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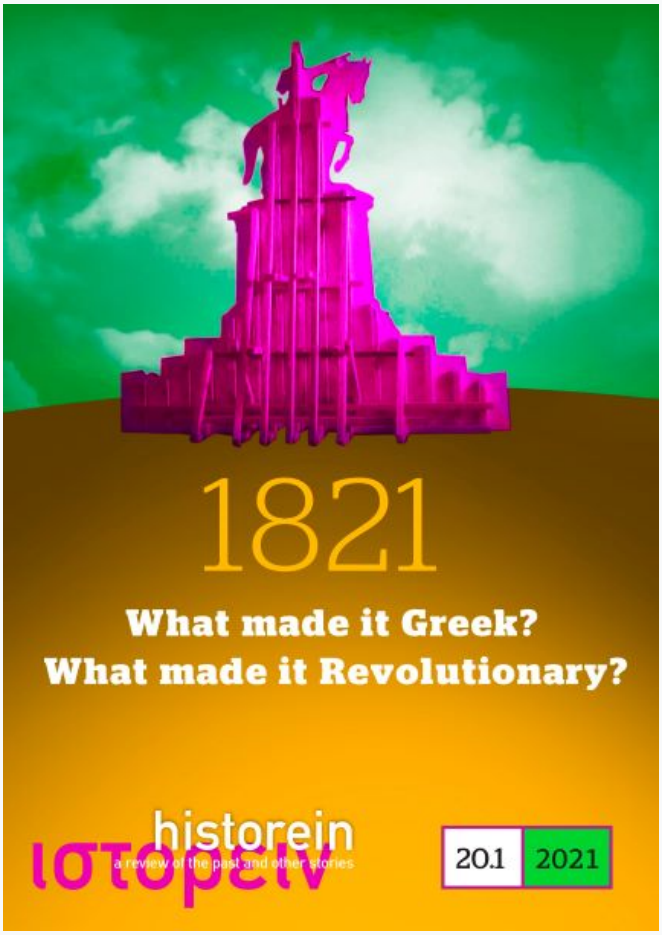
1821: What Made it Greek? What Made it Revolutionary?



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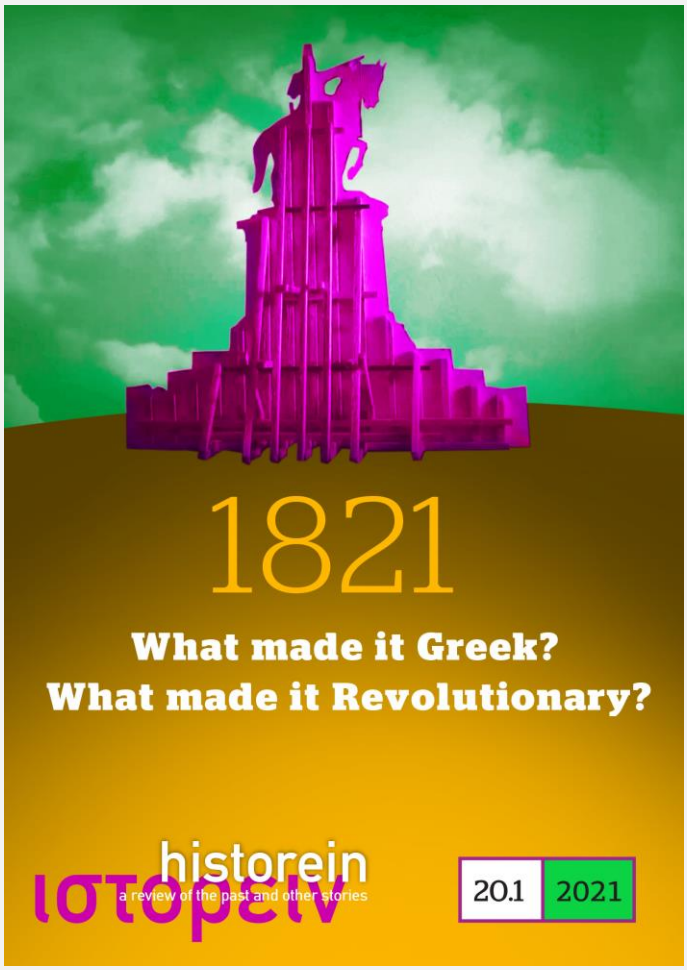

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Neophotistoi and *Apostates*: Greece and Conversion in the Nineteenth Century

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The topic of conversion to Islam during the Ottoman period has received considerable scholarly attention, but the same cannot be said about conversion to Orthodoxy in Greece during and after the Greek War of Independence. This is a curious omission considering the numbers of Muslims and Jews in the territories that would form the initial Greek state, or that would later be added to the state like Thessaly and Epirus. Although Greek historiography no longer shies away from the massacres of non-Christians during the war of independence, little thought is given to the fate of those that survived these massacres, and how their presence, as non-Christians or as converts (*νεοφώτιστοι/νεοφώτιστες*) impacted the new state, its ideology, structures, policies or laws. There is widespread agreement among scholars that religious affiliation was a crucial component in the construction of modern Greek national identity and many have emphasised the links between religious affiliation and citizenship, focusing on the relevant articles of the first constitutions, as well as on the incorporation of religious themes, historical consciousness, and language in the national discourse.[1] However, there has been almost no discussion regarding non-Christian citizens of Greece, the attitude of the state towards religious minorities in the nineteenth century, the potential pressure on such groups to convert, and ultimately their fate in the modern Greek state. It is in fact remarkable that excellent scholars that examine the formation of national identity or engage in legal and constitutional history, while discussing the apparent contradiction found in the early revolutionary constitutions of linking citizenship to Christianity and establishing Orthodoxy as the official religion of the state while incorporating clauses that guaranteed freedom of religion, do not pursue the effects of such principles on the non-Christian subjects of the new state or on the new converts that the war of independence created. In fact, neither general histories nor those focusing on constitutional and legal history even mention the non-Christian minorities or converts, let alone discuss their status and circumstances, until at least the incorporation of Corfu in 1864, with its substantial Jewish minority, and Thessaly, with its Muslim minority in 1881.[2]

It is this gap that I am attempting to begin to fill with the ensuing investigation. In particular, it puts a spotlight on both the extent of conversion in the formative years of the

independent Greek state and the seriousness with which Greek governments, both in the revolutionary and post-independence periods, confronted the issue of conversion. Using a variety of sources such as wills and dowry contracts, court cases, government records and revolutionary memoirs, I attempt to show that the historiography has greatly underestimated the significant presence of converts and conversion during the founding of the modern Greek state and that the conversion issue persisted long after Greece became an independent state. I also try to show that in this regard Greece and the Ottoman Empire share remarkable similarities in their treatment of conversion, the conflicts it generated and the use of religion to shore up political weakness. As was the case in the Ottoman Empire, conversion cases were a thorny issue for the early Greek governments that were trying to establish their legitimacy in the international arena but, at the same time, it provided opportunities for Greece to assert its influence far beyond its physical capacities, presenting itself as defender of Orthodox Christians, a role previously monopolised by the Russian Empire. This role the Greek Kingdom undertook even before the articulation of a clear irredentist agenda in the second half of the nineteenth century, extending it beyond the scope of such irredentist claims in the Balkans or Asia Minor, as the Greek protests over the treatment of Orthodox population in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies indicate.[3]

The Ottoman World and the Greek War of Independence

The examination of conversion and apostasy in the Ottoman world in recent years had challenged or problematised earlier assumptions. Older accounts of Christian conversion to Islam, such as Speros Vryonis' work on Anatolia, saw conversion as an integral part of the process of conquest by the Muslim Turkic tribes.[4] This view, however, does not seem to apply in the Balkans, where conversions reached their highpoint long after the Ottoman conquest, in the sixteenth and even seventeenth centuries, as in the case of the Vallahades, Pomaks or the Dönme, the formerly Jewish followers of Sabbatai Zevi who followed their leader after his conversion.[5] The conversion process in the Balkans was not uniform nor sustained and the region remained predominantly Christian throughout the Ottoman period. There were incidents of mass conversions as in Bosnia, Albania, the Rhodope mountains and Crete, but overall there was no official Ottoman policy of forced conversion with the exception of the ***devşirme***, the periodic recruitment drives from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries of young Christian boys to fill the ranks of the Janissaries. However, those numbers were small, comprising some 200,000 boys over the entire period.[6] Conversions to Islam were influenced by many factors, from local circumstances such as the Bogomil heresy in Bosnia or the prolonged war in Crete, to the religious syncretism of certain Sufi orders, in particular the Bektashi and Mevlevi, to economic considerations such as the fact that non-Muslims had to pay the *cizye*, the poll

tax of non-Muslims, to social pressures especially among the nobility in the early phase of the empire.[7] Others have pointed out less obvious benefits to converts, especially Christian and Jewish women and slaves, when conversion could release them from bad marriages or bad owners.[8]

