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### What Independence for Greece? Abbé De Pradt's Point of View

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WHAT INDEPENDENCE FOR GREECE?  
ABBÉ DE PRADT'S POINT OF VIEW

*Denys Barau*

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*Abstract:* In numerous writings published between 1821 and 1828, Abbé de Pradt approached the questions concerning Greece's future independence from two quite different, if not completely opposite, points of view. On the one hand, he argued that Greece could and should achieve its independence by its own efforts, without the intervention of any foreign power, and that consequently it should also be entirely free to choose its own institutions. But, on the other hand, he wanted to emphasise the benefit that Europe could gain from this independence by making Greece play the role of a barrier against the expansion of Russian power. And this strategic role implied another principle for defining the territory and political regime of the new state. We shall see how, as the situation evolved, this second logic prevailed over the first.

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*A Significant Contribution*

The whole action of the philhellenes was aimed at helping the Greeks to conquer their independence. But what did this word independence mean? What territory, what population, what political regime? Would the Greeks win it by themselves, or through the intervention by the powers that be? Such issues could have jeopardised the fragile unity of often ideologically very heterogeneous Greek committees, particularly in Paris, and as an institution they avoided tackling them head on. On the other hand, the publicists did not refrain from doing so on a personal basis. Among them, Abbé Dominique de Pradt first attracts attention by the size of his contribution: eight titles, a little over 800 pages, between January 1822 and January 1829 – for most of the war. Most of the other authors were satisfied with occasional contributions. He was, indeed, a prolix and prolific author: writing no less than 38 books in the 15 years of the Restoration, on current political issues (the Jesuits, *le milliard des émigrés*), with a predilection for diplomatic congresses and international politics. He specialised in Spanish American revolutions. He was criticised for repeating himself, for writing too quickly on subjects he knew little about, but even his detractors recognised his capacity for quasi-prophetic forecasting, while at the same time

enjoying catching him out.<sup>1</sup> If a royalist journalist mocked those who, taking him for an oracle, were “always waiting until he had spoken to know what they [had] to say”,<sup>2</sup> it was also because this influence was a liberal one. Liberal, however, he had only become so at the Restoration. Deputy of the clergy at the *Etats-Généraux*, he was very much on the right wing in the Constituent Assembly, had emigrated in 1792 to Belgium, then to Hamburg; when he returned to France, his wit seduced Napoleon, who made him his ordinary chaplain, appointed him bishop of Poitiers, then archbishop of Malines, and entrusted him with some diplomatic missions. The most important of these, in 1812 in Warsaw, which was strategic at the time of the war in Russia, earned him disgrace: he avenged himself by writing a narrative about it that was his greatest bestseller,<sup>3</sup> and by participating in 1814, with Talleyrand, in the negotiations that led to the return of the Bourbons, before joining the liberal opposition, and in 1820, being the hero of a spectacular press trial.<sup>4</sup>

So, he was a prominent figure, and one can be sure that his writings on Greece had readers. A likely indication of a wide audience is that each of these eight books was reviewed in at least two newspapers or reviews, often more, up to six for the best recorded title in 1826, at the height of the philhellenic mobilisation. Always very extensive, sometimes extending over two issues, the reviews were generally negative in the royalist newspapers, and frankly laudatory in the liberal organs. It is true that only three were devoted exclusively to Greece: *De la Grèce dans ses rapports avec l'Europe*, in March 1822; *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce et à la réformation de la Turquie*, in November 1826; *De l'intervention armée pour la pacification de la Grèce*, in January 1828. In three books, it was connected with other issues: an *Aperçu sur la Grèce* was appended to *Parallèle de la puissance anglaise et russe* in April 1823; it was compared to the author's favourite cause in *Vrai système de l'Europe relativement à l'Amérique et à la Grèce* in April 1825, and linked to another problem close to his heart in January 1829 in *Du système permanent de l'Europe à l'égard de la Russie et des affaires de l'Orient*. Finally, the Greek event was the subject of important developments in two books devoted more generally to international political current affairs:

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<sup>1</sup> The geographer Conrad Malte-Brun, for example, was astonished that he had “succeeded in guessing fairly accurately the fate of peoples without taking too much trouble to get to know them” (*Journal des débats*, 1 December 1826).

<sup>2</sup> *La Gazette de France*, 23 February 1824.

<sup>3</sup> Dominique de Pradt, *Histoire de l'ambassade dans le grand-duché de Varsovie en 1812* (Paris: Pillet, 1815).

