

Historein

Vol 21, No 1 (2023)

Where was 1821? Space and Territory in the Greek Revolution



Islands on Fire?

Sakis Gekas

doi: [10.12681/historein.24161](https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.24161)

Copyright © 2024, Sakis Gekas



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

To cite this article:

Gekas, S. (2023). Islands on Fire? Navigating Ambiguity and Space during the 1821 Greek Revolution in the Aegean Sea. *Historein*, 21(1). <https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.24161>



**Islands on Fire?
Navigating Ambiguity and
Space during the 1821 Greek
Revolution in the Aegean Sea**

Sakis Gekas

doi: 10.12681/historein.24161

To cite this article:

Gekas, Sakis. 2023. "Islands on Fire? Navigating Ambiguity and Space during the 1821 Greek Revolution in the Aegean Sea". *Historein* 21 (1).
<https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.24161>.

Islands on Fire? Navigating Ambiguity and Space during the 1821 Greek Revolution in the Aegean Sea

Sakis Gekas

York University

Jules Verne's most "Greek" book, *The Archipelago on Fire* (*L'Archipel en Feu*, 1884), was a great childhood read that introduced me to the mysterious world of Aegean pirates during the Greek Revolution but, most importantly, offered a refreshing alternative to the conventional school narrative.¹ The bicentennial anniversary of the revolution has confirmed popular impressions that islands played a major role as the fire raged for years; Hydra, Spetses and Psara, were the home islands of famous admirals (Miaoulis, Kanaris, Tombazis, Sachtouris), several protagonists of the revolution (Kountouriotis, Orlandos, Louriotis) and hundreds of sailors who fought on ships but also on land. To what extent though were the "archipelago" and its islands really on fire? This article focuses on some aspects of the fascinating histories of islands in the Aegean Sea to begin answering the question, drawing on documents of the time and histories of the revolution, to show that there was no uniform "management" of the space claimed by the revolutionary agents, as they tried to navigate the inherent ambiguity built into a revolutionary situation. The different agents at play expressed often conflicting needs, negotiated power relations, economic interests, and demonstrated different capabilities that conceptualised space in diverging ways. In this way, the article follows the interesting "turns" in the history of the revolution, the "conceptual or political turn" and the "spatial" turn.²

Twenty years ago, Spyros Asdrachas alerted Greek historians about the "paradox of an absence", meaning the lack of interest in the seminal event of the revolution; Christos Loukos was even more low-spirited, marking the descent from "relegation to silence".³ The 200th anniversary of the Greek Revolution seems to have changed all that: it has stimulated a search for new archival material and new interpretations, has advanced broad dissemination of digitised research findings and sources and has inspired attempts to draw connections and comparisons between the Greek and other revolutions in a global context, a quest long overdue. Amid this fervour, it is important to recognise the richness of the event in its regional diversity and the role of islands in the course of the revolution. For many people who lived on the Aegean islands – as well as on the mainland, the Peloponnese and Continental Greece (Rumelia) – the revolution remained a contingent situation for years; the revolution suffered major setbacks in 1825–1827 and the state in the making went through several stages of autonomy, from a tributary state to a form of

protectorate to three European powers, to an independent state under a governor, and finally a monarchy. During a dynamic and often ambiguous revolutionary situation such as that in the Aegean in the 1820s, perceptions and policies about which islands were part of the revolutionary project and could be trusted to deliver revenue to serve the revolutionary war changed several times.

The article focuses on the dynamics of the revolution, the changing perceptions of space in the archipelago of the Aegean Sea as soon as the revolution broke out.⁴ For islanders, the regime of limited autonomy they enjoyed during the Ottoman period was the norm. Ambiguity characterised many Aegean islands since at least the Ottoman conquest in the sixteenth century;⁵ the islands' fortunes during the revolution were, to a large extent, the result of their status during the period of Ottoman rule. The formation and role of the pre-revolutionary island Communities, those elite institutional representatives of the islands' population, continued to play a role in the post-revolution politics in many islands. There is an extensive insular literature on the Aegean under Ottoman rule, especially between the sixteenth and eighteenth century, that this article cannot cover; in fact, the most interesting and "revolutionary" aspect of the revolution is precisely the upsetting of established social and political norms and institutions of Ottoman times. The article, instead of offering any conclusions, invites a historiographical rethinking of the ways people on the Aegean islands experienced the revolution and suggests ways to begin answering questions about loyalty and legitimacy, about how the islanders reacted to the shockwaves of the revolution and navigated through the ambiguity that prevailed.⁶

There were islands in the Dodecanese where the revolution acquired a foothold, such as Kasos, Leros and Patmos, and islands (Rhodes, Lesbos, Limnos) that saw no insurgency, as the population did not dare or were unwilling to join. Generally, people who lived in the Cyclades and Sporades, and on Chios, Samos, Crete, were affected directly. Documents of the Archives of National Regeneration (Αρχαίον Ελληνικής Παλιγγενεσίας) reflect the contradictions agents of the revolution faced, when they arrived to sometimes enthusiastic, but often neutral and sometimes outright hostile islands. To better understand the diversity of experience, we need to alternate the scale of analysis between the most spatially specific (the politics on particular islands) to the most spatially diffuse (the politics of the provisional government).⁷

Insularity and revolution

The history of seas, "oceanic histories"⁸ and the study of insularity, have attracted the interest of few Greek historians, despite the obvious significance of the islands for the history of the Greek revolution.⁹ Asdrachas introduced *nisiotismos*, the "islandism" or "insularity" in its literal sense to historiography,¹⁰ but did not elaborate on how islands

experienced the revolution. Unlike the booming historiography of the Caribbean during the age of revolutions (1789–1815),¹¹ the Aegean has not attracted the same interest by historians of the Mediterranean, including Greek historians, a landscape that will change given the ongoing bicentennial research projects. The distinction between islandness and insularity has been likened to the difference between space and territory.¹² If insularity could mean isolation, it was also a condition of multiple possibilities.¹³ The different conceptions of territorial boundaries that existed in the mind of Rigas Velestinlis were frustrated at the end of the nine-year war in 1830.¹⁴ When Kapodistrias arrived, much of the ambiguity and the fog that still veiled the revolution was lifted on another island; during the Conference of Poros, in September 1828, Kapodistrias tried – and failed – to achieve a Greek state with Crete and Samos within its borders.¹⁵

One collection of essays placed the revolution in the context of the competition of foreign powers.¹⁶ If the Greek Revolution was a European event,¹⁷ we need to rethink its history as the culmination of changes introduced during the Napoleonic Wars. An island history of the Greek Revolution offers insights into the history of state formation in the region. Some of the game-changing events of the revolution took place in the sea around (and on the islands of) Chios, Samos, Psara, Kasos, Crete as well as in the Ionian Sea, that this article has to leave aside. In the end, it was the foreign powers that decided the borders and indeed which islands would become part of Greece, leaving Samos, Crete and many more islands out from the Greek Kingdom for another 80 years. Beginning in 1800 and the creation of the Septinsular Republic, continuing in 1815 when the British protectorate of the Ionian State was established, and ending in 1834 with the formation of the Principality of Samos, the period saw a number of state models that emerged in the Ionian and Aegean archipelagos; these were island states, autonomous island regions, while plans for semi-independent islands circulated before the 1830 London Protocol, which fixed the borders without of course ending the conflict over them.¹⁸

When the war broke out, some people expressed their consent or discontent to the representatives of the provisional government; some joined enthusiastically, others protested, and many in the end consented to a national context that aspired first of all to gain legitimacy and to reduce the ambiguity that skyrocketed during the war. The islands were a *patria* (*patris*) that during the war became a battle zone, a place of refuge, a space of retribution and suffering and a territory of contested power. Islandness and insularity – strictly speaking the condition of being an island – shaped the lives of people who lived on islands, by definition vulnerable and susceptible to external forces, and often forced them to move and settle on an island during the war. This is not to say that villages and civilians in the Peloponnese or Rumelia did not suffer the consequences of war, especially during Ibrahim's campaign; but such a comparison would be beyond the scope of this article.

The revolution's new configuration of the Aegean space

It has been argued that three “structural factors” had to be in place for the revolution to erupt: “ideas that challenged the status quo and provided an alternative vision”, the “leadership cadre” to disseminate the ideas to the population and to mobilise them, and the “mass discontent with the current situation”;¹⁹ while this is true for the revolution in general, the Aegean islands shared none of the three pre-conditions. It is unknown to what extent ideas for an alternative vision for any of the islands’ future circulated widely, even in Spetses and Hydra; there was hardly a “leadership cadre”, since most island notables were reluctant to join the revolution, as is evident in the severe difficulties to form a united front and submit personal and local loyalties and agendas to a centralising leadership. Lastly, there was far from “mass discontent” in those islands of the Ottoman Empire that were privileged enough to be exempted from heavy taxation and enjoyed a regime of limited autonomy anyway, much more in mainland areas. Even islands such as Tinos – one of the most populated of the Aegean with 28,000 people before the war – had only one or two Ottoman officials, an aga for collecting taxes once a year. Population estimates for the period before the revolution estimate the population of Hydra at 16,000, of Samos at 25,000, of Santorini at 17,000, of Andros at 16,000, of Naxos at 13,000 and the much more populated islands of Crete at 160,000 and Chios at 120,000.²⁰ Although the war of independence did not spontaneously break out and there was some preparation by the Filiki Etairia,²¹ on the majority of the Aegean islands, such as Hydra, most people were not only unprepared, but were either surprised, reluctant to join or both. Still, once the revolution broke out, a new administrative configuration emerged in the Aegean.