Beyond the ***devşirme***, forced conversions were rare in the Ottoman Empire but they have been given great prominence by the Orthodox church and nationalist historiography, which has celebrated the "neomartyrs" (*νεομάρτυρες*) of the Ottoman period as the "the first national heroes of modern Hellenism".[9] There is evidence, however, that several of these "neomartyrs" may have been prepared for the role of martyr in monasteries and their small overall numbers, some 40 to 100 individuals over the course of several centuries, do not point to a deliberate Ottoman policy.[10] While some historians like Dennis Hupchick have made claims that the Ottomans pursued a deliberate policy of forced conversion in specific regions,[11] such claims have generally been debunked.[12]

Recent studies have further problematised conversion in the Mediterranean world by presenting a much more fluid world than previously imagined.[13] Christians and Jews from all over Europe sought their fortunes in the Ottoman Empire through conversion to Islam, but when their expectations were not met, or when better opportunities beckoned elsewhere, many reverted to their former faith. Similarly, Muslim and Jewish converts to Christianity were, as records indicate, of similarly dubious nature. This is particularly the case among Iberian Jewish converts known as Marranos, who claimed different identities at different times and places.[14] Even some of the most renowned historical figures like George Kastrioti (Skanderbeg), the national Albanian hero, turned Ottoman only to revert to Christianity and become a bitter foe of the Ottomans.[15]

That is not to say that conversion and religious affiliation were taken on lightly either by the individual in question or the states involved. Venice invested heavily in providing proper religious instruction to converts as well as the means to integrate them into Venetian society.[16] In the Ottoman Empire, distinctions between Muslims and non-Muslims were reinforced through regulations over dress, the flaunting of which could be perceived as treason. At times even the learning of a European language by a Muslim could lead to his dismissal from the Ottoman court.[17] Nevertheless, religion did not divide groups as effectively as we often assume and there was a lot of space for negotiation. Eyal Ginio has highlighted an excellent example with his examination of Muslim Roma in the Ottoman context. Roma, including Muslim Roma, were assessed the *cizye* and were excluded from state institutions reserved for Muslims such as the military on what appears to be ethnic rather than religious grounds.[18]

While the majority of the population in the Balkans remained Christian, this does not mean that conversions, and to a lesser degree the migration of Muslims to the region, did not have a significant effect on the composition of the population. Certain regions ended up with substantial Muslim populations, if not outright majorities, such as Bosnia, Crete, Albania, Rhodope and Thrace. Although some Turkic speakers existed in the Balkans,

especially in Thrace and Macedonia, most of these Muslims retained their original languages, whether Albanian, Greek, in the cases of the Vallahades of Grevena and the Muslims of Crete, or Slavic, like the Pomaks and the Bosnian Muslims. Throughout the Balkans, many of the cities became predominantly Muslim and the remainder usually had significant Muslim and Jewish populations.[19] Although Muslim and non-Muslim communities could work together and even protest together against abuses by officials,[20] sectarian violence was also common from Lebanon to Serbia and everywhere in between. Since religion, despite its fluidity, was the most important marker of identity in the Ottoman state, conversions created divisions that often erupted in violence, not only from the usually politically dominant Muslim side but also from Christians, most famously in semi-independent Montenegro, where the Christian population massacred and expelled those that had converted to Islam in an incident celebrated by the most famous literary product of that nation, *The Mountain Wreath* by Petar Petrović-Njegoš.[21] Although the estimates of Muslims in the regions that would compose the first modern Greek state vary significantly from 63,000[22] to over 90,000,[23] it is evident that they formed a significant portion of the population.

In this context, the Greek War of Independence is not an aberration, since similar violence accompanied previous rebellions, but the violence it unleashed was certainly of a different order of magnitude and duration. The war also took place at a time when the practices governing questions of captivity in war, slavery and conversion were undergoing fundamental changes in both Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Although atrocities were not rare in European wars, especially against civilians, attitudes towards the treatment of prisoners had changed significantly by the turn of the nineteenth century. Prisoners of war were not expected to be massacred nor ransomed, as was commonly done in the past, but simply set free at the conclusion of hostilities. Significantly the Ottoman Empire had also accepted this Law of Release, as Will Smiley calls it, in its late eighteenth-century conflicts with the Habsburg and Russian empires. Whereas up until that point, captives, civilian as well as military, were generally enslaved and often sold to private individuals, by the turn of the century the Ottomans had accepted the idea that such individuals should be returned without ransom at the conclusion of hostilities.[24] The exception to this, from both sides, involved those who had chosen to convert who could remain where they were.[25] Conversion therefore was understood to have broken the ties with the state of origin and to have forged new ones, but while in centuries past such converts to Islam often proved to be among the most capable, reliable and influential functionaries of the Ottoman Empire, by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century sultans like Selim III or Mahmud II were often suspicious of converts, many of whom easily apostatised, bringing shame, rather than honour, to Islam.[26] Slavery of course persisted in the Ottoman Empire as it did among European nations, mostly through raids or trade from the Caucasus or Africa, and these

unfortunates were not subject to the rules discussed above, which applied solely to conflicts with recognised states like the Habsburg, Russian or Iranian empires.[27]

When the conflict was with rebellious subjects, as in the case of the Orlov Revolt of 1770 in the Peloponnese, the Serb revolts of 1804 to 1815, or the Greek War of Independence, Ottoman troops were free to massacre and enslave not only the combatants but also the women and children of the rebellious regions.[28] In fact, Ottoman troops, generally irregular Albanian and Anatolian Muslims, expected such conflicts to be vicious, lacking the rules governing the wars with European states, and depended on the captured slaves, mostly women and children, as a significant part of their compensation.[29] Thus the context of such conflicts were quite different, as the irregular warriors on both sides were quite aware. As in earlier conflicts, males could expect to be massacred or sold into slavery unless they were important enough to be ransomed, while women and children would be sold into slavery and, as we shall see, this was true for both sides of the conflict. Ottoman atrocities during the reconquest of cities and islands received widespread publicity in Europe and horrified the European public, but they were not unique and the Greek insurgents also committed similar acts.

The worst atrocities against Jews and Muslims took place in the areas where the Christian revolutionaries were most successful, in southern Greece and the Peloponnese (Morea). On numerous occasions, upon the capture or even after the negotiated surrender of towns, the Muslim population was massacred as was the case in Kalavryta, Kalamata, Gastouni, Pyrgos, Salona (Amfissa), Laconia, Livadia, Athens, Vrachori (Agrinio), Zapandou (Zapanti or Megali Hora), Navarino, Acrocorinth and Tripolitsa, either immediately or after some time.[30] In some cases, like that of the Muslims of Livadia, the massacre was tied to changing circumstances, usually when an Ottoman army was approaching and there was fear that the spared local Muslims would take up arms or assist it in other capacities, as apparently happened during the campaigns of Ibrahim Pasha in the Peloponnese.[31]

The similarities between the mode of warfare practiced by both combatants are most evident in regard to the fate of women and children. Christian women and children were usually taken into captivity and invariably sold throughout the empire as had been the normal practice of Ottoman warfare for centuries, often transported by European vessels, whose consuls in the Ottoman Empire strenuously objected when Greek ships liberated their living cargo.[32] Similarly Muslim, and possibly Jewish, women, children, and sometimes men, were spared by the Greek irregulars only to be used as menial servants or “slaves” in the houses of Christians, to work the fields of Christian notables, become concubines to Greek warlords, or even toil in public works, despite the fact that slavery had been officially abolished in Greece by the constitution of Astros of 1823.[33] Many of these unfortunates sought to convert to Christianity to escape the hardships inflicted on them, or, in the case of men, simply to save their lives.[34] On at least one occasion Jews captured on a ship from Jaffa were taken to the island of Kasos and forced to convert, remaining on the island until

1824, when Egyptian forces sacked the island and freed them, enslaving the Christian inhabitants.[35]