<sup>4</sup> About abbé de Pradt, see Jean Moins, “Les idées politiques de l'abbé de Pradt,” *Revue de la Haute-Auvergne* 38 (1962–1963): 17–47, 105–30, 183–209, 269–95.

*L'Europe et l'Amérique en 1821* (January 1822) and *L'Europe et l'Amérique en 1822 et 1823* (February 1824). These titles, which, with one exception, always include the word Europe, are indicative of the international political perspective from which de Pradt approached the Greek event. But, as we shall see, he always made this diplomatic approach coexist with a conception of the Greek cause that he gave as reflecting the views of the Greeks themselves; he mixed in at a certain point a perspective that we could refer to as humanitarian. Three largely opposing logics, difficult to conciliate: we will try to understand under what conditions and in what ways they have nevertheless been associated in this series of books.

### *The Importance of Overcoming by Oneself*

Like all other philhellenes, de Pradt first had to justify an insurrection that the sovereigns had condemned from the outset at the Congress of Laibach. His argument was fixed from the very first text and repeated with sometimes significant variations from one book to the next until 1826. Starting from the principle that it was useless to invoke “fantastic causes” – conspiracies – where “natural causes” were sufficient,<sup>5</sup> he endeavoured to show that there was only a reaction to the oppression suffered, according to “the nature of things” (an expression which he used frequently like a leitmotiv in his writings): the Greeks sought to free themselves from the sufferings of a life that was only “permitted, as to animals, as to plants ... not because of any right, but by the calculation that there is more to be gained by preserving than by destroying”,<sup>6</sup> a life that was imposed on them by Turks, who had constantly “camped” in Greece as conquerors, according to the expression introduced by Louis de Bonald.<sup>7</sup> So, it was not a conflict between a people and their government, as in the Italian and Spanish revolutions, but between two foreign peoples. Sometimes de Pradt attributed their separation to the Turks, to their religion and customs which, refusing any mixture, had prevented a fusion between the conquered people and the conquering people, of which history could offer examples. Sometimes he saw “the principle ... in the very violence that made the separation possible” and he invoked the Polish example to affirm that “nationality always protests against its erasure; it always lives in the depths of

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<sup>5</sup> Dominique de Pradt, *De la Grèce dans ses rapports avec l'Europe* (Paris: Béchét aîné, 1821), 28–29.

<sup>6</sup> Dominique de Pradt, *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce et à la réformation de la Turquie* (Paris: Béchét aîné, 1826), 24.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal des débats*, 20 September 1821.

hearts and is ready to claim its rights”.<sup>8</sup> But Greece had disappeared long before the Ottomans, already under “the alternately fierce, superstitious and sophistical yoke of the emperors of Constantinople”.<sup>9</sup> And the persistence of this people whose destiny had been “most likely to erase a national character” was more a matter of wonder than of the simple “nature of things”. It should be noted, however, that this reference to nationality appears only in the 1824 book and that de Pradt nowhere seeks to identify the Greeks as a particular population, for example ethnically or linguistically, or to associate them with a well-defined territory.

De Pradt put forward, with much more confidence and insistence, another justification, the strongest in his opinion: the superiority of the Greeks over the Turks. From a quantitative point of view, it was not in the “nature of things” that the former, who were more numerous, were dominated by the latter, who were less so. While he was not too concerned to base this application of the majority principle on facts, he gave much more importance to the qualitative side of the argument: it was not natural for the more civilised Greeks to remain under the yoke of the barbaric Turks. That was all the more true because the gap between the two peoples was widening and, at the same time, deepening. The religion and customs of the Turks, which inspired them with a proud refusal to imitate, isolated them and reduced them to immobility. The Greeks, on the contrary, were making progress by opening up to the world. Since the 1770s, they had developed their navy and their trade; the enrichment had made education possible.<sup>10</sup> Now, “in the state of modern societies, all power can only be measured by degrees of civilisation”,<sup>11</sup> which give priority in trade and education to the military force that had once enabled the Ottoman conquest. Greece still needed “the feeling of its superiority” to rise up. It had acquired this through its openness to the world, its trading houses established in the various ports of Europe, its young people studying in France, England or Germany. In this way, the Greek Revolution was born of a “universal movement”, drawing its strength from “broad communications” at a time when “every principle, every movement carries with it a character and an effect of generality”: a “reformation” or “social revolution” begun three centuries earlier and which, “for some years now ... redoubled in

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<sup>8</sup> Dominique de Pradt, *L'Europe et l'Amérique en 1822 et 1823* (Paris: Béchét aîné, 1824), 179–80.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>10</sup> Without quoting him, de Pradt was echoing the analysis of Adamantios Korais in his *Mémoire sur l'état actuel de la civilisation dans la Grèce, lu à la Société des Observateurs de l'Homme le 16 nivôse an XI* (Paris: s.n., [1803].)

