FROM BYZANTIUM TO MODERN GREECE

HELLENIC ART IN ADVERSITY, 1453–1830

FROM CONSTANTINOPLE TO ATHENS: THE VAGARIES OF GREEK GEOGRAPHY AND THE HELLENIC WORLD, 1453–1830

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Because now we, whom you lead and reign over,
are Greeks by race, as both our language and our ancestral culture attest.
—Georgios Gemistos to Manuel II Palaiologos, 1418

Today the Greek nation declares through its legal representatives in a national assembly,
before God and men, its political existence and independence.
—Constitution of Epidaurus, 1821

The above quotes are to some extent illustrative of the course of events in the Greek world from shortly before the breakup of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 until the outbreak of the War of Independence in spring 1821. However, the concept of "Greek," as used, on the one hand, by the philosopher Gemistos (Plethon) and, on the other, by the Greek revolutionaries, has to be understood in its manifold meanings in order to give it its historical due. To avoid giving history a teleological character, we need to ask ourselves what gives this concept its meaning in each case, how it has fared in between, and what the term meant in the minds of those who used it along the way. With regard to inconsistencies and changes in perception, it may be useful to mention two examples, each relating, respectively, to one of the key historical moments mentioned above.

In the first example, shortly after the fall of Constantinople to Mehmet II, the Patriarch Gennadios was going to burn the works of Plethon, being completely unsympathetic toward his political theories and, above all, to the connection with ancient, pagan Greece. Gennadios declared that, though he spoke Greek, he did not consider himself to be a "Greek," because he differed from them in his way of looking at things. Were he to be asked what he was, he said he would reply: "A Christian."

In the second example, a few decades after the voting on the first Greek constitution, when a Greek state was already in existence, the German historian Jakob Fallmerayer was to doubt even the existence of Greeks on the Greek mainland in the nineteenth century. This theory was, however, effectively refuted by Greek historiography as well as by the disciplines of folklore studies and linguistics. The issue of the relationship between the ancient and the modern Greeks was a pressing one but took on a different cast as the Greek War of Independence showed the indisputable existence of the Greek nation.

These two moments are indicative of the complex and contradictory course that led to the forging of a Greek national consciousness, which emerged both from the historical experience and discourse of the Greeks themselves and from the perceptions of outsiders. Therefore, any narration of the fortunes of the Greek world is bound to be, whether consciously or not, simultaneously an investigation into the checkered career of the term "Greek": what did it mean in the writings of Plethon and what meaning did it take on in spring 1821?

From Constantinople to Tinos, 1453–1715

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the conquest of Greek territory by the Ottomans continued apace, though remained incomplete until 1715 and the taking of Venetian-held Tinos. The indifference, or certainly the dilatoriness, of the western powers permitted Mehmet to continue his conquests unimpeded: in 1458–59 he captured the islands of the north Aegean (Thasos, Samothrace, Imbros, Lemnos) and the duchy of Athens; in 1460 he dissolved the despotate of the Morea in the Peloponnese; in 1461 he took the empire of Trebizond and in 1462 the island of Lesbos. Almost all the remainder of the fifteenth century was taken up by the belated and clumsy reaction of the Venetians, who were now anxiously eyeing the new overlords threatening their maritime bases in Greek territory. The two Venetian-Turkish wars (1463–79 and 1499–1503) gave the advantage for the most part to the Ottomans, since after 1500 the Venetian presence in the southern Greek mainland was reduced to Nafplion and Monemvasia. The larger islands in the Ionian, however, came under Venetian control. In addition to Corfu, which had been Venetian since 1386, Zakynthos (Zante) was taken in 1484 and Cephalonia and Ithaka in 1500, though Lefkada (Santa Maura) did not become Venetian until 1684.

The sixteenth century, and especially the reigns of the two great sultans Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566) and Selim II (1566–1574), saw the Ottomans make rapid advances. The first major milestone was the capture of Rhodes (1522), while the unsuccessful siege of Venetian Corfu by Haireddin Barbarossa (1537) signaled the start of a period of intense aggression that ended with the conquest of Chios and the Cyclades (1566). In the course of these operations, Venice lost all her possessions in the Peloponnese, and her eastern frontiers were now defined by an imaginary line drawn between Cyprus, which was ceded to the Venetians by the Lusignan dynasty in 1489, and Crete, Kythera, the Ionian Islands (except for Lefkada), Parga, and Butrint.

