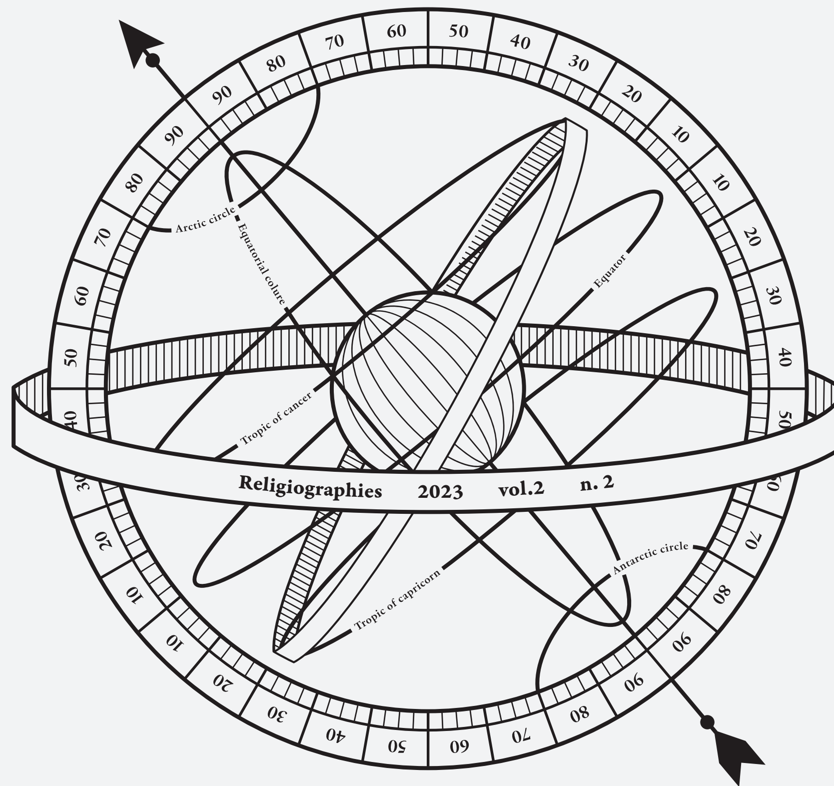
Religiographies



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Sacralising the Greek Revolution

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Abstract
Treating nationalism as a profoundly anticlerical and secular ideology, Greek historians tend to emphasize the role of the Greek Enlightenment in enabling the detachment of educated Greeks from religious values and practices, facilitating the spread of national identity among the mass and, ultimately, effecting the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in 1821. This paper argues, on the contrary, that the clash of religious and secular ideas in pre-war Greek society did not usher in a massive detachment from religious values and practices. As the glory of Hellas waxed in Greek hearts and minds, collective attachments to a past steeped in religion did not wane; rather, the two often overlapped and reinforced each other, especially after the commencement of the war. The focus, therefore, is set on the process of imbrication between nationalism and religion as a binary process that affects and transforms both as a result of active confrontation of the Muslim Ottomans as enemies. Besides the constitutional tie between nationality and faith, several other means of sacralising the revolutionary war are considered depending on agency and circumstance: religiously induced violence, modes of ceremony and ritual focused on veneration and mass reverence, production of new religious literature adjusted to war purposes, action on days of religious significance, religious rites and celebrations for patriotic purposes, transfer of religious practices (hymn chanting) and concepts (martyrdom) to the war culture and, finally, the quasi-sanctification of the bodies of the fallen patriots.

Whether nations retained a religious marker of identity or rejected it depended on whether they had emerged in conflict with religion or in alliance with it.

David Martin*

The Greek enlightenment emerged as a movement aimed at spreading the values and ideas of the Enlightenment to the Balkans in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The movement led to the adoption of modern concepts like political classicism and revolutionary nationalism by the Ottoman-ruled Orthodox communities of South-Eastern Europe. Increased interest in things purely secular—schooling, revolutionary liberalism, freemasonry networks and, finally, a severe economic crisis in Ottoman trade after 1815—resulted in a massive armed insurrection against the Sultan that broke out in the early months of 1821, first in the Danubian Principalities (modern-day Romania) and then further south, in mainland Greece and the islands. The ensuing war was practically unrelated to religion. The Greek Revolution was a national revolution that put forward the sovereignty of a people from a secular viewpoint. Endemic religious indifference in wartime aided the post-war endeavour to establish an autonomous state and an autocephalous national church subordinate to the values of Hellenism. In broad terms, this is today the mainstream view of historians on the rise and early development of Greek nationalism, whose secularist bias often obscures interesting connections and affinities with religion.

* David Martin, "What I really said about secularization," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 46, no. 2 (2007): 142, cited in Effie Fokas, "David Martin on Religion and Nationalism: Navigator of Contested Territories," *Nations and Nationalism* 27, no. 11 (2021): 11.

This line of reasoning was laid down in Greece and abroad by a new wave of historians working on modern Greek history in the 1970s and 1980s. The new wave consisted mainly, though not exclusively, of students of Konstantinos Th. Dimaras, a literature historian who had made the Greek Enlightenment the focal point of his research.[1] The circle of Dimaras disentangled Greek nationalism and national identity from religion, setting the standards of what nowadays is widely accepted in Greek historiography: the movement of the Greek Enlightenment was instrumental in the gradual detachment of educated individuals and groups from religious values and practices, and the clash between religious and secular ideas facilitated the spread of national identity among the Ottoman-ruled Greeks, effecting thus the outbreak of 1821.[2] This is a view that presupposes and stems from, whether explicitly or tacitly, what Anthony Smith has called the secular replacement thesis.[3] According to this thesis, religion is a residual phenomenon and a background category in the analysis of a given nationalism, "representing that from which, and against which, nations and nationalism emerged."[4] As the legitimate offspring of the Enlightenment, nationalism is a profoundly anticlerical and secular ideology meant to replace religion in the modern world, as are national identities. It is for this reason that religion, and more broadly the sacred, cannot account for the origins and development of a given national identity and movement. In respect to the Greek case, for instance, it has been suggested that "religion came last in the struggle to forge new national identities and did not become a functional element in national definition until the nation-states had nationalised their churches."[5]

This paper takes a different stance. There is no doubt that the Greek Revolution or War of Independence (1821–1830)[6] stemmed from the dynamics of Western thought and practice, that it disrupted the Ottoman order of power and hastened the diffusion of secular ideas in the Balkans, yet at the same time, it had been a fascinating mélange of traditional and modern elements, old identities and modern concepts. As the glory of Hellas waxed in Greek hearts and minds, attachments to a past steeped in religion did not wane. On the contrary, the two often overlapped and reinforced each other, especially after the war broke out. The secular replacement thesis, therefore, on which most historians of Modern Greece nowadays rely, does not apply to the Greek case,[7] if it applies to any case at all.[8]

By arguing thus I do not contend that the Orthodox Church had been the guardian of Greek ethnicity and nationhood during the period of the Ottoman rule, nor that it effected the Greek War of Independence. The thesis of the Church-led reawakening of the Greek people after four centuries of Ottoman domination,[9] which informs older works on 1821 (mostly in Greek), lacks validity by modern historiographical standards. My approach stems from two premises, one theoretical and the other empirical. At a theoretical level, I accept Anthony Smith's view of nationalism as a modern ideology and movement which, nonetheless, draws on pre-modern symbols and myths, in order to furnish powerful and compelling imagery and language, generate new modes of imaginings, and construct firm social and political relationships.[10] Religious heritage, text and image are very important in this respect. The notion of divine election of a certain people, the theme of collective regeneration, the belief in the coming of a messiah-saviour, and the idea of overcoming death through self-sacrifice came straight from the sphere of religion to become a staple of nineteenth-century nationalist thinking in Europe and

1 Konstantinos Th. Dimaras, *Neoellinikos Diaphotismos* (Athens: Ermis, 1993), french edition: C. Th. Dimaras, *La Gréce au temps de Lumiéres* (Geneva: Droz, 1969). Thereon see further, Effi Gazi, "Revisiting Religion and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Greece," in *The Making of Modern Greece*, ed. Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (London: Ashgate, 2009), 96. Cf. also, Antonis Liakos, *O ellinikos 20os aionas* (Athens: Polis, 2019), 648, english edition: *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1909 to 2012: A Transnational History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023).

2 See for example, Philippos Eliou, *Tyfloson Kyrie ton laon sou. Oi proepanastatikes kriseis kai o Nikolaos Pikkolos* (Athens: Poreia, 1988 [first published 1974]); Alkis Angelou, *Ton Photon. Opseis tou Neoellinikou Diaphotismou* (vol. 1, Athens: Ermis, 1988), (vol. 2, Athens: MIET 1999). English-speaking literature on the birth of Modern Greece reflects also this perspective; see for instance, Richard Clogg, ed., *The Struggle for Greek Independence: Essays to Mark the 150th Anniversary of the Greek War of Independence* (London: Macmillan, 1973) and Paschalis Kitromilides's renowned PhD diss. (Harvard University, 1978), later reprinted as *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). Dimaras's thesis on secularism and the Greek Enlightenment has not ceased to exert a strong influence on contemporary Greek historians. See quite indicatively: John Koliopoulos and Thanos Veremis, *Greece: The Modern Sequel. From 1831 to the Present* (London: Hurst, 2002); Nikos Theotokas and Nikos Kotaridis, *I oikonomia tis vias. Paradosiakes kai neoterikes exousies stin ellada tou 19ou aiona* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2006); Vasilis Kremmydas, *I elliniki epanastasi tou 1821. Tekmiria, anapsilafiseis, emineies* (Athens: Gutenberg, 2016); Petros T. Pizanias, *The Making of the Modern Greeks, 1400–1820* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2020).

