During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, products became essential resources for the construction of individual identities. They were in particular well-suited for the construction and dissemination of national images, as well for structuring self-perception and the perception by third parties.\(^1\) In the Greek context, products have indeed become significant in the shaping of national identity and especially in the representation and reproduction of the idea of »Greekness«. Relevant historiography has shown that Greekness constitutes a key concept in the social, political and cultural history of modern Greece. Drawing on Hobsbawm’s idea of the »invention of tradition«, we can regard Greekness as a concept not actually preserved in popular memory, but selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized during the process of the emergence of the Greek nation-state in the nineteenth century. Central to this concept was the idea and role of ancient Greek culture, which has been a source of great pride but also a massive »burden« for citizens of modern Greece. Since its inception, the idea of Greekness has been exploited in multiple ways to support various ethnocentric and nationalist ideals. Furthermore, this invented element has been deeply internalized by the Greek people, as it constituted an appropriate medium for national identification and

\(^1\) | International Conference Call, Product Communication and the Nationalisation of Consumption, Vienna, 1-3 October 2009. An earlier version of this paper was presented at this conference. I am grateful to Oliver Kühnschelm, Franz X. Eder, and other conference participants for their constructive questions and comments.
satisfied deeper psychological needs of community-building in a young and insecure state.\textsuperscript{2} This master narrative of Greekness incorporates other sub-narratives, such as the dipoles of craft versus industrialization and tradition versus modernity, corresponding to a local and a European dimension respectively. The emphasis on Greekness has been a more or less constant feature of political and cultural discourse in the country but, as one would expect, becomes intensified in times of increased insecurity caused by political turmoil, financial crises, or other events.

Narratives related to Greekness have had various manifestations in the design domain, where they operated on the sensitive border between the security and status of the old versus the unknown though innovative new.\textsuperscript{3} Advertising of industrial products »Made in Greece« throughout the twentieth century provides telling examples of this tense relationship. Locally manufactured products are highly important as expressions of national power and individuality, because of the problematic role occupied by industrialization in the history of modern Greece. Prevailing beliefs about Greece as a primarily agrarian society and longstanding arguments regarding the viability of industrial development in the country have fuelled its political and economic discourse for many decades. The local production of industrial products acquires thus special significance; this was further intensified in the difficult times following the Second World War and Greek civil war (1945-1949) when the country’s production base was virtually destroyed and Greece was struggling for economic


Designers, advertisers, and other related professionals have created highly expressive advertisements, where heritage and modernity mingle and become exploited to communicate desired messages to the public. Advertisers take advantage of the psychological allure of locally made industrial products; they capitalize on the feelings of pride and hope that these products generate to locals. As the examples presented here will illustrate, advertising narratives have proved to be particularly malleable, and exemplify the skilful mixture and manipulation of traditions for propaganda and commercial purposes.

This paper is based on a selection of 20th century Greek advertisements covering a range of locally produced industrial products, including cigarettes, beer, furniture and electrical equipment. The ads originate from a variety of sources: primary sources include the Historical Archives of the National Bank of Greece, various specialist publications such as the art journal Zigos, the architectural journal Architektoniki, the journal Tefchos, International Review of Architecture, Art and Design, as well as inserts of daily newspapers such as BHMAgazino or Maison & Décoration; whereas the publication by Papapolyzos and Martzoukos on Greek advertising provides secondary material. The paper does not constitute a thorough study of advertising per se, but documents a line of research belonging to a larger history project on the development of industrial design in Greece conducted by the author over several years. The present paper is by no means exhaustive but, based on the eclectic nature of sources spanning several decades, claims to offer a representative albeit brief overview of

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4 | Yagou, Metamorphoses. The low level of Greek industrial capabilities explains the nature of products advertised: They are limited to relatively low-technology consumer goods, mostly food and spirits, cigarettes and furniture. High-technology products were beyond the potential of Greek manufacturing.

5 | Analysis of advertisements may benefit from the approach taken by Garland, who has explored in the visual domain the usage of rhetoric devices such as: anticlimax, antithesis, anthropomorphism, apostrophe, climax, euphemism, hyperbole, innuendo, irony, meiosis, metaphor/simile, metonymy, oxymoron, paradox, parallelism, pun, repetition and zeugma. Ken Garland, Lecture on Visual Rhetoric, Central Saint Martin’s College of Art and Design, 1989.

6 | All the copy quoted is originally in Greek, translated by the author.

