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THINKING EUROPE ON EUROPE'S MARGINS: ALEXANDER STURDZA, KONSTANTINOS OIKONOMOS AND RUSSIAN-GREEK ORTHODOXY IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

Ada Dialla

Abstract: This article seeks to examine the construction of the notion of Europe not from a West–East perspective but from a more complex geographical and conceptual vantage point, including the North and the South in relation to the West and East and, more specifically, from the point of view of the Greek Orthodox and Russian worlds in the post-Napoleonic era. Following the political, religious and intellectual activity of two expatriates and close friends, Alexander Sturdza and Konstantinos Oikonomos, it explores how the idea of Europe was visited and how these two intellectuals and politicians negotiated and renegotiated to what extent their respective communities (Russian and Greek) were part of Europe, with religion as the central axis and the notions of the Orthodox world and Orthodox East in the arsenal of both. The first decades of the nineteenth century brought Russia and the Greeks to the forefront of the European scene. First, Russia, in the wake of its military campaigns against Napoleon's empire (1812–1814), at the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) found itself in a leading position in European politics and as the pacesetter in the elaboration of the idea of a united Europe. A little later, the Greek struggle for independence, the first protracted successful national struggle in Europe, raised the principle of nationalities (as national self-determination was called in the nineteenth century) for the first time as one to be reckoned with in Europe. As I argue, in the early nineteenth century the rise of Russian power provided fertile ground to challenge the idea of the secondary character of Eastern Orthodoxy in comparison to the Latin West and of the Eastern peripheral character of both Russia and Greece, and to elaborate the idea of the cultural and political equality of West and East.

"What is Europe?" is a recurring question in the study of European history, one that needs to be taken not as an essentialist category for analysis but as an open concept to be studied in its historicity.[1] Questions such as, for example, "What are Europe's real or imagined eastern borders?" and "Who qualifies as European?" are intricately interrelated with people's vision about their community's place in the real European, and especially in the symbolic, European geography. No

[1] Bo Stråth, "A European Identity: To the Historical Limits of a Concept", *European Journal of Social Theory* 5/4 (2002), p. 398.

generally accepted narratives existed in the past (and they hardly exist even today), for there were different perceptions and definitions of Europe, and many ways of being European depending on the thinkers in question, and their intellectual positions, interests, priorities and strategies. Various politicians and thinkers have defined Europe on the basis of their own political, ideological or cultural agendas, and by doing so they also defined their own identity, be it religious, imperial and/or national. Within this perspective, Europe does not have a definite physiognomy and cannot be identified a priori with the West.

The concept of Europe and Europeanism has been constructed together with the parallel construction of the East and orientalist discourse in the sense used by Edward Said. In the Western imagination, the East included the Ottoman Empire and its European territories in the Balkans. For the "philosophic geography" of the Enlightenment,2 Eastern Europe as a whole was seen as deficient in "civilisation" (the new concept that appeared from the mid-eighteenth century onwards),3 due to "various absences", such as the lack of a middle class, individuality, and economic and technological progress. Rousseau, for instance, would speak of the non-authenticity of Russian civilisation.4 Although the Enlightenment limited the role of religion in the definition of cultural differences, Christian Orthodoxy, which was the hallmark of the Byzantine Empire (which, it should be noted, was downgraded by the Enlightenment), the Tatar–Mongolian conquest of the Russians (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries), and the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Greeks, implied a number of absences, such as lack of a Renaissance in the Orthodox world, which made the Eastern Orthodox space appear substantially different from Western culture in the eyes of most Western commentators.

The end of the bipolar world witnessed the deconstruction of the "normalcy" and "uniqueness" of Europe qua Western Europe. In the 1990s, important studies inspired by Said's classic work *Orientalism* questioned the hegemonic Western European discourse, with its well-known essentialist construction of a hierarchy within Europe: the images of the homogeneous and unalienable Western Europe

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[2] Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, pp. 1–16.

[3] See Bruce Mazlish, "Civilization in a Historical and Global Perspective", *International Sociology* 16/3 (2001), pp. 293–300; Brett Bowden, "The Ideal of Civilization: Its Origins and Social-Political Character", *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 7/1 (2004), pp. 25–37; Johan Goudsblom, "Civilization: The Career of a Controversial Concept", *History and Theory* 45/2 (2006), pp. 288–293.

[4] Ezequiel Adamovsky, '"Russia as a Space of Hope': Nineteenth-century French Challenges to the Liberal Image of Russia", *European Quarterly* 33/4 (2003), pp. 411–449.

in the dominant role, with Eastern Europe, also homogeneous but exotic at the same time, mimicking the West and subservient and second-class, and well behind Western Europe in all aspects, especially in economic and technological progress.[5]

Such studies tended to examine the construction and the deconstruction of the notion of Europe from a West–East perspective and rarely from an East–West perspective and, even more rarely, from a more complex geographical and conceptual vantage point, including the North and the South in relation to the West and East.