3 Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 13.

4 Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 10.

5 Paschalis M. Kitromilides, " 'Imagined Communities' and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans," *European History Quarterly* 19 (1989): 184–85.

6 Also called "the Greek war of independence" mostly by older studies. Certain methodological shifts in the study of revolutions have rendered the term "Greek Revolution" preferable. Thereon see my book review of *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides and Constantinos Tsoukalas, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 40, no. 2 (2022): 490–93.

7 The 1821–2021 bicentenary has prompted a new spate of studies on the Greek 1820s and some have stood out for their interest in matters of religion and the sacred in contrast to the conventional approach

the Americas.[11] As we shall see, the belief in rebirth or revival of a whole nation, connected to both the Protestant metaphor of Awakening and the Orthodox idea of Resurrection, is particularly useful for my arguments.

Relatively recently, the older picture of the European Enlightenment—and concomitantly, that of the Greek Enlightenment—as a single and unified phenomenon with anti-Christian and anti-Church characteristics has been reviewed by a growing body of studies.[12] The Enlightenment is no longer studied as a monolithic secular phenomenon, while there is increasing appreciation of the intellectual effort to discover "ways to reconcile reason and faith, innovation with tradition, and individual freedom of thought with authority."[13] Looking beyond the bipolarity of religious and secular values, historians have come to address the complex relationship of the Enlightenment with religious belief and the engagement of the former with different forms of Christianity. In the Ottoman empire, for example, the cultural transfer of enlightened ideas from the West to the East involved the Orthodox Church and the intellectuals within its orbit. Not infrequently, the enlighteners opted to reform religion instead of outright rejecting it. Church and religion did re-emerge with a renewed prestige in restoration Europe. In Southern Europe, early liberalism developed an ambiguous, double-edged relationship with Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Being convinced that no society could survive without religious morality, southern liberals developed a variety of religious attitudes, but on the whole they did not abandon their established religions. At times they challenged them; at other times they combined them with new political tenets and sources of legitimacy. As the Greek revolutionary movement became an integral part of the great revolutionary wave of the 1820s that swept across Spain, Portugal, and the Italian peninsula, Greek liberals came to share the same concerns and considerations.[14] In spite of the anticlerical and radical ideals of a sizeable number of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Greek enlighteners and patriots (the two do not always coincide), the pre-war clash between religion and secularism cannot account for the development of Greek national consciousness as conventionally thought.[15] These empirical observations provide the empirical premise of my own approach.

Rogers Brubaker has singled out four distinct ways of studying the connection between religion and nationalism.[16] The one that treats religion and nationalism as intertwined or imbricated phenomena is perhaps the most relevant to my analysis here.[17] I will start by examining the anticlerical and radical ideals of a sizeable number of paragons of the Greek independence movement and the cultural and political reasons behind their pre-war clash with the highest source of religious authority in the Orthodox world, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Then I will probe the facets of imbrication between nationalist and religious discourses that first occurred as the independence movement started to grow beyond the avant-garde circles of republican nationalists and evolve into networks with increasing membership demands. It was within the so-called Friendly Society (*Philiki Etaireia*), certainly the most popular of these networks, that nationalism was wedded to religion. Finally, I will focus on the process of imbrication between nationalism and religion after the outbreak of the war as a binary process that affects and transforms both of them as a result of active confrontation of the Muslim Ottomans on the battlefield. Overall, the analysis here is geared more towards sacred beliefs and practices than institutions. If one is to understand the loyalty,

(see further on here the references). First thereamong is the monumental study of Mark Mazower, *The Greek Revolution: 1821 and the Making of Modern Europe* (London: Penguin, 2021) that informed this article in terms of insights and reflections. A wealth of primary evidence pertaining to religion and the sacred in 1821 is to be found in the master's thesis of Pothitos Varvarigos, *Thriskeia kai thriskeutiki zoi kata ton polemo tis anexartisias* (University of Thessaloniki, 2011) as well as in the study of Elias Oikonomou, *O Theos kai to 1821* (Athens: Saitis, 2018). Unfortunately, both are of little analytical value.

8
For criticism on the understanding of nationalism as a distinctively secular phenomenon, see Peter Van der Veer and Harmut Lehman, "Introduction," in *Nation and Religion: Perspectives in Europe and Asia*, ed. Peter Van der Veer and Harmut Lehman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3–14; Talal Asad, "Religion, Nation State, Secularism," in *Nation and Religion,* 178–96; Philip S. Gorski, "The Mosaic Moment: An Early Modernist Critique of Modernist Theories of Nationalism," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 5 (March 2000): 1428–68; cf. also Peter C. Mentzel, "Introduction: Religion and Nationalism? Or Nationalism and Religion? Some Reflections on the Relationship between Religion and Nationalism," *Genealogy* 4, no. 98 (2020): 1–8, https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy4040098.

9
See for example, Dionysios Zakythinos, *Tourkokratia* (Athens: n.e., 1957); Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); Cf. also George Arnakis, "The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of Modern History* 24, no. 3 (September 1952): 235–51; George Arnakis, "The Role of Religion in the Development of Balkan Nationalism," in *The Balkans in Transition: Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Barbara and Charles Jelavich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 115–44.

10
Smith, *Chosen Peoples*; Cf. Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 107–8.

11
Van der Veer and Lehman, "Introduction," 6–7.

12
See for instance, Helena Rosenblatt, "The Christian Enlightenment," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity,* vol. 7, *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660–1815*, ed. Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 283–301; Mark Curran, "Mettons Toujours Londres: Enlightened Christianity and the Public in Pre-Revolutionary Francophone Europe," *French History* 24, no. 1 (2009): 40–59; L. Lehener and M. Printy, eds., *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe,* (Leiden: Brill, 2010). For a critique of Dimaras's thesis see Manolis Patiniotis, "Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment: In Search of a European Identity," in *Relocating the History of Science. Essays in Honor of Kostas Gavroglu*,

devotion, and allegiance to a given nation, one has to probe the way(s) the national sentiment is experienced through the enthrallment of performance and the effervescence of ritual.[18]

Clash with Tradition

The Greek Enlightenment proclaimed that modern Greeks were a distinct community of common culture and interests but were no match for their glorious ancestors because they had been enslaved by foreigners. Should the foreign yoke be removed, modern Greeks would again be restored to their ancient glory. The Greek enlighteners strove to break away from tradition and crystallise a specifically Greek, rather than Orthodox Christian, collective identity, pregnant with a sense of belonging to a wider European family. What they were seeking was not just political emancipation from the Ottoman rule but also spiritual emancipation from the Orthodox Christian tradition and establishment. The ultimate goal of this enterprise was the perspective of an autonomous political community, while the immediate objective was cultivating reverence for ancient Greece.

Indeed, the glory of Hellas had taken a firm hold in Greek hearts and minds. Some Greeks had gone as far as making libations to Poseidon before crossing the sea while others started to use exclusively classical names for their children or their students. Remarkably, in 1813 the cleric and teacher Dionysios Pyrros organised a ceremony in his school in Athens where he changed the Christian names of his pupils to the plaudits of the Athenian elders. As each pupil was called out, Pyrros presented him with a branch of laurel or olive, saying, "now your name is no longer Yannis or Pavlos . . . but Pericles, Themistocles, or Xenophon. Fear God, help your motherland and love philosophy." And the Athenian elders shouted out "Long live Pericles" or "Long live Themistocles."[19] A more extreme case perhaps was that of the physician and philosopher Georgios Sakellarios who offered prayers to the Olympian Gods on the death of his wife.[20]

The revival of Greek names, the teaching of classics in schools, the interest in the relics of antiquity, and the like culminated in the rise of a politicised sense of Hellenic identity with secular overtones which, in turn, was disseminated through an extended commerce-funded network of schools. Merchants stepped in to subsidise the publication of a body of literature which, increasingly secular as it was, aimed at a specifically Greek readership. A considerable fluctuation in the production and circulation of books followed suit. Literature, almanacs, newspapers, commercial guides, methods for teaching foreign languages, and translations all confirm a broadening in readers' concerns and interests.[21]

However, the enlighteners' call for political and spiritual emancipation represented a threat to the Orthodox Christian structures and moral order. For the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which had been wedded to the Ottoman status quo since the fall of Constantinople, the vision of a sovereign people in secular terms was a concept difficult to grasp and impossible to contemplate. Hence, at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, the Patriarchate adopted an increasingly obscurantist stance in theological, educational, and cultural matters. Books were burned and heresy trials were held in fear that the growing fascination with ancient Greece, let alone the introduction of natural sciences to the Greek schools, would undermine the religious attachments of the Ottoman-ruled Orthodox. Being a staunch opponent of the "foolish wisdom of Europe," the

ed. Theodore Arabatzis, Jurgen Renn and Ana Simoes (New York: Springer, 2015), 117–30; see also Gazi, "Revisiting Religion," 96–7. Kitromilides, one of the main proponents of Dimaras's thesis on secularism and the Greek Enlightenment, has revised, somewhat reluctantly, his earlier approach; see Paschalis Kitromilides, "The Enlightenment and the Greek cultural tradition," *History of European Ideas* 36 (2010): 39–46.