7 | This larger research project will materialize in the form of a book entitled: Fragile Innovation: Episodes in Greek Design History, Charleston, SC 2011.
Greek advertising for locally manufactured industrial products. As the Greek copy indicates, these advertisements were intended for use by Greek audiences, the Thermis and Metaxa being exceptions perhaps targeted at international or simply cosmopolitan audiences. In the case of specialist publications such as *Zygos* or *Architektoniki*, we may safely assume that the receiving public would consist of educated professionals from the technical, artistic or business sectors. Similarly, high-income target groups are assumed for cases advertising luxury products, such as the silk fabrics in the 1946 example or the upmarket furniture by Varangis. In other cases, it is more difficult to define the target groups without more knowledge of a firm’s advertising campaign, market share, pricing policies and other factors. Following the examination and analysis of a much more extensive number of examples, the selection of advertisements included in the paper has been grouped into four distinct themes: evocation of antiquity; patriotic production and consumption; craft versus industry; and attractions of modernity. These themes have been identified as dominant; they offer a taxonomic tool and a conceptual »répertoire« which may prove useful in understanding the visual expression of nationalist ideas. It is however crucial to note that these themes or »patterns« are not mutually exclusive: they often overlap and interpenetrate, and thus express the complex articulation of ideas in the design field as well as in society in general.

**Seducing through the evocation of antiquity**

In modern times, Greece’s illustrious past has been a heavy burden for the people to bear and this has left visible traces in every aspect of society, including design and advertising. An early example of the interplay between antiquity-inspired text and image in advertising comes from Antonakopoulos Brothers, a company producing ceramic tiles and bathroom ware in the mid-thirties. The text is very plain, it only provides factual data about the firm, such as year of establishment, capital and addresses.

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9 | Antonakopoulos firm advertisement of the 1930s, Historical Archives of the National Bank of Greece, Series XXXIV, file 4-025 [in Greek].
narratives OF heritage and modernity

Figure 1: Selling a product with the nimbus of antiquity. Advertising for Elviela sports shoes, 1954.

The text is enclosed in a neoclassicist frame consisting of two ionic columns on the left and right, linked at both ends by two decorative bands with meandric motifs. The lack of textual explanation implies that the image »speaks for itself«: the connection to the ancient Hellenic tradition is obvious to viewers, and conveys an impression of diachronic beauty and prestige. Simile but also hyperbole are at work in the ad of 1954 for Elviela sports shoes\(^\text{10}\) (Figure 1): »As the Hermes by Praxitelis is considered to be a symbol of ideal beauty, so the products with the Elviela logo are symbols of unrivalled technical perfection.« This facile parallelism is emphasized by the oversized »as« and »so« in distinct handwritten-like type. A thick, curved arrow also directs the gaze of the viewer from the elegant Hermes head to the logo of Elviela, »the brand of trust« as the bottom-line states. The connection between the ancient masterpiece and the contemporary, casual, cotton cloth and plastic shoe is clearly far-fetched, but the layout and rhetoric of the ad makes it look less so. In a culture saturated with

references to a glorious antiquity and manifestations of continuity between past and present, such connections are inscribed on the collective unconscious as something natural and perfectly acceptable.\footnote{11} Another example of the omnipresent and always appropriate association with antiquity is provided by the Diana cigarettes ad, where the image of the goddess Diana gives an aura of status to the product advertised.\footnote{12} In this case, the connection to ancient Greece has an illustrative and rather vague role. The Metaxa ad of 1965 is much more direct: the product is placed next to a couple of dolls in folk dress for the tourist market, and set against the background of the Acropolis. The copy reads: »Incomparable – the Glory of Greece... the Brilliance of Metaxa«. A Doric column stands for the »I« in »Incomparable«.\footnote{13} The connection between modern Greece and antiquity appears obvious and without need of explanation. As Barthes has shown for successful ideologies, Greekness renders its beliefs natural and self-evident: this is the way the world is.\footnote{14}

A much more recent and very eloquent example is provided by an advertisement of 2002 for an armchair manufactured by the firm Varangis.\footnote{15} The chair is based on classicist typology; the wooden parts are however over-simplified to suit industrial production.\footnote{16} The special feature of the chair consists of two bronze female heads, attached on the underarm supports. The ad is a double-page spread with several pictures and extensive text whose title declares that »Greekness means continuous contestation [...finally, Creativity!]«. It is worth reproducing here the main

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{11} | Gallant, Greece, 72-74.
\item \footnote{12} | Papapolyzos/Martzoukos, Hellads, 73.
\item \footnote{13} | Architectoniki 49-50 (January-April 1965).
\item \footnote{14} | Alan Aldridge, Consumption, Cambridge 2003, 80.
\item \footnote{15} | Varangis advertisement, BHMAgazino, November 2002 [in Greek]. For the long and significant history of the Varangis furniture manufacturer as an upmarket, high-quality as well as innovative firm, see: Artemis Yagou, Unwanted Innovation: The Athens Design Centre 1961-1963, in: Journal of Design History 18/3 (2005), 269-283.
\end{itemize}
text of the ad, which constitutes a powerful example of the all-pervasive contemporary rhetoric of Greekness:

> «It is certain that all furniture is not the same. Deep knowledge is the element that endows furniture with life and aesthetics that stand the test of time. But there is no ›deep knowledge‹, where there is no past. This past, unbreakably connected to the contemporary, real – not ›copying‹ – creativity, is the history under the name of Varangis. It is the correct appreciation and rebirth of the classic ancient-Hellenic furniture, together with the gifts of the Greek flora, that give the opportunity to create unique pieces, whose substantial quality can hardly be found in exhibitions abroad. This is exactly how ›Aphrodite‹ was born! The adaptation of an ancient figurine of the 4th century B.C. (it is believed that it represents Aphrodite) into contemporary design, together with the use of ›yellow copper‹ (bronze), has generated the base of the underarm supports of this unique armchair made of Greek – so called ›royal‹ – chestnut tree. A tree which is rare today, but in antiquity was dominating Greek forests and was known as ›wild chestnut‹ or ›royal chestnut‹, or even ›Persian chestnut of Theofrastos‹, as it was replanted in Greece and then to other countries by the descendants of Alexander the Great. ›Aphoditi‹ armchair is a token of deep knowledge, of respect to tradition, as well as of the contemporary – always functional – Varangis design. This is just one sample of a series of handmade furniture, which are exported today in the ›expensive‹ markets of Europe. Recognizing this quality is, in the end, exclusively your own responsibility...»

The overstated and historically dubious justification of the armchair design in the previous quote may be seen as undermining the design itself by imposing on it an ideologically loaded marketing strategy. The ad is complemented by images of the product, of the designer-manufacturer in his yacht, of a chestnut tree, of timber, as well as of the designer sketching, complemented by related captions written in the same vein as the main text. Given the pioneering past of the Varangis company, this armchair and its promotion might seem to be a regression, as well as a testament to the deeply conservative nature of the Greek buying public. However, one should be wary not to undervalue consumer taste or make arrogant judgements about it. The chair has been a great success in Greece (as well as a relative success abroad), according to the spokeswoman of the firm. From the producer’s point of view, this design is an example of Greekness-inspired
design that expresses a positive spirit of individuality and difference in a rapidly homogenizing world.17

**PRODUCING AND CONSUMING PATRIOTICALLY**

In Greece, the 1940s were marked by the outbreak of the Second World War, and the terrible civil war that followed. The end of foreign occupation in 1944 resulted in an improvement of sorts, although the civil war that was just about to begin would shatter the country till the end of the decade. The second half of the 1940s witnessed the emergence of the professionalization of advertising, through the establishment of the first systematic advertising agencies. In 1948 the first «live» radio ads were broadcast, but daily newspapers constituted the main medium for advertising. 18 The recent political events had left their mark on promotional activities of the time, which had a strong patriotic feel.

![Figure 2: Playing on a tradition of Greek craftsmanship. Advertising by the department store Lambropouli Bros, 1946.](image)

A 1946 advertisement for silk fabrics by the department store Lambropouli Bros is indeed amazing for its portrayal of the transitional character of

18 | Papapolyzos/Martzoukos, Hellads, 19.
Greek society at the time (Figure 2). The ad shows a group of four ladies, dressed in the latest fashion, examining a fabric with obvious pleasure and satisfaction. The fabric is part of a roll of cloth situated in some distance, on top of other rolls which form a kind of pedestal. On top of this pedestal, there is a manually-operated loom, where a woman dressed in traditional outfit is working. This somehow surrealist setting is complemented by an oversized laurel wreath which encircles the woman and the loom. The four »modern« ladies don’t seem to pay any attention to the worker; in fact they don’t even realize her presence. The positioning of the loom and the perspectival construction of the image contribute to this feeling of distance in space – and time – between the group and the loom worker. The text of the ad reads: »The wonderful Greek silk fabrics constitute a title of honour for our country«. Of course the industrially produced silk fabrics are as removed from handicraft, as the ladies’ lifestyle and mentality are removed from the reality of the loom worker. The ad capitalizes on the heightened nationalist feelings of the period, by juxtaposing two situations that have nothing in common but the gender of the persons portrayed. In fact, the glorified but distant loom worker was soon to become irreversibly an image of the Greek past. The text at the lower left of the ad consists of a list of French terms for different types of silk fabric, in Greek type: »Crêpe Romaine, maroquin, crêpe satin, georgette, lingerie, crêpe de Chine, chemisier, and especially the renowned imprimés.« »Imprimés« are emphasized as being of particular importance and indeed they were going to signify modernity in the years to come. The usage of the French terms is another element of modernization to which young ladies of the bourgeoisie were aspiring. Also, the Greek language employed in the ad belongs to the purist »katharevousa«, the kind of language for State and official uses but not what would be expected in a casual conversation by modern ladies, not to mention the loom worker. This ad is extraordinary as an early but highly conscious example of manipulation of cultural and historical elements in order to seduce. The name of the advertising agency itself, Greca, connects the narratives of patriotism and modernity: it speaks of Greece, but in a foreign language, thus becoming »modern«.

