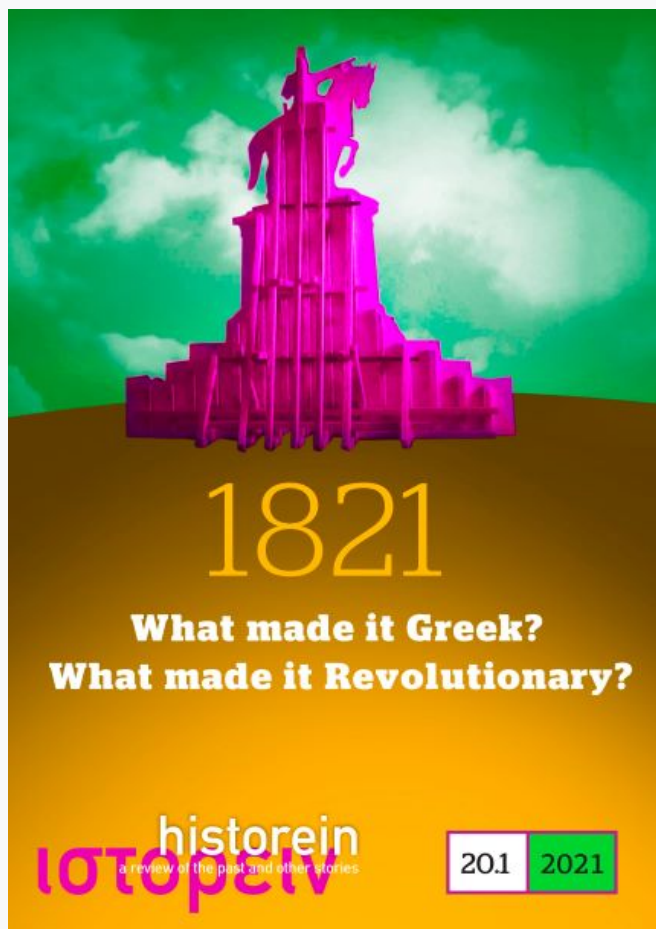


Historein

Vol 20, No 1 (2021)

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



The Catholic Communities of the Aegean Archipelago during the Greek Revolution, 1821–1830

Dimitris Kousouris

doi: [10.12681/historein.25559](https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.25559)

Copyright © 2022, Dimitris Kousouris



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:

Kousouris, D. (2022). The Catholic Communities of the Aegean Archipelago during the Greek Revolution, 1821–1830. *Historein*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.25559>



**The Catholic Communities of
the Aegean Archipelago
during the Greek Revolution,
1821–1830**

Dimitris Kousouris

doi: 10.12681/historein.25559

To cite this article:

Kousouris, Dimitris. 2021. "The Catholic Communities of the Aegean Archipelago during the Greek Revolution, 1821–1830". *Historein* 20 (1). <https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.25559>.

The Catholic Communities of the Aegean Archipelago during the Greek Revolution, 1821–1830

Dimitris Kousouris

University of Vienna

The Catholics of the Aegean islands represent a rather neglected subject in the story of the Greek War of Independence. Recent research focuses mainly, if not exclusively, on the relations between the Greek Orthodox and the Catholic churches and insists, from different standpoints, on the question of the “Greekness” and the patriotic attitude of the islanders,¹ ultimately neglecting the economic, social and spiritual life of those indigenous communities as well as their interconnections with the wider international environment and their links to transregional trade networks. To the extent that Vatican networks were also used by the island Catholics, archival evidence regarding the religious life of the “Franks” or “Latins” of the Ottoman Empire helps us better distinguish their political and diplomatic position in a changing context. The large degree of autonomy conceded to the community by the Sublime Porte, the Catholic Church and its global network, in combination with French protection, can help us explore, on the one hand, the remarkable endurance of Catholicism in the Cyclades and especially in Syros, but also, on the other, the gradual decline of its influence in the centuries that marked the withdrawal of Venice and its allies from the Eastern Mediterranean.

This article presents some of the findings of my research on the Catholic communities of the Cyclades during the 1821 Revolution and their attitude towards the revolutionary events and the Greek national movement during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Apart from secondary literature on the subject and published sources, my research draws on the archives of the Catholic Diocese of Syros and the Archdiocese of Naxos-Tinos from 1820 to 1830, the archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide, now Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples) and of the Vatican Apostolic Archive, as well as French and Austrian diplomatic archives.² My purpose here is to present the opportunities and working hypothesis that derive from sources that have remained largely unexplored and unexploited by scholarly research. Documents held in the Vatican archives and the regional church archives include various types of contractual material (such as wills and dowry contracts), as well as the correspondence of the bishop or archbishop with the Holy See and the European powers,

particularly France, which had an active role in the protection of the Catholic islands, and occasional exchanges with local parishes and members of the flock. More often than not, these files are testimony to the intense political and diplomatic activity throughout the period under consideration. Moreover, the multitude of petitions, memos and reports of the local clergy to the secular authorities and to their bishop reveals the emotions and attitudes of the Catholic islanders as well as the economic, political and cultural networks that conditioned their identity within the broader Ottoman context. The period from the outbreak of the revolution and the formation of the first modern Greek state to the subsequent establishment of political, administrative and judicial authorities in the islands is of particular interest for understanding the complex transformations of the time, the various conflicts between locals and newcomers, Catholics and Orthodox, and among Catholics themselves. The period also reveals the tensions between the forces of the ancien régime and those of liberal nationalism during this transition from an imperial state to a nation-state and from one legal regime to another.

Taking the Ottoman context as a starting point, I will present, in the first instance, the positions and transformations of the distinct Greek/Roman and Latin/Frank communities before the revolution, so as to use them as a guiding thread in order to discern the reconfigurations of the boundary between East/West, civilized Europe vs. the barbarian and lustful Orient in the 1820s. Thereafter, from the first frictions between insurgents and island Latins to the efforts of the Greek government to impose its authority while avoiding open conflict, the tumultuous integration of those insular communities describes the making of the Greek nation as an open-ended process rather than as a pre-existing entity that was by default revolutionary-minded.³ The last part of this article focuses on the effort of those communities to address and mobilise the Vatican's diplomatic and administrative networks and French diplomacy in order to maintain their rights and autonomous status. During that period, these Latin communities would gradually adopt the denomination "Greeks of the Western Church" attributed to them by the insurgents. Coined during the first year of the revolution, that term became the official denomination of the island Catholics once they found themselves within the borders of the new nation-state. The integration of this ethnoconfessional group within the new international context describes the tensions between a prenatal/extraterritorial and a national/territorial conception of state sovereignty and the making of a new frontier between Europe and the Orient within the magnetic field of revolution and counterrevolution.