As Andreas Kappeler has put it, breaking the duality of a Western "core" and an Eastern periphery implies that one of the concerns of the writing of history is to place Russian history – as well as the history of peripheral countries – within a new framework that will not only address the movement of ideas and people from the European West to the East (which means diffusion from the centre of world hegemony towards the non-hegemonic countries and societies) but also within a journey with multiple destinations, as was the case in the nineteenth century, with the Russian North and the Ottoman, Balkan, European South or the Mediterranean.[6] As Kappeler rightly underlines, "However, the Russian and Ottoman empires were on the margins only from a West European perspective […] If we look at the Ottoman and Romanov empires from a Eurasian angle, they are also at the very center, linking Asia and Europe."[7]

Within this new venue of understanding the history of the European continent, this study aims to examine the construction of the notion of Europe/Europeanism from the point of view of the Greek Orthodox and Russian worlds in the first half of the nineteenth century, especially in its early decades, a period which brought Russia and the Greeks to the forefront of the European scene. First, Russia, in the wake of its military campaigns against Napoleon's empire (1812–1814), at the Congress of Vienna found itself in a leading position in European politics and as the pacesetter in the elaboration of the idea of a united Europe, with the text of the Holy Alliance, the brainchild of Tsar Alexander I. The Holy Alliance was signed on 14 September 1815 by Russia, Austria and

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[5] See, for example, Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, London: Oxford University Press, 1997; Iver Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "The East", in European Identity Formation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

[6] Andreas Kappeler, "Spaces of Entanglement", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12/2 (2011), pp. 477–487. See also Diana Mishkova, "Symbolic Geographies and Visions of Identity: A Balkan Perspective", *European Journal of Social Theory* 11/2 (2008), pp. 237–256; *Mediterranean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century*, ed. Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou, London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

[7] Kappeler, "Spaces of Entanglement", p. 479.

Prussia. A little later, the Greek struggle for independence, the first protracted successful *national* struggle in Europe, raised the principle of nationalities (as national self-determination was called in the nineteenth century) for the first time as a principle to be reckoned with in Europe, one which was to have many imitators and which was to lead to the transformation and complex construction of European space in the course of the long nineteenth century.

Needless to say, such an analysis of how Russia or Greece regarded Europe in the nineteenth century is hardly novel. The various national histories that have been written on the periphery of Europe have dealt with the problem of their nation's relation to Europe, but in the sense of the West and the "catch-up syndrome", and not from a more synthetic approach that takes into consideration the process of the creation and recreation of national and imperial identities with reference not only to the West, but as a dialogue with several Others in the West and East, North and South.[8]

More specifically, our aim is to trace how the idea of Europe was revisited in an era of revolutions from the vantage point of intellectuals and politicians like Alexander Sturdza and his close friend Konstantinos Oikonomos,[9] who, through their political, religious and intellectual activity, negotiated and renegotiated to what extent their respective communities (Russian and Greek) were part of Europe, with religion as the central axis. The central role of religion in the perceptions of both of them does not necessarily place them within an anti-modernist traditional paradigm, as it is often assumed, especially in Greek historiography, which regarded the Enlightenment and relations with the West as the only true road to modernity. In fact, Sturdza and Oikonomos expressed something common in their days: a fusion of religious tradition and secular modernity. As has been demonstrated in recent times by social scientists and in the debates on post-secularism, the secular and the religious coexisted in the making of modern Europe (as was also the case with the US at the time). Religious visions played an important role in the creation of modern social institutions. Hence, the stark divide hitherto presumed between tradition and modernity is put into question.[10]

The extended contacts and exchanges between Sturdza and Oikonomos are an illustrative example of today's theories of transnationalism, namely that all

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[8] Neumann, *Uses of the Other,* pp. 1–38.

[9] The extended correspondence between the two men is to be found in the Gennadius Library (Athens), Ioannis Frantzis' Collection, K. Oikonomos Correspondence, f. 1, "Letters Addressed to Konstantinos Oikonomos" (henceforth GL). Most of the letters in this collection are written by Sturdza.