Although captives were forced to convert throughout the conflict, the legality of such conversions was suspect even then. The legality of forced conversion to Islam or the sincerity of conversion under captivity had long been a contentious issue in the Ottoman Empire, especially with regard to children,[36] but the same was true in the Greek context. The Greek authorities, from the early Peloponnesian Senate to the first national Greek governments, explicitly forbade the baptism of prisoners even when the latter requested it, partly out of suspicion of the motives of the converts, bringing to mind the doubts Selim III and Mahmud II had about Russian and Austrian converts. The question of conversion became a contentious point between the Greek executive (*ἐκτελεστικό*) and legislative (*βουλευτικό*) bodies during the war of independence because each saw conversion from quite different perspectives. While the legislative body saw conversion as positive both in religious terms, in that it saved souls, and secular terms, since the converts would benefit the state by supplying it with much needed people, the executive was suspicious of the motives of the converts and was particularly concerned about the fact that converts, especially prominent ones, would gain the political rights of Greek citizens. There were also concerns regarding the property of such converts, confiscated Muslim lands being effectively the sole wealth of the fledgling state. In 1822, the minister for religion suggested that it would be appropriate to baptise only Muslim boys under the age of 12 with the parents' approval and all girls and young women with explicit justification by the senate for each case. The state would eventually adopt this recommendation, and although the executive nominally imposed this policy, it had no means to enforce it and conversions continued throughout the duration of the conflict.[37]

The questions raised by the presence of these converts and of Muslims scattered throughout the regions of Greece continued even following the intervention of Russia, Britain and France that ensured Greek independence. Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first governor of Greece, showed as much concern for these unfortunates as for the enslaved Christians sold in the slave markets of the Ottoman Empire, an attitude mirrored by Mahmud II, who in 1830 ordered the release of the Christians enslaved from the areas that now composed the independent Kingdom of Greece unless they had converted to Islam.[38] Most of the Muslims and Jews that survived the war, often having already escaped the areas impacted by the conflict, chose to remain in the Ottoman Empire, with the exception of those in Evia, and in particular Halkida (Negroponte), a city that had never fallen to the Greek rebels and thus had not experienced the persecution of Jews or Muslims.[39] On the contrary, the Ottomans and local Muslims had maintained their control of the region and, as late as 1831, Muslims in Evia committed atrocities against the local Christian population.[40] Halkida and Evia feature prominently in this examination since they were among the few

areas of independent Greece to retain religious minorities – both Romaniote Jews and Muslims – during the first decades of the independent Greek state. While the Romaniote Jewish community of Halkida has maintained an uninterrupted presence to this day, the Muslim community eventually migrated to the Ottoman Empire between 1830 and 1860, as is evident in the absence of Muslims in the Greek census of 1861,[41] in a process very similar to the one seen after the incorporation of Thessaly into the Greek Kingdom in 1881.[42] There is evidence that some of those who had fled to the Ottoman Empire during the course of the war of independence, mostly Jews, eventually returned or at least applied to the Greek government to return, but the majority of Jews and Muslims who had survived probably did not.[43] Thus the new Greek state was born with a de facto Orthodox Christian foundation as far as its national identity was concerned, and this foundational tie between religion and national identity has persisted ever since. It should be noted that contemporaries, even eminently liberal thinkers like Georgios Psyllas, Adamantios Korais and Jeremy Bentham, writing prior to the devastation of the Muslim and Jewish communities, perceived these communities as a threat to the emerging state, deeming it necessary to restrict full citizenship and especially voting rights to the Christian population, at least temporarily, as a defensive mechanism to allow the new state to establish itself and gain the loyalty of those minorities primarily through education. They did not, of course, espouse their annihilation or expulsion, which they explicitly rejected as options for a civilised state.[44]

Conversion and the modern Greek state

One crucial point in understanding conversion to the dominant religion of the state is the fact that it provided social and material benefits, as exemplified in the better examined cases of the Ottoman Empire, but also of the Russian Empire, Prussia and elsewhere.[45] In these states conversion to Islam, Orthodoxy or Protestantism can be seen as a strategy for social or economic advancement, just as conversion from Islam can be a migration strategy in Europe today.[46] At the same time, however, conversion represented a fundamental change of identity and frequently implied the abandonment of ties with the former religious community and often the family of the convert.[47] In the case of the Ottoman Empire, because of the severe social implications, the state saw it as its duty to facilitate this transition once conversion had taken place, and state and religious authorities were actively involved in the process. In the case of women, a quick marriage to a Muslim was often the outcome, and the cause, of conversion, which would also prevent any possible relapse, something that would stain the Muslim community and necessitate a violent response. In the Ottoman Empire, the conversion of unbelievers to Islam was a moment of validation for the Muslim community, which publicly celebrated such conversions as proof of its superiority over the other faiths.

Starting from the eighteenth century, conversion of Christians to Islam began to

attract the attention of the European powers, several of which took on themselves the role of defenders of certain minorities. Thus, the Russian Empire saw itself as the defender of Orthodox Christians, the French assumed that role for the Catholics, and so on. The conversion of non-Muslims to Islam thus became a potential point of confrontation with the European powers, especially when there were claims of forced conversions. Forced conversion narratives assumed renewed prominence in Europe, in the press and literature of the nineteenth century, in a way rather similar and possibly tied to the "white slavery" narrative that was also prominent in Europe at the time. This coincided with a widespread programme of reform collectively referred to as the Tanzimat period, in which legal restrictions on non-Muslims were lifted, the judicial and educational systems were reformed, etc. These efforts led to a growing disconnect between the Ottoman reforming elite and local Muslim communities, and conversion was one area where this disconnect was visible. While local communities celebrated the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam, the authorities were often uneasy, if not embarrassed, by such events, especially when foreign delegates became involved as was often the case when the non-Muslim communities sought their intervention in cases of supposed forced conversions.[48] To make the position of Tanzimat officials even more difficult, on occasion non-Muslim communities intervened in the process forcefully, emboldened by the reforms and the meddling of foreign diplomats, which threatened widespread unrest. These problems continued even after the Tanzimat period ended under the authoritarian regime of Abdulhamid II that spanned the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Under Abdulhamid's reign, numerous claims of forceful conversions were made, especially in Armenia and often in conjunction with the massacres of Armenians at the end of the century. However, there were also mass apostasies from Islam by supposedly crypto-Christians, individuals and even entire groups who publicly appeared to be Muslim but secretly continued to be practicing Christian rituals, who used the opportunities of the legal changes regarding apostasy to assert a different identity for causes that have been debated ever since.[49]

Although the numbers of converts to Orthodoxy in the Greek Kingdom cannot be known to any degree of accuracy, we find several mentions of converts (*νεοφώτιστοι/νεοφώτιστες*) in the post-independence notarial and court records, indicating that their numbers may have been more significant than previously thought. In the notarial record of Leonidio, a post-independence town built to replace an older settlement, Prastos, destroyed during the war of independence, we find three women and three men identified as converts in eight documents.[50] Though a relatively small number, it is significant because the province (Kynouria/Agios Petros) did not have a significant Muslim population before the war of independence, possibly just a single kadi.[51] The lack of a prior Muslim community in the area makes it likely that these converts were captured Muslims, some of them as children, like the sisters Sofia and Maria, who are described as adopted daughters

(*ψυχοπαίδαι*) of the late priest Ignatios. At least one of them, however, Dimitroula, wife of Georgios Kaffetzes, living in the town of Mystras, was obviously a more mature individual since she was made the legal representative of her two nieces Marina and Panoria, daughters of her late sister, to seek their rights regarding their maternal lands in the courts of the Greek state. Significantly, neither Marina nor Panoria are referred to as converts although their aunt is.[52] Beyond the presence of several converts in an area without prior Muslim population, these documents also show how integrated converts were in Greek society. Two of the women and all three of the men were married, although in the case of one of the men we are aware of his marriage only because six months later his wife sought a divorce.[53] Converts in Leonidio owned property, received dowries, and composed letters giving power of attorney, just like the rest of their community.

Athens had a significant Muslim minority prior to the war of independence that was expelled or massacred during the conflict. Some, however, like Maria and Georgios, the children of "the Ottoman Delivraimi", converted and were thus able to remain in the city. Their case comes to our attention when following the conclusion of hostilities, they married and drafted a document dividing their inheritance.[54] Some Athenian converts were from other regions like Karystos,[55] usually appearing in the record at the time of their marriage through their dowry contracts.[56] In Athens only one convert found in the sources was male and again we see that converts were quickly integrated into society through marriage even while the war was still raging, although we should entertain the possibility that these marriages, and possibly the survival of these women, were due to their position as heiresses of significant landed properties.