In the later sixteenth century Ottoman aggression broke out again in an attack on Cyprus (1570–71). However, the capture of this strategically and commercially crucial island led to the awakening of the western powers. Pope Pius V, Venice, and Spain formed a coalition against the Ottoman Empire, the Sacra Liga (Holy League). Thus on October 7, 1571, the Greek seas witnessed "the most glorious event that has ever been seen or will be," as Miguel Cervantes, an eyewitness, noted. This was the battle of Lepanto, known in contemporary sources as the *battaglia di Curzolari,* in which the Ottoman fleet was soundly defeated. In the opinion of Fernand Braudel, it marked "the end of a real inferiority complex for Christendom," because thereafter the West actually realized that the sultan's forces were not invincible. However, even though hostilities continued the following year and even though there were insurrections by Greeks in mainland Greece and Crete, the Sacra Liga was disbanded, and the treaty of 1573, between the Ottoman Sublime Porte and the Serenissima Republic of Venice, formalized Ottoman sovereignty over Cyprus.

The next act in the scenario of conflict was played out in Crete. The clash between Ottomans and Venetians assumed the form of a pan-European war, as many European powers rallied to the Venetian cause between 1645 (with the occupation of Chania in August of that year) and September 1669 (the surrender of Candia).

The victorious outcome of the Porte's campaign in Crete was not destined to be repeated, when it tried to capture Vienna a few years later (1683). Encouraged by this Ottoman defeat, a feeble Venice was convinced that it could avenge the loss of the Regno di Candia by reconquering its lost holdings in the eastern Mediterranean. It reconstituted the Sacra Liga (together with Germany and Poland and with the acquiescence of the pope) and the Greek peninsula was caught up in another war (see cat. no. 5). Generalissimo Francesco Morosini (nicknamed Peloponnesiaco) led a checkered campaign (1684–99) that brought few long-term benefits to the Serenissima: the doge's only gain was control of Lefkada (captured on

August 6, 1684). In two years (1685–87) the Peloponnese came under Venetian control, and Morosini's forces then attempted to expand their operations. On September 22, 1687, the Venetian fleet sailed into Piraeus. The Ottomans barricaded themselves on the Acropolis of Athens, demolished the temple of Athena Nike, and installed a gun emplacement. They were bombarded by the Venetians encamped on Philopappus Hill and the Pnyx. On September 26, 1687, a date known to few but a day of irredeemable and unforgettable devastation, a Venetian cannonball smashed through the roof of the Parthenon, which the besieged Turks were using as a gunpowder store (see cat. no. 6). Even though Athens surrendered on September 29, the Venetians quickly realized that they were not in a position to hold the city, exposed as it was to attack by the Turks. They abandoned Athens in April of the following year, taking with them some of the ruins of the Nike temple and the lion that adorned the entrance to the harbor of Piraeus (Porto Leone), which still graces the Venetian Arsenale. Although hostilities continued in central and western mainland Greece, with Greeks fighting alongside Venetians, when the Treaty of Carlowitz was signed in 1699 the Venetians took control of Lefkada, Aegina, and the Peloponnese, which they named Regno di Morea, perhaps to soften the blow of the recent loss of the Regno di Candia.

Venice promptly took measures to settle people in the depopulated Peloponnese, to organize it administratively and ecclesiastically, but its plans came to nothing. This venture was the final flickering of Venetian presence in the Levant. After the Treaty of Carlowitz, the Serenissima entered a period of stagnation, which in political terms means decline. This moment was singularly significant for Greece, because in the later seventeenth century the Greeks, disappointed by the Venetians and the Spanish, were to abandon old illusions and turn to new ones: in the same period, the policy of Peter the Great of Russia (1689–1725), and, in particular, his aggressive stance vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire, reawakened old hopes about the role of the "blond race" (a myth circulating as early as the sixteenth century), which, in the consciousness of Greek Orthodox Christians, increasingly became identified with Orthodox Russia.