13
Jonathan Israel, *Europe and the radical Enlightenment. A typology of modernity's intellectual and cultural roots. C. Th. Dimaras Annual Lecture, 2004* (Athens: Institute for Neohellenic Research, 2005), 99.

14
Maurizio Isabella, "Citizens or Faithful? Religion and the Liberal Revolutions of the 1820s in Southern Europe," *Modern Intellectual History* 12, no. 3 (2015): 555–78; cf. Maurizio Isabella, *Southern Europe in the Age of Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023).

15
Konstantina Zanou, "Imperial Nationalism and Orthodox Enlightenment: A Diasporic Story Between the Ionian Islands, Russia and Greece, ca. 1800–30," in *Mediterranean Diasporas Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century*, ed. Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 117–34; cf. Konstantina Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800-1850: Stammering the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

16
Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, 103–16.

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Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference,* 109–13.

18
Cf. Rachel Tsang and Taylor Woods, eds., *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building: Ritual and performance in the forging of nations* (London: Routledge, 2013), 2–11.

19
Alexis Politis, "From Christian Roman Emperors to the Glorious Greek Ancestors," in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (Aldershot: Ashgate 1998), 4, 11–12. See also Richard Clogg, "Sense of the Past in Pre-Independence Greece," in *Anatolica: Studies in the Greek East in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, ed. Richard Clogg (London: Variorum, 1996), 18.

20
Georgios Sakellarios, *Poimatia* (Vienna: Johann Schnierer, 1817), 7–18, 19–37.

21
Dimaras, *Neoellinikos Diaphotismos*, 23–91; cf. Catherine Koumarianou, "The Contribution of the Intelligentsia towards the Greek Independence Movement, 1798–1821," in *The Struggle for Greek Independence: Essays to Mark the 150th Anniversary of the Greek War of Independence*, ed. Richard Clogg (London: Macmillan, 1973), 67–86.

Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V (1746–1821) bemoaned, according to a contemporary observer, that the Platos and Aristotles, the Newtons and Descartes, the triangles and logarithms led to indifference in matters divine.[22] What the Patriarch fretted most over, however, was the spirit of political radicalism that the French Revolution had spawned a few years prior. The Sultan shared the same fear.

The traditional good relations between France and the Porte changed course because of the Napoleonic campaigns. The French capture of the Ionian islands by the treaty of the Campo Formio (1797), an event of greater importance in Bonaparte's view than the occupation of the whole of Italy,[23] had strained Franco-Turkish relations. On his arrival in Corfu in June 1797, the Corsican General Gentili announced that Greece would again be restored to her ancient freedom and that the classical virtues would live once more because the French were bringing with them liberty and equality. In the eyes of the Ottomans, it was clear that Napoleon had designs on their domains. Rumours of insurrection were reaching Istanbul from different parts of the empire. The arrest in Trieste in December 1797 of the Greek patriot Rigas Velestinlis was another sign of alarm. Rigas was perhaps the best representative of the climate of great encouragement and enthusiasm Napoleon had created among the Greeks. Though caught on Austrian territory, Rigas carried a chest with revolutionary proclamations and other printed material against "the insufferable tyranny of the abominable Ottoman despotism."[24] Indeed, Napoleon crossed the threshold of the Ottoman world in the summer of 1798 with his invasion of Malta and his landing on Egypt. Aboard his ship he issued a declaration to the people of Egypt conceding, most astonishingly, that he was a God-sent liberator, a true Muslim himself, who had come to shake off the yoke of Egypt's Ottoman masters. Few Muslims, if any, were convinced of Napoleon's faith.[25] Sultan Mahmud IV declared war against France and called on the empire's supreme religious authorities to check the spread of French ideas. What the Sultan had envisaged in the first place was an Ottoman propaganda counteroffensive for the creation of a common front of believers, of whatever religion, against atheistical France. Patriarch Gregory V joined the effort because he saw the radical ideas of Rigas gaining increasing notoriety among Greeks. The "Paternal Instruction" (*Didaskalia Patriki*),[26] a work printed at the patriarchal press in Constantinople in the summer or early autumn of 1798 should be seen as part of this campaign.[27] The work's authorship remains unknown—the work bears the name of the Patriarch Anthimos of Jerusalem to whom Gregory V probably delegated the task of authoring, or merely had the text written under Anthimos's name—but what is clear is the author's insistence that Christians owed obedience to the Sultan because the Ottoman empire had been deliberately raised up by God to protect the Orthodox faith from adulteration:

> "See how clearly our Lord, boundless in mercy and all-wise, has undertaken to guard once more the unsullied Holy and Orthodox faith of us, the pious, and to save all mankind. He raised out of nothing this powerful empire of the Ottomans, in the place of our Roman [Byzantine] empire which had begun, in a certain way, to cause to deviate from the beliefs of the Orthodox faith, and He raised up the empire of the Ottomans higher than any other kingdom so as to show without doubt that it came about by divine will, and not by the power of man, and to assure all the

22 Konstantinos M. Koumas, *Oi Ellines: Diaphotismos—Epanastasi*, photocopied reprint of the vol. 12 of Koumas's *Istoriai ton Anthropinon Praxeon* (Athens: Karavias, 1998 [first published 1832]), 514.

23 Richard Clogg, "The 'Dhidhaskalia Patriki' (1798): An Orthodox Reaction to French Revolutionary Propaganda," *Middle Eastern Studies* 5, no. 2 (May 1969): 89.

24 Clogg, "The 'Dhidhaskalia Patriki (1798)," 90.

25 Save for political calculation, Napoleon's strange assertion about himself and the French expeditionary force as being of Muslim religion was related to the French translation of the Qur'ān by Claude-Etienne Savary (1783), which portrayed Muhammad as an iconoclast religious reformer and Islam as the equivalent of philosophical deism. See John Tolan, *Faces of Muhammad: Western Perceptions of the Prophet of Islam from the Middle Ages to Today* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 186–88.

26 *Didaskalia Patriki syntetheisa para tou makariotatou Patriarchou tis agias poleos Ierousalim kyr Anthimou* [. . .] (Constantinople: n.e., 1798).

27 Clogg, "The 'Dhidhaskalia Patriki (1798)," 89–94.

> faithful that in this way He deigned to bring about a great mystery, namely salvation to his chosen people . . . The all-mighty Lord . . . puts into the heart of the sultan of these Ottomans an inclination to keep free the religious beliefs of our Orthodox faith and, as a work of supererogation, to protect them, even to the point of occasionally chastising Christians who deviate from their faith, that they have always before their eyes the fear of God."[28]

The assertion that the Ottoman empire was ordained by God provoked the immediate reaction of progressive Greeks. Before the end of the same year (1798), the Paris-based intellectual father of Greek national revival, Adamantios Korais, penned a pamphlet with the title "Brotherly Instruction" (*Adelphiki Didaskalia*)[29] where he defended liberty and democracy. Korais published the pamphlet anonymously, faking the place of publication (Rome instead of Paris). As he put it in the introduction, the pamphlet aimed at correcting the false impression under which a learned European might surmise the true feelings of Greeks when reading the "Paternal Instruction"[30]; nonetheless, one understands that Korais's intention was to counter the damage this text might have inflicted on the development of Greek national consciousness. Korais dismissed the "Paternal Instruction" as a token of monkish obscurantism and assured his readers that the true feelings of the Greeks had always been unwaveringly patriotic. He eschewed, however, a frontal attack on the Patriarchate and took good care to buttress his polemic with scriptural references so it would not offend the religious sensibilities of his Orthodox readers. Korais's refutation prompted a counter-rebuttal by one of the most prolific Orthodox antagonists of Western thought, Athanasios Parios, who in turn authored a pamphlet with the strange title *Neos Rapsakis*. Yet it never actually made it to the publisher because Korais's followers managed to filch the manuscript from the person to whom Parios had tasked with overseeing the publication. The stolen manuscript was subsequently sent to Korais as a token of "the perversity of the wretched monks who, . . . under the pretext of defending religion, seek the perpetual enslavement and ignorance of our nation."[31]

As the Church turned against the movement of Greek national revival favoring *ethelodouleia*—that is, of willing and blind submission to the powers that be—it became the target of even more vigorous criticism by a new generation of Greek radical enlighteners who came to the fore in the 1800s and 1810s. Attacks on the Patriarchate and its hierarchy became increasingly bitter and frequent. One such attack is the satirical poem *Rossoanglogallos* (1812) where a Russian, an Englishman, and a Frenchman[32] explore the reasons for Greece's continual enslavement while on a tour of the Greek lands. Hiding behind anonymity, the poet finds the upper strata of the pre-independence Greek society to be friendly with tyranny. Unsurprisingly, an Orthodox prelate takes to the stage and shamelessly boasts of avarice:

> "I do not know of the yoke [of the Turk] . . . / I eat and drink with pleasure, / I do not feel the tyranny . . . / Two things I crave, yes indeed, . . . / Lots of money and nice girls."[33]

What is perhaps the most well-known tract of pre-independence Greek republicanism, the polemic of 1806 with the title "Hellenic Nomarchy, that is a discourse on Freedom" (*Elliniki Nomarchia, itoi Logos peri Eleutherias*), is informed by fervent anti-clericalism. The author, who used the pseudonym

28 I use Clogg's translation for this excerpt; see Clogg, "The 'Dhidhaskalia Patriki (1798)," 104. Adamantios Korais reprinted the full text in his *Brotherly Instruction* (see below n. 14). For the excerpt, see p. 11.