19 | Ibid., 37.
The group of three ads that follows uses the image of a person dressed in the traditional male outfit, the »foustanella« costume. The male wearing such a costume, the tsolias, constitutes a widely accepted personification of »the nation«. Hobsbawm discusses symbols and devices analogous to the tsolias which came into existence as part of the emergence of national movements and states, for example the French Marianne. Such devices were added to the symbolic vocabulary of states to express national character as seen by the members of the nation itself.\footnote{Hobsbawm/Ranger, Invention, 7 and 276.}

\footnote{Papapolyzos/Martzoukos, Hellads, 40.} The first of the group of ads incorporating this figure dates from 1948 and promotes a petrol stove manufactured by the Pitsos firm, a very modest product (Figure 3).\footnote{One would reasonably argue that Germany, being a recently defeated nation, could not be included among the great powers of the world during the} However, given the circumstances of Greece at the time, the tsolias, the exemplary and typical Greek individual, had every reason to be proud of it. In this ad, the persona of the Greek nation faces the personas of four other nations, perceived as the most powerful in the world, namely, from left to right, Germany, the United States, Britain and France.\footnote{Their}
heads appear in the background, with expressions ranging from surprise to doubt and even contempt. The tsolias is in the foreground, full-bodied, pointing to the object with apparent pride. The stove is lying in front of him on the floor, »shining« with newness and pride. The caption reads: »Poor Greece with the Pitsos stove has beaten you!« This ad is in fact a representation of a fantasy of the small nation against the Great Powers. The actual product advertised is very humble, and clearly cannot compete with the industrial achievements of the big nations. However, following the Greek victories in the beginning of the Second World War, a Greek citizen would feel very proud as he imagined that he himself was in fact the tsolias who fought gloriously on the Albanian front. This fact renders him bold enough to elevate his achievements in the production arena on a level higher than that of the industrially advanced nations. His claim receives even more emphasis by his usage of the word »Psorokostaina«, meaning »poor Greece«, another national stereotype of self-pity and self-mockery.

In the second ad of this group, the product promoted is beer of the Fix brand, produced in Athens since 1864 (Figure 4). This ad of 1954 belonged to a wider campaign undertaken by Fix, in order to increase its market share by »educating« Greeks to drink more beer and in fact popularize beer as a »soft drink« rather than a »spirit«.23 The ad portrays three supposedly typical, though rather refined, moustached Greek males, dressed in traditional tsolias costume. One of them, positioned centrally and dominating the image, is holding a large glass of beer and looks very enthusiastic. His costume is not a plain tsolias costume as in the previous stove ad, but a rather upmarket, embroidered version of it. The other two men, who are positioned in the margins of the image, stare joyfully at the glass. The text of this ad is minimal, though highly suggestive.

late 1940s. However, the inclusion of the German persona in this advertisement indicates the idea of Germany as a powerful industrial nation to be still valid, potent and enduring in the collective imagination of the Greek people.

23 | Papapolyzos/Martzoukos, Hellads, 62.
The brand name «Fix beer» is inscribed under the image of the men (as well as on the glass), together with «1864», the year when the company was founded, thus implying a long tradition and continuity. The word used for beer is «zythos», the Greek word for «beer». The letters are in blue, the «national» colour, and at the top left corner of the ad the two versions of the national flag are shown with the upperscript «Greek industry». Altogether, the clamour for Greekness is all over this ad, to the point that one would be inclined to feel almost guilty for not supporting such a «patriotic» product. This exaggeration of national stereotypes is of course deliberate and is perhaps the reaction of the Fix company to new types of drinks, especially imported ones, in the mid-fifties.²⁴ It is of course ironic that the firm was itself founded by the German Karl Fix, which is perhaps an extra reason

why Greekness becomes so important and overstressed in relation to the foreign-sounding Fix brand. This and other examples that follow show the flexibility and complexity of national identity, which escapes narrow delineations. The acceptable balance between Greek and foreign elements in a brand varies across time, and advertising is a key factor in negotiating this balance and mediating different interpretations of it.

Figure 5: Patriotism and a fluorescent lamp. Advertising, late 1950s.

An impressive ad from the late 1950s depicts a young lady wearing a traditional male (tsolias) costume (Figure 5).25 The lady is portrayed as walking in a parade, and she holds the advertised product, a fluorescent lamp, like a rifle. Her shoes are the most remarkable element of her appearance, because they are in fact modern female high-heel shoes but bearing the characteristic pompon of the traditional tsolias shoes. Despite