Peter's ambition—in contrast to the traditional Russian policy—was to find outlets to the Mediterranean, since the dynamic czar was intent on making Russia a European power. His turning toward the Black Sea, the Bosphoros, and, ultimately, the Aegean Sea, may have been tied up with the ideology of Russia's Byzantine heritage, but there were also obvious economic reasons for doing so. After his victory over Sweden (Battle of Poltava, 1709), Peter strengthened his relations with the Balkan peoples by declaring, for the first time, that Russia would not just stand by in the face of the sufferings of the Greeks, the Romanians, the Serbs, and the Bulgarians under the sultan's yoke. This stance was the basis of an important aspect of Russian policy, at least until the liberation of Greece. In this expectant climate, the czar turned on the Ottoman Empire and declared war. The war (1710–11) did not end happily for Russia (she lost Azov and saw the Black Sea closed to her), but the defeat was only a temporary setback to her plans and the Greeks' expectations. For many Greeks, Russia was now the "common mother of Orthodox Christians and sole hope and refuge of our unhappy nation in these times," as Ioannis Prinkos wrote in 1753. Fellow Russian feeling for the Balkans and especially for the Greek areas grew steadily more powerful and the future liberator of the Greeks began to look more and more like Russia.

For the time being, however, the sultan was able to turn his attention to his old adversary, Venice, which still had not come to terms with the gains it had made in 1699. In 1715, suddenly and with relative ease, he took back Aegina, Tinos, and the Peloponnese from the Venetians. The Treaty of Passarowitz (1718) meant the imposition of Ottoman rule throughout virtually all Greek lands; only the Ionian Islands and a few areas on the western Greek coastline were now exempt from the sultan's control.

From Prince Alexis Orloff to Prince Alexandros Ypsilantis, 1770–1821

The late eighteenth century (possibly 1792) saw the publication—probably by Rhigas Velestinlis—of the *Oracles* of Agathangelos, penned by Archimandrite Theoklitos Polyeidis. This widely read text fired the Greeks' hopes of imminent liberation. These hopes were intensified after the accession to the Russian throne of Catherine II, wife of Peter III, later known as Catherine the Great. The new empress, wishing to emulate Peter the Great, not only declared war on the sultan (1768) but also, from as early as 1763, established contact with the Greeks through agents in the Balkans, Greek territory, Trieste, and Venice. Her plan included fomenting rebellion in Greek regions in order to cause diversions, while one of her military aims (mainly devised at the end of the century) was to drive the Ottoman Empire out of Europe and set up a "Grecian Empire," with Constantinople as its capital and a Russian prince as ruler; indeed, she had named one of her grandsons Constantine and had engaged Greek scholars among his tutors.

Despite all the preparation, the planned general uprising did not succeed. Essentially, only the Peloponnese rebelled, thanks to the support of many leading citizens, whereas the revolts in Roumeli (central Greece) and Crete were aborted. Even in the Peloponnese, the uprising did not last long: despite the contribution made by many locals and Ionian islanders and the presence of Alexis and Fyodor Orloff, the uprising of February 1770 had been suppressed by late June. The Russians' sole significant success was the scuttling of the Turkish fleet at Çesme (July 5, 1770), which gave them control of a large number of Aegean islands until 1774.

For the Greeks, the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji (1774) was a crucial step in their progress toward developing trade, a national consciousness, and reorientation. Its importance for Russia lay above all in ensuring it the right to intervene on behalf of the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire and the concession of certain privileges for its fleet: ships under the Russian flag could now sail freely through the Straits of the Dardanelles.

In 1787 the Sublime Porte declared war on Russia, demanding the return of the Crimea, which had in the meantime been captured by the Russians. Russia again adopted the tactic of smoke-screen rebellions by the Greeks, in which the leading role this time was played by Lambros Katsonis, but without conspicuous success; in fact, Russia repudiated his continuing activity after the treaty of 1792.

The year 1792 also saw the Battle of Valmy. The political geography of Europe was changing, as the ancien régime gave way before the onslaught of the French Revolution. In Greek territory as well, the rules of the game were changing: in 1797 Napoleon's army dissolved the Venetian Republic and on June 19 General Gentili announced a new regime in the Ionian Islands, a change confirmed by the Treaty of Campoformio (October 17, 1797), whereby the islands were ceded to France.

