



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
National and Kapodistrian  
University of Athens



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Bicentennial of the Greek Revolution (1821-2021)

*The Greek Revolution in the Age of Revolutions (1776-1848)*  
*Reappraisals and Comparisons*

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**Abstracts:**

**Bell, David A.**, Princeton University, *From Philadelphia to Athens: Why Revolutions Come in Waves*

The paper will offer a general theory of how revolutions in one country can be connected to revolutions in others, illustrated by examples drawn from across the “age of revolutions” and of course including the Greek Revolution. I will argue that the connections can be broadly categorized in three ways. First, there are *structural connections*: similar structural tensions and conflicts lead to revolutionary outcomes in different countries. The tensions and conflicts can include the rise of new social formations and new cultural practices, and also the weakening of imperial authority (suggestive parallels might be drawn, for instance, between developments in the Spanish and Ottoman empires). Second, there are *connections by transmission*: revolutionary ideas and personnel from one country provoke revolutionary outbreaks in another. Finally, there are *connections by disruption*: a revolution in one country has seriously destabilizing economic or political effects in another, making revolution more likely there (a classic case here would be how the French Revolution led to Napoleon’s invasion of Spain, disrupting Spanish authority over its possessions in the Americas).

**Clark, Christopher**, University of Cambridge, **Aliprantis, Christos**, Max Weber post-doctoral Researcher, European University Institute, *Greece and 1848: Direct Responses and Underlying Connectivities*

In their combination of intensity and geographical extent, the 1848 Revolutions were unique – at least in European history. In 1848 parallel political tumults broke out across the entire continent. The revolutions involved a panorama of charismatic actors. For politically sentient Europeans, 1848 was an all-encompassing moment of shared experience. It turned everyone into contemporaries, branding them with memories that would last as long as life itself. These revolutions were experienced as European upheavals but, as Axel Körner pointed out, they were nationalised in retrospect. The historians and memory managers of the European nations absorbed them into specific national teleologies and path dependencies. For instance, the supposed failure of the German revolutions was sucked into the national narrative known as the Sonderweg. There were three phases to the events of 1848. In February and March, upheaval spread like a bushfire across the continent, leaping from city to city and starting numerous spot fires in towns and villages in between. In May, radical demonstrators were attempting to storm and overthrow the National Assembly created by the February Revolution in Paris, while in Vienna Austrian democrats protested against the slow pace of liberal reform and established a Committee of Public Safety. In June there were violent clashes between liberal leaders and radical crowds on the streets of the larger cities in Prussia and France. In Paris, this culminated in the brutality and bloodshed of the June Days. The autumn offered a more complex picture: counter-

revolution unfolded in Berlin, Prague, the Kingdom of Naples and Vienna. Parliaments were shut down, troops returned en masse to the streets, insurgents were arrested and sentenced. But at the same time a second phase, radical revolt dominated by democrats and socialists of various kinds broke out in the southern German states, in western and southern France, and in Rome. Soon however Prussian, French, Austrian, and Russian troops put down the uprisings. By the end of summer 1849, the revolutions were largely over. The radicals and liberals were impressively successful in creating transnational networks, but these networks were horizontal: they lacked the vertical structures and resources required to wield decisive force. The counter-revolution, by contrast, drew on the combined resources of armies whose loyalty to the traditional powers had never been seriously in question.

**Davis, John**, University of Connecticut, *Greece and the Liberal Revolutions of 1820-1823 in Southern Europe*

Twelve months before the first Greek risings against Ottoman rule, a military *pronunciamento* in Seville in March 1820 marked the start of the liberal revolutions in southern Europe. From Spain the revolutions spread to Portugal, Naples, Sicily and Piedmont with wider resonances from south America to the Ottoman and Tsarist empires that came to constitute a 'liberal international'. But as the first Greek rebellions were starting, an Austrian army was already marching southwards to crush the Italian revolutions; two years later a French army invaded Spain to restore the absolutist monarchy and bring the *trienio liberal* in southern Europe to an end. After 1823, the Greek Revolution was the last hope for liberals across Europe and speculation about its possible outcome was primarily an opportunity for survivors of the earlier revolutions in southern Europe to reflect on why their own revolutions had failed and how their political objectives might still be preserved.