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25 Architectoniki 13 (January-February 1959) [in Greek].
the bizarre outfit, she looks very modern thanks to her make-up, earrings, as well as her general expression. The ad text emphasizes the Greekness of the product: The title reads »Greek fluorescent lamps« and the subtitle adds: »The first to be manufactured in Greece«. Smaller type presents the functional advantages of the product: »White light – Long duration – Very small price.« Such features are obviously important, but they are played down in connection to the importance of the product’s nationality. The dynamic image of the lady, stepping decisively out of the frame towards an imaginary front, suggests that a war is now taking place in the domains of production and market. Her meaningful look invites readers to buy locally for the sake of the country. As pointed out, the relationship between nationalism and consumption is not a new one; it is historical and extremely complex.\footnote{Daniel Opler, Call for Papers: An All-Consuming Patriotism: Consumption and the History of American Nationalism, www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=142762 (accessed May 2011).} In recent years, consumption of patriotic materials has become one of the most important ways to demonstrate support for the nation and has been ardently exploited by retailers.\footnote{Ian Frazier, All-Consuming Patriotism, Mother Jones On-Line Journal (March/April 2002), www.motherjones.com/politics/2002/03/all-consuming-patriotism (accessed May 2011). Similar phenomena of commercial exploitation became widespread in Greece following the victory of the national team in the 2004 Euro football championship.} Another example of patriotically-inspired advertising, provided by the 1967 ad of the Papastratos company for Old Navy and Byron cigarettes, shows a very strong image based on tradition and historical references.\footnote{Architectoniki 64 (August-September 1967) [in Greek].} The ad promotes two different brands, »two cigarettes with a special personality«, as the ad copy states, the Old Navy, a blended cigarette, and Byron, a light and fine one. The Old navy pack shows a stylized image of a boat with colourful oars, sails and flags, inspired by traditional ceramic designs. The Byron brand is based on the image of Lord Byron, the English Philhellene who fought and died in 1825 in Greece, during the war of independence. A portrait of Byron is depicted on the pack, where he is portrayed as a handsome young man, framed by blue and gold graphic elements. Both packs are set on a background that clearly and emphatically speak of Greek tradition and history. The Old Navy pack is combined with
traditional, handmade embroidery of the tsevres type, and the Byron pack with a pistol similar to those used during the war of independence, as well as a red flower, symbolizing the sacrifice and death of Lord Byron in Greece. The special personalities of the cigarettes about which the ad boasts have strong nationalist connotations. This ad was published in 1967, when a military coup imposed a dictatorship that would last for seven years. The coincidence between the overly patriotic tone of the ad and the political situation is very intriguing.

**Craft and Industry: A Controversial Visual Rhetoric**

In Greek advertising, the nationalist rhetoric is also frequently interwoven with allusions to the dichotomy between traditional and industrial modes of production, a dichotomy which is deliberately emphasized as well as distorted. An interesting example is provided by an ad of 1965 promoting Old Navy cigarettes, a brand produced by the Papastratos company from Greek and U.S. tobacco varieties. This »blended identity« is exploited and celebrated graphically by the juxtaposition of the respective flags. The flags' stripes are in fact represented in an abstract manner, so that the white stripes might be taken for cigarettes. The flags are superimposed on tobacco leaves, a big and dominant one for the U.S., and three smaller ones for Greece. The slogan at the top of the ad reads »The first blended« and capitalizes on the novelty and modernity of the product. The sense of novelty and modernity is enhanced by the usage of the untranslated word »blended«, a concept apparently introduced by this new brand. The smaller-case copy under the image of the pack declares: »The first Greek cigarette in the international industrial line! A new step by Papastratos S. A. A Conquest! From Greek hands to worldwide consumption. Unbeatable combination.« The product is promoted as a technological achievement of international dimensions which can be competitive and successful in the world market. The launching of this new brand is described as a »conquest« and an »unbeatable combination«, thus using once again military connotations already observed in the fluorescent lamp ad. However, the pack itself bears a totally different image, as it is

29 | Papapolyzos/Martzoukos, Hellads, 118.
30 | Ibid. (emphases in the original).
mostly white, with a multi-coloured image of a boat. This stylized image is based on a traditional design for hand-painted ceramics from the northern Aegean island of Skyros. The aim of the pack design is to convey Greekness and evoke a feeling of freshness and freedom, as if when sailing on a boat in the Aegean sea. The blue sails and small flags of the ship are visually matched with the same blue colour of the background. It is ironic that the ship image represents a craft culture already on the verge of extinction when this ad was created; it is however used on a product symbolizing industrialization and modernization. Tradition and modernity are skillfully »blended« in this ad, by balancing contradictory messages for the sake of customer seduction. Similarly, the 1977 Serraia blankets, curtains and fabrics advertisement is reminiscent of the 1965 Papastratos and the 1946 silk fabric ads, in the sense that it makes similar use of craft. The image of a traditional loom’s shuttle is depicted to promote the products of industrial manufacturing and, furthermore, this is made to appear as completely natural.31

Many examples illustrate that the design of new products often involves the employment of quasi-Greek visual elements or the morphological adaptation of pre-existing designs. Greek designers seem to lack the confidence to create new forms and products for contemporary needs, or to create new products without at the same time resorting to idealistic, Greekness-based justifications of their designs. In the late eighties and early nineties, the furniture company Neo Katoikein created a range of products entitled Aigaion (Aegean) which represented a modern interpretation of craft traditions.32 The following text is taken from the advertising copy used in the promotion of this industrially produced range:

»The Aegean, in the crossroads of three continents, a Greek sea for four thousand years, receives messages, assimilates influences creatively and, against all novelties and fashions, establishes and defends its civilization. Craftsmen, throughout its history, have been using the humble materials of their land, they turn objects of daily use into works of artistic value, they invest on these labours of love their good humour and their imagination, keeping thus alive the ›Aegean conscience‹ and the ›Aegean Sea aesthetics‹. From all the edges of

31 | Papapolyzos/Martzoukos, Hellads, 183.
32 | Tefchos, International Review of Architecture, Art and Design 11 (Spring 1993), 5 [in Greek].
the Aegean, we have chosen the last specimens of its furniture, we have adapted them to contemporary needs, making sure to preserve intact their formal particularity. We have also gathered the objects that are still being manufactured there, with the same techniques and the same faith, and thus we present today the most complete collection of traditional furniture and objects which remind us of the most precious thing Greece has: its sea, its Aegean.«

Given that the products were industrially produced, bringing together influences from traditional Greek crafts with modernist design aesthetics, the previous quote appears rather pompous and far-fetched. It is an example of contemporary Greek rhetoric loaded with populist and nationalistic overtones. This kind of rhetoric is showering down on the average citizen of the country in advertising, journalism, popular culture, and other aspects of daily life.

The Varangis furniture company has also extensively exploited the craft versus industry discourse, as well as discreet connotations of Greekness, in various advertisements throughout the decades. The 1967 ad is an example of a consciously restrained advertisement, emphasizing simplicity, symmetry and elegance in order to express the status and quality suited to its upmarket target group. The text reads: »You recognize the Varangis furniture because it is manufactured with utmost care, and it is correct in its proportions because it combines the faultless precision of the machine with the sensitive finish of the human hand. Get to know the classic Varangis furniture in showrooms!« The ad speaks of »classic« furniture and the ad structure itself suggests the symmetry and aesthetic perfection of an ancient Greek column. The objects, especially the chairs, conform to a neoclassical style inspired by antiquity. But the main point of the ad is the combination between »the faultless precision of the machine« and »the sensitive finish of the human hand«. Such a statement aims to capitalize on the ambivalent feelings of the Greek public towards industrial production. The Varangis furniture is promoted as hybrid products, bearing the best of both approaches. In a similar vein, a Varangis ad of 1992 is entitled »CRAFT (DESIGN)«.

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33 | Papapolyzos/Martzoukos, Hellads, 135.
34 | Parmenidis/Roupa, Astiko, 556.
35 | Tefchos, International Review of Architecture, Art and Design 8 (Summer 1992), 3 [in English].
text reads: »CRAFT. A heritage which has become a culture. DESIGN. Rooted in the culture of craft. THE METAPHOR. Design conveys craft. Craft conveys design.« The slogan under the company logo also states: »The imprint of the maker’s hand«, again implying a craft process where the touch of the human hand is the decisive factor. It is difficult to evaluate the persuasiveness of this quasi poetic craft/design narrative, but the continuing success of the Varangis company might suggest that it has been quite effective. Similarly ambivalent is the 2004 ad of the furniture firm Karageorgiou.\textsuperscript{36} The picture shows in colour an imitation French period furniture armchair in purple velvet, set against a black-and-white background showing the interior of the factory. The caption reads: »...for those who appreciate hand-made furniture«. Again, there is a deliberate blurring of the processes of craft and machine production, in accordance with the respective prejudiced beliefs of the Greek public.

As in the case of the silk fabrics ad, we identify a complex and perhaps problematic attitude towards products: local industrial products are considered of inferior quality than foreign ones and they are not desirable. Craft products are also unwanted in comparison to imported industrial products but, at the same time, they are portrayed in advertisements as signifiers of quality. Many ads are based on the assumptions that traditional or craft products are synonymous with quality and, furthermore, that the evocation of craft may help sell industrial products!\textsuperscript{37} The attitude of the Greek buying public is difficult to explain: modern industrial products are highly valued, but people are encouraged to buy them through the connection to craft products and the nostalgic evocation of a traditional, pre-capitalist past. Advertising captures and exploits to the maximum this contradictory relationship.

\textsuperscript{36} Advertisement in Maison & Décoration (December 2004) [in Greek].
\textsuperscript{37} The prejudice of Greek consumers towards local industrial products is a complex phenomenon. It is discussed in relation to clothes and fashion in: Dimitra Vassileiadou/Themistoklis P. Roukis/Sakis Spyridis, Oi Aparhes tis Katanolotikis Koinonias stin Ellada tou Mesopolemou [The Beginnings of Consumer Society in Inter-War Greece] (unpublished seminar paper), Rethymno (University of Crete) 2001. As far as the furniture domain is concerned, the issue is discussed in: Parmenidis/Roupa, Astiko.
A COUNTER-STRAIGHT: ATTRACTING THROUGH MODERNITY ONLY

The study of Greek advertisements for locally-produced industrial products generates the question: Is it not enough to be only modern? Isn’t the function and quality of an industrial product sufficient to sell that product to Greek consumers? Is it always necessary to resort to ideas of antiquity, nationalism, or an idyllic pre-capitalist past in order to promote a contemporary product? Following such questions, research has identified relevant examples, where the only advantages of the products promoted are their quality and modernity. Analyzing such examples may shed more light on the nature of Greek advertising narratives.