<sup>11</sup> *De la Grèce*, 20.

strength and speed".<sup>12</sup> De Pradt still saw it as the effect of "the nature of things", rather than the work of history, which he sometimes invoked as an instance of judgement, but not as an acting power; understood in this way, at any rate, the Greek event would have been decidedly beyond the reach of any imaginable plot.

As part of a general movement that was "the work of nature", this revolution was not only legitimate in law, it could only be victorious in fact. Of course, the forces were very unequal, but as with the Swiss, the Dutch and the Americans at the beginning, these "struggles of organised force against weakness left to its own devices, its own inexperience, its own inner disorders"<sup>13</sup> had all come to triumph thanks to the unsuspected moral resources that the nobility of the goal and the "greatness of the ordeal" revealed in the heart of man.<sup>14</sup> But this heroic resort could only reverse the balance of power if certain pitfalls were avoided: the insubordination of "egalitarian" combatants, the "particular ambition of the chiefs",<sup>15</sup> the corruption inherited from the Turks. Despite these appropriate warnings, de Pradt does not seem to have really taken measure of the persistent difficulties of military organisation, nor of the seriousness of factional struggles. From book to book, he reported only a series of successes, like so many new proofs given on the military field of their superiority; each campaign announcing for the following one the final victory. So, it was a victory that the Greeks could and should win by their own strength. The point was fundamental: "a people that wants to be free must be free by itself; if it cannot do so, it is never really free, nor worthy of being free".<sup>16</sup>

He also wrote: "what would be the point of Greece's independence if it did not use the right it confers on it to choose its own government?"<sup>17</sup> Besides, it would not have to "answer to anyone"<sup>18</sup> since it had acquired this right without the help of any power. So, de Pradt had first taken note of a republican choice despite "the dangers [it] could bring to him".<sup>19</sup> Then, changing his mind, he judged that this serious decision, which would commit the future of the new state, should only be taken once victory had been achieved, as the "crowning

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<sup>12</sup> Dominique de Pradt, *Vrai système de l'Europe relativement à l'Amérique et à la Grèce* (Paris: Béchét aîné, 1825), 12 and 14.

<sup>13</sup> *L'Europe et l'Amérique*, 177.

<sup>14</sup> *De la Grèce*, 102.

<sup>15</sup> *L'Europe et l'Amérique*, 176.

<sup>16</sup> *Vrai système de l'Europe*, 248.

<sup>17</sup> *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 195.

<sup>18</sup> Dominique de Pradt, *Parallèle de la puissance anglaise et russe relativement à l'Europe, suivi d'un aperçu sur la Grèce* (Paris: Béchét aîné, 1823), 241.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

achievement” of the struggle. Of course, it would only belong to the “spirit of discernment and wisdom” of the Greeks, but to enlighten it, he “offered them tribute [of his reflections]”.<sup>20</sup> The two possible forms of government being only different means of “procuring for society the greatest amount of happiness”,<sup>21</sup> they had to be assessed according to their appropriateness to the state of society: monarchy was suitable for “societies too little advanced to govern themselves”, republic for “a state of general enlightenment”.<sup>22</sup> The latter was, therefore, only one possible option, and de Pradt advised against it, but, as we shall see, for other reasons. A supporter since 1790 of a separation between the spiritual and the temporal, he also warned the Greeks against the excessive weight that could be given to the clergy because of its role in the war.<sup>23</sup>