29 *Adelphiki didaskalia pros tous euriskomenous kata pasan tin Othomanikin epikrateian Graecous* [. . .] (Rome: n.e., 1798).

30 Korais, *Adelphiki didaskalia*, IV.

31 Richard Clogg, "Anti-Clericalism in Pre-Independence Greece C. 1750-1821," *Studies in Church History* 13 (1976): 260.

32 This is what the title means: "*Rossoanglogallos*" is a word jumble implying the three great powers taken as one vis-à-vis the Greek problem. During the 1810s the poem circulated in manuscript enjoying a considerable vogue in Greek patriotic circles.

33 Here I use Clogg's translation in Clogg, "Anti-Clericalism," 268.

“Anonymous the Hellene,” conceded that the two main reasons for the continued enslavement of the Greeks were priestly ignorance and the absence of Greece’s best citizens, who had moved abroad. The metropolitans ate and drank like pigs, sleeping fourteen hours at night and two hours at midday and when they did not, “they [thought] up the most shameful and base things you could possibly imagine.” “Beloved,” they say to the faithful, “God gave us the Ottoman tyranny, to punish us for our sins, chastising us in the present life so that he may liberate us after death from eternal torment”; the phrase alludes unmistakably to the “Paternal Instruction.”[34]

Besides emphasising the moral denigration of the church, Anonymous the Hellene threw into relief how a given nation could lose its political autonomy to foreign conquerors, and along with it lose its cultural prominence, if ignorance and superstition prevailed. To this end, the author went on to sketch out a historical outline of Greece’s rise and fall, from antiquity up to his day: Greece in antiquity had been at the apex of civilisation but internal dissention made it the first to succumb to the Roman sword. When Christianity took over the empire of the Romans, the Greeks lost any hope of liberation as they sank into ignorance and superstition. Deprived of their “old-time character,” the Greeks succumbed easily to the more superstitious and ignorant Ottomans.[35] The message conveyed by the *Hellenic Nomarchy* could not be clearer: behind the historical vicissitudes and political misfortunes of the Greek nation stood not only the Orthodox church motivated, as it were, by the spirit of subservience to the powers that be, but also Christianity, a culturally obscurantist and backward religion.

34
Anonymous the Hellene, *Elliniki Nomarchia, itoi Logos peri Eleutherias*, ed. Giorgos Valetas (Athens: Aposperitis, 1982), 168, 175.

35
See Anonymous the Hellene, *Elliniki Nomarchia,* 121–26, cf. 215.

Secular Replacement?

Historians have justifiably underlined the republican anti-clericalism of the protagonists of Greek independence. Rigas Velestinlis’s surviving manifesto of 1797 called “New Political Constitution for the Inhabitants of Rumeli, Asia Minor, the Mediterranean Islands and Wallachia-Moldavia” [*Nea politiki dioikisis ton katoikon tis Roumelis, tis Mikras Asias, ton Mesogeion Nison kai tis Vlachobogdanias*] had no place for the church in the secular administration for which it provided after the overthrow of the Ottoman rule.[36] Adamatios Korais, for his part, escalated his social criticism on the eve of the Greek Revolution with the publication “Counseling of Three Bishops” [*Symvouli trion episkopon*] (1820), an anti-clerical tract that seemingly referred to the Catholic church but actually targeted the Orthodox ecclesiastical establishment, and in which Korais castigated the prelates and the monks for “. . . fooling the people with the superstitious rituals, the fake relics, the fabricated miracles, the untrue stories.”[37]

Greek nationalists would attack Christianity or the Orthodox Church for the lamentable condition into which Greece had fallen, but this does not mean that nationalists were (and are) by default dedicated secularists whose thought and action precludes religious feelings, symbols, and values. Anti-clericalism is not tantamount to atheism. In the interrogation that followed his arrest by the Austrians, and preceded his execution by the Turks, Rigas confessed that he always wanted to see Greece free but this came second after his wish to save his soul.[38] Witnesses reported, on the other hand, that Korais on his deathbed muttered Psalm 137: 5–6,[39] where the exiled Jews lament the loss of the land God had promised to them. Throughout his life, Korais had focused on “translating” purely religious values into political terms—what Kedourie calls “transvaluation

36
Clogg, “Anti-Clericalism,” 275, n. 46.

37
Adamantios Korais, *Symvouli trion episkopon, epistapltheisa, kata to 1553 etos, pros ton Papan Ioulion ton triton* (London: Printed for W. Truthlover, 1820), VIII.

38
Emile Legrand and Spyridon Lambros, *Anekdota eggrafa peri Riga Velestinli kai ton syn auto martyrisanton* (Athens: Perris, 1891), 65.

39
Iakovos Rotas, ed., *Apanthisma epistolon Adamantiou Korai* (Athens: Rallis, 1839), ιγ΄.

of values"[40]—and he seemingly continued to do so until his last breath: the psalmic Jerusalem in his mind would have likely stood for Greece.[41]

Another group of Greek nationalists that made up the Friendly Society (*Philiki Etaireia*), the secret society that spearheaded the idea of the Greek uprising from 1814 up to the 1821, had also set out to "translate" sacred values into political ones. In fact, the Society did draw on the sacred motifs and symbols of the Greek past irrespective of origin or epoch. The Society's emblems, for instance, included not only the Christian cross but also the owl of Minerva[42]; whereas the rites of member initiation mixed Christian oath-taking with invocations to the "power of the priests of the Eleusinian mysteries."[43] The Christian side, however, was decidedly emphasised. The Society's founding fathers had reportedly chosen to celebrate its birth anniversary on the 14th of September, when the Orthodox church celebrates the Elevation of the Cross.[44] On this day, Orthodoxy mainly celebrates the discovery of the relic of the True Cross by Helena but also recalls two other incidents: first, the celestial apparition of a cross of light over the camp of Constantine the Great with the words "Εν τούτω νίκα" or "In hoc signo vinces"—"by this sign conquer"—on the eve of the decisive battle against his rival Maxentius in *Mulvius Pons* (312 AD); and second, the restoration to Jerusalem of the piece of the True Cross that the Persians had taken from the city (630 AD) after a successful campaign of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius against the Sassanids. If the two incidents have something in common, it is the military triumph of Christianity over its enemies.

The Friendly Society was likely the first patriotic organization to render religion a crucial factor in its understanding of the Greek nation. The oath of the newly initiated members urged them to keep faith in their own religion, without disrespecting the religions of others, but also demanded that they "hate, persecute and exterminate the enemies of the religion of the Nation and of [their] country." Evidently, no Muslims or Jews were conceived as belonging to the "Nation."[45] Nationalists, suggests Anthony Smith, only rarely attempt to destroy entirely an older, religious identity because they realise that, if their message is to be communicated widely and effectively, it needs to be couched in the language and imagery of those they wish to mobilise and liberate.[46] Save for religion, the language and imagery of the Ottoman-ruled Christian peasants before the Greek war of independence had also been grounded on prophecy.

Within medieval and early modern Greek literature, prophecy is a genre in its own right. Medieval and early modern Greek prophetic literature aimed at restoring hope and dignity to the community of Orthodox Christians during times of threat, anxiety, and change by offering divine assurances that any state of political affairs tormenting the community of the faithful would not last for long. The day of deliverance, *i imera Kyriou* ("the day of the Lord"), was under way. From this vantage point, Islam was nothing but a sinister force that had subdued the once powerful Eastern Roman Empire and brought the mighty Eastern Christian Church to its knees. For the community of the subjugated eastern Christians, this had been a tangible historical experience for which the Book of Revelation offered a scriptural foundation: Revelation 13:7 refers to one obscure diabolic beast that would be "given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them," while 19:20 refers to a mysterious false prophet who would act on behalf of the beast. Save for the Apocalypse of John, biblical and extra-biblical prophecy was also utilised in different

40
Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 37.

41
Known as "By the rivers of Babylon," Psalm 137 is the 137th psalm of the Book of Psalms. Verses 5–6 read: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget [her cunning]. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

42
See the flag's depiction in Vasilis Panagiotopoulos, "I Philiki Etaireia: Organotikes Proypotheseis tis Ethnikis Epanastasis," in *Istoria tou Neou Ellinismou 1770-2000* (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2003), 3:15.

43
Ambrosios Phrantzis, *Epitomi tis Istorias tis Anagennitheisis Ellados arhomeni apo tou Etous 1715 kai ligousa to 1835* (Athens: K. Kastorhis kai syntrophia, 1839), 1:302.

44
Panagiotopoulos, "I Philiki Etaireia," 15.

45
Evdoxios Doxiadis, "Defining a Hellene. Legal constructs and sectarian realities in the Greek War of Independence," *Open Military Studies* 2 (2022): 152.