Revolutions during the Napoleonic period in the Caribbean and the Atlantic led to the emergence of “patriotic localisms and centralism”.²² In the Aegean, sovereignty and boundaries between political communities and state authorities changed radically during the revolution. This reconfiguration of the political space intensified during the revolution between the islands’ new (revolutionary) and old (Ottoman) central authority; between different factions within the islands, and among the islands that were often found competing in the period before but also during the revolution (Samos vs Psara and Hydra vs Spetses, for example). The role of Hydra, Spetses and Psara in the revolution is, of course, legendary; given their central role in the outbreak, defence and persistence of it, it is not surprising that there are both hagiographies and also (a few) books that critically examine the divisions among the three islands.²³ Their contribution was elevated to the pedestal of national pride already during and immediately after the revolution, highlighting the sacrifices and overlooking the more divisive role of the Hydriot – especially – elite and its grip on Aegean islands including Syros and its Catholic population.²⁴ The role of the three islands reverberated also in the conflict over how much compensation they would receive for their

“services” to the revolution and in the insurgency against Kapodistrias, with Hydra as its hotbed.²⁵

The Aegean was not unified either before the revolution nor in the ways in which the Greek provisional government conceived the administration of its islands; the new authority borrowed a structure from the Napoleonic administrative system. The regions that were designed in 1822–1823 formed around various centres, while the Saronic islands did not form part of the Aegean Islands administration. Islands were integrated into the revolutionary government’s ambitions due to the necessity to collect taxes to fund the war; therefore fiscal claims to territory were closely linked to political ones. By giving island notables (*dimogerontes*) authority over affairs beyond the collection of taxes, the provisional government sought to replace Ottoman authority. The collection of taxes and custom duties created tensions and conflict within islands as well as between the islands and the provisional government seeking to achieve legitimacy. The tax hierarchy on the islands did not change, but the use of the revenue collected and those who claimed it did.

As was the case for many Aegean islands, the period of the revolution was a period of intense mobility and increased insecurity, adding to the pre-revolutionary volatile and dangerous conditions that piracy generated. The Greek fleet was the bloodline of the revolution at sea, fragmented as it was into island and even captain-based loyalties, operating on the principle of payment in advance. The fighting crews operated in different configurations and squadrons, with Hydra, Spetses and, to a lesser extent, Psara, as the leading forces. The experience of islanders during the revolution was marked by ambiguity, which is hardly surprising of course during times of war; this concerns both armed men and civilians, regardless of religion or denomination, just like everywhere in the Ottoman Empire where Christians rebelled or suffered the brunt of Ottoman brutality. Revolutions are ambiguous situations, but ambiguity depends on how the revolutionary crisis emerges and develops until it subsides.²⁶ People switched sides, remained on the side-lines or both and such attitudes were identified decades ago by some historians as “collaboration”.²⁷ Subsequent historians of the revolution avoided the term in search for a more grassroots and diverse understanding of conditions on the ground, explaining why *armatole* warlords capitulated to the Ottoman pashas sent to crush the rebellion.²⁸ For most people who experienced the revolution on the islands from spring 1821 to 1828 – by then the pirates in the Aegean had been crushed – loyalties were fluid, sometimes contradictory and almost always ambivalent. People had to choose sides, often based on personal, and not ideological reasons, as letters from the Aegean Islands sent to the central administration tell.²⁹

Concepts of representation at the time included individual or collective mediation, where *patris* was based on local affinities, *ethnos* assumed a broader understanding of *patris* and to some extent overlapped with *genos*, while *demos* was really the revolutionary-era understanding of who is part of the community.³⁰ It took a while, however, for *demos* to function as the new organising administrative category. The new offices of the *armostis*,

eforos and *eparchos* signified the hierarchy of the new administration, with *armostes* (commissioners) overseeing the islands. With this new institution of *armosteia* and the decree that announced it, the administration aimed to legitimise its authority, but also to raise the money necessary for the war. The sultan's authority was expressed in most islands in the payment of tax and the service of men from some islands to the Ottoman navy and was substituted by paying taxes to the provisional government. A regional seat of power that would be accountable to the government was also necessary and would prove in some ways more challenging than raising the money from the customs and the tithe.³¹ The search for legitimacy was intense from the start, despite the fragmentation of the archipelago space or perhaps because of it; the revolutionary geography included the islands of Leros, Patmos, Kasos and Karpathos, which remained within the purview of the provisional government. For islanders, their *patris* was their island, while in some cases the port town or castle of the island, the *chora*, was distinct from the villages.³² Naxos had such an institutionalised division that transcended Catholic/Orthodox lines. *Europe* seems to be completely absent in the language of the documents examined; for the people of the Roman Catholic rite in Cyclades, "Europe" would probably be France, and the French consul in Smyrna.³³ The revolutionary war produced – even if temporarily – new spatial considerations; at the start of the 1824 campaign, for example, before the advent of Ibrahim's force, Kasos was selected as the island to store biscuit bread for the war in Crete, elevating the island's importance in the war beyond its naval capabilities.³⁴

Historians of the revolution sought to address one of the key questions of the times; why did Hydra, Psara and Spetses join the struggle and take up arms since they had so much to lose?³⁵ The answer is that they did not all immediately endorse the revolutionary call, while victory became the only or at least the best alternative for survival. There is little that was not in doubt, not only during the first few months of the revolution, when many uprisings had been suppressed and independence had been short-lived; instead there was a lot of ambivalence, false information (about the imminent arrival of the Russian fleet for example), during the initial few months and then in the years until the end of the hostilities and the control of the Aegean by the revolutionary fleet.

Ambiguity was prevalent during the war when it came to authority and territory, in what became the political space of the revolutionary period. It was far from certain for instance which islands would end up in the Greek state – assuming that there would be one, the greatest ambiguity of them all; Samos was attacked twice but was defended successfully, affluent Chios was destroyed, mighty Psara and feisty Kasos put up a fight, but they were utterly defenceless and were put to the sword at the beginning of Ibrahim's campaign; this is what revolution meant for thousands of people. Even supposedly impregnable Hydra and the more vulnerable Spetses were threatened during Ibrahim's campaign and would have suffered gravely had Ibrahim not changed his plans to invade the

Morea from Methoni, as Gordon noted. An “on the ground” approach entails “examining how collective political institutions were constituted, negotiated, and contested”, both during the Ottoman period and the period of the revolution.³⁶ Such a grassroots approach to the language developed follows the letters of the provisional government officials that were sent to the Aegean islands; this language did not use the word revolution, perhaps deliberately, in an attempt to avoid associations with the Carbonari and other movements deemed subversive. In summer 1822, the language of *apostasias* (sedition) described those who did not pay taxes to the government and *apostates* as those ringleaders who openly called for the islanders not to pay and incited insubordination. It was not too long before those the Ottomans called seditionists accused others of sedition.³⁷

The people that the provisional government sent to the islands were often entering hostile territory, but elsewhere found enthusiastic supporters. This induced the agents of the provisional government to venture “deep” into the Ottoman “thalassocracy”, such as Patmos, Leros and even Symi, as well as Psara, Kasos and Samos, a hotbed of the rebellion. The Ottoman reaction must have struck fear in the hearts of many, which makes the audacious claims of the revolutionaries in the Aegean even more extraordinary. During the revolution, the Aegean was defined as a national space, setting in motion a “megali idea” at sea, long before the concept had been coined; in a bizarre overlap with present-day borders, Kastellorizo was the island furthest east to be included in the revolutionary territorialisation, not Cyprus, at least not in the documents examined for this article.³⁸

This emerging and reconfigured political geography of the revolution can be seen in the deliberations of the Second National Assembly at Astros; representatives present included nine from Spetses, six from Hydra, Psara and Crete, three from Kasos, two from Poros, Aegina and Trikeri, and a total of 26 from “Santorini”, which included however two from Samos, one from Sifnos, one from Serifos and one from Paros, while the island of origin of the others is unclear.³⁹ The representative of Kea (Tzia) raised objections about the article that tolerated other religions, arguing that it carried the risk that the Orthodox Church could lose the islands of the Aegean.⁴⁰ This was far from the only challenge to the inclusive and pragmatic approach to non-Orthodox Greeks that many of the revolutionary leaders took. Political ideas circulated in the islands and were voiced at the time; in 1823, Kasiots made an impressive plea to the National Assembly in defence of human rights, but also for their island’s contribution to be acknowledged equally with the three “warring islands”.⁴¹ Following the destruction of Kasos, the Greek fleet, comprised of Hydriot ships only, led a campaign “in defence of Kasos” in June 1824. Loyalty was tested once again in 1825, when the government selected some Aegean islands to implement conscription for the first time. The government newspaper reported on several occasions on how well the islands’ societies responded to the move; about 90 men from Kea and an impressive 200 from Andros arrived at Nafplio, while Aegina – “surprisingly” according to the government publication – showed “disobedience”.⁴²