Figure 6: Staging modernity and progress.
Advertising by Thermis S.A.

Thermis S.A. was a firm producing heating appliances and metal furniture already since the early thirties. Thermis has a rather fresh strategy regarding advertising, as their ad of the mid thirties shows (Figure 6).38

38 | Thermis firm advertisement of the 1930s, Historical Archives of the National Bank of Greece, Series XXXIV, 8-020 [in Greek and French].
The image is a collage of black-and-white pictures of several private and public buildings which have been equipped with Thermis’ central heating equipment. The collage format of pictures thrown casually on the page and superimposed on one another is already unconventional enough and might be considered as an indirect reference to modern art of the period. A large percentage of the buildings shown are typical of the Greek modernism of the thirties, which constituted a dynamic, though short-lived expression of the international modernist credos. The text is very simple and states: »Some of the more than thousand buildings in Greece, Turkey and Albania with ›Thermis‹ steel radiators for central heating.« The matter-of-factness of this text implies quality and efficiency, as well as a degree of confidence: there is no need to say more about the product, as the quantity and quality of the buildings depicted are adequately expressive. The fact that the text is bilingual (Greek and French) further emphasizes the cosmopolitan character of the firm and suggests that its operations systematically take place outside the Greek territory, which is an extra indication of reliability. It might be argued that this emphasis on efficiency and quality is related to the intended technocratic audience, consisting basically of engineers and entrepreneurs, rather than the wider public.

Figure 7: Advertising by the manufacturer IZOLA, 1955.

One of the oldest advertisements on the same theme is that of IZOLA, manufacturers of refrigerators and other electrical equipment (Figure 7). The image shows a fridge and a heater on a graphic background of lines and curved shapes which makes direct reference to modern art. The ad copy is entitled »The artistic creation in industrial products« and then states: »IZOLA, apart from the qualitative superiority of its products, presents them in an aesthetic form that satisfies the contemporary person. The new branch of art, ›industrial aesthetics‹ finds its full application in the Greek IZOLA appliances.« This ad is pioneering in the sense that it is one of the very first references to industrial design in post-war Greece, if not the first one. By introducing the concept of industrial aesthetics as »a new branch of art«, the ad takes over a role which is not simply promotional, but educational as well. Apart from a minor reference to the Greekness of IZOLA appliances, the ad emphasizes the advantages of the product itself, which are considered to be of two kinds: functional/technical and aesthetic. It should be noted however that this ad appears in Zygos, an art journal which played a seminal role in Greek arts and crafts in the 1950s and 1960s. It is therefore conceived and designed for the specific élite readership of Zygos, a group definitely more educated and sophisticated than the ordinary Greek consumer.

Interesting connections may be established between the 1955 IZOLA ad and that of 1958 by Tsaousoglou, a manufacturer of metal furniture. This ad is illustrated by pictures of various chairs, armchairs and tables, including an example of outdoor usage in a holiday setting. The text reads: »Ensure comfort in the countryside! With quality furniture – 1958 models. The most appropriate for home verandas, cinemas and theatres, gardens, clubs.« The ad promotes the product by suggesting a variety of advantages: »Practical, Elegant, Comfortable, Solid.« There is also specific reference to materials, some of which were perhaps unfamiliar or totally unknown to Greek consumers: »Combinations of aluminium, formica, saran, fabrics, nickel, chromium«. This presupposes a more mature and conscious buying public, which is interested or should be interested in more technical aspects of a product, beyond cost and aesthetics. A related approach is also followed by Afentakis, a metal goods manufacturer based in Halkis, on

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40 | Zygos 1 (November 1955) [in Greek].
41 | Architectoniki 9 (May-June 1958) [In Greek].
the island of Euboea. The ad has the structured, rational appearance of an orthogonal grid and presents the advantages of Afentakis’ products in a systematic fashion: »The stainless steel cooking utensils of our industry provide: health, thrift, comfort, beauty.« Furthermore, explicit technical details and their expected results are given: »The addition of a copper base ensures excellent contact, uniform distribution of heat, reduction of losses. Result: Quick and thrifty cooking.« A bullet-point list also presents the types of products manufactured by this company, as well as their different versions: »stainless-steel, chrome, silver-plated.« Again it should be stressed that both these ads were published in Architectoniki, a specialist journal for architecture and design, whose readership would be mainly technocratic. These examples clearly illustrate a distinct trend in Greek design advertising grounded on an objective evaluation of aesthetic and technical quality which conforms to the phase of sweeping Westernisation that Greece was undergoing.