The Aegean Catholics in the Ottoman Empire

The Catholic communities of the Aegean Sea trace their roots to the Fourth Crusade around the turn of the thirteenth century, the Sack of Constantinople and the creation of the

short-lived Latin Empire. From that point on until the mid-sixteenth century, most of the Cyclades belonged to the Duchy of the Archipelago (or Naxos) under (mainly) Venetian nobles, vassals to the Latin states of the region, and to Naples and Venice after the fifteenth century.⁴ The Ottomans gradually took control of most of the Aegean between the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and 1566, when the duchy was definitely dissolved and most of the islands were formally integrated into the Ottoman Empire. However, the archipelago remained a space both shared and disputed in the subsequent centuries. Sifnos remained under Latin rule until 1616. Tinos remained an advanced outpost of the Serenissima in the Aegean until 1715. In the rest of the islands, the grip of the Ottomans remained mostly indirect: only a few hundred Muslim officials settled in the islands during their rule and the local communities acquired a large degree of autonomy. Imperial authority was mostly secured by the presence of the Ottoman fleet, which collected the annual tribute from the local communities and occasionally dispatched kadis (judges) for the resolution of disputes and punishment of crimes.⁵ Moreover, the tradition of capitulations between the Ottoman sultan and the French king inaugurated in the mid-sixteenth century, as well as the different degrees and forms of protection offered by France to the Catholics of the Ottoman Empire, often created a situation of shared sovereignty between the French protectors and the Ottoman Porte, which is perhaps best observed in the case of Syros, the only island with a solid Catholic majority in the early modern period. Irrespective of the confessional affiliation of their inhabitants, the islands of the archipelago formed, according to Spyros Asdrachas, a “dispersed maritime city” throughout the centuries of transition to modernity.⁶ Historians and anthropologists alike have highlighted a complex set of relations between the communities, as well as between the flocks and the religious hierarchies that, despite the rivalries and antagonisms between the Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, made the limits between the two communities quite porous, not only for conversions from one rite to the other but also for widespread forms of syncretism expressed in shared sites and cult practices.⁷

The identity of these insular Catholic communities, comprising the offspring of intermarriages between Catholic merchants and settlers (coming mainly, but not exclusively, from the Italian peninsula) and the local population as well as of converts to Roman Catholicism during the period of Latin rule, is not always easy to assess. Albeit Greek speakers in a large degree, they did not belong to the Rum millet, and they were considered by the Ottoman administration to be Franks, an ethnoconfessional group separate from those of Greek Orthodox, Armenians and other Eastern Christian minorities of the empire.⁸ Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the denominations Frank and Latin, which initially distinguished between native Ottoman Catholics and foreign subjects, gradually emerged, with more or less the same meaning, covering both a religious and an ethnic sense, as a result of an ongoing ethnicisation of religious identities within the empire and the gradual fusion of the Catholic communities in the Levantine hubs of the Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean.⁹ The archives of the local island dioceses, as well as those of the

secular local authorities, corroborate this view: the terms mainly used by the representatives of those communities themselves in the beginning of the nineteenth century are Latins or Catholics, as opposed to Romans (Romaioi/Romioi) or Greeks. Accordingly, in the early nineteenth century, the term *nazione greca*, already in use to describe either Greek Orthodox or Greek-speaking communities, increasingly acquired a political sense. Meanwhile, Greek Orthodox living in the Ottoman Empire or abroad seemed to consider the island Catholics as a hybrid group of Greco-Latins.¹⁰

Contacts and conflicts between Greeks and Latins at the outbreak of the revolution

Already in April 1821, a few days after the outbreak of the revolution on the island, the inhabitants of Hydra addressed an invitation to the Western Christian co-nationals (*ὁμογενεῖς*, loosely translated) to join the struggle for freedom in the name of their common Christian faith and liberty.¹¹ A series of subsequent letters to the authorities of the Catholic communities repeated the invitation to join the revolution against Ottoman tyranny, offering explicit guarantees for religious freedom and tolerance.¹² For their part, concerned about the fate of their flock in the cities after the wave of Ottoman reprisals against the Greeks, Catholic hierarchs such as Vinkentios Coressi, vicar apostolic of Constantinople, as well as Luigi-Maria Cardelli, archbishop of Smyrna, did not miss the opportunity to express their allegiance to the sultan and issue directives to the islanders to observe strict neutrality and calls for protection to French diplomatic agents.¹³

The specific form of the participation and the contribution of Catholics involved, first and foremost, the payment of an extraordinary levy and the annual tax to the Greek government, which tried to impose a new tax collection system, organised by a central authority on each island. As a result, the rich landowners, who as a general rule also represented their communities,¹⁴ tried to avoid taxation; for their part, the poor, who had little to lose, were keen to join the insurgents, as it happened in Hydra under the leadership of Antonis Oikonomou at the beginning of the revolution. In the first place, the lines of division in local societies cut across the confessional community lines, reflecting mainly social status and short-term economic grievances or opportunities. It is important to note that the people involved in the project of incorporating the Cyclades into the national territory, as well as the clergy, were fully aware of the significance of the material conditions and of the porosity of the frontier between Catholics and Orthodox.¹⁵

In Naxos, seat of the archdiocese, local Catholics took part in the popular mass organised by the Orthodox clergy in May 1821. Whether this was an expression of support for the insurrection or of a wait-and-see attitude or both, remains disputed. In any case, at the same time, Archbishop Andrea Veggetti elaborated, in concert with the local French

vice-consul, a neutral line and called repeatedly for French protection, making it clear in his correspondence with the French ambassador in Istanbul and the Propaganda Fide that his only aim was to buy some time until the arrival of a considerable French force to the island. That the revolutionary events often crossed the boundaries between the religious communities also became evident in Santorini, where Catholic representatives, together with some Orthodox notables, refused to comply with the taxation demands of the Greek insurgents.¹⁶ This conflict fed the fears of the Greeks that, if they gave in, some of the islanders might go as far as to convert to Catholicism in order to avoid tax collection. As in Naxos, in Tinos too members of the Catholic flock took part in a popular assembly in April 1821, in which the Greek Orthodox majority of the island decided to join the Greek insurrection. Again, whether the motivations of those Latins present in the assembly revealed internal divisions within the Catholic community, and to which degree, remains unclear. At the same time, the strict neutrality observed and preached by the local bishop, Giovanni Collaro, revived old frictions and was used as a pretext for Orthodox attacks on Catholic properties and chapels. Orthodox attacks on Latins occurred also occasionally in Naxos and Santorini in the early years of the revolution. Finally in Syros, an island with an overwhelming Catholic majority, the conduct of the local community was much more unambiguous. Already in late April 1821 the secular authorities decided to decline the appeals of the insurgents and to formally request, through the local French vice-consul, that the island be placed under French protection.¹⁷ Regardless of the upheavals and confusion of the first months of the revolution, by autumn 1821 all island Catholics had officially adopted a neutral stance and appealed for French protection, which was expressed in all cases by the hoisting of the French white flag on their churches.¹⁸