### *Intervention by the Powers: From Opposition to Acceptance*

All this argumentation presupposed a fight between two protagonists, which would take place without any external intervention. Nothing was less certain, however, and de Pradt, who considered himself a specialist in international relations, knew it well: “Greece is threatened by its neighbours almost as much as by its enemies”.<sup>24</sup> It was, first, under the guise of neutrality, “signs of disfavour” from the “European coalition”: the supply of arms to the Turks, obstacles to the departure of volunteers, nonrespect of the maritime blockade, the refusal to recognise Greek funds, and, above all in Austria, a malicious official press.<sup>25</sup> All these obstacles did not compromise the victory of the Greeks; it would have been so if the Holy Alliance had intervened against them as in Italy or Spain. Dreading it, de Pradt long fought against the principle. He argued that the republican regime adopted by the Greeks was not in itself a threat, that it could not be opposed to a model of government valid for all mankind.<sup>26</sup> He argued that, given the national character of this revolution, intervention would be a precedent for other cases such as Poland and Norway,<sup>27</sup> paving the way to endless violence. Not to mention the problematic alternative of the consequences of the intervention: to return Greece to its oppressors and make the Holy Alliance seem incompatible

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<sup>20</sup> *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 198.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>22</sup> *Vrai système de l'Europe*, 301.

<sup>23</sup> *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 40–45.

<sup>24</sup> *Vrai système de l'Europe*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> *De la Grèce*, 85; *Vrai système de l'Europe*, 229.

<sup>26</sup> *Parallèle de la puissance anglaise et russe*, 244–45.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 245–47.

with liberty, “even the most legitimate in its principle, the most irreproachable in its effects”? To conquer it, but to do what with it, for whose benefit?<sup>28</sup> In short, political expediency, as well as legal principles, dictated a strict nonintervention, which was by the way defended by the British cabinet.

The rule was valid in both directions: the excellence of the Greek cause did not justify an exception in their favour.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, they had not asked for it at least until 1825, and de Pradt had even congratulated them on having been abandoned by Russia: “Russian assistance would have brought Russian plans, Russian troops, Russian leaders, we would have wanted to act with Russian clocks and have a Russian result.”<sup>30</sup> And at the same time, he had opposed the idea defended by many of a joint Anglo-Russian intervention, the divergent interests of the two powers, and above all the incompatibility between a “movement towards liberty” and “the march and [the] combinations of the cabinets”.<sup>31</sup> Protecting the Greeks from the damage of foreign aid, nonintervention thus preserved the possibility of a victory by their own forces and of true independence.

Yet already in 1822, de Pradt had suggested that its debt to classical Greece perhaps demanded from Europe more than true neutrality.<sup>32</sup> But in 1826, he no longer questioned it in the name of the identity of the protagonists; he clearly challenged it, because of the atrocious way in which this “from citizen to citizen” war was taking place, in which the “hideous reprisals” of the Greeks responded to the “horrific barbarities” of the Turks.<sup>33</sup> These, in Chios, Psara and Messolonghi, seemed to him to take a systematic turn which made the prospect of the extermination of the Greeks, or even “of all the Christian populations spread over the surface of Turkey”,<sup>34</sup> probable, whereas that of their victory by their own means became less credible with the reconquest of the Peloponnese by the Egyptians. And then the mobilisation of European opinion on the subject was at its height; it was moved by the “dreadful scenes that soiled Greece” and “before asking for its triumph ... asked that its life”.<sup>35</sup> This priority of the humanitarian imperative had to be imposed on governments that always “need the opinion of the people”.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, putting an end to the corrupting spectacle of such

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<sup>28</sup> *L'Europe et l'Amérique*, 203.

<sup>29</sup> *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 68–69.

<sup>30</sup> *Parallèle de la puissance anglaise et russe*, 252.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>32</sup> *De la Grèce*, 84–85.

<sup>33</sup> *Parallèle de la puissance anglaise et russe*, 225–26.

<sup>34</sup> *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 186–87.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 78

<sup>36</sup> *De la Grèce*, 95.



“horrible abuses” was a “law of public honesty” that bound states even more than individuals, because of their “greater responsibility”.<sup>37</sup>