[10] Bernard Giesen and Daniel Šuber (eds.), *Religion and Politics: Cultural Perspectives*, Leiden: Brill, 2005, p. 6; Craig Calhoun, "Rethinking Secularism", *The Hedgehog Review* 12/3

national histories are interconnected histories, in other words transnational and entangled histories. Transnational approaches bring to the fore not only ideas that travel, but also people who travel, emigrate or live abroad (expatriates, diplomats, literary figures, clerics, students, revolutionaries, travellers – all of them crossing frontiers and coming to terms with the familiar and the alien), as well as commerce, along with the images of the Other and their reciprocity.[11]

Both intellectuals were ex-Ottoman subjects who, under different circumstances during the troubled period of the Napoleonic and Russo-Ottoman wars, found themselves as emigrants. Sturdza became a Russian subject, and Oikonomos, who was from Thessaly, with his many places of residence (Smyrna, Odessa, St Petersburg and so on) became a Greek subject after the establishment of the Greek state in 1830, following the successful end of the struggle for independence. Oikonomos was to play a noteworthy role in the first steps of the new Greek state. At this point some clarification is in order. During the period under discussion, concepts such as Greeks, Hellenes or Hellenism were still under construction, not only within the imperial Ottoman setting, where Greeks could be Christian Orthodox Greek speakers, Romioi or Hellenised Albanian speakers, Bulgarian speakers or Romanian speakers, as well as "descendants" of the ancient Greeks, but also in the newly established Greek state, where the concepts of Greek and Greekness were to be clarified and invented and reinvented for most of the nineteenth century.

The Networks and the Friendship

The two Orthodox worlds (Russian and Greek) had experienced systematic contacts, osmosis and constant interaction for centuries.[12] These contacts intensified in the eighteenth century, with the transimperial contacts between the Ottoman and Russian empires, which were the result of the southern expansionist policy of the Russian Empire in the Balkans and the Caucasus. This led to the extensive emigration of Greek speakers from the Ottoman Empire to Russia and to the creation of Greek-speaking Orthodox communities in Russian territory,

(2010), pp. 35–48; Massimo Rosati and Kristina Stoeckl (eds.), *Multiple Modernities and Postsecular Societies*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

[11] For the reexamination of the European canon, see Antonis Liakos, "The Canon of European History and the Conceptual Framework of National Historiographies", in *Transnational Challenges to National History Writing*, ed. Matthias Middell and Lluís Roura Aulinas, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 315–342.

[12] Ada Dialla, "Entangled Histories: Russian Decembrists and Greek Revolutionaries in the 1820s", *State, Economy, Society (19th–20th Centuries): Essays in Honor of Emeritus Professor George G. Dertilis*, ed. Ada Dialla and Niki Maroniti, Athens: Metaixmio, 2013, pp. 87–106.

the best-known case being the one in Odessa. In the last decades of the eighteenth century, the ideas of the Enlightenment were propagated in Russia by Catherine the Great (her famous correspondence with Voltaire, Diderot and others). Apart from Diderot, who visited St Petersburg at the invitation of Catherine the Great, other personalities were also invited by her, such as the clerics Nikiphoros Theotokis and Evgenios Voulgaris, who were key figures in what has been called the Neohellenic Enlightenment, which was inspired by the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment made a seminal contribution in imparting the knowledge of ancient Greek to the Russians and was influential in bringing about the Russian involvement in the liberation of the Orthodox Greeks of the Ottoman Empire. Finally, Voulgaris was directly involved with the formal education of both Grand Duke Constantine and Alexander Pavlovich (the future Tsar Alexander I).[13]

This was a time when Russia was fully established as the hegemonic power of the Orthodox world, but also as a key power in European politics and a bastion of European stability and the main rival of the Ottomans. Within the setting of the Orthodox – Greek-speaking or Hellenised – community, the various new and burgeoning ideas regarding the regeneration of the Greeks, which within an eschatological view of history was regarded as predetermined and legitimate, were associated with and went hand-in-hand with Russian expansionist tendencies towards the south (that is, the Ottoman Balkans). From the point of view of the (Greek-speaking or Hellenised) Romioi, the Russia of Catherine the Great was not at variance with the ideological and political projects of the Enlightenment, which were regarded by the standards of the age as not incompatible with an enlightened form of despotism. This was defined later by the historiography as the Russian expectation, which at that time included both an imperial and a national ideal, and the prospect that the Russian emperor would replace the sultan.[14]

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[13] Stephen Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate: Eugenios Voulgaris in Russia, 1771–1806*, Boulder: East European Monographs, 1982; Gregory L. Bruess, *Religion, Identity and Empire: A Greek Archbishop in the Russia of Catherine the Great* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1997). For expectations concerning Russia among the Greeks, see Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "Tradition, Enlightenment and Revolution: Ideological Change in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Greece", PhD diss., Harvard University, 1978, pp. 167–194. For a study of Greek-Russian relations in the *longue durée*, see Kitromilides, "Από την ορθόδοξη κοινοπολιτεία στις εθνικές κοινότητες: το πολιτικό περιεχόμενο των ελληνορωσικών σχέσεων κατά την Τουρκοκρατία" [From the Orthodox commonwealth to national communities: the political aspect of the spiritual relationship between Hellenism and Russia from the 16th to 19th centuries]", *Χίλια χρόνια Ελληνισμού-Ρωσίας* [Hellas–Russia: a thousand years of bonds], Athens: Gnosi, 1994, pp. 139–165.