**Dixon, Simon**, University College London, *Russia and Greece in the Age of Revolution*

By 1821, Greeks reached northward into the tsarist empire in myriad ways: through bands of sailors and Black Sea corsairs; through educational institutions scattered across New Russia and beyond; through commercial networks with their hub in Odessa (named after Odysseus in 1794); and more ethereally in the Russian political imagination inspired, like the city itself, by Catherine II's 'Greek Project'. In 1821, Russians turned southward to play a correspondingly kaleidoscopic role in the Greek Revolution: some joined Alexander Ypsilantis' army of liberation on its march through Moldavia and Wallachia; others co-ordinated humanitarian relief for Greek refugees; still more sought to realise philhellenic dreams. But it was in the three decades after 1821 that the relationship between Greece and Russia was at its most complex and most significant. Alarmed by revolutionary challenges to Restoration monarchy, exemplified in Russia by the Decembrist movement (a less successful parallel to the Philiki Etaireia), the Russian autocracy nevertheless played a pivotal role in securing the international stability of the emergent Greek state and in settling its internal ecclesiastical establishment. Both these moves were made under the umbrella of a mutual commitment to ecumenical Orthodoxy. However, to translate that commitment into readily compatible institutional terms proved to be a challenge beyond the diplomatic and intellectual resources of both governments, and of both national churches.

**Efthymiou, Maria**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, *Internal Conflicts and Civil Strife I the Serbian and the Greek Revolution: a Comparison*

Different groups or individuals (such as the *armatoloi* of the high mountains, the *kocabasi* of different regions, and the Greek Orthodox Clergy) who, before the Revolution, played the role of administrative 'bridge' between the Ottoman Empire and its subjects, participated strongly in the Greek Revolution of 1821. Many of them members of the Philiki Etaireia, were among the pioneers of the Revolution and tried, throughout the 8 years' war, to keep their own local and general significance adapting to the ongoing evolutions and political realities. Equivalent phenomena of the Serbian Revolution (1804) help in the better understanding of the Greek case.

**Harlaftis, Gelina**, University of Crete, Director of the Institute of Mediterranean Studies Foundation of Research and Technology-Hellas (FORTH), **Galani, Katerina**, Hellenic Open University, Post-doctoral Researcher at the Institute of Mediterranean Studies Foundation of Research and Technology-Hellas (FORTH), *The Sea and Nation-building: Between a Privately-owned, Privateering and "Piratica" Merchant Fleet and a Revolutionary National Navy, 1821-1829*

On the eve of the Greek Revolution, Greeks, as Ottoman, Ionian, Russian or other subjects owned the largest fleet of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea and were the main carriers of the goods of the Ottoman Empire to the Western Mediterranean and northern Europe. The Ottoman Empire, an inland empire relied on its non-Muslim subjects for maritime trade and the manning of its Navy. The Sublime Porte actively promoted the economic development of its non-Muslim subjects since the late 18th century, to limit the influence of European nations in its domestic market and promote Ottoman trade. The agents of these maritime activities were predominantly the Greeks. Shipping directly connected with the Greek diaspora communities at the port-cities of Europe, apart from building an entrepreneurial system of transporting cargoes from East to West, carried also revolutionary ideas. The importance of the shipping activities in the Greek Revolution in the existing bibliography has focused its attention on the involvement of three islands in the formation of the first Greek navy: Hydra, Spetses and Psara. The present study, result of a three-year research in the Greek and European archives reveals two stages of the formation of the Greek navy and a threesome activity in connection to the sea. Its first phase that lasted from 1821-1825 the Greek "Navy" was a privately-owned revolutionary national fleet formed by 50-60 merchant cargo vessels from more than ten islands and coastal towns in 1821. During its second phase, from 1826 onwards the temporary revolutionary government financed the purchase of ships in order to form its National Navy. Apart from the formation of a national Navy of about 50-60 vessels, the main strength of the revolutionaries at sea was a privateering and/or piratical fleet of about 900 large merchant vessels in both the Aegean and Ionian seas that acted both as a belligerent, supplier and economic provider. In the meantime, Ionian vessels under British or other European flags acted as an ancillary merchant fleet involved in international trade also supplying the revolted areas. What archives reveal is that legitimate and illegitimate sea trade financed the war at sea and contributed to the formation of the Greek Kingdom.