The same prominence of female converts is also evident in the civil courts of the Greek Kingdom. In 1837, the first available year of the records of Athens Appeals Court, we encounter four female converts, two of them sisters, all involved in property disputes. The case of two sisters, Maria and Marousa, of the late "Dervis Mehmet Ali Alimpani", was in fact a very drawn-out affair related to their very act of conversion. The case centred on whether they retained their rights of inheritance or whether their act of apostasy from Islam had disinherited them, as some of their Muslim relatives that survived in the Ottoman Empire claimed. The two sisters appeared before the appeals court nine times in 1837 and continued to defend their right in 1838.[57] In doing so, they placed the courts in a quandary since it was unclear what law applied in their case.[58] The other cases also involved property disputes, with one also carrying to 1838.[59] Cases involving converts continued to appear throughout the first decades of the existence of the Greek state until at least 1860.[60]

Although the evidence presented here is sporadic, it is also indicative of a noteworthy presence of converts, and especially female converts, in the early decades of the modern Greek state and their integration into Greek society as wives and property owners. If converts appear well integrated in Greek society, however, for the Greek state conversion presented all sorts of difficulties. As in the case of the two women discussed above, Ottoman relatives often enquired about the fate of these women and children and

demanded their return or, alternatively, filed complaints against their rights to take possession of the property of their relatives who had probably been massacred during the conflict. These cases could span decades, as was the case of a young boy named Abdul, who had been captured by Dimitrios Zaimis from Kalavryta in 1821 after the "death" of his parents, was baptised in 1822 with the name Ioannis, and was raised as a Christian until his circumstances became a matter of scrutiny in 1842.[61] As seen above, most recorded cases involved women who were more likely to survive the onslaught of the violence of the war of independence. In 1836 a permanent committee was established to deal with the properties of such women who, under Ottoman (Islamic) law, recognised by the Greek state since 1830 as the customary law for Muslims, were stripped of their inheritances, but who vigorously defended their inheritance rights in the Greek courts. The committee recognised that the state had an obligation towards the well-being of these women who were in danger of being left without wealth. It conceived this problem as a question of "charity" and hinted that these women's Greek husbands may have married them because of their lands and could abandon them if those lands were taken away from them, a credible fear considering the ease of divorce at the time.[62] The committee finally stated that it was willing to confront the Ottoman representatives and their demands since many of these women were "forced from the then circumstances to embrace the Christian religion".[63] It should be noted that this language bears remarkable similarities in the terms and concepts used to that of Ottoman chroniclers like Sem'dani-Zade with regard to Russian converts at the end of the eighteenth century.[64] This continued to be a contentious issue throughout the 1830s, with cases still coming before the Greek courts 30 years later.[65] The Ottoman state submitted letters confirming that Islamic law disinherited apostates,[66] and the issue was significant enough for King Otto to become personally involved in the deliberations.[67]

Conversions, however, were not limited to the period of the Greek War of Independence. According to official statistics, 11,450 Muslims remained in Greece in 1828,[68] as well as an unknown number of Jews, predominantly in Evia, and on occasion members of those communities converted to Orthodoxy in the decades following the establishment of the Greek state. These conversions landed the government of newly independent Greece in embarrassing situations that raised questions about the ability of the government to ensure the safety of non-Christians, which could undermine the country's irredentist aims to more territory from the Ottoman Empire. Certainly, many of the converts during the war of independence had converted to Orthodoxy by force, often in the sense that they were children and not consulted in the process, and the Greek government already had to deal with accusations that such individuals were being held against their will. While the post-independence governments under Otto could reject responsibility for such conversions perpetrated under the chaotic conditions of war, when cases emerged of conversions after the conclusion of hostilities, the government felt obliged to investigate

them as thoroughly as possible. In 1838, for example, the government was made aware of two cases regarding Ottoman children, one of whom had converted after the conclusion of the war, supposedly of his own free will. The investigation, however, determined that the circumstances of the conversion were suspicious partly because the child had supposedly converted at exactly the age of 15, the youngest possible age for legitimate conversion.[69] More problematic still was a case in Halkida in 1840 involving a Muslim family that was on the point of emigrating to the Ottoman Empire. The case of the family's daughter "Eleni", as she appears in the documents, ultimately involved the municipal authorities, the police, the naval ministry, the foreign ministry, the Greek courts, the church, and the Ottoman ambassador to Greece, indicating the significance attached to such cases not only by the Greek authorities but also by the Ottoman ones.[70]

The case involved a young Muslim girl who went missing on the eve of her family's emigration to the Ottoman Empire. Her father requested the assistance of the police, who found the girl in a Christian home. She apparently declared that she did not want to follow her family to the Ottoman Empire and wanted to convert to Christianity. She even took a vow in front of holy icons, the local Greek investigating magistrate (*εἰσαγγελέας*) and a priest. Conscious of the potential for local interference, the government had the sloop-of-war *Argos* transport her to Athens while it investigated the circumstances of her conversion. The investigation was in part conducted to appease the Ottoman ambassador, who refused to accept her conversion and demanded a face-to-face meeting with the young woman. He also dispatched a letter to the Greek foreign minister making the accusation that the girl had been kidnapped and "enslaved". To complicate matters further, the young woman, who had taken the name Eleni following her conversion, had hired lawyers to lay claim to her deceased father's property, accusing her mother, who had remarried, of illegally appropriating her inheritance.[71] The ambassador continued to protest to the foreign ministry and, in a series of letters, drew parallels to the case of another girl who, while engaged to a Muslim man named Emin Aga, had converted to Christianity and been married off to a Christian while her Muslim fiancé was thrown in a jail in Halkida. The ambassador also demanded the restitution of that unnamed girl to her family and the punishment of her Christian husband and the prefect of Halkida, who had facilitated the whole affair.[72]

These cases escalated from domestic issues into embarrassing diplomatic incidents. In September 1841, the Greek ambassador to the Ottoman Empire received a formal complaint from the Ottoman foreign minister regarding the forced conversions of these two Muslim women.[73] The Greek government sought refuge in the judicial system, claiming that it was up to the courts to annul the marriages and resolve the cases, but it also launched an internal investigation of the prevailing circumstances in Evia.[74] There was clearly a disconnect between the government in Athens and the local authorities in Evia, as two petitions from the Muslim inhabitants of Halkida indicate. The Muslims of Halkida claimed that Greek soldiers had attacked the house of the widow Carpouzade Ahmed Aga and abducted her daughter. These actions, they claimed, had the support of the prefect of Evia

who refused to return the girl to her mother. The Muslims of Halkida also claimed that they were constantly being harassed by Greek soldiers and that the prefect had also forcibly baptised a Muslim girl against the explicit orders of the previous Greek foreign minister, Andronikos Paikos, who had demanded her return to her parents.[75]

It is significant that the government in Athens took considerable pains to investigate and address all such incidents throughout the country, responding in part to Ottoman diplomatic pressure, as the Ottoman ambassadors frequently intervened in such incidents,[76] in part to avoid the intervention of the ambassadors of the Great Powers,[77] but also because the Greek government was acutely aware that accusations of forced conversions undermined its image as a secular European state. In 1841 for example the government asked the prefect of Achaia to report on the conversion of a brother and sister following yet another complaint from the Ottoman ambassador.[78] The same year the interior minister notified the foreign ministry regarding a couple of Muslim girls who had converted to Christianity in Athens by forwarding letters from the prefect of Attica, the chief of police in Athens, and the mayor of Athens, all of whom were involved.[79] The interior ministry also investigated the Halkida cases. It appointed Rigas Palamidis, a state councillor, to go to Halkida to determine the circumstances of the conversions and the validity of the complaints of the Muslim population and, if found to be accurate, to redress them.[80]

The local authorities, however, clearly saw things differently. The prefect of Evia, Anagnostopoulos, sent a harsh reply denouncing the “unfounded” complaints of the Ottoman ambassador, accusing him of fanaticism, of spreading unsubstantiated lies and slander, and even accused the government in Athens of adopting the Ottoman position.[81] The government eventually removed the girls from Halkida and entrusted them to the mayor of Athens to protect them from “all religious suggestion”.[82] Unappeased, the Ottoman government persisted in its protests. The case was further complicated by the discovery that the man who had married one of the girls was a Greek officer and, as such, needed royal permission to marry, which possibly invalidated the marriage. The Greek government essentially accepted the validity of the Ottoman complaints that such acts were “an insult to the honour, the religion, and the property of the Ottomans in Greece” but feared the political ramifications of returning these women to their families, especially if the latter relocated to the Ottoman Empire and the women were forced to convert back to Islam. The question was taken up by the cabinet and subsequent letters reveal that prominent political figures such as the notorious General Nikolaos Kriezotis, who acted as if Evia was his fiefdom and would later lead several revolts against the government, were actively involved in the conversions of these women.[83] The officer who had married one of the women without permission was initially dismissed from the army, but the king subsequently pardoned him and the war ministry asked the foreign ministry to inquire if the Ottoman ambassador objected to his reappointment to the army. This was a remarkable request – a state asking

a foreign power for permission to reinstate one of its own officers – indicating that the dismissal had been due to the effective pressure of the Ottoman Empire.[84]