Edward Blaquiére was clear about the seemingly entrenched positions between

Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic islanders: “it is somewhat ludicrous to hear the members of the Greek persuasions called schismatics by their Catholic rivals, while they in their turn regard Catholicism as a complete perversion of Christianity”.⁴³ In fact, there is evidence that Roman Catholics supported the revolution, though not en masse, at least in some islands, such as Syros. In the early and probably rather chaotic stages of the revolution, in January 1822 Collaro, the Catholic bishop of Tinos, commented, “in the dominant anarchy there take place all the disorders imaginable, and all the Catholics groan and suffer”.⁴⁴ The Catholic population of the Cyclades looked up to the French consul at Smyrna, but the correspondence reveals that not everyone who sought protection followed the Catholic rite. On 12 May 1823, the people of Neochori in Naxos sent a letter to the consul requesting his protection and mediation so that the French king would protect them. These were Greek Orthodox, not Roman Catholic, Naxiots requesting protection based on a pre-revolutionary administrative arrangement, as they were “one body together with the community of the Latins of the Castle of this island”.⁴⁵ Such responses raise questions about how “Greek” the Naxiots felt; clearly it was not yet in the national sense. It is possible that their definition of Greekness did not preclude them from seeking the protection of a foreign power. After all, such requests came from the highest ranks of the revolutionaries, especially when the tide turned against them. For several islands at least, especially those with Catholic populations, loyalty was defined by what seemed the rational thing to do in the midst of a sea of uncertainty.

The revolutionaries’ claim to political legitimacy extended to the island of Mytilini, where in April 1822 the interior minister appointed one Lemonis to coordinate with the *eforoi* of Chios, Psara and Samos for the easiest, faster and safest way to liberate the island;⁴⁶ none of this would materialise of course. Further south, the “notables and the rest of the inhabitants of the island of Symi” regretted to write to the war minister that as much as they welcomed the appointed *anteparchos* and heard the letters he had read to them, they could not possibly agree to “raise the flag of freedom” and to contribute to the war, since they were so close to and dependent on Rhodes, which was “able to eliminate us” with its naval power; nonetheless, they did show their support to the government by sending 4,380 piastres.⁴⁷ Patmos’ representatives (*plirexousioi*, *eforoi* and *prokritoi*) showed some support for the revolution, as seen in the certification they provided to some Manuel Hadji Georgiou “as a zealot of our common patria” (*os zilotis tis koinis patridos*).⁴⁸ Even Kastellorizo was dragged into the revolution; Lykourgos Logothetis, the strongman of Samos, invited the captains and shipowners of Kastellorizo, located at a significant distance from his island, to come to Samos with their ships and families as *adelfous* (“brothers”) “regarded not as strangers but as the same compatriots”.⁴⁹ The limits of the provisional government and the reconfiguration of the Aegean space extended to the Dodecanese and even further east; what is surprising is the audacious call of the provisional government to people so blatantly

exposed to the wrath of the Ottoman forces to rise up. Symi remained on “the frontline” (*ellinikai emprosthofylakai*) of the revolution, where the formidable Ibrahim’s enemy fleet was spotted, “consisting of 115 ships and 8,000 troops, 2,000 of which he is considering to disembark in Crete; where they will disembark the rest, only they know; they are considering Hydra and Spetses, and the Peloponnese”.⁵⁰ The national newspaper of the revolution expressed its anxiety on the turn the revolution was about to take.

During the revolution, the fluidity of loyalties derived from decisions based on calculations people made to protect life, families and property. A vocabulary of loyalty reveals the ways in which people navigated the sea of ambiguity during the revolutionary years. In 1824–1825, the revolutionary government passed legislation that forbade Greeks from requesting the protection of foreign consuls or agents to evade the jurisdiction of the Greek government, a law that applied especially to the Greek-speaking Catholics of the Cyclades.⁵¹ These efforts aimed to clear away the clouded ambiguous world of the revolution, inspire loyalty, and generate resources and revenue to continue the war, defend the territory under control, and defeat the Ottoman counterattacks. The Ottoman threat and use of force (in Chios, Kasos and Psara) during Ibrahim’s campaign coerced rather than convinced people to join the revolution and ended the ambiguity regarding their precarious position.

The making of a fiscal space in the Aegean during the revolution

On 22 February 1822, the inhabitants of Leros sent a priest to declare their intention to be acknowledged as “genuine children of our common mother Greece” and appealed to Ypsilantis for some good news and for their heart to “rid itself of the cowardice that has surrounded it”.⁵² “Cowardice” crept into the hearts of the Leros islanders since Greek ships had stopped patrolling the seas; as long as they could be seen, the people had “most brave consciousness” and the enemy had not dared to attack them. When the Greek ships disappeared, the Muslims from Kos and Rhodes sent a note to Leros to capitulate to the Turkish yoke and receive “the so-called *haratzohartia*”.⁵³ Mavrokordatos and Negris sent guidelines to the *armostes* of the islands to appoint locals to collect taxes in the event that they were unable to. In doing so, they should “take care to the greatest extent to stop the passions between Greeks of the eastern and western Church, based on freedom of religion, which the provisional constitution of Greece pledges” and to appoint some of the most “able and sensible” Greeks of the Western Church.⁵⁴

The fiscal needs of the provisional government included the payments of crews. Business-savvy Hydriots and Spetsiots had already calculated by 1822 how much it cost each ship for crew salaries and expenses, accurate enough apparently to be included in the Astros National Assembly.⁵⁵ The budget for 1822 expected an enormous revenue of 7,383,620 piastres from Crete, 446,700 from Evia and 972,400 from all the “free islands of the Aegean Sea”. A vast sum of Cretan revenue was “expected” from olive oil (6.5 million

piasters) while the islands were expected – more realistically – to yield 250,000 from Samos, 100,000 from Tinos, 90,000 from Santorini, 50,000 from Andros, 40,000 from Naxos and Paros, 30,000 from Karpathos and smaller amounts from other islands.⁵⁶ The estimate was probably the result of the intense and often frustrated attempts of government officials to collect the tithe and customs duties of the islands and must have reflected the needs of the revolutionary war rather than the realistic capabilities of the islands to offer such amounts.

By 1822, there were already signs that many islands were refusing to pay. Problems in collecting money emerged in Syros as well, where the port was essential for the collection of custom duties, but the agents of the provisional government were also interested in being seen to function like a state. The appointment of *eparchos* Faziolis caused riots with victims, killed by Hydriot men most likely, who tried to impose authority and collect money to pay for the war expenses.⁵⁷ In Kea, the *anteparchos* arrived on 27 May 1822 and went ahead with the “soul-counting” (*psychometrisis*) and the tithe; while the people were welcoming, they did not contribute anything. Orfanos, the *anteparchos*, appointed three standard officers (*frontistes*, caretakers), one for the “economy”, one for the police and one for the port, but as he lacked instructions he requested clear guidelines so that people of means (*echontes*) would contribute.⁵⁸ Letters from other islands confirm that as soon as representatives reached an island, they summoned “everyone” and read the letters the provisional government had entrusted to them. Next, the *eparchos* or *anteparchos* was obliged to set up the mechanism for collecting taxes but also for imposing order.⁵⁹ Time and again *eparchoi* noted that the absence of ships from Hydra in the waters around the islands was the main reason for the “disrespect” in which Paros inhabitants held the administration and for spreading rumours against it.⁶⁰ The moment people in Milos heard about the Ottoman invasion of the Peloponnese and the “disorder of Greeks”, they were “confused”, requested their tithe back and refused to give cash, arguing that no administration existed and that they no longer wished the revolutionary government commissioners to appear on the islands.⁶¹

Not everyone in the Cyclades had abandoned the offer of protection from France. Hydriot notables, who claimed to speak on behalf of other Aegean islands, sent a letter to the French consul in Smyrna in January 1822, conceding, at what they considered a particularly low point, “that they initially wanted their independence, but seeing the difficulties in the endeavour and pessimistic about the final outcome, as there was no money or support, the wealthy were considering to migrate before the final outcome, which seemed inevitable”.⁶² The wealthy of the islands switched their allegiances and hopes from France to Britain. A similar class-specific response to the course of the revolution in April 1827 saw them purchase properties or opening stores and founding companies in Kythira in collaboration with local merchants. They chose Kythira because of its proximity to the

islands of Hydra and Spetses and because it was part of the British protectorate of the Ionian State. The document concerned sales of ships from Hydriot and Spetsiot shipowners to Kythiran merchants.⁶³ There is little doubt that some wealthy shipowners and merchants were hedging their bets, which was evidence of lack of loyalty or determination but also an expression of a sense of realism about alternatives to a victorious war.