**Heppner, Harald**, University of Graz, *The Serbian, Greek and Romanian Revolutions in Comparison*

Revolutions are exceptional events of the past: they change the direction of development and create alternative combinations for the future. Some of the contemporaries participate in revolutionary activities, others play the role of observers or prefer to remain adversaries. Looking at the situation among the Serbs, the Greeks and the Romanians in the early 19th century we have to analyse the preconditions for their revolutionary attempts, the pool of available human resources, and the different motivations (for and against the rising), the structure of the revolutionary processes as well as the results in retrospect. Comparing these three cases in South Eastern Europe we may observe similarities (opposition to the Ottoman power, a part of the same ethnic group beyond their own life horizon, interest to get help from outside, common Orthodox legacy), but also differences (initial position with regard to the sociological and political structure, concepts, results). A special aspect concerns the question what was in summary more relevant – the juridical, the economic or the mental effect of the revolution upon the organization of the future.

**Ilicak, Šükrü**, Hellenic Open University, Researcher at the Institute of Mediterranean Studies Foundation of Research and Technology-Hellas (FORTH), *The Decade prior to the Greek Revolution: A Black Hole in Ottoman History*

A theme that stands out as central in all the documents produced by the Ottoman state throughout the Greek Revolution is the Sublime Porte's unsuccessful efforts to mobilize Muslim Albanian magnates-cum-warlords against the Greek insurgents. The multitude of documents is due to the fact that the Ottoman state had essentially no army, nor much means to raise one, and was literally at the mercy of Albanian warlords and mercenaries for the suppression of the Greek uprising until the advent of the Egyptian forces in 1825. To understand what had happened to the Ottoman army and the consequent developments during the Greek Revolution, it is necessary to examine the preceding decade. The Treaty of Bucharest (May 1812) and Russia's revised nonaggressive imperial agenda in the post-Napoleonic world order brought about the

favorable conditions for a certain clique at the Sublime Porte to deal with its internal affairs and eliminate the provincial magnates (*ayans*), without whose support the Ottoman central state could not raise an army or taxes since the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-1774. The *ayans* had carved out almost autonomous statelets for themselves and especially during the Russian war of 1806-1812, they became ever more independent and less responsive to the Sublime Porte's demands. Hence, in February 1813, the Sublime Porte officially announced and embarked upon a military and administrative project to reassert itself in the provinces. What followed was a civil war between the Ottoman central state and a myriad of provincial magnates. Official Ottoman documents and chronicles allow us to trace dozens of urban and rural uprisings led by provincial magnates throughout the empire, from Yemen to Wallachia, from Caucasia to Serbia, against the Sublime Porte's encroachments. The last one of these magnates was Tepedelenli Ali Pasha in Ioannina, who led the Tosk, Lap and Cham Albanians to revolt in 1820. As a result of this "*de-ayanization*" process large sections of the empire were ruined and the Sublime Porte exhausted its pool of military manpower. My article will examine the chain of uprisings throughout the Ottoman Empire and discuss their influence on the Greek Revolution.