The cabinet was embroiled in a similar case of possible forced conversion again ten years later in the case of Ayse (Marigo). This case also took place in Evia and, as before, Ayse's family was emigrating to the Ottoman Empire. Ayse, however, used a delay caused by bad weather to seek refuge in the house of a Christian, where she declared her intention to convert. Once again the local authorities, including the local prosecutor, police and port functionaries, took an active role transferring her to the home of an army captain, Eleftherios Hatzikonstantis, where she was promptly baptised. Her parents appealed to the French consul and inevitably the case reached the government in Athens.[85] Interior Minister Alexandros Mavrokordatos directed the prefect of Evia to take care and protect "her personality" and to make sure that "her freedom of conscience is not forced in the least, as it is protected by our legislation".[86] This case, which took over a year to resolve, involved repeated interventions by French and British diplomats who, as in the earlier cases, complained that the local authorities were ignoring official proclamations, the reality that her baptism was irregular and the instructions of the government to return the woman to her parents.[87] Again the case ended up in the Greek courts, where the mayor, police, military and other local Christians were accused of physical violence against Muslims, while Ayse, now Maria or Marigo, and her new Christian husband, Damianos Gierotis, were accused of voluntary abduction, a crime under the penal code.[88] This case again embroiled the war ministry, the Ottoman embassy and even the Greek embassy in Istanbul, which applied for a fatwa from the sheikh-ul-Islam regarding the age of maturity for Muslim women and forwarded it to the court, while the state, with the direct involvement of the king and queen, undertook the material support of Ayse.[89]

The same pressure to convert was also applied to Jews, who, like Muslims, sought the aid of the Ottoman authorities in such situations. In 1845 the Ottoman ambassador to Athens once again sent a letter to the Greek foreign ministry regarding the case of Riza Mizdrahi, a Jewish woman and a native of Smyrna (Izmir), who had worked as a servant to a Christian Athenian named Dimitrios Boghazianos. According to the ambassador, Boghazianos had baptised Riza's six-year-old daughter without her mother's permission or consent, and when Riza, accompanied by her son-in-law Haim Solomon and other Jews, went to demand the return of her daughter, they were confronted by a "crowd of fanatics" who encircled Boghazianos' house and threatened to "exterminate" them. The "terrified" mother abandoned her child and fled Athens for Halkida, where she sought the intervention of the Ottoman authorities who, in turn, requested the return of the child to the imperial legation.[90]

The government's ensuing investigation found conflicting accounts of the events. An Athens Appeals Court prosecutor, Diomidis Moriakos, also noted the legal difficulties of the case. According to him, the applicable law was not the law of the place of residence but that of nationality, meaning the laws of the Ottoman Empire may have applied. He also noted

that he was ignorant of Ottoman laws and the rights they bestowed on the mother but that Roman law, the basis of Greek jurisprudence, accorded authority over children to the father and in the absence of a father the mother enjoyed such rights. However, Greek laws also stipulated that a "heretic" (*αίρετικός*) could not be considered the guardian of a Christian child. Thus, if the child had been legitimately baptised, Rika could not have initiated a court case; only another Christian appointed by the court as the child's official guardian could.[91] In the end, the child remained in the hands of the Christian family while her mother left for the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman government dismissed the explanations provided by the Greek government, with the Ottoman ambassador asserting that Greek claims contradicted international law and the "private law of all civilised nations".[92] While the Greek ministers of justice, ecclesiastical affairs, and foreign affairs passed the case from one to the other like a hot potato, the situation was further complicated when the supposedly deceased father of the child appeared to demand the return of his daughter.[93] Once again the Greek authorities, and more precisely the ministry of ecclesiastical affairs and public education, sought cover in the judicial system, stating that the Greek government could not interfere in a judicial matter and based on this the cabinet rejected the renewed demands of the Ottoman ambassador.[94]

These cases reveal the ambivalent attitude of the early Greek state towards minorities and religion and the difficulties they presented to the government. First of all, we must dismiss the long-held idea that the Greek Kingdom emerged as a homogenous state from the war of independence. Evia at the very least had retained its religious minorities and was the epicentre of religious conflict in Greece, for Muslims as well as Jews, while also serving as a precarious haven for non-Christians, as seen by the decision of the above mentioned Riza to flee to Halkida when threatened by a mob in Athens. It is also clear that Greek Muslims and Jews saw the Ottoman Empire as a protector of their rights, and that the Ottoman state was quite willing to undertake that role, just as Greece was willing to act this way for Orthodox Christians beyond its borders, as we shall see below.

Its lack of legitimacy, both domestic and international, placed the Athens government in a quandary, caught between its desire to appease local Christian sentiment and the need to safeguard Greece's international reputation. Domestically these early royal governments had little earned legitimacy, as they had been imposed on Greece by the Great Powers and were predominantly staffed by foreigners and diaspora Greeks, while internationally Greece was still trying to prove itself as a modern, European polity after only two decades of statehood. These disputes also brought Greece into conflict with the Ottoman Empire, which remains a significant power and was still considered the greatest threat to Greek independence. Furthermore, they undermined Greek arguments for territorial expansion that would inevitably bring the significant non-Christian populations in Crete, Thessaly or

Epirus under Greek rule. If, however, the Greek governments had every incentive in terms of international politics to deal with these quickly and equitably, local politics imposed a different set of imperatives. A government imposed by foreign powers and headed by a Catholic Bavarian-born king could hardly afford to be seen to favour Muslims and Jews over Christian Orthodox sensibilities, especially when municipal and local authorities actively assisted in the conversion of non-Orthodox individuals and were willing to stand up to the government in Athens. It is not surprising, therefore, that ministers repeatedly sought to pass the buck to the nominally independent Greek judicial system.

Rather than eschew further confrontations over religious conflict, however, the Greek government essentially embraced them, when they did not take place within the borders of Greece. It presented itself as the protector of the rights of Orthodox Greeks beyond its borders while fending off Ottoman accusations of allowing forced conversions. Greek consuls kept the government informed about actions against Orthodox Christians or Greek speakers in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, Romania and elsewhere and monitored what they considered to be threats, including Catholicism and the spread of the Uniate dogma, often later conflated with Panslavism as *βουλγαροκαθολικό δόγμα* (Bulgarian Catholic dogma).[95] Greek diplomats repeatedly protested to the Ottoman authorities regarding the conversion of Orthodox *raya* and, on occasion, Greek subjects (usually young sailors) in the Ottoman Empire, although most bore great similarities to the aforementioned cases in Greece involving young women marrying Muslim men.[96] Greek consuls often presented conversions of individual Christians as efforts to intimidate the Christian community, as for instance in 1855 when a young man named Panagiotis Prasinelis was “forcibly” converted to Islam. After his conversion, he was paraded through the streets of Kydonies (Ayvalik) at the head of a Muslim mob brandishing swords, shields and banners, which frightened the remaining Christians, many of whom fled the town.[97] These cases allowed the Greek government to turn the tables on the Ottoman authorities and place them in a similarly difficult position, risking offending either the Muslim community or the non-Muslim local communities, who often enjoyed the support European diplomats, especially since these conversions could develop into cases of apostasy from Islam if the new convert was convinced to return to her or his original faith.[98] As in the Greek examples examined earlier, cases of conversion to Islam in the Ottoman Empire could also escalate into serious diplomatic incidents, as did a case in Varna concerning a 13- or 14-year-old daughter of a Greek subject that became an international incident, with the involvement of the local Greek consul, the Greek ambassador to Istanbul and even the Russian consul and Spanish ambassador, eventually leading to an Ottoman request for the recall of the Greek consul in Varna.[99]

Greek consuls also intervened in cases involving the so-called Muslim Christians (*Ἰσλαμοχριστιανῶν*) or crypto-Christians, some of whom were captured Christians that had nominally converted to Islam but continued to practice Christian rites in secret. One such case involved the wife of an Ottoman treasurer in Crete, who fled to the house of the British

consul with her daughter and son-in-law to escape the fury of her husband, when he discovered that they were still practicing Christian rites, but others involved entire communities practicing hybrid forms of Christianity and Islam.[100] Greek consuls like the one in Candia (Irakleio) in Crete kept the government regularly informed about Muslims who may have expressed a wish to convert to Orthodoxy as well as about Christians who converted to Islam.[101]