46
Anthony D. Smith, "The 'Sacred' Dimension of Nationalism," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 800–803.

proportions, yet the texts that compose medieval and early modern Greek prophetic literature are called *chrismoi* (oracles) and *chrismologia* (oracular literature). The authors and interpreters of oracular literature, and its mere adherents, fostered belief in the coming of a deliverer, a saviour Christian king of this world who would defeat the Muslims and restore lost sacred space and sovereignty to Christians. Occasionally, the motif of a people-deliverer would appear as well, which came to be identified with the fellow Orthodox Russians, especially since the Russian empire started to beat the Ottomans militarily in the late eighteenth century. Throughout the centuries of Ottoman rule, early modern Greek prophetic literature[47] became a major source of anti-Ottoman and anti-Muslim sentiment on the political and religious level, thereby forging a bond that linked the subjugated Orthodox community. Attempts have been made to show that in the age of revolution, this literature was turned into a validating charter for collective actions and political stances that would otherwise have appeared unacceptably revolutionary to the populace.[48] No matter how backward and "medieval" it would appear in the eyes of nationalists, oracular prophecy was useful insofar as it assured the masses that their political status was destined to be reversed. Therefore, it was used as an adjunct for mobilisation around a cause that was otherwise modern and secular. It was not accidental that the founding members of the Friendly Society had deliberately created the impression that their struggle had Russia's unconditional backing.[49] Evidence abounds[50] that prophecy was used as a popular means of nationalistic indoctrination before the war, facilitating the reach of the Friendly Society within peasant communities and increasing considerably its membership—especially after 1819, when the Society, faced as it were with increasing requests for membership, "came to indoctrinate even the swineherds" as a contemporary witness noted.[51]

What was more, oracular literature became the source of powerful vocabulary, imagery, and symbolism that was also entrenched in the teachings of the Orthodox church: the vocabulary, imagery, and symbolism of resurrection. The idea of bringing back to life a dead entity by the will of God, on which Eastern Christianity focuses more than its Western counterpart, helped Greek nationalists to popularise the notion that Greece could be reborn, would be reborn, or was destined to be reborn as a political community. Up to the outbreak of the 1821, the idea of resurrection became a cornerstone of the Greek nationalistic discourse, one that emphasised the importance of the Greek homeland and people and at the same time couched the patriotic message in the language and imagery of faith. It is not without importance that Anonymous the Hellene used the title "The resurrection of the nation"[52] in the fifth and final chapter of the *Hellenic Nomarchy*; as for Adamantios Korais, he used the same terminology[53] as did the intellectual and teacher Constantinos Oikonomos in his enthralling speeches,[54] to name but a few examples. In late spring 1821, at the village of *Milies* in Mount Pelion, a company of young men raised glasses in a toast: "The Christ has risen, long live the resurrection of the homeland, long live liberty." It was the very same people who a few days later would spark revolution in the region.[55]

Imbrication with Religion

Originally, the Greek revolution had been planned to break out in the Morea (modern-day Peloponnese), a region remote from the Ottoman capital with a

47 Marios Hatzopoulos, "Eighteenth-century Greek Prophetic Literature," in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 14, *Central and Eastern Europe (1700-1800)*, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 382–402.

48 Marios Hatzopoulos, "From Resurrection to Insurrection: 'sacred' myths, motifs, and symbols in the Greek War of Independence," in *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)*, ed. Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (London: Ashgate, 2009), 81–93; Marios Hatzopoulos, "Oracular Prophecy and the Politics of Toppling Ottoman Rule in South-East Europe," *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 8 (2011): 95–116; Marios Hatzopoulos, "Prophetic Structures of the Ottoman-ruled Orthodox Community in Comparative Perspective: Some Preliminary Observations," in *Greek-Serbian Relations in the Age of Nation-Building*, ed. Paschalis Kitromilides and Sophia Matthaiou (Athens: SNR-NHRF, 2016), 121–47; Marios Hatzopoulos, "Saints in revolt: The anti-Ottoman Vision of kyr Daniel," in *Early Modern Prophecies in Transnational, National and Regional Contexts*, vol. 2, *The Mediterranean World*, ed. Lionel Laborie and Ariel Hessayon (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 246–76.

49 Emmanuel Xanthos, *Apomnimoneumata peri tis Philikis Etaireias* (Athens: A. Garpolas, 1845), 12.

50 For pertinent evidence see Hatzopoulos, "Oracular Prophecy," 109–12; Hatzopoulos, "Prophetic Structures," 142–45.

51 Ambrosios Phrantzis, *Epitomi tis Istorias tis Anagennitheisis Ellados arhomeni apo tou Etous 1715 kai ligousa to* 1835 (Athens: K. Kastorhis kai syntrophia, 1839), 1:79–80.

52 Anonymous the Hellene, *Elliniki Nomarchia*, 201–23. Anonymous uses the synonym "*genos*" for the term "nation."

53 See for instance his letter of 27th March 1815 where Korais referred to the prospect of "the resurrection of Greece"; Adamantios Korais, *Allilografia*, ed. K. Th. Dimaras et al. (Athens: Estia, 1979), 3:401.

54 See for example Oikonomos's speech of 1st October 1821 where the word is about the "on-going resurrection of Greece"; Constantinos Oikonomos o ex Oikonomon, *Logoi*, ed. K. Sperantzas (Athens: n.e., 1971), 291, cf. 304.

55 Rigas N. Kamilaris, *Grigoriou Konstanta: Biographia - Logoi - Epistolai, meta Perigraphis ton Mileon kai tis Scholis Auton* (Athens: A. Konstantinidis, 1897), 29–30.

high ratio of Christians to Muslims and with powerful Christian land-owing elites who retained armed bands at their command and exercised a considerable degree of local autonomy. All these circumstances increased the chances of the uprising's success, thereby making Morea a rump for creating a future Greek-Christian state. Nevertheless, the plan eventually changed and the Friendly Society's leader, Alexandros Ypsilantis, a former aide-de-camp of Tsar Alexander I who had an eminent Phanariot background, decided on an opening thrust in the north, more particularly in the Danubian Principalities in an apparent bid to stir up the other Balkan peoples and draw Russia into the conflict. It was there that the war broke out first, in February 1821, and then in late March in what was eventually to become Greece. However, things in the Principalities did not develop as Ypsilantis had hoped: the revolution was renounced by the Tsar, condemned by the Holy Alliance, and excommunicated by the Patriarchate, but down to the south, in mainland Greece, the Morea, the Aegean islands, and Crete, the uprising took root and gradually evolved into a full-scale and prolonged conflict.[56]

From the onset, Ottomans viewed the war in the light of religious difference. Upon learning the news from the Danubian Principalities, the Porte called for holy war, interpreting the uprising as a battle between Islam and Christianity through the lens of what would be called today conspiracy theory. The Orthodox Christian Ottoman subjects, and particularly the Greeks,[57] were accused not only of sedition but also of complicity in a wider plot to annihilate all Muslims.[58] The hand of Moscow was alleged to have guided the movement; Ypsilantis had made it known that seventy thousand Russians would soon be crossing the border to his aid.[59] The Sultan issued orders to provincial pashas requesting help and the pashas pledged to defend Islam and the empire. According to the British ambassador to the Porte, Lord Strangford, the Sultan had clearly decided "to strike terror into the minds of [his] Greek subjects."[60] In Strangford's words, terror commenced with the appearance of "an armed and licentious population, wandering through the streets of this capital and its suburbs, daily commit[ing] such excesses as destroy all confidence on the part of the *reaya*, in the security of their lives and property"[61] and escalated with the execution of prominent and influential members of the capital's Orthodox community, in particular members of Phanariot families. The most notorious in the series of public executions was the hanging of the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V, on Easter Sunday in April 1821. Gregory had anathematised the Greek revolt and excommunicated Ypsilantis along with his supporters, yet in the eyes of the Sultan he stood guilty for failing to maintain the subordination of the Eastern Christians over whom he presided as religious and communal leader. The Patriarch's dead body was dragged through the streets and tossed into the Golden Horn, igniting the sympathy of co-religionists in Russia and liberals in the West. In the ensuing weeks and months, arbitrary Ottoman attacks targeted Greek churches, shops, and clergy, in Constantinople, Adrianople, Smyrna, Salonica, Crete, and Cyprus, so as to frighten the Orthodox communities into obedience and pre-empt any movement on their part. Involuntarily but decisively, the Ottoman authorities came to give the Greek uprising a solidly religious character.

Christian violence against Muslims in the Principalities and the Morea had also come to confirm the Porte's perception of the Greek uprising as a war of religion. Once the fighting broke out, sporadic attacks against Muslims soon evolved into an all-encompassing wave of murderous

56
Dean Konstantaras, *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 124–25.

57
Notably, Ottoman state authorities appear to have differentiated between "Graikoi" and Rum/Romioi. See Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire : Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 70–71.

58
See the imperial decree (*ferman*) to the Muslim population, wherein the sultan warned of a plot to take over the seat of the imperial government: "Muslims: in the month of April, when the *giavur* [infidels] have their Easter, they have conspired on that day to set fire to Asia, across from . . . [the Old City quarter of İstanbul] . . . , planning that we will cross the straits to put out the fire. At that moment they will enter Byzantium and take the throne," cited in Philliou, *Biography*, 68; Cf. also the dispatch (10th April 1821) of Britain's ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Lord Strangford, to Foreign Secretary Castlereagh: ". . . the insurrections in Wallachia and Moldavia, and the rebellious movements in other places, are attributed to a design formed by the Greeks, for the total overthrow of the Mahometan religion," cited in Theophilus C. Prousis, "British Embassy Reports on the Greek Uprising in 1821-1822: War of Independence or War of Religion?", *History Faculty Publications* 21 (2011): 187; cf. also Theophilus C. Prousis, "Eastern Orthodoxy Under Siege in the Ottoman Levant: A View from Constantinople in 1821," *History Faculty Publications* 13 (2008): 46. Conspiracy theorising is not a recent phenomenon but has considerable historical depth, Michael Butter, "Bad History, Useless Prophecy: The 'Paranoid Style' Revisited," *Symploke* 29, no. 1–2 (2021): 28–30.