**Jourdan, Annie**, University of Amsterdam, *Revolutions in Europe (1776-1848)*

My contribution will focus on the French Revolution and the revolutions that followed in The Netherlands, Switzerland and Italy (1789-1799). I will try to show that each revolution had its own features and was not necessarily influenced by France, although it was the most important European country at the time and had a very strong army. I will describe these revolutions and their vicissitudes, before noting the irony of fate marking the 1820s, when old patriots and new ones deserted their national Restoration(s) and enrolled to be part of a foreign legion sailing from Belgian ports to liberate other peoples – in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece. Among them, there were a lot of Napoleon's soldiers! Thus, what ended up as a fiasco in France after the First Empire, inspired other nations to rise up against their tyrants and some of them succeeded to get rid of those tyrants, as far away as in South America – or in Greece.

**Karakatsouli, Anna**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, *Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the 1820s: Philhellenism(s) in the Public Sphere*

The story of Philhellenism has been told many times, mostly from a strictly national point of view. British, French, German or American volunteers to the Greek cause have been examined as if they were independent actors operating along mutually exclusive national boundaries and cultures. This essay aims to survey certain key aspects of Philhellenism in a transnational approach with relevance to the reactions in the public sphere regarding the Greek cause. We can distinguish four types of interest in the Greek struggle for independence: a. Military engagement of the foreign liberal army and naval officers who came to fight in Greece, b. Humanitarian action by European and American philanthropy committees gathering funds and provisions to assist the Greek population, c. Financial activity of bankers, investors and speculators who hastened to set up high risk but also extremely profitable loans, and d. State intervention by the Great Powers, openly from the Battle of Navarin in 1827 onwards but acting undercover much earlier. It is proposed to explore the shared and enduring solidarity of public opinion in the West during the years of the Greek national uprising as a result of these multiple commitments at different levels and to examine the philhellenic movement within the tensions and dynamics of European societies in the Age of Revolutions.

**Katsiardi-Hering, Olga**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, *From the Revolts to the Greek Revolution: Economic-Political Realities and Ideological Visions among the Greeks (End of the Eighteenth C.-1821)*

This paper concerns the fifty years before 1821. As its starting point it takes the Greek revolt of 1770, known as the 'Orlofika', during the Russian-Ottoman War of 1768–1774. The economic and political framework was shaped by the growing interest of the naval European powers in trade in the Eastern Mediterranean and the dynamic appearance of Russia in this antagonistic game after the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty (1774). The Austro-Russian-Ottoman war of 1787–1791/2, the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, the intense competition and war rivalries among Europeans on land and at sea, and the weakened position of the

Ottoman Empire all fed into political and economic changes in Southeastern Europe. Rebel movements led by powerful Muslim *ayans* in Ioannina, Shkodra, and Vidin challenged central Ottoman power in the Balkans. The increasing commercial strength of Greek Orthodox people was another new reality. Merchants' networks extended throughout the Southeastern European Ottoman provinces connecting the Diaspora of Greek Orthodox commercial communities in Central/Western Europe and Russia. Education centers flourished in these communities; scientific books, newspapers and journals were published in the Greek language; an ideological osmosis of modern political ideas followed. It was through this osmosis, and through the political interactions among the European powers, that various projects seeking liberation with the assistance of Europeans (French or Russians) emerged. The fall of Venice and its impact on the Ionian islands at the turn of the 18th century led to the establishment of the first semi-autonomous *Repubblica Settinsulare*, 1800–1807, and the institution of new sovereignties (Russian, French, English) on the islands. The end of the first decade of the 19th century saw the emergence of a more or less mature political ideology of liberation based on its own strengths. Political visions of nation, fatherland and liberty spread through wide social strata and prepared the way for the outbreak of the Revolution in 1821.

**Kitromilidis, Paschalis M.**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, *The Greek World in the Age of Revolution*

A survey, through the prism of Greek political thought from the 1770s to the 1820s, of the collective condition of Greek society in the closing decades of Ottoman rule and of the self understanding of the Greeks as a community on its way to becoming a modern nation ready to claim its sovereignty and independence. The lecture also considers the historiographical concept “Age of Revolution”, the debates generated by it and its renewal in a global perspective in recent years. It is suggested that the Greek Revolution provides a paradigmatic example for understanding the historical and political logic of the age of revolutions.