Greek governments did not simply exploit conversion to cause difficulties for the Ottoman Empire, however, but attached real significance to their assumed role as defenders of Orthodox Christians. This is best exemplified by the diplomatic spat with the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1843. The Greek government strenuously objected to the decision of that kingdom to dismiss all Orthodox priests and replace them with Catholics while also seizing the Orthodox churches of Messina and Barletta and transferring them to the Catholic Church. Following protests to the Two Sicilies, King Otto, himself a Catholic, sought the intervention of France, one of Greece's protecting powers, to safeguard the freedom of worship of the Orthodox in the Two Sicilies, insisting that the Orthodox should enjoy the same rights as Catholics. What makes the case most interesting is that Otto claimed to have acted following complaints from the Orthodox communities in Messina and Barletta, which apparently saw Greece, just over a decade after its independence, as a more likely protector than the vastly more powerful and influential Russian Empire, which had traditionally acted as the defender of Orthodoxy.[102]

Conclusion

This article has tried to present the complexities involving religion, identity, citizenship and conversion during and in the immediate aftermath of the Greek War of Independence. Although many enduring myths regarding the war of independence and the modern Greek state have been challenged in recent decades, some surprisingly persist unquestioned by modern historiography. While the massacres of the Greek insurgents are increasingly discussed and debated, the conversion of the Muslim population of southern Greece is barely an afterthought. Similarly, the idea that Greece emerged as a solidly homogenous Christian state is rarely challenged nor, of course, is the pressure on the remaining Muslims and Jews to convert examined.[103] My examination here is far from comprehensive and should be seen as a first step towards a better understanding of the complexity of religion and religious conversion with regard to Greek nationalism and nationality. The contradictions of "enslaving" Muslims while abolishing the institution of slavery, or of emancipating all the inhabitants of the country regardless of race or religion while religious minorities faced increasing pressure to convert or emigrate, should be researched further to understand why the rhetoric, and possibly the policies, of the government of the new

kingdom were at such odds with local realities. As Katherine Fleming has noted, the Greek state had confused expectations with regard to minorities, their rights, duties and place in the new polity.[104] Perhaps conversion should be seen in the same manner as the assimilation of Orthodox Christian linguistic/ethnic minorities (Slavophones, Vlachs, Albanians), who were expected to assimilate linguistically and become indistinguishable from other Greek Orthodox Christians. Certainly, the evidence does not indicate that, once conversion had taken place, converts were in any way discriminated either by the state or by the local communities, as they easily married and integrated into Greek society. A better understanding of conversion would also inform our understanding of assimilation with regard to Greece, a state which, as Devin Naar has correctly noted, did not seem particularly interested in the assimilation of religious minorities, as it was understood in other parts of Europe. Contrary to the policies pursued in much of Europe regarding the assimilation of Jewish minorities in particular, Greece maintained significant barriers on the integration of Jews with the rest of society. Notably it did not recognise civil marriages but only religious ones, which negated the possibility of "mixed marriages" without conversion. Thus intermarriage between Jews and Christians (and Muslims) remained marginal in Greek society, unlike much of Europe.[105] Seen in this light, and with the evidence presented above, conversion (as well as apostasy) appears as a much more significant element in the construction of modern Greek identity and was linked to state policies from the very inception of the Greek state until well into the twentieth century and thus requires a more careful analysis than historians of modern Greece, have afforded it.

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[1] See, for example, 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 (New York: Ashgate, 2009), 88, 90; George Th. Mavrogordatos, "Orthodoxy and Nationalism in the Greek Case," *West European Politics* 26, no. 1 (2003): 129; Vassilis Kremmydas, *Η Μεγάλη Ιδέα: Μεταμορφώσεις ενός εθνικού ιδεολογήματος* [The great idea: Transformations of a national ideology] (Athens: Typothito, 2010), 65; Effi Gazi, "Reading the Ancients: Remnants of Byzantine Controversies in the Greek National Narrative," *Historein* 6 (2006): 147; 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).

[2] See, for example, Kostas Kostis, *"Τα κακομαθημένα παιδιά της ιστορίας": Η διαμόρφωση του νεοελληνικού κράτους 18ος–21ος αιώνας* ["The spoiled children of history": the formation of the modern Greek state, 18th–21st centuries] (Athens: Polis, 2013); G.B. Dertilis, *Ιστορία του ελληνικού κράτους, 1830–1920* [History of the Greek state, 1830–1920] (Irakleio: Crete University Press, 2017); Nikos Alivizatos, *Το Σύνταγμα και οι εχθροί του στη νεοελληνική ιστορία 1800–2010* [The constitution and its enemies in modern Greek history, 1800–2010] (Athens: Polis, 2011); Alexandros Svolos, *Τα ελληνικά συντάγματα 1822–1975/1986: Η συνταγματική ιστορία της Ελλάδος* [The Greek constitutions, 1822–1975/1986: The constitutional history of Greece] (Athens: Stochastis, 1998). Even Giorgos Sotirelis, who discusses exhaustively the question of universal suffrage, does not mention non-Christian subjects in his book *(Σύνταγμα και εκλογές στην Ελλάδα 1864–1909: Ιδεολογία και πράξη της καθολικής ψηφοφορίας* [Constitution and elections in Greece, 1864–1909: ideology and practice of universal suffrage] (Athens: Themelio, 2003). For the political representation and eventual emigration of the Muslims of Thessaly, see Nicole Immig, "The 'New' Muslim Minorities in Greece: Between Emigration and Political Participation, 1881–1886," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29, no. 4 (2009), and *Zwischen Emigration und Partizipation: Muslime in Griechenland 1878–1897* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015).

[3] Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece (AYE), Kentriki Yperesia (Central Service, thereafter KY), 1843/76.1, 1865, 13/25 August 1843. See also Elpida K. Vogli, *Έλληνες το γένος: Η ιθαγένεια και η ταυτότητα στο εθνικό κράτος των Ελλήνων (1821–1844)* [Greek by descent: identity and citizenship in modern Greece, 1821–1844] (Irakleio: Crete University Press, 2008), 275.

[4] See Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

[5] Phokion P. Kotzageorgis, "Conversion to Islam in Ottoman Rural Societies in the Balkans: The Cases of Vallahades and Pomaks," in *Ottoman Rural Societies and Economies*, ed. Elias Kolovos (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2015), 143, 146; Joseph Nehama, *Ιστορία των Ισραηλιτών της Σαλονίκης* [History of the Jews of Thessaloniki] (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2000), 2:715–16, 719.

[6] Suphan Kirmizialtin, "Conversion in Ottoman Balkans: A Historiographical Survey," *History Compass* 5, no. 2 (2007): 650.

[7] Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kisve Bahasi Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670–1730* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 92, 100, 102, 104–5; Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Bulgarians in the Seventeenth Century: Slavic Orthodox Society and Culture under Ottoman Rule* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1993), 59; Adem Handzic, *Population of Bosnia in the Ottoman Period: A Historical Overview* (Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 1994), 6.

[8] See Marc Baer, "Islamic Conversion Narratives of Women: Social Change and Gendered Religious Hierarchy in Early Modern Ottoman Istanbul," *Gender & History* 16, no. 2 (2004).

[9] Nikos G. Svoronos, *Το ελληνικό έθνος: Γένεση και διαμόρφωση του Νέου Ελληνισμού* [The Greek nation: Genesis and formation of modern Hellenism] (Athens: Polis, 2017), 84. There is an extensive bibliography on neomartyrs, mostly nonacademic, of which the following are a selection from the past century: Despoina Damianidou, *Νεομάρτυρες* [Neomartyrs] (Thessaloniki: Christianiki Elpis, 2013); *Νεομάρτυρες Πελοποννήσου* [Neomartyrs of the Peloponnese] (Tripoli: General State Archives–Arkadia Archives, 2003); Charalampos Vasilopoulos, *Ευρυτάνες Νεομάρτυρες* [Neomartyrs of Evrytania] (Athens: s.n., 1967); Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, *Οι Νεομάρτυρες* [The neomartyrs] (Athens: Foinikas, 1934); Georgios Printzipas, "Νεομάρτυρες εκ κρυπτοχριστιανών" [Neomartyrs of the crypto-Christians], in *Έλληνες νεομάρτυρες 1453–1821* (Athens: s.n., n.d.), unpaginated; Apostolos Glavinas, *Οι Νεομάρτυρες της Τουρκοκρατίας* [The neomartyrs under Turkish rule] (Katerini: Epektasi, 1997).

[10] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans*, 83.

[11] Hupchick, *Bulgarians in the Seventeenth Century*, 62.

[12] Kirmizialtin, "Conversion in Ottoman Balkans," 651; Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the Balkans as a Historiographical Problem: The Southeast-European Perspective," in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, ed. Fikret Adanir and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 262.

[13] See E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[14] Brian Pullan, "'A Ship with Two Rudders': 'Righetto Marrano' and the Inquisition in Venice," *Historical Journal* 20, no. 1 (1977): 37, 45, 51–52.

[15] Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Constructing Ottoman Identity in the Reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II," *Journal of Ottoman and Turkish Studies* 1, no. 1–2 (2014): 124.