59
Thomas W. Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768 to 1913: The Long Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 68.

60
Prousis, "British Embassy Reports," 187.

61
Prousis, "British Embassy Reports," 187.

violence. Muslims were swept away irrespective of age, occupation, and gender. Ypsilantis's troops committed massacres in the Romanian cities of Jassy and Galati whereas the troops of Theodoros Kolokotronis, the supreme military leader of the revolution in the Morea, killed the entire Muslim population of the Ottoman capital of the Morea, Tripolitsa. As the war progressed, mosques, hammams, fountains, and tombs were attacked and destroyed. One reason for the violence was the chronic mistreatment suffered by the Christians at the hands of their former masters. The other was religious hatred. As Mark Mazower has observed, "one reason why the Greek war of independence reached levels of violence unseen in the other revolts in southern Europe was that it assumed at the outset the character of a religious clash."[62] Sometimes religious violence was calculated to create a breach between Christian and Muslim communities, hence marking a point of no return for the belligerents. However unholy, religiously induced violence was a means of sacralising the war. This had not escaped the attention of the British. "The insurgents" wrote Strangford in a dispatch to the Foreign Office, ". . . have attempted to consecrate their revolution by religious processions and ceremonies without end, and by the murder of many defenceless [sic] Turks."[63] However, for the insurgents, the war had not been conceived, planned, or organised as a holy war. There was no deliberate plan for the destruction of the Muslim communities of the Morea and mainland Greece.[64] Alexandros Mavrokordatos, the civilian leader of the besieged town of Missolonghi, made this clear in his reply to the leader of the Ottoman besiegers, Omer Vryoni Pasha:

> "Your highness, we don't have war with [Muslims] . . . we don't care at all if one believes in Mahomet and the other in Christ . . . what we want is to be free in this world and live under our own laws, like the other free nations live under their own laws, and not to be slaves because our ancestors had not been slaves to anyone."[65]

A small number of Muslims aligned themselves with the revolution and served in the Greek camp as soldiers, physicians, surgeons, and translators of Ottoman documents. Several went as far as claiming pensions for war service or compensation for family properties lost during the war.[66] On the part of the Greeks, nevertheless, the war had been declared in the name of religion and homeland with the former coming first. Revolutionary proclamations were quite telling thereon and the most famous perhaps was the one issued by Ypsilantis himself under the title, "Fight for the faith and homeland."[67] Greek nationality and citizenship were connected to the Greek Orthodox faith from early on. From the "temporary" local charters that were drafted in the early months of the war to the first constitutions of Epidaurus in 1821 and Astros in 1823, Orthodox Christianity was made the official religion of the state and Greek citizenship was reserved for Greek Orthodox Christians. Connecting nationality and faith was in line with other constitutional projects in southern Europe. Many adherents of the 1812 Cadiz constitution, particularly in the Mediterranean, who advocated liberal constitutionalism, considered religious uniformity as an essential element of national identity. Whether it was the Catholic faith in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, or Orthodoxy in Greece, they viewed it as a crucial aspect.[68] However, the Greek constitutions of 1822 and 1823 also embraced the principles of religious tolerance and equality under the law. They stated that all religions and their rituals could be freely practiced,

62
Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, xxxiii.

63
Strangford to Castlereagh, FO 78/98, ff. 226–31a, 25th May 1821, cited in Prousis, "British Embassy Reports," 192.

64
Doxiadis, "Defining a Hellene," 155.

65
Document batch of 1823, undated leaf; *Istorikon archeion Alexandrou Mavrokordatou*, vol. 5, issue 3 (Athens: Academia Athinon, 1968), 3. Similar discourse was employed by the Greek revolutionaries in Crete somewhat later, in November 1828: "We are not enemies of the Turks, nor of their religion. We are indifferent to one's personal beliefs. We don't seek to persecute anyone but to change merely the conduct of government. What we are after is justice; what we want is to secure one's dignity, life and property. We can't bow the neck any longer . . ."; see Manos Vourliotis, "I epanastasi stin Kriti (1825-1830). Ena anekdoto cheirografo," in *Apo to 1821 sto 2012*, ed. Martha Pylia (Athens: Vivliorama, 2012), 108.

66
Stefanos Katsikas, *Islam and Nationalism in Modern Greece, 1821–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 41.

67
Cf. Lucien Frary, "The Orthodox Church," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary,* ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides and Constantinos Tsoukalas (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2021), 486. Interestingly, the title of this proclamation seems to be in dialogue with a line of *Hellenic Nomarchy* where Anonymous the Hellene reproached the preachers in church: " 'In church why do preachers never mention the maxim 'Fight for faith and country' . . . why do they never point to the examples set by Themistocles, by Aristides, by Socrates and the myriad other virtuous and wise men . . . ?" Anonymous the Hellene, *Elliniki Nomarchia*, 174.

68
Maurizio Isabella, "Citizens or Faithful?", 555–78.

Fig. 1. Ary Scheffer, *Les femmes souliotes*, 1827. Oil on canvas. Paris, Louvre Museum. Source of the photo: Ary Scheffer Museum. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 2. Ary Scheffer, *Les femmes souliotes*, ca. 1826. Oil on canvas [preparatory sketch]. Reims, Musée des beaux-arts de Reims. Photograph © Christian Devleeschauwer. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 3. Ary Scheffer, *Les femmes souliotes*. Oil on canvas [preparatory sketch]. Source of the photo: Ader, *Dessins, miniatures & tableaux anciens*, mardi 4 mai 2021 [auction catalog], accessed 1st December 2023, https://www.gazette-drouot.com/telechargement/catalogue?venteId=113659.

and both "foreigners" and Greeks were regarded as equals in the eyes of the law. The constitution of Troezen in 1827 loosened the knot of citizenship and Christianity by facilitating the acquisition of Greek citizenship for "foreigners." Although it was not explicitly stated, this constitution effectively eliminated religious requirements for citizenship. Moreover, it took a brave step in reducing Church power in insurgent Greece by preventing lower clergy from holding public office.[69]

In spite of the Patriarchal effort to defuse any revolutionary activity, those who initially embraced the revolution, including bishops and parish priests, understood that faith and war participation went hand in hand on the road toward independence. The ceremonial act of blessing the arms and the banners of the revolutionaries took place in almost every location in Greece that rose up in revolt, becoming thus an integral part of the Greek "revolutionary script."[70] Historians doubt whether the ritual ever happened at the monastery of Hagia Lavra, where the archbishop of the Old Patras Germanos allegedly blessed the flag of the rebels, thus igniting the war in the Morea[71] as Greek public history has it today. But the ritual did happen in Kalamata, in Patras and numberless other spots throughout Greece during March and April 1821. In the Aegean, religious ceremonies also took place on every island that had joined the uprising and where the clergy made sermons and blessed vessels before the captains and their crew departed on missions.[72] In Kalamata, two dozen priests held a liturgy before five thousand armed Greek Christians, who were about to fight for first time in their lives on 23th March 1821. In his memoirs, Kolokotronis solemnly recalled how the crowd was gathered by the river of Kalamata while the priests led public prayers.[73] Modes and styles of ceremony and ritual, such as raising the flag or banner, public worship, and processions were sometimes orchestrated and formally structured, such as the one hundred young men of Hydra who carried in procession a flag to be blessed by the island's archpriest.[74] Other times the ceremonial content and sequence was improvised in situ by the local leader(s) of the revolution. Here individual choices, perceptions, emotions, and beliefs were crucial for the outcome. Lykourgos Logothetis, for instance, the local leader of the island of Samos, thought it expedient to make an appearance before the insurgent Samiots with an ancient Greek helmet on his head, the culmination of a sequence of ceremonial acts that had commenced with a candle-lit liturgy and flag raising. Apparently, there are several layers of interpretation of this scene because a candle-lit liturgy

69 Doxiadis, "Defining a Hellene," 157; cf. also Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks,* 86.

70 For the term see Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein, "Introduction," in *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions*, ed. Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 1–21.

71 As it appears, the scene never actually happened but rather stemmed from the narrative of the French traveler and diplomat Pouqueville (1824) and its subsequent illustration by philhellenic artists; see Christina Koulouri, *Historical Memory in Greece, 1821–1930: Performing the Past in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2023), 38.

72 Frary, "The Orthodox Church," 489.

73 Theodoros Kolokotronis, *Diigisis symvanton tis ellinikis phylis apo ta 1770 eos ta 1836. Ypagoreuse o Theodoros Kolokotronis*, ed. Georgios Tertsetis (Athens: Ch. N. Philadelpheus, 1846), 52.

74 Nikolaos Spiliadis, *Apomnimoneumata, itoi Istoria tis Epanastaseos ton Ellinon* (Athens: Institouto anaptyxis Charilaos Trikoupis, 2007), 1:102.

in the Orthodox church is organised to celebrate Christ's resurrection at Easter—and in this case the resurrection of the nation—while wearing the helmet would be to emphasise Greek continuity.[75] Flags and banners played a key role in those instances and though decorative motifs spanned from the pagan past (e.g., the owl of Minerva denoting wisdom, the phoenix denoting regeneration) to Christian iconography (e.g., military saints like St George), the most common motif to appear on Greek revolutionary flags was the symbol of the cross. The cross-upon-crescent complex, inspired by the Friendly Society, was standard among the motifs decorating the Greek flags at sea. As for land flags, with a few words in his usual stiff prose, Kolokotronis concludes in his memoirs with the description of the aforementioned scene by the river of Kalamata: "Right away, I had two flags cut from cloth with the cross [sewn thereon] and we set off."[76]

75 Michael B. Sakellariou, *Enas syntagmatikos dimokratis igetis kata tin epanastasi tou '21. O G. Logothetis Lykourgos tis Samou* (Heraklion: PEK, 2014), 29.