**Papageorgiou, Konstantinos**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, *Ideals of Freedom in the Greek Revolution and the Political Discourse of Modernity*

Political, but also national revolutions are, as a rule, founded on certain emblematic ideals, which act originally as motivations for revolutionary action and eventually provide legitimacy to it. In social and political revolutions in particular it is debatable whether and to what extent the shape of things that eventually emerges from them in fact corresponds to the original emblematic ideals. For national revolutions, like the Greek Revolution, the question is particularly critical to the extent that emblematic ideals like freedom, not only provide justifications of the revolutionary act itself, but also supply the normative foundation to the political self-determination and independent statehood sought by a people. In this paper we propose to look at readings of the concept of freedom which played a decisive role in the Greek Revolution, trace the origins of such ideas in the philosophical and political ideas of the Enlightenment (and also of the Counter-Enlightenment) and at the appeals to them by the protagonists of the Revolution.

**Portillo Valdés, José Maria**, University of the Basque Country, *Greece, Spain and the Theory of Emancipation in Early European Liberalism*

Since the crisis of the Spanish monarchical empire in 1808 the idea of emancipation proved a very useful concept for interpreting its consequences. Even if limited by a Catholic culture, early Spanish and Spanish American constitutionalism integrated a theory of emancipation that affected both nations and citizens. From the 1820s the appeal of the Greek revolution and war of independence opened a new scenario that was immediately taken as an additional case for expanding and comparing the theory of emancipation. This paper will explore the thought of Dominique Dufour de Pradt, the French intellectual who reflected extensively on both cases.

**Anna Maria Rao**, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, *Economy and Politics in the Correspondence of the Neapolitan Consuls in Greece*

Consular correspondence has attracted increasing attention by scholars in recent years, as an intermediary in the circulation of information from one country to another. As it is known, the consuls were not diplomatic agents. They had above all functions of legal protection of the subjects of their own country and of gathering information that could favour economic interests and exchanges. However, they were often valuable sources of information also from a political point of view. The paper will take into consideration the correspondence sent to Naples by the Neapolitan consuls, in particular by Rocco Martuscelli, consul in Nauplia in the 1830s. Of French mother, whom his father Domenico married during his exile in France after the fall of the Neapolitan Republic in 1799, Martuscelli was the first general consul of the king of the two Sicilies in the Kingdom of Greece and, later, he was also the first Neapolitan consul in the United States. Son of a patriot of 1799, his testimony on the events of Mediterranean liberalism of the early 19th century possesses particular interest.

**Scalora, Francesco**, University of Padova and CHS in Greece Harvard University, «*Che dura prova è tentar di greca aquila il dorso*». *The Greek War of Independence and its Resonance in Sicilian Culture of the Nineteenth Century*

The Greek War of Independence was supported from the very beginning by a vibrant wave of European solidarity. The Philhellenic sympathy was manifest in various ways and had a concrete effect in the political and cultural sphere among the European countries, which on several occasions gradually turned their attention to the Greek world in revolt. Italy offers a privileged point of view for understanding the dynamism of Philhellenism in 19th century Europe. In particular, the analysis of the Sicilian case offers the opportunity to study the gradual ideological adaptation and the political evolution of Philhellenic discourse. Through the detailed examination of the Sicilian periodical press and various kinds of publications, published on the island during the 19th century, there clearly emerge the ways and the levels of reception of the Greek Revolution by Sicilian culture and public opinion, from the dynamism of the first Greek insurrectionary years until the end of the 19th century. The Greek Revolution constituted an example to be followed. Firstly, the references to the Greek cause must be studied in relation to the particular regional context of Sicily as well as to anti-Bourbon and anti-Napoletan sentiment that characterized Sicilian political life in the first half of the 19th century. Secondly, references to the Greek cause must be considered in relation to the broader cultural, political and social movement that promoted the Italian unification.