Many years later, Theodoros Kolokotronis was to say: "The war-god Napoleon opened our eyes." The presence of French revolutionaries in the Ionian Islands, which had raised the hopes of many—including Rhigas Velestinlis and Adamantios Korais—was short-lived. They managed nevertheless in this brief time to chip away at the centuries-old system of rule by the "nobility" (*cittadini*) in the islands, as the fundamental revolutionary principles and, above all, a sense of ethnicity gained ground. The phobic behavior and the convulsive tremors experienced by the political system in Europe appeared in Greek territory, too. The allied Russo-Turkish fleet gradually occupied the Ionian Islands (starting with Kythera on September 22, 1798, and terminating with the capture of Corfu on February 25, 1799), ending the rule of the French revolutionaries. Not long before, Patriarch Gregorios V, in an encyclical that was circulated widely in the islands, had called upon the Ionians to expel the "atheist French."

The French forces were unable to resist, since they also had to face discontent among large portions of the population. The success of the Russians and the Turks produced the first state formed in Greek territory: the "Septinsular Republic" (Repubblica Settinsulare). On March 21, 1800, an act was signed in Constantinople giving it official recognition and the newborn republic was put on the same footing as the regime of Ragusa, under the suzerainty and protection of the Sublime Porte. Despite its aristocratic character and problematic nature, many Greeks placed their hopes in this newly created state: Adamantios Korais dedicated his translation of Cesare Beccaria's *Dei delitti e delle pene* (On Crimes and Punishments) to the "newly founded republic" and Eugenios Voulgaris also dedicated some of his books to it.

However, the rapid pace of developments was to lead to the breakup of the Septinsular Republic. The Treaty of Tilsit (July 7, 1807) brought the French (now no longer revolutionaries) back to the Ionian Islands, which became a province of France. After the fall of Napoleon, it was decided at the Paris Conference (November 5, 1815) that "the islands and their dependencies would constitute an independent state, under the direct and exclusive protection of His Majesty the King of Great Britain."

Thus the Ionian Islands began to experience life under a protectorate, which was to end in 1864 (with the union with Greece). For the rest of Greek territory, the early nineteenth century saw developments accelerate. The insurrectionist experience and the mass appeal of the uprisings, especially in the eighteenth century; the radicalization of ideology, mainly after the French Revolution; the growing power of merchants after 1774 and particularly during the Napoleonic Wars; and the activity of progressive men of letters both inside and outside Greek territory were some of the factors that contributed to producing the conditions necessary for a heightened awareness of the need for revolution and for more systematic preparation for it. The Greeks began to organize on the model of the secret societies of Europe: the example of Rhigas Velestinlis, despite its tragic outcome in 1798, was imitated by the most important Greek secret association, the Philiki Etaireia (Friendly Society), which was founded in Odessa in 1814. This organization, which in the seven years leading up to 1821 initiated Greeks of various classes, beliefs, aims, and mentalities into its membership, had the honor of preparing the national struggle. Despite internal disputes and problems, the head of the Philiki Etaireia, Prince Alexander Ypsilantis, aide-de-camp to Czar Alexander, declared the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence at Jassy (Iași) on February 24, 1821. Two aspects of earlier Greek thinking can be seen in this move: on the one hand, a harking back to Rhiga's thoughts about a pan-Balkan liberation and, on the other, the linking of Greek liberation with Russian policy. These ideas and others were to be put to the test in the future, but the Greek struggle for independence was now a reality.

Men, Institutions, and Ideas: From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century

Under the Ottoman Turks, the Orthodox community had been granted certain well-known privileges (inviolability, exemption from taxation, and incontestability of the patriarch and his successors; maintenance of the administrative and judicial jurisdiction of the patriarch). The jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople extended to the churches of Asia Minor, the Aegean and the Ionian Islands, the Balkan Peninsula, Wallachia, Moldavia, and Russia. The patriarch was the ethnarch (*millet-baçi*), the political and ecclesiastical head of the Orthodox subjects (*reyas*), thus acquiring not only ecclesiastical but also politico-juridical authority over the Christians. By appointing as patriarch (on January 6, 1454) Gennadios, who had opposed the unification of the churches, Sultan Mehmet satisfied the anti-papal faction and consequently impeded any agreement between the patriarchate and the Catholic Church in the West.