[16] E. Natalie Rothman, "Becoming Venetian: Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 21, no. 1 (2006): 43, 47, 54.

[17] Virginia Aksan, "Who Was an Ottoman? Reflections on 'Wearing Hats' and 'Turning Turk'," in *Europa und die Türkei im 18. Jahrhundert/Europe and Turkey in the 18th Century*, ed. Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2011), 307.

[18] Eyal Ginio, "Neither Muslims nor Zimmis: The Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State," *Romani Studies* 14, no. 2 (2004): 118, 135.

[19] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans*, 49.

[20] Antonis Anastasopoulos, "Political Participation, Public Order, and Monetary Pledges (Nezir) in Ottoman Crete," in *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Eleni Gara, M. Erdem Kabadayi and Christoph K. Neumann (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2011), 129; Giorgos D. Kontogiorgis, *Κοινωνική δυναμική και πολιτική αυτοδιοίκηση* [Social dynamics and political self-government] (Athens: Livanis, 1982), 59, 101.

[21] Kirmizialtin, "Conversion in Ottoman Balkans," 654; See also Petar Petrović-Njegoš, *The Mountain Wreath* (Chicago: Aristeus, 2012).

[22] Alexandros Mansolas, *Πολιτειογραφικαί πληροφορίαι περί Ελλάδος* [Politiographical information concerning Greece] (Athens: Ethniko Typografeio, 1867), 2.

[23] Joelle Dalegre, *Grecs et Ottomans 1453–1923* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002), 109. One should note that this was probably a diminished community following the Venetian rule of the Peloponnese (1684–1715), which saw the expulsion of Muslims from the area.

[24] See Will Smiley, *From Slaves to Prisoners of War: The Ottoman Empire, Russia, and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 4, 24, 106, 122. Such rules were, of course, frequently broken even by European states. Napoleon, for example massacred 2,000 Ottoman prisoners following the capture of Acre in 1799 (ibid., 31).

[25] Ibid., 47, 91, 92, 132.

[26] Will Smiley, "The Meanings of Conversion: Treaty Law, State Knowledge, and Religious Identity among Russian Captives in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *International History Review* 34, no. 3 (2012): 559, 561, 568, 571–72.

[27] Smiley, *From Slaves to Prisoners of War*, 35–36, 122.

[28] Ibid., 25, 122, 175.

[29] Ibid., 166, 176, 179.

[30] George Finlay, *A History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time*, vol. 6, pt. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1877), 92, 148–49, 151, 161–65, 192, 215, 218–20, 226–27, 282. Gustav Friedrich Hertzberg, *Ιστορία της ελληνικής επαναστάσεως* [History of the Greek revolution], trans. Pavlos Karolidis (Athens: Georgios D. Fexis, 1916), 1:60–61, 83, 97, 160, 177–79; 2:49; Vassilis Kremmydas, *Η Ελληνική Επανάσταση του 1821: Τεκμήρια, αναψηλαφήσεις, ερμηνείες* [The Greek Revolution of 1821: presumptions, revisions, interpretations] (Athens: Gutenberg, 2016), 91.

[31] Apostolos E. Vacalopoulos, *Τούρκοι και Έλληνες αιχμάλωτοι κατά την ελληνική επανάσταση (1821–1829)* [Turkish and Greek prisoners during the Greek revolution, 1821–1829) (Thessaloniki: Ant. Stamoulis, 2016), 19, 53, 87.

[32] Ibid., 8–9.

[33] Ibid., 7, 10, 29, 47, 50–51; Apostolos E. Vacalopoulos, *Αιχμάλωτοι Ελλήνων κατά την επανάσταση του 1821* [Captives of the Greeks during the revolution of 1821] (Athens: Irodotos, 2000), 7, 24, 39, 46; Finlay, *A History of Greece*, 11, 21, 92, 148–49, 163, 192, 220; Svolos, *Τα ελληνικά συντάγματα* [The Greek constitutions], 122–23.

[34] Vacalopoulos, *Τούρκοι και Έλληνες αιχμάλωτοι* [Turkish and Greek prisoners], 11, 21.

[35] Maria Efthymiou, *Εβραίοι και χριστιανοί στα τουρκοκρατούμενα νησιά του νοτιοανατολικού Αιγαίου: Οι δύσκολες πλευρές μιας γόνιμης συνύπαρξης* [Jews and Christians in the Turkish-occupied islands of the southeastern Aegean: the difficult aspects of a fruitful coexistence] (Athens: Trochalia, 1992), 77.

[36] See Eyal Ginio, "Childhood, Mental Capacity and Conversion to Islam in the Ottoman State," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 25 (2001): 99–101, 104, 109–10.

[37] See Vacalopoulos, *Αιχμάλωτοι Ελλήνων* [Captives of the Greeks], 52–55; *Τούρκοι και Έλληνες αιχμάλωτοι* [Turkish and Greek prisoners], 52–58.

[38] Giorgos Georgis, "Η ανατολική πολιτική του Κυβερνήτη Ιωάννη Καποδίστρια" [The eastern policy of Governor Ioannis Kapodistrias], in *Ο Κυβερνήτης Ιωάννης Καποδίστριας: Κριτικές προσεγγίσεις και επιβεβαιώσεις* [Governor Ioannis Kapodistrias: critical approaches and confirmations], ed. Giorgos Georgis (Athens: Kastaniotis, 2015), 189; Smiley, *From Slaves to Prisoners of War*, 181.

[39] Michael Molho, "Le judaïsme grec en général et la communauté juive de Salonique en particulier entre les deux guerres mondiales," in *Homenaje a Millas-Villicrosa* (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1956), 75–76; K.E. Fleming, *Greece: A Jewish History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 17.

[40] Lucien J. Frary, "Russian Consuls and the Greek War of Independence (1821–31)," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 28, no. 1 (2013): 55.

[41] Mansolas, *Πολιτειογραφικαί πληροφορίαι περί Ελλάδος* [Politiographical information concerning Greece], 2.

[42] Immig, *Zwischen Emigration und Partizipation*.

[43] AYE, KY, 1834/49:1, 2727 (2452), 5 February 1834; 1834/49:1, 248, Nafplio, 31 March 1834; 1834/49:1, 210, Nafplio, 19 March 1834; 1853/32.2, 72/243, Ioannina, 21 July 1853.

[44] Vogli, *Έλληνες το γένος* [Greek by descent], 59; Adamantios Korais, *Σημειώσεις εις το προσωρινόν πολίτευμα της Ελλάδος του 1822 έτους* [Notes on the provisional government of Greece of 1822] (Athens: s.n., 1933), 9–10, 12–17; Jeremy Bentham, *Securities against Misrule and Other Constitutional Writings for Tripoli and Greece*, ed. Philip Schofield (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 254, 263.

[45] Baer, "Islamic Conversion Narratives," 434.

[46] Elyse Semerdjian, "Armenian Women, Legal Bargaining, and Gendered Politics of Conversion in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Aleppo," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 12, no. 1 (2016): 3, 13; Sebnem Koser Akcapar, "Conversion as a Migration Strategy in a Transit Country: Iranian Shiites Becoming Christians in Turkey," *International Migration Review* 40, no. 4 (2006): 819.

[47] Fahd Kasumović, "Understanding Ottoman Heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Conversions to Islam in the Records of the Sarajevo Sharia Court, 1800–1851," *Belleten Türk Tarih Kurumu* 80, no. 288 (2016): 507.

[48] Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 22, 66.

[49] Ibid., 91, 98, 173–74. Will Smiley pushes the origins of this divergence of views and even conflict between local Muslim communities and the Ottoman state to the 1740 following the treaties stipulating the return of Russian prisoners of war. See "The Meanings of Conversion," 561.

[50] General State Archives Leonidio, Notarial Archive (GAK Leonidio, NA), 431, 19 May 1837; 489, 21 July 1837; 922, 29 February 1839; 2621, 2 November 1843; 786, 25 September 1846; 552, 28 November 1849; 452, 24 October 1848; 551, 28 November 1849.

[51] Michail Houliarakis, *Γεωγραφική, διοικητική και πληθυσμιακή εξέλιξις της Ελλάδος, 1821–1971* [Geographical, administrative and demographic development of Greece, 1821–1971] (Athens: National Centre of Social Research, 1973), 25; Thanos Vagenas, *Ιστορικά Τσακωνιάς και Λεωνιδίου* [History of Tsakonia and Leonidio] (Athens: s.n., 1971), 151.

[52] GAK Leonidio, NA, 786, 25 September 1846.

[53] GAK Leonidio, NA, 431, 19 May 1837; 489 21 July 1837.