[14] For different versions of the expectations of liberation, see Nikos Rotzokos, *Εθναφύπνιση και εθνογένεση: Ορλοφικά και ελληνική ιστοριογραφία* [National awakening and ethnogenesis: the Orlov episode and Greek historiography], Athens: Vivliorama, 2007.

Russia's presence in the Ionian Islands during the short-lived Ionian State (1800–1807) brought a number of Ionian thinkers and politicians to serve under the tsar, such as Count Ioannis Capodistrias, a future Russian joint foreign minister (with Count Nesselrode) and future president of the newly born Greek state.[15] Other lesser known figures include Spyridon Destounis, a diplomat and intellectual who, with the support of the tsar and Capodistrias, translated the whole of Plutarch's work into Russian and was, together with his son Gabriel, one of the main founders of Russian Byzantine studies.[16] It was Destounis who acquainted Sturdza with Oikonomos. The three men maintained their intellectual friendship for many years, sharing a concern about Greek affairs. They also shared the cherished memory of Capodistrias after his tragic assassination, and sought to keep alive his memory among their Russian and Greeks contemporaries.[17]

Alexander Skarlatovich Sturdza (1791–1854) was an expatriate of aristocratic Moldavian and Phanariot origins (the Phanariots were Greek speakers, though not all of them were ethnic Greeks), born in Jassy in 1791, who moved to Russia in 1792 with his family when the Russian Empire annexed Bessarabia, the eastern part of Moldavia. A polyglot who spoke and wrote Greek, Moldavian, Russian, French and German fluently, he entered the service of the Russian foreign ministry in 1809, enjoying the cosmopolitanism of Tsar Alexander I. Moreover, his sister Roxandra was a lady-in-waiting to the tsarina and close to Alexander.[18] In the

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[15] For the "Russian moment" in the Mediterranean, see Konstantina Zanou, "Imperial Nationalism and Orthodox Enlightenment: A Diasporic Story between the Ionian Islands, Russia and the Greece, ca 1800–1830", in Isabella and Zanou, *Mediterranean Diasporas*, pp. 117–134. For Caposistrias, see Grigorii L. Arsh, *I. Kapodistriia i grecheskoe natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie, 1809–1822* [I. Capodistrias and the Greek national liberation movement], Moscow: Nauka, 1976; Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Capodistrias and a 'New Order' for Restoration Europe: The 'Liberal Ideas' of a Russian Foreign Minister, 1814–1822", *Journal of Modern History* 40/2 (1968), pp. 166–192; C.W. Crawley, "John Capodistrias and the Greeks before 1821", *Cambridge Historical Journal* 13/2 (1957), pp. 162–182; C.M. Woodhouse, *Capodistria: The Founder of Greek Independence*, London: Oxford University Press, 1973.

[16] Theophilus Christopher Prousis, *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution*, DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994; I.P. Medvedev (ed.), *Arkhivy Russkikh Vizantinistov v Sankt Petersburge* [Archives of Russian Byzantinists in St Petersburg], St Petersburg: Bulanin, 1995, pp. 22–35.

[17] See "The Destunis Collection", Manuscript Section of the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Library, St Petersburg.

[18] For an interesting account of this exceptional and influential woman, see Alexander M. Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries: Russian Conservative Thought and Politics in the Reign of Alexander I*, DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997.

salons of St Petersburg he met the Corfu aristocrat Capodistrias, soon to become joint Russian foreign minister (from 1815 until 1822). The young Alexander and his sister cultivated a close personal friendship with Capodistrias, sharing common views regarding Russian policy in the Balkans and Greek emancipation.