The Orthodox Church, thanks to its privileges, not only became the sole institution to function without interruption in Greek territory until the liberation but also the sole instrument for saving and perpetuating the memory of a Christian empire. This notion was of enormous importance, because the church, which underwrote all forms of elementary and higher education well into the seventeenth century, helped to create with unprecedented intensity a definite link in the minds of Greeks between Christianity (Orthodoxy) and the sense of identity and historical continuity. It was in this climate that Patriarch Gennadios wrote: "That is why, if at some time our cowed race is to see the sun shining more kindly over it, it is up to us priests and monks to create a new dawn of spiritual health." The Orthodox Church thus also took on a secular, political role, since it envisioned and shouldered the responsibility for the "reconstitution of a Hellenized Christian Empire" or, at least, of a "Hellenized Christian state." This explains why, in the early centuries of the Ottoman conquest, the church participated in, and even encouraged, rebel movements in Greek territory, hand-in-hand with descendants of imperial Byzantine families and even with Western leaders (such as Charles VIII of France) who laid claim to the throne of Constantinople. These movements culminated in the uprisings of the late sixteenth century. In 1597–98 Dionysios, metropolitan of Tirnovo (Bulgaria), descendant of the Byzantine Rallis and Palaiologos families and kinsman of the Kantakouzenos family, led an unsuccessful revolt for the liberation of the Balkans, following agreements with the patriarch of Constantinople and the prince of Wallachia, Michael the Brave. The rebellions led by Dionysios, metropolitan of Trikke (Trikala), nicknamed the Philosopher, or Skylosophos, in Thessaly (1600) and Ioannina (1611), in league with the Spanish, took a similar form. In the same period the Maniots rose up without success, following deals with Bishop Athanasios of Ochrid, the duke of Nevers, and King Philip III of Spain.

In order to understand the process of opinion forming in Greek territory, it should be pointed out that even though the church locked the Greeks into an exclusive identification with Orthodoxy in the early centuries, it made an essential contribution to preserving historical memory and continuity, language, and a certain cohesion of populations (through faith), even if this led to some confusion and even contradictions. On the other hand, this dynamic compounded the introspection of the Greek world, since now the church and a large part of Greek literary output were drawing on apologetics, texts inveighing against Islam and Catholicism, while at the same time condemning any contact with the ancient Greek world. Thus a movement that had begun in the closing centuries of Byzantium was checked and the Greeks were cut off from developments in Europe, which had significant consequences for the way in which they understood their own identity and subsequently shaped their national identity.

The position of the Orthodox Church and the patriarchate deteriorated when the crisis erupted in Europe between Rome and churches that followed the various aspects of the Reformation. Tension reached its peak after the Council of Trent (which ended in 1563), when Catholicism, with the Jesuits (Compagnia di Gesù) and the Capuchins in the vanguard, attempted a "turn toward the East," inspired by none other than Cardinal Bellarmino, the prelate who had condemned Giordano Bruno and Galileo Galilei. Papal propaganda sought to influence the Orthodox world through proselytism and by imposing the terms of the Synod of Ferrara-Florence (1438–39). At the same time, and for obvious reasons, it tried to cut short a dialogue that the Protestants (mainly the Tübingen theologians) had initiated with Constantinople, especially during the patriarchates of Ioasaph II (1556–65), Jeremiah II (1572–95), and Kyrillos Loukaris (who held office intermittently between 1601 and 1638). It is perhaps not insignificant that several of these patriarchs' names are linked with innovative efforts in the sector of education from as early as the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The defensive stance of the church led to entrenchment and polemic against anything that overstepped the bounds of, or opposed, Orthodox thinking. This attitude did not, however, apply in Greek areas outside Ottoman domination, particularly in Crete and the Ionian Islands. There, the church did not take on a political role, since Venice was most circumspect in balancing the claims of the Orthodox and the Catholic churches. In the areas under Venetian rule, self-government was entrusted to the "community councils," which were made up of the so-called nobles (*cittadini*) and represented (theoretically at least) the population as a whole. Such Orthodox bishops, wherever they remained, had limited powers and their activity was monitored by the Venetian administration. This political philosophy of the Venetians created a far more "secular" mindset among Orthodox Christians, which was made all the easier by the potential for dialogue between rulers and subjects since the closeness between the two dogmas did not lead to the sort of separation experienced by Christians and Muslims on the Greek mainland. Such channels of communication encouraged osmosis, as indicated, from as early as the second half of the sixteenth century, by the flowering of a local literary output in Crete resulting from contacts with European culture. This interaction was cut short in 1669 but had already managed to imprint its achievements on literature, historiography, theater, and religious painting. Vincenzo Cornaro, author of *Erotokritos,* Michael Damaskenos, and Domenikos Theotokopoulos (El Greco) are the best-known names, but they are only a few of the many who enhanced the new reality in the Venetian-held territories—that is, the possibility of finding other ways of forming a Greek identity.