Despite their distrust of the island Latins and their fear that the Latin challenge to their authority, their refusal to pay taxes and comply with public order measures would also spread to Orthodox islanders, the insurrectionary government sought to avoid tensions with them at any price. The main reason for this stance was the quest for international recognition by European Powers. Taking into account the prominent role of the Vatican in the diplomacy of the European Concert and the French protection of the Catholics of the Ottoman Empire, the Greek government was fully aware that an open confrontation would jeopardise its efforts to distinguish themselves from the Carbonari and other Jacobin movements and present themselves as legitimate representatives of Christian subjects that had revolted against Muslim despotism.¹⁹ Thus, during the Congress of Verona in 1822, Count Andreas Metaxas from Kefalonia and the French philhellene colonel Jean-Philippe Jourdain attempted, for the first time, to officially solicit the support of the European Concert on behalf of the Greek government. Their petition to the Roman pontiff and their memorandum to the imperial courts of Europe were very carefully worded: the first addressed Pius VII as “Head of Christianity” and “Supreme Pontiff”, the second appealed for support in the name of Christianity and implied that the Catholics had also joined the Greek struggle. Accordingly, in the insurgent territories, in an effort to convince the

Catholics to join the struggle, the Greeks circulated a fake papal condemnation of the sultan.²⁰

In the first year of the revolution, all those questions remained pending. The endeavour to incorporate the islands and, with them, the native Catholic communities took shape between spring 1822 and summer 1823, with the first laws on the administrative division of the national territory, issued April 1822 and May 1823, respectively.²¹ In practice, that first administrative division was implemented with the appointment of prefects charged with establishing an elementary fiscal and administrative apparatus in several eastern Aegean islands and in the Cyclades, with the exception of Syros. This reticence of the revolutionary government regarding the only island entirely under the control of a Catholic community attests to the former's awareness of the complications entailed by the island's neutrality, and of the distinct identity and the particular allegiances of the Syriots. Thus, together with the establishment of elementary government instances and the pressures on the Catholic communities to contribute to the tax collection where Orthodox and Catholics coexisted, the effort to integrate the insular communities into the revolutionary regime acquired in Syros a territorial dimension that offers a panorama of the political conflicts, the socioeconomic transformations and the demographic upheavals brought about by the Greek War of Independence.

The case of Syros

During the first two years of the war, Syros and Naxos Catholics continued paying the annual tribute to the sultan and occasionally liberated Turkish prisoners. This consolidated the hostility of the Greeks towards the Latins after 1822, at a time when the end of the military operations on the mainland and the internal strife among the insurgents had drastically reduced the available resources for the government. This gradually pushed the Greek government to exploit the resources of the maritime space and many shipowners and captains to seek profit, whether in privateering or in piracy.²²

As a neutral territory where merchants of all nations, including Greeks and Turks, could trade untroubled by the turbulences of war, the port of Syros would soon be transformed into a trade hub. Within the first year of the war already, some rich merchants from Chios and Asia Minor had sought to acquire a foothold on the island, along with refugees, who, seeking safe haven after the first wave of Ottoman reprisals, started crowding the port with a growing pace after the Chios massacres in April 1822. Although the Syriot representatives did not miss the opportunity to protest the raids, thefts and trespassing on private or church property by Orthodox refugees, the lucrative opportunities offered by the de facto transformation of Syros into a free port for Orthodox and Catholics alike kept the tensions between the two communities under control until the end of 1822,

when the Greek government started to claim its share in political power and capital accumulation.

On Christmas Eve 1822,²³ a military corps under the command of a Kefalonian ship captain, Nestor Faziolis, and his brothers, attempted to assault the port of Syros; this attack was stopped by the intervention of a French warship. Faziolis soon reorganised his force on the nearby island of Tinos, with the support of the Greek prefect (*ἐπαρχος*), and attempted a second invasion in February 1823. Once more the attack was nipped in the bud thanks to the intervention of the French navy, after which Faziolis was provisionally taken into custody. Soon afterwards, it became clear that Faziolis had acted in collusion with the Greek government in Nafplio. Shortly after his incursions, a Hydriot flotilla entered the island's port to force the payment of an extraordinary levy of 40,000 piastres. After the new administrative division issued by the government in May formally incorporated Syros into its territory,²⁴ Faziolis was officially appointed Syros police chief under the command of the prefect, Alexandros Axiotis. His arrival on the island provoked the immediate reaction of the French naval captain Henri de Rigny, who arrived on the spot on his frigate *La Médée*, arrested Faziolis, dismantled his unit and addressed a strict warning to the Greek government for appointing a bandit (*forban*) as police chief.²⁵ Nevertheless, by the end of 1823, the prefect had established a police force whose jurisdiction was still called into question by the French consul and the leaders of the Catholic community. In the fiscal register of the Greek government, Syros was divided into two communities, that of the local Latins and that of the merchants of the port of Syros.²⁶

From that point on, the port of Syros very quickly became a hub for all sorts of lucrative activities, including the legal trade in wheat and cereal, as well as in luxury products such as wine, textile, perfumes, spices and condiments, but also for all sorts of illegal traffic, including piracy booties, counterfeit coins and slaves. Although the slave trade was formally forbidden under the Greek constitution, Ottoman captives were exchanged for Greeks, redeemed (mainly by the Catholics) or traded in plain sight at the port of Syros until the late 1820s. The regularity of such unlawful transactions, together with the supplying of Ottoman fortresses in Evia and the Peloponnese, corroborate that the main purpose of the Orthodox businessmen in Syros was profitmaking rather than patriotism. Be that as it may, that primitive accumulation of capital attracted a great number of refugees, who provided the workforce for the further development of sea trade, as well as of the shipbuilding industry.²⁷ According to different estimations, until 1826, 20,000 to 30,000 people had settled in the island's port, not only as traders of different kinds, but also workers in the port and the local naval industry, small store holders, peddlers, seamen, etc., thus reversing the demographic equilibrium and the power balance between the two communities. From now on, Catholics would be in the minority, forced to struggle in order to maintain their autonomy and land property.