In the second year of the revolution, rumours fuelled fear and ambiguity and elicited various responses from the nascent provisional government officers in the islands. While in Paros the *anteparchos* toured the villages of the island to collect the tithe, he faced considerable difficulties, as he put it, because some “despicable Patriots” were “spreading excessive fear among the inhabitants”, urging them not to submit their tithe; the government official suggested regular communication with three “messenger ships” that would travel to the Cyclades and Sporades.⁶⁴ The following day the *anteparchos* of Milos sent note that the captain of a French brig informed him of a large fleet and army in Crete, from where he had sailed, news that “spread fear in our island and there is no doubt that fear will spread generally in the islands”.⁶⁵ The same rumours led the Patriot villagers to refuse to pay any taxes, claiming that they had to buy gunpowder to protect themselves; the news of an Egyptian fleet outside Milos turned out to be false but destructive nonetheless for the attempts of the *eparchos* to raise taxes. On Milos, inhabitants had declared their allegiance to the *armostes* of the islands in May of the same year, outlining how they read to the whole population the “monetary needs of the *Genos*” and promised to send what was requested: “We desire our freedom, our security, not only of our islands but of all Greece.”⁶⁶ On 7 June 1822, the Tinos *eparchos* took up the suggestion to introduce regular correspondence and communication between the islands and the government, accusing the Paros “Greek-hating, Latin-Greek” Catholic population of spreading fear, rumours and fostering cowardice.⁶⁷ Representatives of the revolutionary government sought to convince (some) Catholics on the islands to respond to the government’s demands for taxes and to inform the government about potential threats such as the sailing of the Egyptian fleet and about the troublemakers circulating around the islands and spreading rumours. Getting information was crucial and the fastest routes were the maritime ones; this is why islands and their surveillance was crucial for the war effort. Appointed officials had every reason to treat some of the inhabitants of the islands with suspicion. The politics of Orthodox-Catholic populations and the ambiguous stance of their Catholic populations aimed to avoid Ottoman attacks, averting social unrest of the uprising and stemming the heavy taxation of the revolutionary authorities.⁶⁸

The experience of the Catholics of Chios is rarely mentioned, presumably because of their small numbers, but there were a few thousand of them on the island before the destruction of April 1822. An American newspaper published an extract from a private letter, dated Smyrna, 15 May 1822, of a young Greek who survived the Massacre of Chios:

Every day women of the first families in the Island are exposed to sale in the public

markets; articles of great value, such as the sacred vases of the Greek and Catholic churches, and the habiliments of the Priests, are by these wretches sold at a vile price. Through the intervention of the Chargé d’Affairs of the French Consulate, I have succeeded in purchasing 35 women, whose names I send you, and who are now in safety at the Consulate.⁶⁹

A traveller named Pococke painted a picture of post-massacre Chios as an island with 60 towns and villages, with 300 Latin and 500 Greek churches.⁷⁰ In this mixed religious milieu of Greek Orthodox majority and Roman Catholic minority, one issue crucial for the revolutionary government in gaining legitimacy was taxation, as Ottoman officials called on islanders to pay and show their capitulation even after they had rebelled, giving them a second chance. This created a difficult dilemma; in some cases, people refused to pay taxes to the provisional government, either because they lacked the means or because they doubted the durability of the revolutionary authority, thus challenging its claim to legitimacy. The Ottoman notions of order and justice and the importance of taxation as a tangible declaration of loyalty, as well as injustice/oppression and sedition as manifestations of treachery, remained in force during the revolution.⁷¹

In September 1822, the *armostes* of the islands were frustrated with the *proestoi* (notables) of Serifos for not sending the tithe; they did not mince their words, threatening the notables that if they failed to collect the remainder of the tax and heard anything about riots and confusion, they would send a ship to slaughter those responsible, grab all their animals and burn their houses; arrest those who caused riots and send them to the seat of government, so that their “country” would avoid punishment.⁷² Threatening letters were directed to the riotous Andros population, too; when government officials were met with violence, the *armostes* wrote to the *eparchos* of Andros informing him that they would send five or six ships to enforce order.⁷³ In Naxos and Santorini “rebels” also defied government men.⁷⁴ The following month, the news from Andros was that the threatening letter had an impact even on the inhabitants of the upper castle, the “riotous”, as they were called, who showed cowardice. Following the “dispersal of the seditionists” the *eparchos* was optimistic that they would be able to collect the 65,000 piastre tax bill, of which only a mere 4,000 piastres had been gathered.

In Ikaria, the same resentment and difficulties as on Samos were noted. The commissioner in Samos sent *anteparchoses* to Ikaria, Patmos, Leros and Kalymnos. Samos, Leros and Kalymnos paid 278,000 piastres in 1823.⁷⁵ The choice of the islands represents realistic perceptions about the revolution and where it had gained a foothold, but also the potential for revenue for the fleet. The collection of taxes through contracting and tax farming tested the limits of the central authority. The rights to tax collection were put to auction first at regional centres, followed by a second one in the seat of government. This created a bottom-up hierarchy, cancelling out the attempts of the central government to control tax farmers and set prices.⁷⁶ The conflict that fermented following the appointment

of commissioners reflected the fact that Hydra and Spetses had practically imposed their authority in the Aegean by threat of force, as seen in their letter to the magistrates of Santorini in August 1822 to despatch of the remainder of revenue.⁷⁷ Similarly, the islanders of Skyros were informed on 23 June 1822 that a new vice prefect was appointed who requested respect and submission, and invited the people to elect “honest men” for the collection of the tithe and customs.⁷⁸

In Santorini “Latin Greeks”, as the central administration called the Roman Catholics of the islands, were exempted from taxation, according to the islands’ foreign and Roman Catholic consuls. The Greek administration responded forcefully in 1823 when Syros, Naxos and Santorini refused to comply and protested the use of police-like forces to extract customs duties and the tithe. A letter to the French consul in Smyrna in August 1823 stated in no ambivalent terms that

Naxos island is a part of the Greek state and those residing there are obliged to submit to its laws. If the French Government protects the Latin Greeks in Naxos, no one objects; but no one is supposed to think that this means that the right of Greece to collect customs and tax on the properties that exist in the country in which it is sovereign can be annulled.

The forceful argument noted that “in none of the European nations are foreigners exempted” and “all those called Greeks, whatever religion they follow” are equally subject to taxes. De Rigny, the French admiral of the fleet stationed in the Cyclades, accepted the argument and acknowledged the right of the Greek government to raise taxes.⁷⁹ During 1822 and 1823 several islands were in a constant precarious state, and often refused to pay the taxes requested or rather ordered by the administration. The assertiveness of Ermoupoli was evident already by 1827, when the city’s deputies applied to the National Assembly at Troezen to enjoy all “political rights” and to “be recognised as genuine citizens of Greece, and not to be looked down upon as foreigners” otherwise “the Nation will be deprived of 17,000 residents, the unstoppable national benefit to the National Treasury”.⁸⁰

The end of piracy and violence in the Aegean

The revolution was a violent war; part of the Greek navy’s success, at least during the first years, lay with the element of surprise, a kind of sea guerrilla warfare that struck fear into the enemy, especially the fire ships, legendary for their destructive capabilities; but crews were at times difficult to direct and discipline. When revolution was declared in Spetses, a public meeting was called and ships from Spetses and Hydra – Finlay’s “Albanian Islands” – rushed to Milos; instead of giving their annual contingent of sailors to the Ottoman fleet, the ships from Hydra captured the corvette waiting there, brought the prisoners back to their island and massacred them.⁸¹ On the first cruise of the joint Greek fleet, the ships of Hydra, Spetses and Psara captured an Ottoman vessel carrying notable

families and wealth. The Hydriots murdered all on board: men, women and children. The incident not only led to the end of Oikonomou and his challenge to the “oligarchs”, as Finlay calls them, but also to the delay of the Greek naval force in attacking the Ottoman fleet and preventing them from sending reinforcements to the Morea.⁸² The reason Finlay gives is that this was from the beginning a war of extermination. The “immense booty” taken by the Hydriot admirals Sachtouris and Pinotsis was another strong motive for the rebels and, in fact, remains one of the hidden research treasures in the history of the naval warfare of the revolution as the relevant documents remain untapped in the Hydriot and Spetses archives.