At the age of 24, Sturdza participated in the Congress of Vienna as the personal secretary of the tsar. But his promising career in the Russian foreign ministry was cut short as a result of the outcry over his scathing attacks on the German universities and on the propagation of liberal ideas. During the Greek War of Independence, he was a central figure of conservative Russian philhellenism and in the humanitarian support network for the Greeks. He returned to the foreign ministry during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828–1829 and remained there until 1832, playing a prominent role on Balkan issues and contributing to the drafting of the quasi-constitutions for Moldavia and Wallachia. Thereafter he retired to Odessa, where he became actively involved in philanthropic work and wrote on literature, religion, philosophy and economic-agrarian matters. During his long stay in Odessa, he rarely travelled abroad. He was not a central figure like Capodistrias in the political life of the empire or in its intellectual life. His associations were mainly with the peripheral aristocracy and not with that of the capital or Moscow. However, he had a wide circle of acquaintances among politicians, church personalities and intellectuals, among them Vasilii Zhukovskii, Nikolai Gogol and Alexander Pushkin, and he wrote articles in *Moskvitianin*, the periodical edited by the early Slavophile Mikhail Pogodin.

Sturdza was a characteristic figure of the era as regards the ambiguity of his conflicted loyalties. He had arrived in Russia as an infant with no personal experience of his country of birth. He acquired a Greek, Russian and European education and culture, and in the process experienced the fluidity of state, ethnic and cultural boundaries. His adulthood and maturity were associated with Russia, Bessarabia, Ukraine, Austria, France and the German world. The cosmopolitan, aristocratic and Orthodox Sturdza "adopted" Russia as his country, although he was aware of his dual ethnic identity (Moldavian and Phanariot).[19]

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[19] The complete works are in Alexandre de Stourdza, *Oeuvres posthumes religieuses, historiques, philosophiques et littéraires*, 6 vols, Paris, 1858–1860. See also Oikonomos, *Αλέξανδρος Στούρτζας: Βιογραφικόν Σχεδίασμα* [Alexander Sturdza: biographical sketch], Athens: Typois Karampini, 1855. The main studies on Sturdza are the following: Prousis, *Russian Society*; Prousis, "Aleksandr Sturdza: A Russian Conservative Response to the Greek Revolution", *East European Quarterly* 26/3 (1992), pp. 309–344; Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries*; Stella Ghervas, *Reinventer la tradition: Alexandre Stourdza et l'Europe de la Sainte Alliance*, Paris: Champion, 2008; Vadim S. Parsamov, *Zhozef de Mestr i Aleksandr Sturdza: Iz istorii religioznykh idei Aleksandrovskoi epokhi* [Joseph de Maistre and

Konstantinos Oikonomos (1780–1857) was a Greek Orthodox cleric of Greek origin, attuned to the climate of the Neohellenic Enlightenment,[20] whose early years were connected with Smyrna (1809–1819) and Constantinople. In 1821, with the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence and the harsh reprisals of Sultan Mahmud II, Oikonomos fled to Odessa and from there to St Petersburg in August 1822, where he was accepted in the imperial court and held various offices there. While in St Petersburg, he wrote on the close historical and contemporary relations between Russians and Greeks, for example, in an essay on the very close relationship of the Slavo-Russian language with the Greek language (1828). This linguistic affinity that the "Slavic" languages were closely linked to Greek was also espoused by Sturdza (needless to say, this outlandish idea was not shared by serious linguists).[21] Oikonomos became a member of the St Petersburg Theological Academy and the Imperial Academy and was the recipient of various awards from foundations in Russia as well as from other European countries.[22] In 1828 he wrote, on the request of Capodistrias (by then Governor of Greece), a draft for the establishment of an theological academy for the Greeks. Oikonomos was to remain in St Petersburg until 1832, though he frequently travelled to Vienna, where his family lived. In 1832, following the death of members of his family in a cholera outbreak in Vienna, he travelled for two years in Italy, together with his two sons, and in 1832 arrived in Nafplion, the then capital of Greece. When he arrived, the Kingdom of Greece was in the process of declaring the autocephaly of the Church of Greece, which amounted to a split in the ecumenical unity of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This led to strong reactions in Greece, with Oikonomos emerging as the main figure

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Alexander Sturdza: aspects of the history of religious ideas during the era of Alexander I], Saratov: Izdatel'stvo Saratovskogo Universiteta, 2004; Maria Maiofis, *"Vozzvanie k Evrope": Literaturnoe obshchestvo 'Arzamas' i rossiiskii modernizatsionnyi proekt 1815–1818 godov* [Appeal to Europe: the Arzamas literary society and the Russian modernisation project, 1815–1818], Moscow: NLO, 2008.

[20] For the Neohellenic Enlightenment, see Kitromilides,"Tradition, Enlightenment and Revolution".

[21] Alexandre de Stourdza, *Considération sur la doctrine et l'ésprit de l'église orthodoxe.* Weimar: Bureau d'industrie, 1816, p. 183.