Taxation and representation, rupture and continuity

The main question in the contacts between the Greek insurgents and Catholics remained the contribution of the latter to the fiscal mechanism of the revolutionary authorities. And as the institutions of the insurgents remained liberal, at least in form and in principle, the political issue that emanated from this was representation, that is, participation in the decision-making process of the revolutionary authorities by sending delegates to the National Assembly.²⁸ As mentioned above, Catholics refused both to contribute and send representatives from the beginning of the revolution until well into the period of Ioannis Kapodistrias. Nevertheless, between 1823 and 1824, until the arrival of the first loans from England, the tax revenue from the islands acquired a considerable weight given the scarce financial situation of the Greek government. During this period, using threats or straightforward violence that ranged from a gunboat diplomacy of sorts to confiscation of properties and physical attacks, sometimes fatal, against the Latins,²⁹ the Greek government gradually managed to extract the tithe and several additional extraordinary levies. However, the line of the religious authorities remained that of defending the exemption of church property from income tax. This was mainly due to the position of the local secular parish priests: with no regular financial support or stipend, their main source of income were their church properties, which most commonly were passed down in a hereditary lineage of parish priests from father to son. Comparing the names of the Catholic priests in different decades of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century in the archives of the Catholic Diocese of Syros, one observes the same surnames – a fact that raises questions about the exact status of the church properties and a possible (informal) right of inheritance of church properties for relatives in the descending line.³⁰ Besides, the hybrid status between hereditary properties and church properties can also be discerned in the petitions of the local clergy to the bishop and the lay communal council. For instance, in a letter to the bishop dated 17 November 1829, the Syriot priests claimed that the council should name auditors and inspectors for all “foreigners” that had acquired land or founded their business on the island;³¹ likewise, in another petition, the priests Pambakari, Marinello and Privileggio demanded the maintenance of their privileges as members of the clergy.³²

Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to consider that such issues only came up with the outbreak of the Greek Revolution. A closer look at the archival evidence reveals serious threads of continuity. The decay of Catholicism in the archipelago had been a concern for the Vatican already before 1821. A year before the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, in April 1820 Francesco Saverio Dracopoli, bishop of Chios, submitted to the Propaganda Fide a report “on the causes of the decay, decline and the weakness of Catholicism in the islands of the Archipelago”, written after a six-month stay in the Cycladic islands as apostolic visitor.³³ In this densely written 78-page text, the head of the oldest and most prestigious diocese of the region presented extensively the situation and recent history of

the Catholic Church and attempted to single out the weak links within the clergy. In the first place, Dracopoli pointed to the lack of skills and education of the local clergy, which caused attachment to “their private interests and comforts” and inability to “promote the interests of our Holy Catholic Religion”. Concerning the broader political and ideological context, the author attributed the disorder reigning within the local Catholic hierarchy to the vices of “bad secular governments”, the “hatred and enmity of the schismatic Greeks” and the “barbarism of the Turkish sovereign”.³⁴ Drawing a historical sketch of the Catholic Church in the islands during the previous half-century, Dracopoli described a gradual decline of the Catholic faith since the times of Giovanni Battista Crispi, a former bishop of Santorini and archbishop of Naxos from 1773 until his death in 1796.³⁵ Describing the situation in each of the Catholic communities of the islands, the author laments the failure of the local clergy to accomplish their duty that led to the extinction of the communities of Milos and Andros through conversion and migration, and reports on the worsening situation within the other communities, stressing mainly the harmful government of bishops Caspar Delenda of Santorini and Giovanni-Battista Russin of Syros.

A most interesting point in Dracopoli’s report was that concerning the relations between the role of bishops as spiritual leaders of the flock and their relationship with the local authorities. Dracopoli recommends a more active political involvement of the bishops through guidance and control of the secular governors, who tend to cultivate affinities with Greek prelates and Turkish officials, often obliging the church to contribute to the collection of the community’s share in the collection of the annual tribute to the Sublime Porte, thus diverting the church’s finances from providing aid for the needy among its flock and to assure the sustenance of the clergy. Hence, it becomes clear that the issue of the status of church properties, as well as that of their exemption from taxation, was at stake well before the Greek insurgency. For the Catholic leadership, the Ottoman context, despite its flaws, provided them a greater leeway to meet their objectives than the inclusion of the islands in an Orthodox nation-state.

Regarding the dialectics of rupture and continuity with the prerevolutionary period, of great interest was also the gradual desuetude of a long-lived customary law, the “right of first refusal” for neighbours and relatives in the sale of an estate or field, which was replaced on the eve of the revolution with a more “liberal” rule, according to which any property could be freely sold to the highest bidder.³⁶ This change seems to indicate the relative failure, or obsolescence of the pre-existing norms, and an increased class differentiation within the community. The development of a commercial bourgeoisie associated with the Levantine communities of Istanbul and Asia Minor increased local inequalities and contradictions.

Adaptation within the changing context

The 1820s was a period of transition for the Catholic Church. In the Vatican, three popes

succeeded one another. The staunchly conservative Pius VII, who had openly aligned Vatican policy with the counterrevolutionary forces and had been exiled during the French occupation of the Papal States by Napoleonic troops, died in 1823. He was succeeded by Leo XII, who remained in office until his own death in 1829; Pius VII became pope soon thereafter, in March 1829, remaining in office until his death a year and a half later, in September 1830.³⁷ Thus, at the local level, opposition to taxation and expropriation of ecclesiastical property was justified as submission to the legitimate sovereign. At the same time, this opposition was expressed towards the Greek authorities through the discourse of a traditional, communal moral economy, focusing on the preservation of local autonomy and property relations and the maintenance of tax immunity for church properties.³⁸ At the same time, the connections of those insular communities with the networks of papal and French diplomacy link the history of the archipelago with the regional and international dimension of the Greek War of Independence.

Some of the most common misconceptions in the discussion of religious rivalries in the late Ottoman Empire are due to the false impression of stability and homogeneity within the different groups and denominations. In the three decades after the French Revolution, the rapid expansion of Greek shipping and trade in the Eastern Mediterranean led to the rise of local entrepreneurial elites and deepened social inequalities within the communities of the Aegean. Where Orthodox and Catholics shared the island, in the power vacuum created by the revolutionary events conflicts between leading factions would take on religious connotations.³⁹ As we have already seen, it was not unusual that individual members of one community would side with the other. That was, for instance, among several others, the case of the local Latin peasant (*paesano*) Giorgio Xantaki, tithe collector (*decimatore*) in Syros for the Greek government in 1826, who was straightforwardly threatened with excommunication by Apostolic Administrator Luigi Maria Blancis da Ciriè.⁴⁰ The antagonisms between villagers and notables, but also between rival factions of the local elite, came to the surface in a peasant revolt in 1814 that temporarily deposed the *ἐπίτροπος* (governor [*governatore*]) Niccolo Capella, substituting him with Gianni Salacha, before the latter was finally arrested and jailed in Istanbul by the Ottoman authorities.⁴¹

It is unclear whether this revolt had any direct or indirect connection with the period in office of the Catholic bishop Giovanni Battista Russin, who, facing charges of factionalism, was recalled in spring 1821 by the Holy See to Rome, where he remained until his death in 1829.⁴² From 1822 to 1825 the archbishop of Smyrna ensured, as apostolic visitor, the connection of Syros with the Holy See through a series of trips and reports on the situation at Syros sent to the Propaganda Fide.⁴³ In autumn 1825, Blancis, a Franciscan in the service of the Apostolic Vicariate of Constantinople, became titular bishop of Canatha and apostolic administrator of the Syros bishopric.⁴⁴