Men of letters who were active in the West shared the same ideal of disengagement from the prevailing religious thinking. This group includes not only the first Byzantine scholars (Demetrios Chalkokondylis, Ioannis Argyropoulos, Andronikos Kallistos, Manuel Chrysoloras, Iannos Laskaris, and so on), catalysts in generating the renaissance movement, but also others, who studied later in the West and adopted different ways of thinking, sometimes even espousing Catholicism (for example, Bessarion and Leon Alattios et al.). The following example is indicative: the case of the Cretan scholar Markos Mousouros (1470–1517), who was a colleague of Aldo Manutius and a teacher of Erasmus at the University of Padua. Previously, in Florence, Mousouros had been part of the circle of Marsilio Ficino, and at Manutius' printing press he published the first *Complete Works of Plato* (1513). It was to Mousouros and Battista Egnazzio that the Venetian Senate entrusted, in May 1515, the eight hundred manuscripts from the library of Cardinal Bessarion (d. 1472), which were to constitute the nucleus of the Biblioteca Marciana.

It was in Italy from as early as the sixteenth century that the first important centers of Greek education appeared. The creation of the Collegio Greco (1576) in Rome, by Pope Gregory XIII, certainly should be considered among the—in any case, self-confessed—aims of the papacy after the Council of Trent. Its purpose was to train spiritual cadres who would be sent to Greek areas in order to raise the level of spirituality among their compatriots. The most famous graduate of the college was Leon Allatios (1588–1669).

The Greek community of Venice (officially organized in 1498) was the basic reception center for Greeks. It was the most important expatriate community until the eighteenth century (numbering some 15,000 Greeks in 1585). It was an important trading center and significant educational foundations were established there or in Padua that provided Greeks with almost their only means of access to education in over three hundred years. In Padua there was the Collegio Cottuniano, founded in 1563 by Ioannis Cottounios, as well as the colleges of Ioannis Kokkos (1565) and of Ioannis Palaiokapas (1590). In 1665 the Collegio Flanginiano was founded in Venice with a bequest from the Corfiot Thomas Flangines (1579–1648); it was housed in a building designed by Venetian architect Baldassare Longhena, next to the preexisting "Greek School of Venice." In addition to the contribution made by these

foundations, the University of Padua, under the exclusive control of Venice and far from papal authority, was, until the eighteenth century, the alma mater of the Greek world. It took in hundreds of Greeks, not only from the territories under Venetian rule, and helped to create the men who subsequently—mainly, of course, through the church—brought their knowledge back to Greek territory.

In the areas under Ottoman domination, the leadership groups of the Greeks gradually began to coalesce, mainly from the seventeenth century onward, shaping a somewhat "mixed consciousness" as, on the one hand, they acted within the infrastructure (mainly administrative and economic) of the Ottoman state while, on the other, they saw themselves as leaders of the subjugated Orthodox world. These groups were the patriarchate, the heads of the communities, and the Phanariots. Alongside these groups, two others gradually emerged, though they did not yet aspire to leadership roles—the *klefts* (bandits) and the *armatoloi* (Turkish: *martolos*). Even though the *armatoloi* were instituted as a kind of guard to impose order in regions that were threatened mainly by the activities of the *klefts,* the two groups were not mutually exclusive and their members frequently exchanged roles. Nonetheless, their activity, especially in later centuries, created a strong mentality of rebellion, the importance of which became apparent in the late eighteenth century and, of course, at the time of the War of Independence.

The population of Ottoman-occupied Greek areas (villages, towns, cities) was organized in communities. The heads of the communities, working together with the officials of the Ottoman administration, decided on the distribution of taxes and the mediation of local issues, while in collaboration with the ecclesiastical authorities they also exercised the functions of magistrates, interposing themselves between the Ottoman authorities and their Greek subjects. The possibilities provided by the system of taxable farming as well as by the manner of electing local leaders led to the creation of a special Greek administrative hierarchy (*prokritoi, proestoi,* archons, and so forth) that slowly but surely managed to control the communities to a considerable degree.