Histories of the revolution show an impressive mobilisation and coordination that was propelled by fast communication in a virtually open sea, even if this communication often spread rumours. The arrival of two cruisers from Spetses in the waters of Mykali near Samos, for example, on 14 April 1821, “confirmed the conflicting news about events in the Morea and heightened the uncertainty and the insecurity of the inhabitants, just in case the revolutionary upheaval reached the ears of Ottomans in Samos”.⁸³ Finlay – in a more sensationalist tone – writes that when a Spetsiot ship arrived at Vathi in Samos on 30 April, people took up arms and murdered all Turkish families there, while the kadi and aga in Karlovasi escaped, saved by the notables of the island; this class-determined response to the revolution highlights the fact that the responses varied, depending on positions of authority or the lack thereof.⁸⁴ The massacre of the Ottoman (Muslim) merchants from Efessos, and from Crete, and the escape of representatives of Ottoman authority, created a sense of insecurity as rumours of the revolution spread. Rumours, understudied in the history of the revolution, shaped people’s lives with often devastating and at the same time transformative consequences; the hopes generated by rumours that there was Russian assistance on the way most likely exacerbated the wrath of the rebels against the Ottoman Muslims, who were, in most cases, on islands unprotected by any significant military force.

The rise of Hydriot, Spetsiot and Psariot shipping in the decades following 1780 was undoubtedly impressive. When the revolution broke out, the Ionian fleet stepped in to carry the grain trade during the revolution, securing a more central place in the importance that the various powers, French, Russian and British, held for the islands during the Napoleonic Wars. The Ionians, protected by the British-Ionian flag of the Ionian State, substituted for the Aegean islands shipping when their ships got involved in the war.⁸⁵ The actual contribution of Greek-owned shipping to the revolution remains an open research question.⁸⁶ In the 1820s, the ability of the fleet to chase, or harass and sometimes attack the Ottoman fleet transformed the Aegean into a war zone. Ibrahim’s campaign that ravaged three islands and threatened numerous others was another – literal – sea change.

Foreigners participating in the revolution noted the ambiguity, if not outright confusion, that reigned in the military. Howe, a participant observer, scoffed at the title “admiral” that Tombazis held, noting that each of the three islands had its own command

and treated each other with suspicion, and described with contempt the ambiguity in the ranks.⁸⁷ The “disorganised” Greek fleet⁸⁸ was private, subject to the demands and the fastidious reaction of its precocious shipowners, a family-centred, local-based naval force. At the same time the provisional government made plans for a military force that would turn areas of the Aegean into garrison islands, in need of 1,000 soldiers with an extra 1,000 especially for Psara.⁸⁹

In studying the Aegean and Ionian “island archipelago”, Asdrachas noted the role of the “men of plunder” as “one of the driving forces of the national revolution”.⁹⁰ Pirates occupy an ambiguous and liminal position in the story of the Greek Revolution, as in the history of other seas, between commerce and corsairing, between duty and plunder, between advancing a cause and promoting their own enrichment or eking out a living after finding refuge on an island; sometimes all of the above. In January 1826, the people of Agios Efstratios reported their deplorable condition since three boats “with several liapides” (Lab Albanians) from Skyros raided their island. The government decided to remove the captains responsible from its payroll and to discharge them, requesting also from the Skyros eparchos to return to the people of Agios Efstratios the stolen goods, arrest the sailors responsible and send them to Nafplio and appoint two ships to sail in the Aegean,⁹¹ an all too common event during the revolution and until 1828.

In September 1827, the government official in Karpathos complained about the abuse of power, looting and even attacks on women that Cretans, exploiting their dominant place among the island’s population, were carrying out.⁹² Piracy was uncontrollable and the revolutionary government had even granted licences for cruising ships that were used for piracy.⁹³ The turbulent and ambivalent times that followed the outbreak of the revolution resemble the piracy boom during the American Revolution and lasted until the Greek state established its authority.⁹⁴

Raids carried the prospect of significant profits for some privateers – those that were granted a licence – and other pirates; some attacked communities of fellow Greek Orthodox (but usually on a different island than that of their origin) and even facilitated trafficking of captives from islands to slave markets. A mix of patriotism and venality must have been commonplace, fuelling the ambiguity of the times. The liminal position of people in the Aegean can also be seen in the slave trade. The sale of war captives was prohibited by the National Assembly of Astros in 1823, but the trade in slaves in the port of Syros, outside Greek territorial jurisdiction, carried on and a notary witnessed sales.⁹⁵ The liberalism of the provisional government is evident in the banning of the slave trade in the transition to the era of a more humane treatment of war victims, especially civilians, most often young women and children.

In 1827, the admirals of the three powers declared that they would not tolerate the continuation of piracy beyond Volos, Nafpaktos, Salamina, Aegina, Hydra and Spetses.⁹⁶ Indeed, the Treaty of London, signed on 6 July 1827, found at once many opponents, exposing the factionalism that prevailed in the Aegean islands. De Rigny noted that

the mass of the population would gladly accept any arrangement ... the islands of the Archipelago, in every one of which a band of land and sea pirates gives the law! Examine what is passing at Syra, at Tinos, at Naxos, at Paros, at Milo, where bands of Candiots, of Caxiots, of Sphactiots, come and establish themselves as rulers, and leave nothing to the inhabitants, sometimes not even the liberty of complaining ... the greater part of these calamities are inflicted by the supremacy which the Hydriots have arrogated to themselves, in sending their own people to form the local Authorities.⁹⁷

This clear denunciation of Hydriot rule over the islands points to the desperation of people living there. The ambivalence is clear in a letter from the Karpathos notables, admitting that they “surrendered” to the Egyptian fleet in 1825. By 1827, the fleet was away, pirates re-emerged, and the island eventually “returned” to Ottoman rule. There were up to 600 refugees from Crete on an island of no more than 4,500 people. The refugees were mostly armed men, who the island’s notables failed to keep at peace. In Naxos and Milos, Cretans were a law unto themselves, refusing to submit even to Codrington when the admiral arrived in Milos, threatening to kill his men if they disembarked. The defeat of the Ottoman naval force at Navarino led to an increase in piracy as it allowed Greek ships to attack whomever they could. In October 1827, the Greek administration and foreign ships declared war on pirates to restore order and a sense of security to people of the Aegean. Piracy was suppressed during the Kapodistrias period through a combination of police and juridical powers.⁹⁸ The first step was to revoke the commanding licences to privateers to suppress piracy, leaving a single naval squadron to pursue pirates. In January 1828, an allied fleet descended on the main pirate base at Carabusa (Gramvousa), destroyed most of the pirate flotilla and sailed to Cape Matapan (Tainaro) for the “prevention of piracy and the interruption of supplies”.⁹⁹ The second target were the Sporades, which Miaoulis and his fleet took on the following month. In May 1828, Kapodistrias called the inhabitants of the Aegean to assist government officials in eradicating piracy, stressing the great advantages for the people and the government from undisturbed commerce and navigation. The aim, he wrote, was to place the Aegean under the protection of the law and to give “Europe” the guarantee that piracy would not reappear.¹⁰⁰ Credentials and appearances went hand in hand.

The suppression and near eradication of piracy encapsulates the struggle to control the new national space that was emerging, and its financial, territorial and indeed political dimension. How did the revolution end in the Aegean islands? Not with a bang, but, as the poet wrote (about the world), with a whimper, especially for the islands that remained outside the borders of the new state. As the Treaty of London stipulated on the sea borders:

There shall likewise belong to Greece the whole of the island of *Negropont*, with the *Devil's islands* and the island of *Skyros*, and the islands anciently known by the name of *Cyclades*, including the island of *Amorgo*, situated between the 36th and the 39th

degrees of north latitude, and the 26th degree of longitude east of the meridian of Greenwich.¹⁰¹

In Samos, the ambivalence of the revolutionary years turned into a slow transformation of the social, economic and political conditions of Ottoman rule, just like in other parts of the empire, where the integration of community leaders to the Ottoman system remained always “incomplete”.¹⁰² In fact, the period of ambiguity for many islands ended with the elimination of piracy and the settling of borders.

The management of space in the Aegean islands during the revolution lacked uniformity; let us not forget that establishing and achieving (whatever authority) on land was equally laden with conflict (the civil wars). The revolutionary government strived to acquire control over people and resources on as many islands as possible, to assert its authority and to collect taxes to continue fighting. Ambiguity often became a driving force, an “agent” in the revolutionary war. Documents from the period and histories of it show that historians of the revolution would be ill-advised to consider the islands in the Aegean merely as a field of naval battles and thus miss the fascinating and diverse dynamics that transformed the “archipelago” into a national space. More research is necessary to examine how, during and after the war, islanders abandoned, often involuntarily, a state of locality and regional authority to become part of a national state that marginalised locality and promoted centralisation.