76 Kolokotronis, *Diigisis*, 52.

Imbrication with Nationalism

Before the war, as we have seen, various paragons of the Greek nationalist movement were highly critical of the clergy and the monks for cultural and political reasons. They were wrong. In the Morea and mainland Greece, the monks did support the revolution through taking care of the wounded and providing food, gunpowder, and ammunition, or even through fighting on the battlefield. Many of them met with a cruel fate at the hands of the Ottomans.[77] Ever within the reach of peasants, monasteries were beacons of faith, channels of traditional learning, and fountains of prophetic and apocalyptic expectations. Priests, for their part, would accompany the Greek troops, playing an important role in maintaining the fighters' morale or in joining the fray as combatants. They would lead the soldiers' prayers on the eve of battles and hold thanksgiving liturgies thereafter. Most of them had the same background as the peasants and shared with them more or less the same feelings, sorrows, and aspirations. They too had been brought up too through prophecies and oracles in the hope of "casting off the infidel dynast" and of founding something of a Christian state.[78] The low-rank clergy and the monks had barely grasped the pre-war rift of the church with Greek nationalists and intellectual-enlighteners. In the case of the higher clergy, however, the picture was undoubtedly more complex. Being a formal institution of the Ottoman empire, the Ecumenical Patriarchate had to make sure that Orthodox Christians remained faithful to the Sultan to whom Providence had entrusted the Orthodox flock because it had sinned. However, predicting the end of the Ottomans—that is, predicting the end of Islam itself—was a temptation hard to resist, even for the top rank of the Orthodox clergy. In 1657, the Ecumenical Patriarch Parthenius III was hanged for making oracular references to the end of Islam and the revival of Christian domination in one of his letters intercepted by the Ottoman authorities.[79] Among the scrutinisers of prophetic and apocalyptic scriptures, there existed ample room for top clergymen. Some might have treated it as an outlet of anti-Ottoman feelings and others might have simply realised that there was nothing wrong in believing that the "Hagarenes" were destined to lose their world-renowned empire through the very same means they had gained it: the will of Providence.

Of course, these considerations were not enough to align the Orthodox prelates with the revolution. On the contrary, a sizeable part thereof felt uncomfortable and likely desperate on learning the news of the war. Some were arrested and put to death: this is what happened to Gregory V and seven synodic prelates in Constantinople. The same thing happened in

77 Frary, "The Orthodox Church," 489; see further, Charles Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821–1852* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

78 Phokion Kotzageorgis, "Clergymen," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary,* ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides and Constantinos Tsoukalas (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2021), 344.

79 Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day* (London: Phoenix, 2003), 78.

Cyprus to the archbishop Kyprianos and the metropolitans, as happened in Crete and elsewhere in the empire as part of the Ottoman reprisals. Others were incarcerated, likely tortured, but managed to survive: eight metropolitans, for example, were imprisoned in Tripolitsa, the Ottoman capital of the Morea, three of whom survived and were freed by Kolokotronis's troops in September 1821. The survivors had no other choice but to throw in their lot with the revolution. By contrast, another part of the top clergy did align itself with the revolution from the very beginning—recent research suggests they were far more numerous than those who harboured reservations at the start of the war.[80] These clergymen went on to take political initiatives behind the line of fire and/or join the military campaigns on the front. Few were motivated by liberal ideals, more entertained patriotic feelings in the broadest sense, and some saw in the war a chance to politically advance themselves. To all of them, however, this was a war of religion. On 25th March 1821, the archbishop of Old Patras Germanos at the head of a peasant army pitched a banner with the cross on the slopes of Patras, thereby making the city the epicentre of the uprising and himself the temporary leader of the Greek camp. On their march to Patras the peasants had chanted "Freedom, freedom in the name of Christ" as their war cry[81] and sung psalms. Kyrillos, bishop of Aigina, called upon the clergy of the islands Hydra, Spetses, and Poros to lead the war against the Muslims, promising salvation to those who fell in the sacred struggle.[82] Ioannikios bishop of Lidoriki in mainland Greece asked his flock to take revenge for the hanging of Patriarch Gregory V,[83] while another fiery archimandrite urged the insurgents ". . . to imitate Moses who triumphed over the Egyptians and Joshua who won the Amalekites and kill the blood-thirsty usurpers of the throne of Constantine," implying the Ottomans.[84] Orthodox religious discourse became imbricated with patriotism as a result of actively confronting the Ottoman Muslims on the battlefield. There were several modes of imbricating religion with patriotism for which the peasant troops were responsible as much as the insurgent clergy.

To embolden themselves on the battlefield, Greek fighters regularly chanted hymns or used "sacred" war cries. This did not go unnoticed by the Ottomans. Kaboutli Vasfi Effendi, an Ottoman irregular who left a valuable account of his military action in Greece, noted that Greeks during combat appealed often to the Cross or recited verses from the Gospel.[85] The Christian prayer "Lord have mercy" (in Greek: *Kyrie eleison*) had been used as a war cry since Byzantine times,[86] and it was still in use up to the 1820s to invoke both God's mercy and God's wrath.[87] The introit of the exaltation of the Cross—"Save oh Lord Thy people / and bless Thine dispensation / grant victories unto [our] kings over the barbarians / and by the power of Thy Cross / preserve Thy habitation"—was sung as something of a "national anthem" in Byzantium and is still often heard in the Orthodox liturgy; it enjoyed a great vogue in the uprising.[88] On 27th March 1821, when Ypsilantis declared the war in Bucharest, the introit of the exaltation of the Cross was sung along with other psalms ("Your grace shone up oh Lord . . ."), followed by the patriotic songs of Rigas Velestinlis, as a priest was offering prayers for the revolutionaries and was blessing their arms and banners in public.[89] In the same vein, the monks of Ithaca welcomed Lord Byron in 1823 with the apparently self-made chant "Christ has risen to elevate the cross and trample on the crescent in our beloved Greece."[90]

80 Kotzageorgis "Clergymen," 336.

81 Joseph Stefanini, *The Personal Sufferings of J. Stefanini* (New York: Vanderpool & Cole, 1829), 50, cited in Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 74.

82 Frary, "The Orthodox Church," 489.

83 Cited in Varvarigos, *Thriskeia kai thriskeutiki zoi*, 69.

84 Varvarigos, *Thriskeia kai thriskeutiki zoi*, 69, note 230.

85 Respectively, Ottoman troopers cited from the Quran; see Sophia Laiou and Marinos Saryiannis, "To apomnimoneuma os autoprosopi afigisi. Ta keimena tou Moraiti Yousouf Bey kai tou Kaboutli Vasfi Efenti," in *1821 kai apomnimoneuma. Istoriki chrisi kai istoriografiki gnosi (praktika synderiou)*, ed. Dimitris Dimitropoulos et al. (Athens: Idryma tis voulis ton Ellinon, 2020), 226.

86 John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565-1204* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 24.

87 Traian Stoianovich, "Prospective: Third and Fourth Levels of History," in Traian Stoianovich, *Between East and West: The Balkan and the Mediterranean Worlds*, vol. 4, *Material Culture and Mentalités: Land, Sea, Destiny* (New Rochelle-New York: A. D. Caratzas, 1995), 107.

88 In his *Brotherly Instruction*, Korais cited the verses of this troparion in full, suggesting implicitly that it refers to the reversal of status of the Ottoman-ruled Greeks. See Korais, *Adelphiki didaskalia*, 44.

89 Elias Photeinos, *Oi athloi tis en Vlachia Ellinikis Epanastaseos to 1821 etos* (Leipzig: n.e., 1846), 73–74.

90 Edward John Trelawny, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, ed. Edward Dowden (London: Humphrey Milford, 1941), 138.