The Phanariots, made up of descendants of the old Byzantine aristocracy and powerful merchants, succeeded not only in playing a part in the management of the affairs of the patriarchate but also in getting themselves appointed to highly important offices in the Ottoman administration (dragomans of the fleet, dragomans of the Porte, and so on). At the time of the Cretan war, the office of Grand Dragoman (or interpreter) to the Sublime Porte was held by the Phanariot Panayotis Nikousis (1613–1673), the first in a long line of Phanariots to hold the post. From 1709 until the War of Independence, the same group monopolized the office of Prince of the Danubian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia). The Phanariots, or at least some members of this group, were admirers of "enlightened despotism" in contact with Western culture (mainly French) and contributed to the organization of education, especially in the Danubian principalities during the eighteenth century. Demetrios Katartzis, Iosipos Moisiodax, Rhigas Velestinlis, Daniel Philippides, Gregorios Constantas, Athanasios Christopoulos, and other distinguished "renaissance" men of letters were linked with Phanariot circles.

Until about 1770, the Phanariots set the tone of intellectual life, endeavoring to impose their own ideals and political thinking (directed toward the creation of a "flexible morality," which would allow collaboration with the Ottoman administration) and pursued academic studies that would permit them to continue to occupy offices in the patriarchate and the Ottoman administration. The principal exponents of this ideal were Alexandros (1641–1709), Nikolaos (1680–1730), and Constantinos (d. 1769) Mavrokordatos. The Phanariots, educated as they were within the power structures of the Ottoman system, could not fully support the development of the political and scholarly ideas forged in the West and reworked in Greek territory by progressive intellectuals, who, toward the end of the century,

were to spearhead the neo-Hellenic Enlightenment. The turning point was the French Revolution, which revealed the contradictions and limitations in the mentality of the patriarchate and the Phanariots: the radical revival of consciousness—through the influence of the sciences and the principles of liberalism—and the consequent possibilities of violent overthrow of Ottoman rule lay outside the conceptual framework that these groups had been putting together for centuries and, at the same time, conflicted with the conception of the Greek identity that they had established.

For the Greeks, the eighteenth century was critical, both with regard to the domain of ideas and that of allegiances, since important economic changes were taking place (alongside the above-mentioned political changes and shifts in the areas of operations of the European powers and of Russia), mainly in the mercantile arena. These changes made it possible to break with the traditional forms (mentalities, identities, orientations), as new social subjects emerged, with a different perception of what was needed, what really was going on, and the nature of the alternatives.

As specialized studies have demonstrated, it was in the eighteenth century, for the first time since the Age of Discovery, that the eastern Mediterranean "returned" to the forefront of history. The European powers were increasingly active in the area of European Turkey, though it was basically Greek merchants who traded there. Large Greek cities were transformed into veritable "economic capitals" (Smyrna, Thessaloniki), while other trading centers also developed: Ioannina, Arta, Patras, Chios, Herakleion. The Greek merchants, initially involved in European trade—encouraged by the fact that they were included among the protégés of the advantageous terms of certain trade agreements, the so-called capitulations—gradually began operating independently from about the mid-eighteenth century. Eventually (mainly after 1774 and during the Napoleonic Wars, 1792–1815), they controlled a large part of the domestic and foreign trade of the Ottoman Empire, and, in particular, trade conducted to and from countries of Western and Central Europe (for example, Austria, southern Russia, and France), where important Greek communities were established. These communities, particularly in Vienna, Trieste, Leghorn (Livorno), and Odessa, now became centers of economic and intellectual development, places in which innovative views and orientations were cultivated. The Greek merchants of this generation were by now systematically organized in the process of trade and had large amounts of capital, land, and businesses in Western Europe. However, their experience of the West, coupled with their contacts with everyday Greek reality, soon made them realize the antiquated nature of the economy under their Ottoman masters: the high-handedness of the authorities, the system of privileges, and the climate of uncertainty impeded the investment of capital, while manufacturers who went beyond the cottage-industry stage were prevented from developing into true industrial units. The consul of France in Thessaloniki, Félixe de Beaujour, noted, "The despotism makes the fortunes fleeting, because it always ends up conquering them. It puts constraints on economic activity, because no one takes care to gain what he may lose. It hinders the circulation of money, which is hoarded in hands interested in hiding it." So, despite the growth of trade and shipping in the eighteenth century, the manufacturing sector went through a crisis and many experiments in modernization proved futile in the end.