¹ I have borrowed and adapted the title of the article from Vernes’ book. There are two Greek translations, interestingly, the first one being more literal, “Το Αιγαίο στις φλόγες/Το Αιγαίο φλέγεται” (Aegean in flames) and a second one “Οι πειραταί του Αιγαίου” (Pirates of the Aegean). Dennis Kytasaari. “Les Voyages Extraordinaires,” <https://epguides.com>, <http://epguides.com/djk/JulesVerne/works.shtml>. Verne connected the Ionian with the Aegean Seas during the 1820s seamlessly and realistically. Part of the novel takes place in Corfu, home of banker Elizundo and his daughter Hadjine, where another protagonist, French Lieutenant Henry D’Albaret, “one of the first of the Philhellenes to shed his blood for the cause of independence”, as Verne writes, arrived; the Frenchman recuperated in Corfu from fighting at Athens during the 1826 siege. The most interesting character perhaps is the pirate and soldier of fortune Nikolas Starkos from Mani, who served with Kara Ali in Chios. Verne places Starkos in an ambivalent status; the same holds for the Corfiot banker, who is financing the slave trade of prisoners from the war of independence that Starkos is trafficking.

² Michalis Sotiropoulos, “The Three Bipolar Framings of the History of the Greek Revolution and How to Avoid Schizophrenia” (conference paper, 1821: What Made it Greek and Revolutionary?, Centre for Research of the Humanities and NYU Jordan Center, National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens, 4–5 July 2018).

³ Spyros, Asdrachas, “Το ‘παράδοξο’ μιας απουσίας” [The “paradox” of an absence], *Avgi*, 24 March 2001; Christos Loukos, “Η Επανάσταση του 1821: Από κυρίαρχο αντικείμενο έρευνας και διδασκαλίας στην υποβάθμιση και στη σιωπή” [The 1821 revolution: From the dominant subject of research and teaching to degradation and silence], in *Ιστοριογραφία της νεότερης και σύγχρονης Ελλάδας, 1833–2002: Πρακτικά* [Historiography of modern and contemporary Greece, 1832–2002: Proceedings], ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides and Triantafyllos E. Sklavenitis, vol. 1 (Athens: Centre for Neohellenic Research, 2002), 579–59.

⁴ For the dynamic of the revolution “and the contradictions and the antinomies that the project of independence itself produces”, see Nikos Rotzokos, “Πολιτικές και κοινωνικοπολιτισμικές συγκρούσεις στο

- Εικοσιένα: Οι προύχοντες της Πελοποννήσου” (PhD diss., Panteion University, 1996), 334–35, <https://doi.org/10.12681/eadd/6061>.
- ⁵ Nicolas Vatin, “Îles grecques? Îles ottomanes? L’insertion des îles de l’Égée dans l’Empire ottoman à la fin du XIXe siècle,” in *Insularités ottomanes*, ed. Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein (Istanbul: Institut français d’études anatoliennes, 2004), 71–89.
- ⁶ Most of the research and writing for the article was completed before many significant works on the history of the 1821 Revolution came out; as a result it was impossible to include their findings in the article.
- ⁷ For a similar argument for colonial and postcolonial Africa, see Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,” *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1516–45.
- ⁸ David Armitage, Alison Bashford and Sujit Sivasundaram, *Oceanic Histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- ⁹ For an approach to history as insularity and history of islands, see Antonis Hadjikyriacou, “Envisioning Insularity in the Ottoman World,” in “Insularity in the Ottoman World,” ed. Antonis Hadjikyriacou, special issue, *Princeton Papers* 18 (2017): vii–xix. Also published as *Islands in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Markus Weiner, 2018). For a historiographical overview, see Eleftheria Zei, “The Historiography of Aegean Insularity,” in Hadjikyriacou, “Insularity,” 37–57.
- ¹⁰ Spyros I. Asdrachas, *Υπομνήσεις: Ιστορικότροπα σημειώματα* [Reminders: Historically speaking notes] (Athens: Themelio, 2014), 61; Asdrachas, “Το ελληνικό αρχιπέλαγος, μια διάσπαρτη πόλη: Χάρτες και χαρτογράφοι του Αιγαίου” [Maps and cartographers of the Aegean] (Athens: Olkos, 1985), 235–48.
- ¹¹ Flavio Eichmann, “War and Revolution in the Caribbean: The Lesser Antilles, 1789–1815,” in *TRAFO: Blog for Transregional Research*, 28 May 2019, <https://trafo.hypotheses.org/18614>.
- ¹² Francois Taglioni, “Insularity, Political Status and Small Insular Spaces,” *Shima* 5, no. 2 (2011): 45–67. Insularity tends to be studied over the long term. See Roxani E. Margariti, “An Ocean of Islands: Islands, Insularity and Historiography of the Indian Ocean,” in *The Sea: Thalassography and Historiography*, ed. Peter N. Miller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 199–229. Insularity was severely disrupted or reformulated during times of revolution.
- ¹³ Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, eds., *Insularités ottomanes* (Paris: Institut français d’études anatoliennes, 2004).
- ¹⁴ Rigas talked about the “Mediterranean islands” (*Μεσόγειες νήσους*) in his political manifesto. These boundaries existed in the various maps of the “Greek lands” produced in the century following the revolution; Anastasia Stouraiti and Alexander Kazamias, “The Imaginary Topographies of the *Megali Idea*: National Territory as Utopia,” in *Spatial Conceptions of the Nation: Modernizing Geographies in Greece and Turkey*, ed. Nikiforos Diamandouros, Thalia Dragonas and Caglar Keyder (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 11–34.
- ¹⁵ Kostas Kostis, *History’s Spoiled Children: The Formation of the Modern Greek State* (London: Hurst, 2018), 70.
- ¹⁶ Petros Pizanias, *The Greek Revolution: A European Event* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2011).
- ¹⁷ Asdrachas, “Το ‘παράδοξο’ μιας απουσίας.”
- ¹⁸ We should add here the 1828–1840 period of semicolonial rule of Crete by Governor Mustafa Pasha.
- ¹⁹ Thomas W. Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768 to 1913: The Long Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 53.
- ²⁰ Archives of National Regeneration (AEP), vol. 4, 247. The volumes are available from <https://paligenesia.parliament.gr/>; Eleni Koromila and Giorgos Kokkinos, eds., *Αρχαία της Ελληνικής*

Παλιγγενεσίας: Ανθολόγιο [Archives of National Regeneration: Anthology] (Athens: Hellenic Parliament, 2002), 294.

²¹ Kostis, *History's Spoiled Children*, 74.

²² Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 391.

²³ Petros Omiridis Skylitsis, *Συνοπτική Ιστορία των τριών Ναυτικών Νήσων Ύδρας, Σπετσών και Ψαρών καθ' όσον συνέπραξαν υπέρ της ελευθερίας της αναγεννηθείσης Ελλάδος το 1821 και πρώτον έτος της Ελληνικής αυτονομίας* [Brief history of the three naval islands of Hydra, Spetses and Psara as they cooperated for the freedom of the reborn Greece in 1821 and the first year of Greek autonomy] (Nafplio: Typ. E. Antoniadou, 1831); Nikolaos Kotzias, *Επανόρθωσις των εν τη Σ. Τρικούπη ιστορία περί των Ψαριανών πραγμάτων ιστορούμενων* [Rectification of S. Trikoupis' history of the matters of Psara] (Athens: Typ. P. Panteli, 1857); Anastasios Orlandos, *Ναυτικά, ήτοι Ιστορία των κατά τον υπέρ ανεξαρτησίας της Ελλάδος αγώνα πεπραγμένων υπό των τριών ναυτικών νήσων, ιδίως δε των Σπετσών* [Naval affairs, that is, the history of the struggle for the independence of Greece carried out by the three naval islands, especially Spetses] (Athens: Filadelfefs, 1869). The history of Psara, for example, was fiercely defended by Nikodimos, who contested what he claimed were unfounded lies and distortions by other witnesses in their memoirs (Sachtouris, Filimon, Spiliadis). Konstantinos Nikodimos, *Υπόμνημα της Νήσου Ψαρών* [Memorandum on the island of Psara], 2 vols. (Athens: Typ. D.A. Mavrommati, 1862).

²⁴ For an exception, see Christos Loukos, *Η αντιπολίτευση κατά του κυβερνήτη Καποδίστρια 1828–1831* [The opposition against Governor Kapodistrias, 1828–1831] (Athens: Themelio, 1988).

²⁵ There were additional costs incurred to buy the ship to be burned for the cause and the cost of recruiting the crew that would be on that boat until it was set on fire.

²⁶ Gene Burns, "Ideology, Culture, and Ambiguity: The Revolutionary Process in Iran," *Theory and Society* 25 (1996): 349–88, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00158262>. Slave revolts have served as case studies for the concept of ambiguity for decades. Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolt in the Making of the New World* (New York: Vintage, 1981), xiv. Genovese found relations between maroons and slaves after the promulgation of "maddeningly ambiguous" treaties. Maroons were descendants of Africans in the Americas, especially Jamaica, who formed settlements away from plantations, following their escape and forming independent communities or had always been free, born and raised in such communities. Mavis C. Campbell, "Maroons of the Caribbean," *NACLA*, 25 September 2007, <https://nacla.org/article/maroons-caribbean>.

²⁷ John A. Petropoulos, "Forms of Collaboration with the Enemy during the First Greek War of Liberation," in *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation, 1821–1830: Continuity and Change*, ed. Nikiforos P. Diamandouros, John P. Anton, John A. Petropoulos and Peter Topping (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976), 131–43.