It may well be argued that, in the larger context, the designation of Blancis, who a

few years later would become apostolic delegate of the Holy See in the Kingdom of Greece,⁴⁵ was an expression of a broader policy of the Vatican in the Eastern Mediterranean to fill the most mission-critical positions of the hierarchy with priests from Italy, in order to have direct insight into the social and ideological cleavages within each community. Thus, we can start discerning the story of those communities through the prism of the Braudelian dialectics of isolation and connectivity. The island Catholics did not only withdraw to their citadel but also, once it became clear that the situation would turn out differently than expected, they gradually sought to enhance their connectedness to their traditional protectors (France and the Vatican) as well as the Sublime Porte. The election of Giovanni Marinello, a member of a prominent Syriot diaspora family in Istanbul,⁴⁶ as *ἐπίτροπος* (governor) in 1824 was certainly a move in that direction. During his period in office, Marinello repeatedly solicited support and protection from French diplomats and the Catholic hierarchy in Istanbul and Smyrna.⁴⁷ Blancis himself was at the same time quite prolific in his correspondence both within and without Syros – with Rome, Istanbul and Smyrna. On the internal front, he tried, on the one hand, to ease tensions between factions and, on the other, to limit the points of contact or friction between the two communities, by such measures as the strict prohibition of mixed marriages.⁴⁸ In what concerns the relations with the embryonic Greek state, after convening for several months with the local clergy and the bishops of the other islands and securing the approval and support of the Propaganda Fide, Blancis endorsed and upheld the line of maintaining tax immunity for church property.⁴⁹

In a letter to the bishop, dated 10 November 1829, fourteen priests of Syros mention that they helped the refugees and tolerated their presence on the island as a temporary state of affairs that would cease once and for all after the end of the conflict.

Now that the emergency is over, justice imposes on all those innumerable foreigners, who have been gathered in Syros, to return to their respective homelands that have been pacified in the meantime, and to be grateful for the wealth they accumulated on our island, at the expense of the inhabitants ... We, the Catholic clergy of Syros, submit this formal protest in the name of the entire community against all those who commit various injustices against our hereditary or ecclesiastical property rights and we declare that we do not recognise the orders, nor the decisions, of the current commission of the Greek state on the subject of the landed property of the inhabitants of Syros, as such a tribunal has not been created, nor did it function according to the basic principles of justice, nor with the necessary consensus of the local population; instead it is the product of a scheme that serves as a pretext ... But neither the law of God, nor the law of humans, gives usurpers the right to become legitimate owners of the usurped properties.⁵⁰

The priests requested the expulsion of all refugees and settlers and flatly rejected the legitimacy of the new state authorities that had been imposed on the island in 1828-1829. According to another petition of the priests to the council of elders (*δημογεροντία*) of the island, one of their demands, which were supported by the French ambassador, was

the reimbursement of the tithe collected by the Greek authorities for church properties: “Through our present petition, we address the respectable Council of the Elders of Syros, which should defend the laws and local ecclesiastical rights by asking the so-called tithe collectors [τούς λεγόμενους δεκατηστάς] to return all the tithes collected on the so-called church gardens”.

Latins, Franks, Greeks or Hellenes? Plans for the legal and political status of the Catholics

If the Catholics nursed the belief that the wounds inflicted on them by the war would be short-lived, so did most of the Orthodox refugees and settlers, who continued to aspire to return home years after their arrival to the island. Two events in late 1827 and early 1828 definitively buried the prospect of a return to the status quo ante and demonstrated that those upheavals rather heralded a transition to uncharted territory. The first was the complete destruction of the Ottoman fleet in Navarino in October 1827. A series of alarming reports submitted to the Vatican in the aftermath of the naval battle relayed the widespread panic at the prospect of reprisals among the Levantine communities of Istanbul and Smyrna after the mobilisation of Tatar troops by the sultan.⁵¹ The second event that marked an end of the illusions occurred shortly afterwards, in the spring of 1828: the definitive failure of an ill-prepared expedition for the reconquest of Chios mounted by its former inhabitants, who represented half of the Orthodox community of Ermoupoli, the new town built by the Orthodox settlers at the port of Syros.⁵² After 1828, it became clear that the Orthodox refugees would remain on the island, and the Catholic community would represent a minority, as was the case in Tinos, Naxos and Santorini. The question now concerned the status of the island Catholics within the emerging situation.

Syros had already become a dimension of the Holy See’s foreign policy in 1822-1823, when, following instructions of Secretary of State Cardinal Consalvi, the French philhellene captain Jean Philippe Jourdain, as representative of the Greek government, entered into negotiations with the Order of the Knights Hospitaller, for an alliance against the sultan that would be sealed with the concession of Syros to the latter and the transformation of the island into a “new Gibraltar”.⁵³ In early 1826, once Blancis had taken office, he wrote a detailed report on Syros, in which he supported its transformation into a free port (*porto franco*), that would be a tributary of the Greek state.

If, since the beginning of this revolution, the Catholic communities of the Aegean, which are five and include 12,000 Catholics, have validated their neutrality through the intermediary of Rome or another European court, in the same way the Greeks secured the neutrality of the European Powers, the Greeks would have left the Latins in peace and the Latins would have paid their tribute to the Greeks as conquerors, a tribute agreed and fixed by the Europeans until the end of the war ...

In that case, Syros could remain a free port, since Greece has no rights of conquest or occupation ... But on this purpose, it would be enough to convince the allies that those small colonies who request protection in order to sustain their neutrality are not Hellenes (*ellene*), but actually Latin European, as witnessed by the family names of all those Grimaldis, Giustinianis, Vitalis, Rossis, Freris, Privilegios, etc., who live on the islands. If those Europeans, who came to Greece, tried to revive Ulysses, Odysseys and all the remains of antiquity, it was also their duty to defend their blood and ancestry.⁵⁴

The protection and recognition of the distinct identity of local Catholics remained an indispensable parameter for the different scenarios promoted by the Catholic Church throughout the 1820s. During the negotiations on the future borders of Greece, the newspaper *Courrier de Smyrne* published a petition from the clergy and notables of Syros to the Holy See, in which they expressed the wish not to become part of the new state.⁵⁵

The Greeks rose against their sovereign. Three Christian Powers decided to concede independence to some parts of Greece. To our great displeasure, we were informed that our island is included in those territories.

Most Holy Father,

We always remained loyal to our sovereign, observing the rules of our religion and we made every sacrifice to fulfil this duty. If faith and loyalty are not a crime, then why should we be part of the insurgents and submit ourselves to their laws? In that case (may God save us from this misfortune), we will be forced either to abandon our homeland or to convert in order to coexist with such an intolerant people. We do hope, however, that the Christian powers, who supported the Greek revolution, do not wish to force a poor people to betray its faith against their will.