[54] GAK Athens, Notarial Archive (GAK Athens, NA), F1, no. 195a, 26 October 1831; F1, no. 24, 26 October 1831.

[55] GAK Athens, NA, F1, 26, 28 March 1832.

[56] GAK Athens, NA, F1, 60, 12 October 1824; F1, 195a, 26 October 1831; F16, 81.1, 22 September 1833.

[57] GAK Athens, Efeteio Athinon, Politikes Apofaseis (GAK Athens, EA), vol. 1, no. 355, 26 January 1837, p. 4247; vol. 2, no. 514, 13 August 1837, p. 5925; vol. 2, no. 538, 24 September 1837, p. 6269; vol. 2, no. 495, 5 August 1837, p. 5735; vol. 1, no. 356, 29 January 1837, p. 4267; vol. 3, no. 578, 19 November 1837, p. 6767; vol. 3, no. 579, 16 November 1837, p. 6809; vol. 3, no. 566, 29 October 1837, p. 6619; vol. 2, no. 464, 6 July 1837, p. 5487; vol. 4, no. 641, 1 February 1838, p. 7517.

[58] Greece did not create a unified civil code until the twentieth century but relied on customary practices and Byzantine legislation. In this framework, Islamic law was considered valid by the Greek courts for the Muslim community just as Jewish law applied to Jews. In the case of converts, however, it was unclear if the applicable legislation was Islamic law or the Christian customary law of the region in question.

[59] GAK Athens, EA, vol. 2, no. 520, 17 August 1837; vol. 4, no. 749, 17 May 1838, p. 9477; vol. 3, no. 565, 22 October 1837, p. 6587.

[60] GAK Athens, EA, vol. 119A, no. 17974, 26 March 1860; vol. 121, no. 18419, 8 October 1860, p. 2281.

[61] AYE, KY, 1843/76.1, 5086, 11 January 1843.

[62] For divorce, see Evdoxios Doxiadis, "'Ous O Theos Synezeuxen, Anthropos Me Chorizeto': State, Church, and Divorce from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Greek State," *L'Homme* 31, no. 1 (2020).

[63] AYE, KY, 1837/76.1, Athens, 22 August 1836.

[64] Smiley, "The Meanings of Conversion," 563.

[65] GAK Athens, EA, vol. 119A, p. 725, no.17974, 25 March 1860; vol. 121, p. 2281, no. 18419, 8 October 1860, among many others.

[66] AYE, KY, 1837/76.1, 1357, 22 March 1837 (23 de la lune Zilhetze l'an de l'hegire 1252).

[67] AYE, KY, 1837/76.1, 20698, 22716, 29 May 1837.

[68] Mansolas, *Πολιτειογραφικαί πληροφορίαι περί Ελλάδος* [Politiographical information concerning Greece], 2.

[69] AYE, KY, 1838/76.1, 1601, 8 July 1838.

[70] AYE, KY, 1840/76.1, 2353 12 July 1840; 1840/76.1, 3350, 30 September 1840; 1840/76.1, 3716, 7 August 1840; 1840/76.1, 2314, 10/22 July 1840.

[71] AYE, KY, 1840/76.1, 2353, 12 July 1840; 1840/76.1, 3350, 30 September 1840; 1840/76.1, 3716, 7 August 1840; 1840/76.1, 2314, 10/22 July 1840.

[72] AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 4346, 14/26 November 1841; 1841/76.1, 360, 25 September/7 October 1841; 1841/76.1, 3394, 9/21 September 1841.

[73] AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 3565, 15/27 September 1841.

[74] AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 4346, 14/26 November 1841; 1841/76.1, 3172, 31 August 1841.

[75] AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 3083, 21 August/2 September 1841; 1841/76.1 2925, 12/24 August 1841.

[76] See, for example, AYE, KY, 1840/76.1, 2353, Halkida, 12 July 1840, 1841/76.1, 1817, Patras, 23 May 1841; 1841/76.1, 4346, Athens, 14/26 November 1841; 1841/76.1, 3565, Constantinople, 15/27 September 1831; AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 3665, Halkida, 29 August 1841, among many others.

[77] See, for example, AYE, KY,1856/76.1, 6757, Athens, 9 May 1855; 1856/76.1, Athens, 27 April 1855.

[78] AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 1817, Patras, 23 May 1841.

[79] AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 4477, Athens, 24 November 1841.

[80] AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 10144, 25 August 1841.

[81] AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 3665, Halkida, 29 August 1841.

[82] AYE, KY, 1841/76.1, 3253, Athens, 7 September 1841.

[83] AYE, KY, 1842/76.1, 289, Athens, 24 January/5 February 1842; 1842/76.1, 4912, 19 August 1842; 1842/76.1, 1380, 13 August 1842; 1842/76.1, 1380/1675, 5 May 1842; 1842/76.1, 1554, 4 June 1842; 1842/76.1, 1244, 17 November 1841; 1842/76.1, 2238/2335, 15 June 1842; 1842/76.1, 4948, 11 December 1842; 1842/76.1, 4280, 16/28 October 1842. For Kriezotis, see Stefanos P. Papageorgiou, *Από το γένος στο έθνος: Η θεμελίωση του ελληνικού κράτους 1821–1862* [From descent to the nation: the foundation of the Greek state, 1821–1862] (Athens: Papazisis, 2005), 440–41.

[84] AYE, KY, 1842/76.1, 1673, Athens, 9 February 1842; 1843/76.1, 12918, 7 October 1843.

[85] AYE, KY, 1856/76.1, 27 April 1855; 1856/76.1, 6757, Athens, 9 May 1855.

[86] AYE, KY, 1856/76.1, 9167, Athens, 16 April 1855.

[87] AYE, KY, 1856/76.1, 9 May 1855; 1856/76.1, 3169, Halkida, 20 April 1855; 1856/76.1, 3943, Halkida, 18 May 1855; 1856/76.1, 3169, Halkida, 20 April 1855.

[88] AYE, KY, 1856/76.1, 195, Halkida, 20 May 1855.

[89] AYE, KY, 1856/76.1, 13435, Athens, 24 May 1855; 1856/76.1, 13/25 January 1856; 1856/76.1, 68, Pera, 19 January 1856; 1856/76.1, 349, Pera, 27 April 1856; 1856/76.1, Athens, 21 November 1855; 1856/76.1, Athens, 20 June 1856.

[90] AYE, KY, 1845/75.1, 523, Athens, 30 January/11 February 1845.

[91] AYE, KY, 1845/75.1, 248, 5 February 1845; 1845/75.1, 5943, 6 March 1845.

[92] AYE, KY, 1845/75.1, 711, 10/22 March 1845; 1845/75.1, 1647, 4/26 May 1845.

[93] AYE, KY, 1845/75.1, 30903, undated.

[94] AYE, KY, 1845/75.1, 31562, 25 August 1845; 1845/75.1, 3172, 3/15 September 1845.

[95] AYE, KY, 1835/36.2, 34.22, 15 February 1835; 1845/76.1, 172, 2 April 1845; 1861/76.1, 28, Pera, 10 March 1861; 1861/76.1, 18, Pera, 24 February 1861.

[96] AYE, KY, 1855/76.1, 107, Smyrna, 29 June 1855; 1856/76.1, 222, Thessaloniki, 29 May 1856; 1861/76.1, Therapeiois (likely Therapeio), 2 June 1861; 1856/76.1, Chios, 2 April 1856.

[97] AYE, KY, 1855/ 76.1, 91, Smyrna, 22 June 1855.

[98] Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 13–14, 21–23, 33–34, 38, 57, 66.

[99] AYE, KY, 1861/76.1, 717, Pera, 31 March 1861; 1861/76.1,341, 25 March 1861; 1861/76.1, 872, 12 April 1861; 1861/76.1, 1087, 3 May 1861.

[100] AYE, KY, 1856/76.1, 75, Chania, 11/23 June 1856; Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 85, 87, 90–91, 97–98, 109.

[101] AYE, KY, 1856/76.1, 10, Irakleio, 12 July 1856.

[102] AYE, KY, 1843/76.1, 1865, 13/25 August 1843.

[103] See, for example, the otherwise excellent works by Kostis, *"Τα κακομαθημένα παιδιά της ιστορίας"* ["The spoiled children of history"], Dertilis, *Ιστορία του ελληνικού κράτους* [History of the Greek state], or even Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece: From the War of Independence to the Present* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), and *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768 to 1913: The Long Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015),) let alone older more nationalist historiography, like John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos Veremis, *Greece: The Modern Sequel: From 1831 to the Present* (London: Hurst, 2002).

[104] Fleming, *Greece: A Jewish History*, 97.

[105] Devin E. Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 63.