Figure 8: Advertising for Fix beer, 1957.

42 | Architectoniki 60 (December 1966-January 1967) [in Greek].
43 | Yagou, Innovation, 269-271.
The perceptions of the consumer public do not of course remain static, they change over time and advertising messages are adapted accordingly. In a Fix beer advertisement of 1957, the traditionally dressed men of the 1954 version were replaced by a young blond lady, reminiscent of a movie star (Figure 8).\textsuperscript{44} Similarly, Old Navy cigarette ads are very flexible and follow changing lifestyles. In 1969, two years after the nationalist message of the Byron ad, a new advertisement attempts to present a totally different image, targeted at the young and modern woman.\textsuperscript{45} The image shows a young lady set on a light blue background, who is dressed in a casual and modern fashion, wearing a navy cap and holding an Old Navy cigarette. Her posture and general style imply confidence and pleasure. Her head is encircled by sketched lifebelt, which contains a translation of »Old Navy« in Greek. The smaller text reads: »The Old Navy cigarette is an ideal blend made of Greek and American tobacco, destined for people with high taste. Like the refined taste of the tough crew of the old navy.« Such ads provide clear indications of the drastic social changes taking place in the 1950s and 1960s, a period of reconstruction and rapid economic growth. It then may come as no surprise that Greek advertising actually took off in the 1950s and this decade, more than any other time, provides the groundwork for Greek advertising as it exists today.\textsuperscript{46} Locally produced products participated in the emerging discourse of modernization as tangible symbols of a national narrative of progress.

We observe that the examples represented in this section of the paper, as representatives of the advertising strand that rejects nationalist rhetoric and instead opts for a technocratic perspective, are primarily (but not exclusively) technical products. This observation indicates a possible direction of research that could be further explored. Was perhaps the nationalizing and sentimental perspective considered less appropriate for technological products, which were thus subjected to a rationalizing treatment? It is also worth pondering more generally whether design decisions expressed in advertising resulted from managerial attitudes, were substantially shaped by the advertising professionals themselves, or were shaped through the joint influence of various factors. In any case, from a design history point of view, the purely modern or technocratic approach

\textsuperscript{44} Architectoniki 1 (January-February 1957).
\textsuperscript{45} Architectoniki 73 (April-June 1969) [in Greek].
\textsuperscript{46} Nicholas, History, 8.
that excludes nationalist arguments provides a fertile contradistinction to advertising dominated by ethnocentric preoccupations.

**Conclusion**

The fact that a range of advertisements for industrial products »Made in Greece« published over several decades have been capitalizing on nationalist ideals testifies to their credibility among the wider public. It also suggests that the concept of Greekness has been internalized by the Greek people as a truth which is over-arching and wide enough to incorporate everything one wishes to include in one’s own idea of it. I would even argue that if we attempt to distance ourselves from the stereotypes of Greekness, some of the ads presented in this paper would appear preposterous. Nevertheless, the continuing presence of nationalist-centred concepts demonstrates their wider public appeal. On the other hand, non-nationalistic examples of ads promoting mostly technical products offer a refreshing antidote to the nationalist excesses and support the existence of a pluralistic advertising landscape that deserves further attention.

It should however be acknowledged that the interpretations put forward in the present paper may not represent the views held by consumers, since this paper was based on visual analysis and interpretation of the advertisements themselves. Cultural historian Jeffrey Meikle acknowledges the difficulties of knowing with certainty »how and why consumers at a given historical moment responded to particular products, graphics or environments«. We should therefore be very cautious when discussing meanings ascribed to these products by »the people who use, inhabit or consume them« not to project on to them »our own personal desires, irrational nostalgias or political agendas«.47 In this sense, the paper is therefore meant as an introduction and as a stepping-stone or otherwise entry point for further research which would offer new insights into the process of nationalisation of consumption.48

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48 | One line of future research that I would particularly seek to elucidate has to do with the origins of the nationalisation of consumption, for example whether it was primarily state- or market-induced. My initial hypothesis, which
In conclusion, as the paper has demonstrated, the ads connect conceptions of the past and present of the country and its people, by successfully integrating a vast range of ideas on ancient heritage, patriotism, pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production, as well as technical progress and modernity. Thus, advertising, a major, imported capitalist institution has been appropriated and manipulated in Greece by various stakeholders, including the State, design, production and marketing professionals, and of course the public itself, to serve a spectrum of apparent or latent needs, and arguably provide a degree of resistance to the homogenizing forces of globalization.

is supported by this paper, is that nationalisation of consumption was neither clearly state-induced nor market-induced. It rather resulted from a complex web of interactions between the state, private firms, design professionals as well as the wider public, all taking advantage of nationalist product communication for their own purposes.