The “great European powers”<sup>38</sup> – Britain, France and Russia – had not always been insensitive to the “cries of the victims”.<sup>39</sup> De Pradt recognised this, sometimes gave examples of it,<sup>40</sup> and when they decided to put an end to the hostilities,<sup>41</sup> he approved them, “time having proved that, equal in weakness, [the combatants] could only end up exterminating each other without having the means to overcome themselves”.<sup>42</sup> It was no longer a question of saving Greece so that it could win, but of saving it because it had not been able to win. The Abbé’s prediction had turned out to be false, but he did not give up his system: He adapted a “protectorate of humanity”,<sup>43</sup> the work of civilisation, which he praised as disinterested, impartial and pacifying. It was disinterested simply because of the alliance: England and France, too far away to have territorial ambitions in the region, would counterbalance those of Russia. There could be some divergences in the future, but the initiative had the merit of establishing a balance of power. Praised as a novelty in diplomatic practice, this “imperative mediation”<sup>44</sup> with the threat of intervention seemed to him to be adapted to a situation where there was no common ground between the two sides, where one side was asking for mediation and the other one was refusing it, and where only one side was held responsible for the atrocity of the war. But how could one speak of impartiality when one was seeking above all to protect one side from the violence of the other? De Pradt went even further: he called, after Navarin, for an armed intervention on land to replace an ineffective naval blockade,<sup>45</sup> and even asked that the Greeks be encouraged to use it to push their military advantage.<sup>46</sup> According to him, the action of the powers would only be pacifying if it made a Greek victory possible.

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<sup>37</sup> *L’Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 79.

<sup>38</sup> Dominique de Pradt, *De l’intervention armée pour la pacification de la Grèce* (Paris: Pichon-Béchet, 1828) 15.

<sup>39</sup> *De la Grèce*, 40.

<sup>40</sup> *Vrai système de l’Europe*, 238.

<sup>41</sup> On the genesis of this decision, see Edouard Driault and Michel Lhéritier, *Histoire diplomatique de la Grèce de 1821 à nos jours*, vol. 1 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1925).

<sup>42</sup> *De l’intervention armée*, 38.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 61–66, 112–13.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

*A Bulwark Against the Russian Threat*

De Pradt therefore adhered to this “protectorate of humanity” as he had opposed any external intervention: in the interest of the Greeks. But if he was so concerned about their victory, it was also because he wanted to make their cause a “European cause”.<sup>47</sup> He had indeed questioned from the outset how Greeks should “be placed in Europe so that its introduction into Europe would not be harmful to it, but would also be useful to it, by incorporating the interests of this new member of Europe with the older ones.”<sup>48</sup>

Arising in a troubled time, the Greek Uprising was first perceived as a threat. Although Tsar Alexander I had condemned it, it was expected that it would lead to a war with the Turks with an unpredictable outcome, which, if it became widespread, would jeopardise the system of alliances that was supposed to guarantee the European balance. De Pradt also feared this war, but considered it dangerous for another reason: the incoherent political “conformation” of the continent, resulting from the Congress of Vienna, with its extreme disproportion between states. The small ones were too numerous, were a waste of strength and had to guard against the appetites of their neighbours. They were all reduced to taking the defensive against the two “colossuses” that dominated Europe: England at sea and Russia on land.<sup>49</sup> The latter, “a giant of frightening stature”, had been progressing for a century in all fields and “was disturbing the thought of the future”.<sup>50</sup> Its territorial expansion, slowed down by the wisdom of the emperor, would not fail to resume, carried by the power of the people, which is “always on the move”.<sup>51</sup> And all the other states, once united against Napoleon, now had to determine themselves in relation to this new threat.

The Greek affair was all the more favourable to Russian ambitions as the main force of the empire was moving south and would not fail to “make its way to the lands where both sun and gold shine”: the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.<sup>52</sup> This would be the beginning of a “general invasion” that de Pradt predicted as “imminent”, especially if “unexpected events” came “to hasten the development of what lies in the nature of things”.<sup>53</sup> The “perfect concert”<sup>54</sup> between England

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<sup>47</sup> *De la Grèce*, vi.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 44–52.

<sup>50</sup> *Parallèle de la puissance anglaise et russe*, 217–18.

<sup>51</sup> *L'Europe et l'Amérique*, 215.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Parallèle de la puissance anglaise et russe*, 232

and Austria would not be enough to cope with it. Unable to oppose it on their own, one as a maritime power, the other being bound by treaty to Russia,<sup>55</sup> they had relied on Turkey; its impotence in the face of the Greek insurrection, which had forced it to call on the Egyptians for help, and the defeat at Navarino showed that it was no longer up to the task, despite too partial attempts at reform which were too partial, such as the disbanding of the Janissaries in June 1826.<sup>56</sup> Canning's England had taken note of this by recognising the Greek blockade in March 1825; de Pradt understood this gesture as a rally to his other main idea (along with that of winning by one's own forces): to oppose the Russian threat, instead of a stagnant Turkey, Greece with "a beautiful, numerous and growing population, arms hardened by a very hard struggle, a renewed spirit and a complete harmony with everything that exists in Europe".<sup>57</sup> In addition to the strategic gain, there would be an advance in civilisation, lighting "a torch in the sight of Asia",<sup>58</sup> providing outlets for European industry and offering "posts to fill [for] worried minds".<sup>59</sup>