²⁸ Kostis Papagiorgis, *Τα καπάκια: Βαρνακιώτης, Καραϊσκάκης, Ανδρούτσος* [The *kapakia*: Varnakiotis, Karaiskakis, Androutsos] (Athens: Kastaniotis, 2009).

²⁹ It would not be surprising if historians studying the period found that the same people changed their allegiances, having developed what one historian of the American Revolution called "flexible loyalties ... ultimately these ambiguous allegiances undermined the varying concepts of loyalism that civilians and officers attempted"; Donald F. Johnson, "Ambiguous Allegiances: Urban Loyalties during the American Revolution," *Journal of American History* 104, no. 3 (2017): 610–31, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jax311>.

³⁰ Michalis Sotiropoulos and Antonis Hadjikyriacou, "*Patris, Ethnos, and Demos*: Representation and Political Participation in the Greek World," in *Re-imagining Democracy in the Mediterranean, 1780–1860*, ed. Joanna Innes and Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 99–126.

³¹ Konstantinos P. Belsis, *Από την οθωμανική νομιμότητα στο εθνικό κράτος: Το "άτομο" στο επίκεντρο της ιστορίας: Λυκούργος Λογοθέτης (1772–1850) πολιτική βιογραφία* [From Ottoman legitimacy to the nation-state: The "individual" at the centre of history: Lykourgos Logothetis (1772–1850), political biography] (Athens: Papazisis, 2014), 110–11; Ioannis Moutzouris, *Η αρμοστέα των νήσων του Αιγαίου Πελάγους στα*

χρόνια της ελληνικής επανάστασης [The agency of the islands of the Aegean Sea during the Greek revolution] (Athens: Syllagos pros diadosin Ofelimon Vivlion, 1984).

³² Charles A. Frazee, “The Greek Catholic Islanders and the Revolution of 1821,” *East European Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1979): 315–26.

³³ Mark Mazower, “Villagers, Notables and Imperial Collapse: The Virgin Mary on Tinos,” in *Networks of Power in Modern Greece: Essays in Honour of John Campbell*, ed. Mark Mazower (London: Hurst, 2008), 69–88; Charles Stewart, “Dreaming of Buried Icons in the Kingdom of Greece,” in Mazower, *Networks of Power*, 89–108.

³⁴ In 1800s, Kasos boasted 22 ships of 300 tonnes, 62 smaller and medium size of up to 100 tonnes, almost all of them built on the island; Petros Pizaniyas, *Η ιστορία των νέων Ελλήνων: Από το 1400 έως το 1820* [History of the modern Greeks: From 1400 to 1820] (Athens: Estia, 2014), 382.

³⁵ Here is what Blaquiere wrote about the paradox: “In so prosperous a condition, these islanders had little to desire, and had they consulted only their own interests, it is not likely they would have risked so many advantages by taking up arms. But they keenly felt the national degradation, and the wretched state of their less fortunate countrymen; though generally unlettered and too much occupied to attend to speculative doctrines, they could appreciate the difference between slavery and freedom; *nor is it improbable, that the more enlightened inhabitants were captivated by the prospect of political regeneration which must follow the entire independence of Greece*” (my emphasis). Edward Blaquiere, *The Greek Revolution: Its Origin and Progress* (London: Whittaker, 1824), 23.

³⁶ Sotiropoulos and Hadjikyriacou, “*Patris, Ethnos, and Demos*,” 101.

³⁷ Notables from Western Greece region of Kravara used the same language when they wrote to Mavrokordatos about the enemies of the government, calling them *apostates*, *antartes* (rebels), *fatriastes* (factionalists), *tourkofrones* (Turkish-minded) and *tyranniskoi* (tyrants). Alexandra Sfoini, “‘Επανάσταση’: Χρήσεις και σημασίες της λέξης σε κείμενα του ’21” [“Revolution”: Uses and meaning of the word in documents of the Greek Revolution of 1821], in *Όψεις της Επανάστασης του 1821: Πρακτικά συνεδρίου* [Aspects of the 1821 Revolution: Conference proceedings], ed. Dimitris Dimitropoulos, Christos Loukos and Panagiotis D. Michailaris (Athens: Society for the Study of Modern Hellenism–Mnimon, 2018), 334–35.

³⁸ Few studies have taken stock of debates to explore insularity, ambivalence and the fractured state of insular identity during the 1820s, with few exceptions, Cyprus being one of them, albeit for the prerevolutionary period. Antonis Hadjikyriacou, “The Respatialization of Cypriot Insularity during the Age of Revolutions,” in *The French Revolution as a Moment of Respatialization*, ed. Matthias Middell and Megan Maruschke (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 149–65.

³⁹ *AEP*, vol. 3, 75. Andreas Z. Mamoukas mentions slightly different numbers in *Τα κατά την αναγέννησιν της Ελλάδος* [During the renaissance of Greece], vol. 3 (Piraeus: Typ. Iliia Christofidou, 1839), 10–13.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

⁴¹ *Astros*, 16 April 1823.

⁴² *Γενική Εφημερίς της Ελλάδος* [General gazette of Greece, *GEE*], 1, no. 18, 5 December 1825, <http://repository.academyofathens.gr/document/181850.pdf>; *GEE* 1, no. 19, 9 December 1825, <http://repository.academyofathens.gr/document/181851.pdf>.

⁴³ Blaquiere, *Greek Revolution*, 297.

⁴⁴ Mazower, “Villagers, Notables and Imperial Collapse,” 77.

⁴⁵ “Παρακινούμεθα να πάρωμεν τούτο το ταπεινότατον θάρρος, οπού αγκαλά και να είμεθα γραιοί κατά το ρητόν, είμεθα από το έκπαλαι εν σώμα, με την κοινότητα των Λατίνων, του Κάστρου ταύτης της Νήσου, έως της αρχής της παρούσης μεταβολής.” Apostolos E. Vacaloropoulos, *Πρόσφυγες και προσφυγικό ζήτημα κατά*

την επανάστασιν του 1821 [Refugees and the refugee issue during the 1821 revolution] (Athens: Irodotos, 2001), 176–77.

⁴⁶ Minister of Interior, letter, 9 April 1822, *AEP*, vol. 1, 406.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 431–32.

⁴⁸ General State Archives (GAK), Archives of Samos, Collections. Folder C3. Various documents from the period of the revolution (1821–1834), file 001, doc. 003, <http://arxeiomnimon.gak.gr/browse/resource.html?tab=tab02&id=468583>.

⁴⁹ “Λογιζόμενοι ουχί ως ξένοι αλλά ως ίδιοι συμπατριώτες μας”; GAK, Archives of Samos, Collections. Folder C3. Various documents from the period of the revolution (1821–1834), file 001, doc. 004,

<http://arxeiomnimon.gak.gr/browse/resource.html?tab=tab02&id=468584>.

⁵⁰ *GEE* 3, no. 1, 14 October 1825, <http://repository.academyofathens.gr/document/181835.pdf>.

⁵¹ Nikiforos Diamandouros, *Οι απαρχές συγκρότησης σύγχρονου κράτους στην Ελλάδα, 1821–1828* [The beginnings of the formation of a modern state in Greece, 1821–1828] (Athens: National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, 2002), 254.

⁵² *AEP*, vol. 15a–b, 80.

⁵³ “Χαρατζοχάρτια” were the notes issued by Ottoman tax collectors to be given to those who paid tax, evidently, in this case, proof of submission to the Ottoman authority. In Samos there were three classes of χαρατζοχάρτια, the first class paying 30 grossia, the second 20 grossia and the third 8 grossia. Epameinondas I. Stamatiadis, *Σαμιακά, ήτοι ιστορία της νήσου Σάμου από των πανάρχαιων χρόνων μέχρι των καθ’ ημάς* [Samiot issues, that is, the history of the island of Samos: from the most ancient times to the present], vol. 2 (Samos: Igeonikou Typ., 1881), 28.

⁵⁴ *AEP*, vol. 1, 330–31.

⁵⁵ *AEP*, vol. 3, 115.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 116–18. Mamoukas, *Τα κατά την αναγέννησιν της Ελλάδος*, 3:24–27.

⁵⁷ Apostolos Delis, “A Hub of Piracy in the Aegean: Syros during the Greek War of Independence,” in *Corsairs and Pirates in the Eastern Mediterranean, Fifteenth–Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Gelina Harlaftis, Dimitris Dimitropoulos and David J. Starkey (Athens: Sylvania Ioannou Foundation, 2016), 47.

⁵⁸ Letter of the anteparchos of Milos and Kimolos, 6 June 1822, *AEP*, vol. 15a–b, 84.