[22] Konstantinos Sivinis, *Υπόμνημα αυτοσχέδιον: περί του Αιδεσιμωτάτου Πρεσβυτέρου και Οικονόμου Κωνσταντίνου του εξ Οικονόμων* [An improvised memorandum concerning the reverend presbyter Konstantinos Oikonomos ex Oikonomon], Trieste: Typois tou Austriakou Loud, 1857; Charles A. Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821–1852*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969; *Konstantinos Oikonomos ex Oikonomon, Αλληλογραφία* [Konstantinos Oikonomos ex Oikonomon: Correspondence], vol. 1, ed. Kostas Lappas and Rodi Stamouli, Athens: Academy of Athens, 2002.

against autocephaly. Thereafter, he remained in Greece and was, until his death in 1857, a central and respected figure in the political, religious and social life of the newly independent state.

Sturdza and Oikonomos became close intellectual friends in Russia from the onset of the Greek uprising in 1821 and continued their correspondence from afar until their deaths in the 1850s, with Oikonomos in Greece but Sturdza never venturing to Greece, not even when Capodistrias was governor.

Throughout the years of their friendship, the two men exchanged their works, which were of a historical, political and religious nature or translations, often before they had been published. Sturdza, in particular, as evident from his letters, had a great respect for the "wise Oikonomos" and sought his advice and his critical observations on several questions. The two men had read the same books within the cultural heritage of the "Greco-Russian Orthodox Church", to use Oikonomos' expression. The term "Greco" does not refer, in Oikonomos' jargon, to the Greek kingdom but to the totality of the Orthodox world represented by the Mother Church, the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This implied not only the relation of the Mother (the Ecumenical Patriarchate) with the Daughter (the Russian Church) but also the close cultural and political relationship between Graikoi and Russians. The two men made sure to propagate the work of each other within and outside the confines of their respective countries. They built around them an intricate network of people of Greek or Moldavian origin which contributed to a voyage of ideas. Within this network of people, one would contribute with his linguistic abilities, another with financial assistance and yet another would help with publications. Their correspondence is also proof of a wide network, especially in Sturdza's case, that included high state and religious officials, with whom he made sure to keep in contact, even after leaving active service. His obvious aim was to retain close links within a triangle comprising Russia (St Petersburg, Odessa, Bessarabia), Constantinople and Athens. In short, the correspondence between the two men highlights the material and social practices from which the movement and circulation of ideas arose.

The Christian Orthodox East and the Ambivalence towards the West

From the end of the eighteenth century, the ideas of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution brought to the fore new concepts, with vital new words such as slavery, patria, freedom, human rights (as in *The Rights of Man*),[23] terms with different conceptual horizons depending on the conditions and subjective stances and perceptions of those who used them. Within this context, the cultural

[23] Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, New York: Norton, 2008.

values of Orthodoxy and the Byzantine heritage, which were common to the Russian and Greek worlds, were redefined and secularised in accordance with the Enlightenment project. Despite the different regional experiences, modern identities were constructed and reconstructed with reference to Europe, but also with a perceived difference from Roman Catholic and Protestant Europe, with a past and present which was intricately linked with the traditions and cultural heritage of Eastern Orthodoxy.[24] The image of the East was constructed as a civilised eastern Christianity and not as an oriental East associated with the Ottoman Empire.

As we have said, the end of the Napoleonic Wars witnessed the height of Russian power and the personal prestige of Tsar Alexander (from 1815 to 1820). The power of Russia was generally recognised and its role was pivotal in the European diplomatic family, even though the sense that Russia was at the edge of Europe prevailed not only in Western Europe but also among Russians. In 1815, the Parisian public celebrated the arrival of the tsar, welcoming him as the liberator of Europe. This was undoubtedly the Russian moment in nineteenth-century European affairs.

Within the framework of Romanticism and the religious revival reigning then across Europe, the role of Russia was not limited to its recognition by its contemporaries as a full member of the five-power Congress system. As it has been correctly pointed out, "within this vision, Russia is therefore not placed in a sort of waiting-room where, in accordance with the eighteenth century ideas of the Enlightenment, it must first receive the benefits of more civilization before being admitted to the world of European culture, but viewed as the saviour of European Christian civilization, which in the West has fallen into decay."[25] At the time, the question whether Russia belongs to the West or East had not yet become an existential issue for the Russians themselves or for other Europeans. And this despite the fact that during the Enlightenment Russia had been described as different and placed at a lower level civilisation-wise. As the work of Ezequiel Adamovsky has shown, it was the dominance of liberalism by the mid-nineteenth century which was to define Russia as a traditional backward

[24] On this problematic, see also Dimitris Stamatopoulos, *Το Βυζάντιο μετά το έθνος: Το πρόβλημα της συνέχειας στις βαλκανικές ιστοριογραφίες* [Byzantium after the nation: the problem of continuity in Balkan historiographies], Athens: Alexandria, 2009; Stamatopoulos, "From the Vyzantism of K. Leont'ev to the Vyzantinism of I.I. Sokolov", *Héritages de Byzance en Europe du Sud-Est à l'époque moderne et contemporaine,* ed. Olivier Delouis and Petre Guran, Athens: French School at Athens, 2013, pp. 321–340.

