



of the Hellenic language, living until then a life of their own, will begin to come to the fore and will demand their voice to be respected. The need of the Christians of the East to distinguish themselves from the Latin West (due to the Schism of 1054), the dire experiences of the Crusades (especially the Sack of Constantinople in 1204), and the concomitant search for a distinctive identity (after the territorial losses of the Byzantine Empire), found their best possible ally in the Hellenic language of the people. This is how Neo-Hellenism emerged and how the Hellenic language assumed the proportions of an overarching and cohesive social force. This is how the modern Hellenic sense of ethnicity was sustained and promoted, providing modern Hellenes with their true motherland: Nea Ellinika! Along with the Orthodox faith, this is the legacy of our direct ancestors –without which we do not have the right to even call ourselves Hellenes!

The Language Divide of a Nation

With the creation of the modern Hellenic Nation/State a problem will immediately arise regarding its official language. The ruling elites will have their go over against the spoken language of the people that had sustained the nation in its formative years. Thus two opponents suddenly appeared: Katharevousa (puristic Greek) and Demotike (romaic Greek). The former was an attempt to resuscitate the Hellenic language of the ancients, while the latter was the natural and organic, so to say, evolution of the Hellenic language at the grassroots level. Regardless of the respective cons and pros, both of them played a vital role in experimenting with the treasures of the Hellenic language and gave exceptional new fruits: romaic Greek bequeathed to the Nation the unique and exquisite Demotiko Tragoudi, whereas puristic Greek became the channel for the hellenisation –or, better, re-hellenisation– of innumerable philosophical, scientific and cultural terms from European languages.