However, always hostile to the Greeks, the Austrians saw them, on the contrary, as natural allies of the Russians because of their religion. The former archbishop responded to them by devoting an entire chapter to minimising the religious dimension of the uprising.<sup>60</sup> The Greeks, he also said, had only turned to Russia because of their common enemy and because they had been "neglected by the whole world".<sup>61</sup> Once the situation has changed, this alliance of pure interest would no longer be necessary; a common Greek-Turkish front against the Russians would even be imaginable.<sup>62</sup> As for those who doubted the capacity of the Greeks to play this role of bulwark, he replied that there was no other choice than between the Turks, condemned to immobility by their religion and their morals, and the Greeks, in whom, on the contrary, the natural perfectibility of men could act freely.<sup>63</sup> Under the leadership of wise men, their divisions would be healed,<sup>64</sup> "raised to the dignity and consistency of a great state", Greece would

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<sup>55</sup> *L'Europe et l'Amérique*, 187.

<sup>56</sup> De Pradt spent almost a quarter of *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce et à la réformation de la Turquie* (90–149) demonstrating the insufficiency of this reform.

<sup>57</sup> *De la Grèce*, 72.

<sup>58</sup> *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 26–45.

<sup>59</sup> *De la Grèce*, 57–58.

<sup>60</sup> *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 26–45.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 174–75.

<sup>62</sup> *Vrai système de l'Europe*, 223; *De l'intervention armée*, 95.

<sup>63</sup> *De l'intervention armée*, 100–1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

take on “all the manner of being of it” as “the brigands of Romulus” or, more recently, the Americans had done.<sup>65</sup>

“A great state,” first of all by its size: the whole of Turkey in Europe. Because this conquest was within the reach of the Greeks as the natural outcome of their fight<sup>66</sup> and because Europe “aspiring to greatness” would applaud it,<sup>67</sup> but above all because it was the condition for Greece to play its role as a bulwark. With a compact territory, “covered by two seas and islands of easy defence”, with the “imposing barrier” of the Danube as its “only front of attack”,<sup>68</sup> the country would be “both unassailable by others and unable to attack them”.<sup>69</sup> Moldavia and Wallachia would not be included; freed from Ottoman suzerainty, they could be shared, as compensation, between Austria and Russia, if “the principle of their constant opposition” was not affected.<sup>70</sup> In contrast, it was essential to the success of the Greek Revolution that Constantinople be part of it. Not as a city to be conquered, but as the access route of the Turks to the European continent, which had to be taken away from them in order to end the war. He was convinced that it would be destroyed before it was abandoned, and he did not regret this. With it would disappear the memory of all the oppressors of Greece, Byzantines and Ottomans alike. Where once had been the centre of an empire, there would now be only a ruin and a border.<sup>71</sup>

The diversity of the populations living in this vast territory did not concern de Pradt too much. Of these “races of savage, bitter men, accustomed to governing themselves in small associations”,<sup>72</sup> he named only a few – Albanians, Serbs, Bosnians, Croats – without any further details, linguistic or ethnic, on their differences, which he put on the same level as the regional differences between the Greeks: Rumeliots, Moreots, Hydriots.<sup>73</sup> He noted above all their military capabilities, “warriors from generation to generation, able to provide a good army fund”.<sup>74</sup> Although hardened, these peoples were “not well trained in civil discipline”: their divisions could even be exploited by the Russians.<sup>75</sup> A common bond was

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 102; *Parallèle de la puissance anglaise et russe*, 270.

<sup>66</sup> *Parallèle de la puissance anglaise et russe*, 213–16; *Vrai système de l'Europe*, 267–68.

<sup>67</sup> *De l'intervention armée*, 119.

<sup>68</sup> *L'Europe et l'Amérique*, 218–19.

<sup>69</sup> *Vrai système de l'Europe*, 268.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 250–51; *L'Europe et l'Amérique*, 219–20.

<sup>72</sup> *De la Grèce*, 76.

<sup>73</sup> *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 187.

<sup>74</sup> *De la Grèce*, 76.