With the sweet expectation that a favourable mediation of Your Holiness will convince the allied powers to let us live in peace under the laws of our sovereign, we kiss your feet.⁵⁶

Although the authenticity of this document was denied by the Syriots, it nevertheless corresponds to the scenarios discussed and promoted by the Catholic bishops to French representatives in the region. In a later report, dated 17 September 1827, Blancis enumerated once again the crimes (thefts, encroachments, assaults, killings, etc.) committed by Orthodox settlers against Catholics, and proposed that Syros obtain a status similar to that of the Republic of San Marino, which was autonomous but directly connected to the Holy See.⁵⁷ Almost a year later, in August 1828, Blancis again recounted to the Propaganda Fide prefect, Mauro Cappellari, who would some years later become Pope Gregory XVI, the initiatives he had taken jointly with the bishop of Tinos, Giorgo Gabinelli, to promote the establishment of a special status for the Catholic Church and the gathering of all Catholics of the Aegean on one of those islands.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, all this remained a paper exercise, since the position and status of Catholics in the new kingdom was finally decided with the Treaty of London of 1830 and the immediate aftermath until the treaty of 1832 that led to the coronation of a Catholic king of Greece, Otto, the second son of the Bavarian monarch.⁵⁹ Another report on the situation

and the prospects of the island, written by three members of the communal council in April 1833, just after the arrival of the king, demonstrates that the secular authorities were at that point compelled to deal with the urgent demands of adapting to the new circumstances.⁶⁰

Thus, within a decade, the Latin subjects of the sultan had been transformed into Greek citizens. The imposition of territorial sovereignty on maritime crossroads where merchants, pirates, diplomatic agents, warriors and adventurers of all kinds used to meet allows us to discern the gradual dismantlement of the imperial context and the formation of a new, ever-changing border between Europe and the Ottoman Orient within the magnetic field of revolution and counterrevolution.

¹ Symptomatic of this trend in most of the recent scholarly research on the Archipelago Catholics are two recent studies on the subject from different viewpoints. See Konstantinos Manikas, “Σχέσεις ορθοδοξίας και ρωμαιοκαθολικισμού κατά τη διάρκεια της Επανάστασως (1821–1827)” [Relations between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism during the Revolution, 1821–1827] (PhD diss., University of Athens, 2001) and Ioannis Assimakis, *Η πορεία των σχέσεων Ελλάδος–Αγίας Έδρας (1820–1980)* [The course of relations between Greece and the Holy See, 1820–1980] (Thessaloniki: Apostolic Vicariate of Thessaloniki, 2007).

² See mainly the publications by the Pontifical Oriental Institute and its director Georg Hofmann, *Vescovadi Cattolici della Grecia*, vol. 3, Syros (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1937) and *Das Papsttum und der griechische Freiheitskampf (1821–1829): Quellenausgabe mit Einführung* (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1952).

³ See among the recent contributions on the period the remarks of Christos Loukos, “Η Επανάσταση του 1821: Από κυρίαρχο αντικείμενο έρευνας και διδασκαλίας, στην υποβάθμιση και 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 (Athens: Centre for Neohellenic Research, 2004), 579–94. See also Nikos G. Kotaridis, *Περί της επανάστασως των λεγομένων Ελλήνων: Η μαρτυρία του ιερομόναχου Γεράσιμου (1836)* [On the revolution of the so-called Greeks: The testimony of the hieromonk Gerasimos (1836)] (Athens: Opportuna, 2017).

⁴ For the discussion about the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the Archipelago Catholics during the Ottoman period, see Ben Slot, *Archipelagus Turbatus: Les Cyclades entre colonisation latine et occupation ottomane, c. 1500–1718* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archeologisch Instituut, 1982), 13–17 and 57–65; see also Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453–1923* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 114–23; Georg Hofmann, *Vescovadi cattolici della Grecia* (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1934–1941). For the populations, fluctuations and movements of the various islands in the early modern period, see Dimitris Dimitropoulos, *Μαρτυρίες για τον πληθυσμό των νησιών του Αιγαίου, 15ος–αρχές 19ου αιώνα* [Testimonies about the population of the Aegean islands, 15th–early 19th century] (Athens: Centre for Neohellenic Research, 2004), 56–63, especially for the various ethnoconfessional groups; cf., among others, Philip P. Argenti, *The Religious Minorities of Chios: Jews and Roman Catholics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); F.W. Hasluck, “Depopulation in the Aegean Islands and the Turkish Conquest,” *Annual of the British School at Athens* 17 (1910–11): 151–81.

⁵ Slot, *Archipelagus Turbatus*, 100–16.

⁶ Spyros 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.

⁷ On religious boundaries and syncretism from the perspective of anthropology and historical sociology in the Ottoman Empire, see Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey, eds., *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites:*

Religion, Politics, and Conflict Resolution (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Dionigi Albera and Maria Couroucli, eds., *Sharing Sacred Spaces in the Mediterranean: Christians, Muslims, and Jews at Shrines and Sanctuaries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012). On the questions of conversions and intracommunal relationships in recent studies, see Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); also Eleftheria Zei, *Visages et visions d'insularité: L'île de Paros dans l'archipel grec pendant la première moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Istanbul: Isis, 2017), 375–88.

⁸ For the political and administrative status of Catholics in the Ottoman Empire, see Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 153–221, and Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Levantiner: Lebenswelten und Identitäten einer ethnokonfessionellen Gruppe im osmanischen Reich im "langen 19. Jahrhundert"* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005), 51–87.

⁹ Cf. Schmitt, *Levantiner*, 55–58, and Slot, *Archipelagus Turbatus*, 272–81.

¹⁰ See the letter of Korais to Neofytos Vamvas, 17 September 1821, in Adamantios Korais, *Αλληλογραφία*, vol. 4, 1817–1822 (Athens: Omilos Meletis Neollinikou Diafotismou, 1982), 307.

¹¹ “We Western and Eastern Christians are also bound by the Holy Cross, upon which our Lord spread His arms. Rise up, together with your Eastern Brothers! ... Let us all move ahead under the same flag and the same spirit.” Ioannis Filimon, *Δοκίμιον ιστορικόν περί της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως* [Historical essay on the Greek Revolution] (Athens: Soutsas and Ktenas, 1860), 3:113–14.

¹² The most emblematic of which was the letter addressed to the “Greeks of the Western Church” by Interior Minister Grigorios Dikaios, of 9 June 1823, that mentioned, among others, “If we look at the enlightened world, we see many nations composed by people of different religions who however remain in the same nation, like the German, the Dutch, the French nation. Only barbarian nations identify religion and nationalism, that is why even a small religious difference can divide them.” In Manikas, *Σχέσεις ορθοδοξίας και ρωμαιοκαθολικισμού* [Relations between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism], 103–4.

¹³ See Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide (Propaganda Fide Historical Archives; APF), Scritture riferite nei Congress (SC) Arcipelago, vol. 35, f. 61, 288–97, 477–78r–v. Cf. the report of Luigi Maria Blancis on Syros, Hofmann, *Vescovadi Cattolici*, vol. 3, Syros, 145–53.

¹⁴ For the character and function of local authorities in the Aegean, see Slot, *Archipelagus Turbatus*, 260–64: Zei, *Visages et visions*, 343–61.

¹⁵ Both sides, for instance, feared possible conversions because of the ban on mixed marriages or lack of material advantages. See, for example, among many other examples, Hydra Community Archive (HCA), vol. 9, 362, and APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 36, f. 154r–v.