[25] Kevin Wilson and and Jan van der Dussen (eds.), *The History of the Idea of Europe*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 70. See also Adamovsky, "'Russia as a Space of Hope'".

society that was not simply at the edge of Europe, but part of the East. The Greeks were a somewhat different case, for during the eighteenth century Greece had been "discovered" in the Western imagination as the birthplace of European civilisation, which now, due to Ottoman rule, lacked adequate education and civilisation.

In the spirit of the age, Tsar Alexander regarded religion, through the intellectual intercultural networks of Romanticism, mysticism and Pietism (together with others that were opposed to the revolution), as the springboard of reformist activism in order to combat the "moral degeneration" of European societies, the Russian included.[26]

It was a question of how the power of religion, faith and, at the same time, knowledge could be used by political authority in the quest for order and the regeneration of society. Within this spirit, Alexander proposed the creation, over and above the Congress system of the five great powers, of the Holy Alliance, which would unite the representatives of all Christian confessions, the three monarchies of Russia, Austria and Prussia, on the basis of the Christian norms of justice, charity and peace in international life, and would link the three monarchs by a bond of fraternity.[27] In this vein, Alexander regarded Europe as a community of civilised nations which, at the level of international politics, made the great powers responsible for resolving the major problems that arose between and within small and weak states.

Sturdza was infused by this overall mentality, as expounded in the spirit of the Holy Alliance. He and Capodistrias, according to Martin, "typify the ambiguity of the terms liberal and conservative",[28] and together they were among the first readers and drafters of the Holy Alliance text proposed by Alexander.[29] In accordance with Sturdza's religious cosmopolitanism, the Holy Alliance aimed at creating an ideal Christian European commonwealth, and not at setting up an

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[26] Martin, "The Mental World of the Holy Alliance", chap. 6 in *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries*, pp. 146–168.

[27] For Alexander and the Holy Alliance, see, among others, the memoirs of Roxandra Edling-Sturdza in chap. 7, Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries*; Andrei Zorin, "'Star of the East': The Holy Alliance and European Mysticism", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4/2 (2003), pp. 313–342; Parsamov, *Zhozef de Mestr i Aleksandr Sturdza* [Joseph de Maistre and Alexander Sturdza], 73; Janet M. Hartley, "Is Russia Part of Europe? Russian Perceptions of Europe in the Reign of Alexander", *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 33/4 (1992), pp. 369–385.

[28] Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries*, p. 170.

[29] Ekaterina Liamina, "Novaia Evropa: mnenie deiatel'nogo ochevidtsa: A.S. Sturdza v politicheskom protsesse 1810–kh godov" [New Europe, the view of an active witness: A.S Sturdza in the political process during the 1810s], *Rossia/Russia* 3/11 (1999): 135–145.

organisation of mutual aid among reactionary tyrants, as conceived by the ultra-conservative and scheming Metternich, and as finally adopted by Alexander, under the influence of the Austrian chancellor.

From the Russian point of view, the new educated elite, the generation that had been brought up with the ideas of the Enlightenment as well as Romanticism and had taken part in the epic of the Napoleonic Wars, was in search of a national idea which went hand in hand with an imperial one, a national idea that would not only secure the position of Russia within a single European civilisation but also ensure a leadership role for it on the European political scene and at a global level. The emphasis was put in the development of literature, science and education. The following fields of study were cultivated in particular: Greek and Roman antiquity, oriental studies (which gained notoriety during this period),[30] German philosophy, the importance and achievements of French culture, the idea of Christian ecumenism (with Christian Orthodoxy in the leading role as the oldest and most authentic Christian dogma), and religion as a driving force in the modernisation of a country.[31] This political task was undertaken by the Arzamas Society (1815–1818), a literary circle set up in St Petersburg following the creation of the Holy Alliance. This circle brought together young writers who were to feature as representatives of the golden age of Russian literature, including Alexander Pushkin and Vasilii Zhukovskii, who subscribed to the linguistic novelties of the writer and great historian Nikolai Karamzin. It also brought together writers, such as Sturdza's brother-in-law, the diplomat and poet Dmitrii Severin, and Sergei Uvarov, the future education minister under Tsar Nicholas I (who was the first to speak of the triad of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality [*Narodnost'*]"), and also one of the founders of oriental studies in Russia. Capodistias was regarded as an honorary member of this circle, with a leading role among the moderate reformist circle within the Russian political elite.[32]