⁵⁹ *AEP*, vol. 15a–b, 88.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁶² They were asking to be placed under the protection of France and to be allowed to leave with French ships to Marseille, “bringing their capital with them”. Diamantouros noted the “lack of identification with a national idea that holds even for the islands, which due to their maritime contacts with Europe, were supposedly more favourable to the ideas of nationalism and liberalism ... however, letters between the magistrates of Hydra and the islands of the Aegean show they were interested more in the conditions that would safeguard the continuation of their commercial activity and would secure their only resource, which, in the early 1820s looked at least a vague and precarious promise.” Diamandouros, *Οι απαρχές*, 117.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 296–97.

- ⁶⁴ “Επιστολή του αντεπάρχου Πάρου και Αντιπάρχου Βαφιοπούλου προς τους αρμοστές των Νήσων,” 5 June 1822, *AEP*, vol. 15a–b, 87.
- ⁶⁵ Milos, 6 June 1822, *AEP*, vol. 15a–b, 88–89.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 81.
- ⁶⁷ 7 June 1822, *ibid.*, 89.
- ⁶⁸ Mazower, “Villagers, Notables and Imperial Collapse.”
- ⁶⁹ *American Watchman and Delaware Advertiser*, 23 August 1822, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014894/1822-08-23/ed-1/seq-2/>.
- ⁷⁰ *Portland Gazette*, 15 October 1822, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016083/1822-10-15/ed-1/seq-1/>.
- ⁷¹ Sotiropoulos and Hadjikyriacou, “*Patris, Ethnos, and Demos*.”
- ⁷² *AEP*, No. 99, vol. 15a–b, 169.
- ⁷³ *AEP*, No. 101, vol. 15a–b, 170.
- ⁷⁴ *AEP*, No. 112, vol. 15a–b, 179.
- ⁷⁵ Thanasis Kalafatis and Evangelos Prontzas, *Οικονομική ιστορία του ελληνικού κράτους* [Economic history of the Greek state], vol. 1 (Athens: Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, 2011), 88–89.
- ⁷⁶ Simos Bozikis, “Δημόσια οικονομικά και συγκρότηση εθνικού κράτους το 1821” [Public finance and national state building during the Greek revolution of 1821] (PhD diss., Ionian University, 2018), 311, <https://doi.org/10.12681/eadd/44112>.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 320.
- ⁷⁸ Mykonos, 23 June 1822, *AEP*, vol. 15a–b, 105.
- ⁷⁹ Bozikis, “Δημόσια οικονομικά,” 321.
- ⁸⁰ Letter of the Ermoupoli deputies Petros Skylitzis Omiridis and Argyrios D. Tarpochtzis, 11 April 1827, *AEP*, vol. 3, 511.
- ⁸¹ George Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution and the Reign of King Otho* (London: Zeno, 1971), 170.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 174–76.
- ⁸³ Belsis, *Από την οθωμανική νομιμότητα στο εθνικό κράτος*, 88.
- ⁸⁴ Finlay, *History*, 176.
- ⁸⁵ Gerasimos Pagratis, “Εμπόριο και ναυτιλία στα νησιά του Ιονίου Πελάγους στα χρόνια της Επτανήσου Πολιτείας, 1800–1807” [Trade and shipping in the islands of the Ionian during the years of the Ionian state], 1800–1807], in *Ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων 1700–1821: Ο αιώνας της ακμής πριν από την Επανάσταση* [The seafaring of the Greeks, 1700–1821: The century of its heyday before the revolution], ed. Gelina Harlaftis and Katerina Papakonstantinou (Athens: Kedros, 2013), 631–49; Alexandra Papadopoulou, “Από το τοπικό στο παγκόσμιο: Η ενσωμάτωση των ναυτότοπων του Αιγαίου στο μεσογειακό εμπορικό σύστημα, τέλη 18ου–αρχές 19ου αιώνα” [From the local to the global: The integration of the Aegean seaports into the Mediterranean trade system, late 18th–early 19th century], in Harlaftis and Papakonstantinou, *Ναυτιλία*,

703–34; Panagiotis Kapetanakis, “Από την Αμφιτρίτη στον Οδυσσέα: Πλέοντας με την ιόνιο ναυτιλία στα νερά της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου κατά την επαναστατική δεκαετία του 1820” [From Amphitrite to Odysseus: Sailing with the Ionian fleet in the waters of the eastern Mediterranean during the revolutionary 1820s], in Harlaftis and Papakonstantinou, *Ναυτιλία*, 734–70.

⁸⁶ It is argued that of the approximately thousand or more ships of the Aegean and Ionian seas trading in nearby and distant seas, only 5–10% was engaged in the conflict, while the rest provided capital “on which the destroyed economy of the small Greek state was founded”. Gelina Harlaftis, “Επίλογος. Ανατροπές και νέες θεωρήσεις υπό το πρίσμα της *Αμφιτρίτης*” [Epilogue. Upheavals and new considerations in the light of Amphitrite], in Harlaftis and Papakonstantinou, *Ναυτιλία*, 776. The claim that 90% of commercial shipping was not involved in the war appears enormously high and raises the issue of the politics of those shipowners, but Pizanias seems to agree on the estimate. Pizanias, *Η ιστορία των νέων Ελλήνων*, 386.

⁸⁷ Samuel Howe, *An Historical Sketch of the Greek Revolution* (New York: White, Gallaher & White, 1828), 35.

⁸⁸ Kostis, *History’s Spoiled Children*, 60.

⁸⁹ *AEP*, vol. 3, 114.

⁹⁰ Asdrachas, *Υπομνήσεις*, 61; Asdrachas, “Το ελληνικό Αρχιπέλαγος: Μια διάσπαρτη πόλη” [The Greek archipelago: a scattered city], in *Χάρτες και χαρτογράφοι του Αιγαίου Πελάγους* [Maps and cartographers of the Aegean Sea], ed. Anna Avramea, Vasilis Sfyroeras and Spyros I. Asdrachas (Athens: Olkos, 1985), 235–48.

⁹¹ *GEE* 1, no. 31, 23 January 1826, <http://repository.academyofathens.gr/document/181863.pdf>.

⁹² Dimitris Dimitropoulos, “Πειρατές στη στεριά; Πρόσφυγες, καταδρομείς και καθημερινότητα των παράκτιων οικισμών στα χρόνια του Αγώνα” [Pirates on land? Refugees, raiders and daily life in coastal settlements in the years of the war of independence], in Dimitropoulos et al., *Όψεις της Επανάστασης του 1821*, 87–104.

⁹³ Dimitropoulos has aptly mapped the regions where some of the refugees from the coast of Asia Minor had turned to piracy; a) in the Sporades; b) in the southwestern Aegean Sea; c) Samos. Dimitropoulos, “Πειρατές στη στεριά;” 91; Dimitropoulos, “Pirates during Revolution: The Many Faces of Piracy and the Reaction of Local Communities,” in Harlaftis et al., *Corsairs and Pirates*, 29–40; Leonidas Mylonakis, “Transnational Piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1821–1897” (PhD diss., University of California San Diego, 2018), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6k16v5sb>.

⁹⁴ During the American Revolution, almost 800 vessels were commissioned as privateers and are recorded to have captured or destroyed about 600 British ships, at the time a major blow to the world’s most powerful navy. Robert H. Patton, *Patriot Pirates: The Privateer War for Freedom and Fortune in the American Revolution* (New York: Pantheon, 2008).

⁹⁵ Delis, “A Hub of Piracy in the Aegean,” 50. The trafficking of captives from the islands is portrayed in Verne’s *The Archipelago on Fire*, as mentioned earlier.

⁹⁶ GAK, Archives of Samos, Collections. Folder C3. Various documents from the period of the revolution (1821–1834), file 001, document 030. Document from admirals Codrington, de Rigny and van Heiden concerning keeping Greek cruisers out of the range of pirates, 8 October 1827,

<http://arxeiomnimon.gak.gr/browse/resource.html?tab=tab02&id=468610>.

⁹⁷ “Art. V: Papers relative to the Affairs of Greece,” in “Affairs of Greece,” *Monthly Review* 59 (1830): 376.

⁹⁸ Dimitropoulos, “Πειρατές στη στεριά;” 92–93, 96, 105.

⁹⁹ [Sir Edward Codrington], *Documents Relating to the Recall of Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Codrington from the Mediterranean Command in June 1828* (London: Cowell, 1830).

¹⁰⁰ Kapodistrias also stressed the obligation of people and local authorities to follow the orders of the special commissioners. GAK, Archives of Corfu, I. Kapodistrias Archive, Folder 5, “Προκήρυξη προς τους κατοίκους

των έξι Διαμερισμάτων του Αιγαίου Πελάγους” [Proclamation to the inhabitants of the six Departments of the Aegean Sea], 14/26 May 1828, <http://kapodistrias.digitalarchive.gr/unpublished.php?type=node&id=213>.

¹⁰¹ [Codrington], *Documents*, 23. The Diavolonisia (Devil’s Islands) were in the northern Sporades, a pirate hub that Miaoulis cleared in 1828.

¹⁰² Asdrachas, *Ιστορικά απεικάσματα*, 73–76.