¹⁶ In the case of Santorini, local Orthodox notables allied themselves with the Catholics in order to block the effort to establish Greek authorities on the island from the first months of the revolution, a reaction that led to a polarisation and, according to the Catholic Bishop Caspar Delenda, to the attempted conversion of some of them to Catholicism. For the “anarchic situation”, the tensions and the conflicts on the island after the outbreak of the revolution, see Abbè Pégues, *Histoire et phénomènes du volcan et des îles volcaniques de Santorin suivis d'un coup d'oeil sur l'état moral et religieux de la Grèce moderne* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1862), 624–50; Manikas, *Σχέσεις ορθοδοξίας και ρωμαιοκαθολικισμού* [Relations between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism], 101–3; Hofmann, *Das Papsttum*, 163 (doc. 111).

¹⁷ According to the apostolic vicar in Istanbul Vinkentios Coressi, former bishop of Chios and archbishop of Naxos, in summer 1821 the Syriot Catholics bore arms to oppose a Greek takeover of the island. See APF, SC Romania Costantinopoli, vol. 35, f. 267. Cf. Schmitt, *Levantiner*, 132–33.

¹⁸ See for example the letters of Andrea Veggetti, archbishop of Naxos, to Marquis Florimond de Faÿ de La Tour-Maubourg, French ambassador to the Sublime Porte, concerning mainly the various forms of pressure exercised by the Greeks on the island Catholics and the reactions of the latter, as well as the correspondence of the French ambassador and the archbishop of Smyrna with the Propaganda Fide on that same issue: APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 35, f. 140–44, 288–97, 464–65. Cf. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 248–52.

- ¹⁹ For that purpose, at the initial stage of the conflict, some of the Greek representatives went so far as to propose a union of the two churches: Hofmann, *Das Papsttum*, 37–42. See also Krateros Ioannou, *Διεθνές δίκαιο και ελληνική εξωτερική πολιτική* [International law and Greek foreign policy] (Komotini: Sakkoulas, 1989); Oliver Schulz, *Ein Sieg der zivilisierten Welt? Die Intervention der europäischen Grossmächte im griechischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg (1826–1832)* (Münster: LIT, 2011), 170–200; Assimakis, *Η πορεία των σχέσεων* [Course of relations], 187–224; Ada Dialla and Alexis Heraclides, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 105–33.
- ²⁰ Ioannis Delendas, *Οι καθολικοί της Σαντορίνης: Συμβολή στην ιστορία των Κυκλάδων* [The Catholics of Santorini: Contribution to the history of the Cyclades] (1949; Athens: Kalos Typos, 2019), 219–20; cf. Manikas, *Σχέσεις ορθοδοξίας και ρωμαιοκαθολικισμού* [Relations between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism], 59–62.
- ²¹ Georgios Dimakopoulos, “Η διοικητική οργάνωσις κατά την Ελληνικήν Επανάστασιν 1821–1827: Συμβολή εις την ιστορίαν της ελληνικής διοικήσεως” [The administrative organisation during the Greek Revolution, 1821–1827: Contribution to the history of the Greek administration] (PhD diss., Panteion, 1966), 154–57, 186–89.
- ²² From that point on, politicians who would adopt an anti-Greek stance across Europe would often describe the Greeks as a nation of brigands and pirates. For piracy and pirates during the Greek War of Independence, see mainly Despina Themeli-Katifori, “Καταδρομή και πειρατεία κατά την Επανάσταση του 1821: Φαινόμενα οικονομικών και κοινωνικών μετασχηματισμών” [Privateering and piracy during the 1821 Revolution: Phenomena of economic and social transformations], *Parousia* 5 (1987): 239–54; Leonidas Mylonakis, “Transnational Piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1821–1897” (PhD diss., University of California San Diego, 2018), 74–94; Dimitris Dimitropoulos, “Pirates during a Revolution: The Many Faces of Piracy and the Reaction of Local Communities,” in *Corsairs and Pirates in the Eastern Mediterranean: Fifteenth–Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Gelina Harlaftis, Dimitris Dimitropoulos and David J. Starkey (Athens: Sylvia Ioannou Foundation, 2016), 29–40; Apostolos Delis, “A Hub of Piracy in the Aegean: Syros during the Greek War of Independence,” in Harlaftis, Dimitropoulos and Starkey, *Corsairs and Pirates*, 41–54. For an overall view of piracy in the Ottoman Mediterranean, see Joshua M. White, *Piracy and Law in the Ottoman Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).
- ²³ In the Gregorian Calendar, observed by the Greek Orthodox.
- ²⁴ Dimakopoulos, “Η διοικητική οργάνωσις” [Administrative organisation], 154–57.
- ²⁵ See HCA, vol. 9, 260; cf. the report of the events by the French consul in Smyrna, Pierre David: Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (AMAE), CCC, Smyrne, 39 (July–December 1823), 28–29.
- ²⁶ On Fazolis’ incursions and what followed, see the report of Pierre David, French consul in Smyrna: AMAE, CCC, Smyrne, 39 (July–December 1823), 28–29. Cf. the studies of Andreas Drakakis, *Ιστορία του οικισμού της Ερμούπολεως (Σύρας)* [History of the settlement of Ermoupoli (Syros)], vol. 2 (Athens: s.n., 1983), 51–75 and Drakakis, “Ν. Φαζιόλης: Ένας Έλλην Κοντοτιέρος στα χρόνια της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως” [N. Faziolis: A Greek condottiero during the Greek Revolution], *Kykladika* 7 and 8 (1958): 3–21 and 23–37.
- ²⁷ According to Giovanni Marinello, head of the lay committee of the community (επίτροπος), “Quotidianamente e senza numero vediamo traspostarsi in Sira dele foreste familie occupando nostra isola.” APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 36, f. 189.
- ²⁸ Efforts of forced military conscription are only mentioned occasionally; most important of them happened in Syros in 1825. See the correspondence between the archbishop of Smyrna, the local secular authorities, the Vatican and French diplomatic representatives in APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 36, f. 187–88, 190, 219 r–v.
- ²⁹ “For nine years now, the Catholic island of Syros, which declared its neutrality from the very beginning and was formally acknowledged by the European Powers, the Turkish government (*governo turco*) and the Greek Nation (*nazione greca*), has been overrun by foreigners (*forestieri*), who number more than 21,000. Those foreigners, found in our homeland, Syros, comfort and security for their families, were received as brothers by our peaceful Catholic population and found here quiet and freedom they did not have in their

lands. Instead of showing gratefulness for the benefactions received from the Syriots, however, an important part of this crowd started trespassing and plundering the land belonging to the Syriots, the episcopal seat, the priests and the charitable foundations of the church, while at the same time they committed premeditated murders of our compatriots, even against priests who had previously helped them.” Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syros (ARCDs), Ecclesiastic documents, 1829, doc. 141.