<sup>75</sup> *L'Europe par rapport à la Grèce*, 217, 222.

therefore needed “to hold all the parts together and prevent them from diverging, in order to return to the old separation”.<sup>76</sup> Of both forms of government, monarchy would, by its nature, be better able to resist attempts at division.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the Greeks had to consider beyond their “radical right” to choose their institutions, “the opportunity of its exercise”. Faced with the hostility of the powers, to adopt a republican regime would be like committing suicide. On the contrary, Greece would be adopted by Europe if it overcame its aversion to monarchy and chose the government that was “the most established” there – constitutional monarchy – a representative government, a “the thing of the time” which allowed “to be governed without loss of dignity and liberty”.<sup>78</sup> As for the king, he should not be designated according to personal or dynastic ambitions. And in fact, he would be more to be pitied than envied: seated “on a throne that has emerged from the fire of a revolution”, he would have to face “immense difficulties”.<sup>79</sup>

### *In Conclusion*

For itself, Greece could and should conquer its independence by its own efforts; in the interests of Europe, it could and should act as a barrier to Russian expansion. Two key ideas clearly asserted, but de Pradt does not seem to have perceived how contradictory the underlying logics were: the desire for national independence and the mechanics of international balances. And in the end, the second prevailed over the first, at least on such essential points as the territory and institutions of the future state. Yet confidence in the ability of the Greeks to achieve their independence on their own had been the cornerstone of a system that was jeopardised when the situation on the ground made this form of victory less and less likely. The ambiguities of our author’s adherence to the “protectorate of humanity” supported by the Anglo–French–Russian triple alliance betray his embarrassment. Moreover, the Greece almost reduced to the Peloponnese that the allies imagined, as well as the one they agreed on in March 1829, was very far from the great state that he had advocated. Indeed, de Pradt did not comment on this outcome, nor on the difficulties encountered by Russia in defeating Turkey, which belied once again his predictions.<sup>80</sup>

Largely speculative, supported by philosophical or ideological conceptions that would deserve further investigation than the few indications we have

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 230, 232, 234.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 250–51.

<sup>80</sup> Having broken with the liberals in 1828, de Pradt joined the legitimist camp after 1830.

given of it,<sup>81</sup> Abbé de Pradt's system thus represents a variant of philhellenic discourse which, mixing forecast and prescription, placed the main emphasis on the political, or even geopolitical, register of the Greek cause, leaving only a secondary, occasional place to the humanitarian dimension or to the reference to the classical heritage. As for its religious dimension, his political concerns led him to explicitly reduce its significance, or to denounce certain possible effects. This overall economy made the singularity of a discourse in which we find many motifs present in the writings of other publicists. And even one of its two main ideas, that of the barrier to Russian expansion.<sup>82</sup> Like other philhellenes too, he sought through his books to sway public opinion in order to influence government policy by virtue of what he called "the duty of remonstrance".<sup>83</sup> Their common effort was no doubt not for nothing in the decision of the Powers to intervene, which made it possible to integrate an independent Greece into Europe, but not exactly as de Pradt had advocated, nor in the way he had planned.

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In his penultimate work in 1836 (*Question de l'Orient sous les rapports généraux et particuliers* [Paris: Roret, 1836]), he was to declare this fear of the Russian threat was in vain, against which he called again in 1828, in *Du système permanent de l'Europe à l'égard de la Russie et des affaires de l'Orient* [Paris: Pichon et Didier, 1828], for a coalition of all Europe – a coalition of the same kind that he had advocated in 1798 against revolutionary France in his first book on international politics published in the Hamburg emigration, *Antidote au Congrès de Radstadt ou plan d'un nouvel équilibre de l'Europe* (London: s.n., 1798).

<sup>81</sup> Some elements of this can be found in the above-mentioned study by Mions.

<sup>82</sup> It was defended, in particular, by Sismondi, but in a very different way, more concerned with the sovereignty of the future state and, above all, much more attentive to the realities on the ground. Moreover, his contribution to philhellenism is comparable to that of de Pradt, in that it also took the form of a series of publications, though over a shorter period (between 1825 and 1829), and in the more concise form of review or newspaper articles. On this subject, may I take the liberty to refer to my study: "Penser dans l'actualité: Sismondi à propos de la guerre d'indépendance de la Grèce," *Langages, Politique, Histoire: Avec Jean-Claude Zancarini*, ed. Romain Descendre and Jean-Louis Fournel (Lyon: ENS, 2015).

<sup>83</sup> *Vrai système de l'Europe*, 4.