The Greek merchants, who, according to an apt expression of the day, were the "trans-Balkan bourgeoisie," were aware of the economic deadlocks, and gradually, thanks to their experience of the European environment, gave ideological form to their doubts about these obstacles. Realizing that the "occupation" was hindering economic activity, they took another step toward consolidating the Greek identity (focusing on the contrast with their Ottoman overlord), thus sidestepping the approaches of the traditional leadership groups. "This opposition," Nicos Svoronos wrote, "between the bourgeoisie and the conditions of the Turkish conquest, which precludes every possibility of compromise, contributes to the

creation, among large segments of this new social class of Hellenism, of a revolutionary national ideology that, reinforced by the European ideology with which this group is in contact, contributes in its turn to the greater clarification of the national consciousness." In the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries this radical conception went hand-in-hand with the opinions of certain intellectuals of the period and led to intense internal conflicts. The radicalization of some of the merchants led to an intensification of the social struggles, initiated mainly when these merchants claimed a role in, or even control of, the administration of local communities, in many instances forming "democratic parties" (for instance, Kozani, Kea, and Samos). We have now reached the climax of the Enlightenment, the climax of social tension: we are on the eve of the Greek War of Independence, the national revolution of the Greeks.

The Creation of the Modern Greek State, 1830

The organizational preliminaries of the Philiki Etaireia—most important, the entrusting of the leadership to Prince Alexander Ypsilantis—led to the outbreak of the revolution in the Danubian principalities, which was proclaimed at Jassy (Iaşi), capital of Moldavia, on February 24, 1821. Although the uprising was crushed (June 7, 1821), failing to foment the concurrent insurrection of other Balkan peoples, as 1821 progressed revolution took hold in the entire Greek mainland. The initial unanimous condemnation of the uprising by the Holy Alliance failed to turn the tide, while the sultan's forces were able to suppress the insurgency only in some areas. The Greek successes put the revolution on a firm footing and heralded radical transformation in the region. Thus, whereas in the early years the only Greek support came from the continually swelling philhellenic movements in Europe and America, now European governments, seeing their interests in jeopardy, were gradually forced to change their policy of disengagement. The Greek struggle enhanced the internal dissensions within the Holy Alliance and led to its breakup. This became inevitable as of late 1825, when Nicholas I, the new czar of Russia, took steps to draw Britain and France into mediating a solution to the "Greek question."

In April 1827 Ioannis Capodistria was elected governor of Greece for a seven-year term, signaling an attempt at more effective organization at a political level on the part of the Greeks. The same year, the London Treaty was signed (July 6, 1827) between Russia, Britain, and France, committing them to true intervention in the "Greek question." Toward the end of 1827 the Greeks saw the fleet of the three great powers defeat the combined navies of Turkey and Egypt in the battle of Navarino (October 20, 1827). The involvement of the European powers made it inevitable that a favorable solution would be found for the Greeks. On February 3, 1830, the three great powers met in London, where they decided on the creation of the first independent Greek state and appointed Leopold of Saxe-Coburg as head of state. His resignation and the assassination of Capodistria on October 9, 1831 (perpetrated by his rivals within Greece, very probably with British connivance), led to the choice of Othon, the seventeen-year-old son of King Ludwig of Bavaria, as king of Greece on May 7, 1832. On February 1, 1833, the ships carrying King Othon dropped anchor at Nafplion, the first capital. Othon was to reign in a land laid waste, with a population of 750,000. Some two million Greeks were still living under British sovereignty in the Ionian Islands and under Ottoman sovereignty in central and northern Greece, in the Aegean Islands (except for Cyclades), and in Crete.

A small independent state, under the guarantorship of the three great powers, was born at the far end of the Balkan Peninsula. It may not have fulfilled the aspirations of many of the architects of the War of Independence, but it was a radical new reality. The Greeks were creating the first national state in the Balkans and the Eastern question was thus propelled into a new phase.

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