Before the war, the Friendly Society had pushed for the publication of a booklet of prayers for the use of the Greek revolutionary troops. The prayers asked God to protect the leader of the revolution and grant victory to his Christian army: "Let us pray to Lord for the most pious and philochristos Prince, Commissioner General of the Greek and Orthodox nation, Alexandros Constantinos Ypsilantis."[91] Yet more importantly, the prayers were meant to be recounted as parts of the Orthodox liturgy—not as individual prayers. Further on, the prayers ask God to grant victories and glory to "our cross-bearer Prince" and to deploy his army against the enemies "who cannot stand facing the Cross," thereby implicitly equating Muslims with demons.[92] Nationalists couch their ideals in the language and imagery of faith, yet the language and imagery are not foreign to them. They might lean towards radical Enlightenment, political classicism, secularism, atheism or deism, like Korais himself did, yet their beliefs and practices don't cease to be informed by tradition in one way or another.[93] They might be contesting and negotiating the religious values of their time but in doing so they don't necessarily turn out to become atheists or agnostics. In fact, they undergo transition themselves as individuals as much as their societies do. Hence, not infrequently, they strive to find an accommodation between religious and patriotic values not only to mobilise the constituencies singled out as the "national community" but also because they have not entirely forsaken their own religious attachments for new ideologies. Take for example Alexandros Ypsilantis, who chose to unleash the independence war in the Principalities on a day of religious significance. This is at least what he concedes in his private correspondence:

> "My brother [=comrade] Stamatis Koubaris! The time is ripe; the hour has come . . . on the first Sunday of the Holy Lent, on the so-called Sunday of Orthodoxy, I will raise in Jassy the flag of freedom for our homeland . . ."[94]

Contemporary historians may write about Ypsilantis's crossing of the river Pruth and the declaration of the Greek war of independence, but they usually miss the fact that the leader of the Greek revolution in the Principalities did, in fact, declare war on a day of religious celebration. From the believer's viewpoint, action on a day of religious significance would strengthen the plea for God's intercession in the critical undertaking, thus increasing the stakes for success. Had Alexandros Ypsilantis ceased to be a believer as he ferried his revolutionaries across the river? Coming from a different walk of life than that of the Phanariot Ypsilantis, the brave but controversial Greek military leader Gogos Bakolas, attributed the victory he won on a Friday to the intercession and help of the second-century Christian martyr and saint Paraskevi (Parasceva), whose name is identical to the word "Friday" in Greek:

> "I crossed myself and with the help of Saint Paraskevi I killed three thousand Turks with merely sixty comrades in the battle of Stavros and then again [I won] on the day of Saint Paraskevi with one hundred and fifty comrades—that is double the number before—in the battle of Lagada."[95]

Victory would afford troops and leaders the chance to revisit religious ceremony and ritual so as to express their thanks and praises to God. In this light, it is not without importance that Kolokotronis chose to celebrate one of his victories through fasting:

91
[Anonymous], *Synaptai, kai ekteneis, legomenai en kairo polemou* . . . (Jassy: en ti elliniki typographia, 1821) [facsimile reprint by the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece, Athens 1971], 3. The title "Prince" alludes to Ypsilantis's Phanariot family background. It is also important that their original version of the booklet had been Russian, just like Ypsilantis's former military career.

92
[Anonymous], *Synaptai, kai ekteneis,* 5. The Greek term used in the text is "Σταυροφόρος," which literally means "cross-bearer" but also means "crusader," thereby adding semantic value to the sentence.

93
Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism*, 109–10.

94
Unpublished manuscript of Stamatis Koubaris in Sakellarios G. Sakellariou, *Philiki Etaireia* (Odessa: n.e., 1909), 72.

95
See Nikolaos Kasomoulis, *Enthymimata Stratiotika tis Epanastaseios ton Ellinon, 1821–1833*, ed. Giannis Vlachogiannis (Athens: n.e., 1939), 1:221. In both cases the battle appears to have taken place on a Friday; see Kasomoulis, *Enthymimata Stratiotika tis Epanastaseios ton Ellinon,* 1: note 3, 221.

> "That day [when the battle at Vasilika was won] was Friday and I said that everyone must fast to offer praise to God for the day, and for the victory too, and that it must be praised for the ages of ages, so far as the nation stands up alive, because [that day] meant freedom for the fatherland."[96]

Friday is traditionally a day of fasting for the Orthodox church and Kedourie would have argued here for the "transvaluation of values" and the politicisation of religion.[97] However, the frame of reference of Kolokotronis's thought and action in the case under consideration did not cease to be religious; it was merely expanded to encompass the new meanings brought about by the novel ideology of nationalism. Instead of the politicisation of religion, what one observes in the cases discussed here is the sacralisation of politics.

Nowhere is the sacralisation of the Greek revolution more evident than in the sanctity attributed to the patriots who fell in the war. The glory of self-sacrifice and the idea of overcoming death through posterity are basic elements of nationalist values, myth, and imagery, and the classical past is replete with exemplary individuals who had laid down their own lives, from philosophers like Socrates to generals like Leonidas. Religion, however, purveyed another legacy of exemplary individuals, one focused less on sages and heroes and more on martyrs and saints. This legacy could be held up to reinforce, and frame, the *exempla virtutis* of ancient Greece. Although of Judeo-Christian origin, this frame of reference had parallels in Islam. In this light, it was sanctity that withstood the powers of death. It may be surprising but the first one who framed the execution of Rigas Velestinlis in terms of martyrdom and sanctity was none other than Korais. In his *Brotherly Instruction*, the intellectual leader of the Greek national movement characterised Rigas and his comrades as "martyrs of freedom," lamenting over their "blessed soul" [*makaria psyche*] and their "innocent blood."[98] Writing shortly after the war the judge and intellectual Georgios Tertsetis referred to the fallen patriots as "soldiers of Christ," describing their bodies as "holy relics."[99] Sacralisation, furthermore, purveyed modes of commemoration and ritual focused on veneration and mass reverence. Thus, Lord Byron in the besieged Missolonghi:

> ". . . went to the church dressed in a Greek manner . . . and when the liturgy ended . . . the bishop handed him a sword . . . and Byron wanted to sacralise the sword by leaving it upon the tomb of Marcos Botsaris. The bishop and all the people followed him . . ."[100]

What is subject to veneration in the scene is less the personality of a hero, the fearless Souliot leader Botsaris who had fallen for insurgent Greece and made a name for himself across Europe, and more that of a saint: an individual whom the community has set apart from ordinary men and endowed with supernatural, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities[101]—hence the alleged sacralisation of Byron's sword. Evidently, during the war, death in action was turned into martyrdom for both faith and country. Orthodoxy has a rich tradition of neomartyrs or new martyrs; that is, of men and women who lost their lives at the hands of Muslim Ottomans for refusing to convert to Islam, who unequivocally provided the role model.[102] In his memoirs Fotakos, the man who served Kolokotronis as an aide-de-camp, tells of a moving scene in the aftermath of a bloody battle involving one of his men who remains unnamed:

96 Kolokotronis, *Diigisis*, ιζ'.

97 See the Introduction in Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*, 1–147.

98 "Now [Rigas and comrades] may be standing shackled before the tyrant, those brave martyrs of freedom. Now the executioner's axe may be falling upon their sacred heads and the bold Greek blood may be pouring out of their veins, their blessed soul may be flying high above so that to join the souls of all those [men] of everlasting renown who gave their lives for freedom. Yet the spilling out of this innocent blood . . ."; see Korais, *Adelphiki didaskalia,* IV-V. In terms of imagery and symbolism, Korais here draws equally on religious and civic traditions.

99 In his introduction to the memoirs of Kolokotronis; see Kolokotronis, *Diigisis*, ι΄; Cf. also, ζ'.

100 Koumas, *Oi Ellines*, 647.

101 Joep Leerssen quoting Max Weber on charisma; see Joep Leerssen, "Sacral States: The Politics of Worship, Religious and Secular," in *The Great Immortality: Studies on European Cultural Sainthood*, ed. Marijan Dović and Jón Karl Helgason (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 25.

102 Nomikos Michael Vaporis, *Witnesses for Christ: Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period, 1437-1860* (St Vladimir's Seminary, 2000). For a background of Christian neomartyrdom before the rise of the Ottomans, see Christian C. Sahner, *Christian Martyrs under Islam Religious Violence and the Making of the Muslim World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). Comparatively, for the concepts of martyr and martyrdom from the viewpoint of Ottoman Islam, see Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1938).

> "He came to me in tears and said behold! Here is the head of my brother. Then I said to him, don't cry for your brother is now a saint and there's now a saint descending from your family. Go now, find his body and bury it."[103]

What the war itself had effected was a remarkable shift from the personality cult of a given hero-saint to the cult of the unnamed masses of fallen patriots who were endowed with the aura of saintly charisma, thereby providing inspiration to society and a lasting reservoir of moral pride for the generations to come.

Conclusions

The Patriarchal anathema on the Greek Revolution, the republican anti-clericalism of a sizeable part of the Greek nationalist movement, and the clash of religious and secular ideas before the independence war did not usher in the detachment of large groups of Greeks from religious values and practices, nor did they help to forge a Greek national identity with anti-Christian and anti-Church characteristics. Religion came to meet patriotism within the bosom of the Friendly Society as the movement for Greek independence enjoyed wider social dissemination and faced increasing membership demands. Once the war broke out, nationalism and religion overlapped and reinforced each other in multiple ways. The agents of imbrication between the two were, on the one hand, the political and military leaders of the insurgents and, on the other, the clergy and monks who had aligned themselves with the Greek cause. Actively confronting the Muslims as enemies brought them together and transformed them both. The tie between nationality and faith, hammered out successively by the Greek constitution of 1822 and that of 1823, was but one means of sacralising the Greek revolution. The others involved religiously induced violence, modes of ceremony and ritual focused on veneration and mass reverence, production of new religious literature adjusted to war purposes, action on days of religious significance, religious rites and celebrations for patriotic purposes, transfer of religious practices (hymn chanting) and concepts (martyrdom) to the war culture and, finally, the quasi-sanctification of the bodies of the fallen patriots. The sacralisation of the revolutionary process forged a liturgical-collective commitment to the values of the nation. Within this frame of reference, agonistic valour sprung from faith, self-sacrifice for the community was endowed with awe and reverence, while death radiated powerfully the belief in resurrection and regeneration both individual and collective.

103 Photios Chrysanthopoulos, *Apomnimoneumata peri tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos* (Athens: Sakellariou, 1858), 105–6, cf. 126.