³⁰ Cf. the names of the priests and landowners mentioned in a local land registry published by Dimitris Dimitropoulos, “Ένα συριανό κτηματολόγιο του 19ου αιώνα” [A 19th-century Syriot cadastre], in *Σύρος και Ερμούπολη: Συμβολές στην ιστορία του νησιού, 15ος–20ός αι.* [Syros and Ermoupoli: contributions to the history of the island, 15th–20th centuries], ed. Christina Agriantoni and Dimitris Dimitropoulos (Athens: Institute of Historical Research, 2008), 55–75.

³¹ “Not only the clergy but also the entire poor and unhappy Catholic population of the island suffer from these disasters in fields, vines and bees. This Catholic population is in a deplorable condition: a large part has already left the island, and the others are very scared ... The foreigners are constantly plundering farmhouses and even killing bees; during the last year they have become even more barbarous by destroying trees and vines and the whole countryside with the excuse: ‘we pay and we have the right to do what we want’. We believe that the most appropriate solution would be either that they designate a guarantor for each separate business, or a trusted inspector will be appointed to control all their activities.” ARCDs, Ecclesiastic documents, 1829, doc. 201.

³² In fact, the management and use of church property was hitherto resolved as an internal affair, subjected to the jurisdiction of the local church and community. Hence the priests considered that those rights derived from the Holy See and could not be subjected to the jurisdiction of the Greek state: “[W]e cannot leave our homeland, nor quit our ancestral inheritance and the church property. We cannot either submit ourselves to secular tribunals without the permission of the senior hierarchy of our church. Therefore, we demand full maintenance of our Rights.” ARCDs, Ecclesiastic documents, 1829, doc. 149.

³³ APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 34, f. 166–205v.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 169–70.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 172.

³⁶ See Dimitris Dimitropoulos, “Το δικαίωμα προτίμησης στα νησιά του Αιγαίου: Επιπτώσεις και προσαρμογές κατά τη διάρκεια της οθωμανικής περιόδου” [The right of first refusal in the Aegean islands: implications and adjustments during the Ottoman period], *Ta Istorika* 33 (2000): 205–28. Cf. the description by Della Rocca, *Traité complet sur les abeilles, avec une méthode nouvelle de les gouverner telle qu’elle se pratique à Syra, île de l’archipel* (Paris: Bleuët, 1790), 1:77–78.

³⁷ See Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003).

³⁸ The Catholic hierarchy, the priests at the local level and the bishops at the regional level, became the champions of this discourse not only towards the Greek revolutionary authorities but also within the church hierarchy in the region. See, for instance, the petition of Tinos priests to the SCPF protesting against the attempt of Monsignor Andrea Vegeti, archbishop of Naxos, to put under his jurisdiction the churches of Tinos, Syros and Santorini. APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 35, f. 754–55.

³⁹ Cf. Mark Mazower, “Villagers, Notables and Imperial Collapse: The Virgin Mary on Tinos in the 1820s,” and Charles Stewart, “Dreaming of Buried Icons in the Kingdom of Greece,” in *Networks of Power in Modern Greece: Essays in Honor of John Campbell*, ed. Mark Mazower (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 69–88.

⁴⁰ APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 36, f. 441–42.

⁴¹ Andreas Drakakis, *Η Σύρος επί Τουρκοκρατίας* [Syros during Turkish rule] (Ermoupoli: Tharros, 1948), 1:75–77.

⁴² According to Blancis, his “party” would still exist at the end of the decade. See his report to the SCPF, 2 September 1829, in APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 37, f. 230–32.

- ⁴³ APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 35, f. 288–97, 306–17, 320–26, 640–43, 923–26 and vol. 36, f. 33–35, 49–50. For the discussion and protests by local priests against his activity as apostolic visitor, see SC Arcipelago, vol. 35, f. 716–19 and 746–47.
- ⁴⁴ He officially became bishop after the death of his predecessor. APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 36, f. 179, 197.
- ⁴⁵ See Assimakis, *Η πορεία των σχέσεων* [Course of relations], 93–107.
- ⁴⁶ Yannis Karachristos, “Μετανάστευση Συριανών στην Κωνσταντινούπολη (1759–1818)” [Migration of Syrians to Istanbul, 1759–1818], in *Η Ελλάδα των νησιών από τη Φραγκοκρατία ως σήμερα* [The Greece of the islands from Frankish rule to today], ed. Asterios Argyriou (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2004), 161–71; Schmitt, *Levantiner*.
- ⁴⁷ APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 35, f. 698 and vol. 36, f. 77, 153–54, 189–90, 308.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 37, f. 15–16.
- ⁴⁹ Church property had already been submitted to taxation by then. The adoption for this position practically meant support for the claims for restitution of collected taxes for church properties by individual priests. *Ibid.*, vol. 36, f. 439–44.
- ⁵⁰ ARCDs, Ecclesiastic documents, 1829, doc. 176.
- ⁵¹ Coressi’s account also mentions a wave of migration towards safer havens far from the centre of Ottoman power. See, indicatively, APF, SC, Romania Constantinopoli, vol. 26, 1185–86 and SC Arcipelago, vol. 36, f. 599–600.
- ⁵² Drakakis, *Ιστορία του οικισμού της Ερμουπόλεως*, 175–85.
- ⁵³ Apostolos Daskalakis, *Κείμενα–πηγαί της ιστορίας της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης* [Articles–sources of history of the Greek Revolution] (Athens: Kleisiounis, 1967), 2:298–351; Jean Philippe Jourdain, *Mémoires historiques et militaires sur les événements de la Grèce depuis 1822 jusqu’au combat de Navarin* (Paris: Brissot-Thivars, 1828), 215–17, 230.
- ⁵⁴ Translation from the publication of the original, written in Italian, by Georg Hofmann, *Vescovadi Cattolici*, vol. 3, Syros, 178. Cf. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 250–51. The text has also been translated into Greek by Manikas, *Σχέσεις ορθοδοξίας και ρωμαιοκαθολικισμού* [Relations between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism], 295–96.
- ⁵⁵ *Courrier de Smyrne*, 22 March 1829.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁷ APF, SC Arcipelago, vol. 36, f. 579–80.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 37, f. 88–89.
- ⁵⁹ Along with the treaties recognising Greek independence and offering the throne to Leopold of Saxe-Coburg signed by the representatives of the Three Powers in London on 3 February 1830, in which the French king renounced his role as protector of the Catholics in an additional protocol, trusting in the hands of the new king the maintenance of the status and the protection of property of the Catholic Church as well as the complete religious freedom and civic equity for the Catholic subjects of the new kingdom. See Assimakis, *Η πορεία των σχέσεων* [Course of relations], 277–83.
- ⁶⁰ Archives of the Community of Ano Syros (ACAS), Documents (Έγγραφα), file 13. The main chapters of this report concern the fiscal immunity of commercial transactions, the new port, the lazaretto, the customs office, the warehouses, the taxation of exports.