**Šedivý, Miroslav**, Institute of Historical Sciences, University of Pardubice, *Austria and the 1820s Revolutions: Between the Heritage of the Congress of Vienna and Political Change*

Austria's attitude towards the Greek revolution has long been depicted as a black and white story, with this great power being portrayed in a mostly negative light. Austria's policy towards the insurgents has usually been assessed as reactionary, oppressive, anti-national and anti-humanitarian. A similar evaluation was adopted for its policies toward the revolutionary movements in other European regions. Did Austria and its Chancellor Metternich deserve such a one-sided portrayal of their part in the narrative or is a revisionist approach applicable in their case? The principal aim of the paper is to offer a fitting answer to this question through the re-evaluation of Austria's conduct towards the Greek revolution within the wider context of its behaviour towards political opposition in other European countries. It will particularly focus on the principal author of its foreign policy, Prince von Metternich, and how his opinions and actions were influenced by his personal experience with the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, his allegiance to the post-Napoleonic states system as well as his geopolitical consideration of the Balkan Peninsula, the internal situation of the Ottoman Empire, the widely debated humanitarian aspect of the Greek uprising and last but not least the Philhellenic movement in European society.

**Seirinidou, Vaso**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, *The Vigilant Eye of the Revolution: Public Security and Police in Revolutionary Greece*

As an expression of the state monopoly on violence, which was previously shared by more agents (local rulers, communal authorities, private individuals etc), and as the constituted body empowered to enforce public order and security, the idea of modern police is largely a product of the Age of the Revolutions. A true child of its time, the Greek Revolution of 1821 included policing in its political priorities and proceeded with the foundation of a Police Ministry and the establishment of police authorities throughout the revolutionary territory. Shifting the view from the (admittedly) weak organizational structure of the police to the competencies it assumed and its social reception, the paper highlights the importance of the revolutionary period in promoting the new role of crime and public security manager attributed to the police since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The paper shows how during the Revolution crime becomes a field of police competence, as traditional mechanisms of social pacification proved unable to manage the increased intensity of violence. Taking into account similar processes in European and global context, the paper also argues that the dense in war and political events period of the Revolution was crucial for the implementation of practices and techniques of “high” policing and population control, as well as for the accumulation of know-how to shield state security.

**Vlachopoulos, Spyros**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, *The Vision of the Rebellious Greeks for a Democratic and Liberal State: the Constitutions of the Greek Revolution and the first Post-revolutionary Constitutions*

The Greeks, from the beginning of their Revolution, felt that there cannot be a State without a Constitution. That is, the Constitution was a constituent element of the independence of the revolted nation. The first period of the Greek constitutional history starts with the "Constitutions of the Struggle", namely the Constitutions of Epidaurus (1822), Astros (1823) and Troizina (1827). They were democratic and liberal Constitutions, but largely not implemented due to the war conditions. After the period of absolute monarchy, the Constitution of 1844 marks the passage to constitutional monarchy, while with the establishment of the universality of the vote, Greece joins the constitutional vanguard of the time. The leading moment, however, is the transition from constitutional monarchy to crowned democracy with the Constitution of 1864, which establishes the people as the sovereign state organ.

**Yakovaki, Nassia**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, *When Exactly Did the Greek Revolution Begin? The Philiki Etaireia as Part of Revolutionary Action during the Year 1820*

The paper addresses the question of revolutionary beginnings. It revisits the year 1820 from the standpoint of international developments, in both post-Napoleonic Europe and the Ottoman Empire and discusses in parallel the activities of the leadership of the Philiki Etaireia (in Italy, the Ottoman Empire and especially Russia). In other words, it attempts to place the internal story of the Greek secret society in the context of the “first wave” of the post-Vienna revolutions of 1820. The impact of revolutionary insurrections or activities in the Mediterranean (as well as other) regions will be assessed anew, while taking into consideration the dynamics of an international order in transformation.