Sturdza was not a member of the Arzamas Society but belonged to a wider circle around it. He had close relations with the famous reformist Archimandrite Philaret (Drozdov), rector of the St Petersburg Theological Academy and future metropolitan of Moscow, who in his activity had stressed the idea of a national church. Both of them highlighted the status of Christian Orthodoxy as a European religion. This led Sturdza to become an informal ambassador of Christian Orthodoxy in Europe. In 1816, on the suggestion of Capodistrias and

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[30] David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration*, New Haven: Yale University, 2010.

[31] Maiofis, introduction to *"Vozzvanie k Evrope"* [Appeal to Europe].

[32] On the Arzamas Society there is a large bibliography in Russian, as discussed in ibid.

inspired by the works of Philaret, he published *Considerations sur la doctrine et l'ésprit de l'église orthodox* in Weimar.[33] This work, which according to Vadim Parsamov, fused modern liberal ideas, modern mysticism and the idea of a national religion, was translated into several languages, including English, German, Spanish, Moldavian and Greek.[34]

The overriding ideas in Sturdza's book are the ecumenism of Orthodox Christianity, its ability to extinguish religious hatred and its tolerance of difference,[35] a concept inspired by the Enlightenment concept of religious tolerance, which was central also to Voulgaris' political thinking.[36] *Terpimost* (tolerance), according to Sturdza, is associated (at the political level as well) with truth, justice and love.[37] As he put it: "The government [of Russia], which others regard as underdeveloped in terms of the so-called liberal ideas, in practice implements these very ideas, which other peoples praise only in words."[38] Thus, the difference between East and West is not the result of geographical or other cultural distinctions but exists at the moral-political level, which is defined not by the form of government but by the principle of tolerance.

The dynamism of Orthodoxy was founded, according to Sturdza, on its rich Greek theological heritage, with its Greek language, which was regarded as the hallmark of European education. In keeping with the romantic spirit of the age, he redefined Western approaches regarding the Middle Ages, stressing the superiority of Orthodoxy. The concept of national identity and patriotism was something which Orthodoxy nurtured. The 1056 Schism was not entirely a bad thing; it was salutary in that it severed its sick member, Catholicism, from the Orthodox centre, which continued to flourish while Western Christianity succumbed to temporal power and earthly enjoyments. But later the Eastern Orthodox Church found itself under the Tatar-Mongol yoke in the Russian case and under the Turkish yoke in the Greek case. Yet despite their tragic fate, they both retained in their integrity all the advantages of the original church, and this protected the primeval essence of Christianity from papal despotism

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[33] Ibid., p. 472; Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries.*

[34] Parsamov, *Zhozef de Mestr i Aleksandr Sturdza* [Joseph de Maistre and Alexander Sturdza], p. 113.

[35] Stourdza, *Considerations sur la doctrine et l'ésprit de l'église orthodox*, p. 186.

[36] Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "Europe and the Dilemmas of Greek Conscience", in *Greece and Europe in the Modern Period: Aspects of a Troubled Relationship*, ed. Philipp Carabot, London: Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College, 1995, pp. 1–15. Kitromilides, "Europe and the Dilemmas of Greek Conscience", p. 6.

[37] Stourdza, *Considerations sur la doctrine et l'ésprit de l'église orthodox*, pp. 201–202, 191.

[38] Ibid., p. 184; Maiofis, *"Vozzvanie k Evrope"* [Appeal to Europe], p. 475.

as well as Protestant rationality. From the days of Byzantium, the retention of the substance and purity of the early church contributed to the survival of the Russian and Greek nations despite the centuries-old Muslim yokes they respectively endured.[39]

Sturdza's efforts to promote Orthodoxy was also in the service of the political agenda of Capodistrias and the web of Russian diplomats around him. To the extent that religion was within the ambit of international relations as the moral basis for the building of a new Europe, the special role of Russia could be foreseen in the liberation of Christian territories under the Ottoman yoke, with Orthodoxy functioning as the cohesive element uniting the Orthodox world within a Christian community.[40] The Greek language, apart from being the hallmark of European education, was praised as a common link within the Orthodox world.

As the celebrated conservative French political philosopher Joseph de Maistre, who lived in St Petersburg from 1803 until 1817 as ambassador of Piedmont-Sardinia and was a family friend of Sturdza from the salons of the city, explained in his work *Du pape*, the chapter on Russia was written so as to counter Sturdza's views on the importance of Orthodoxy. In his reappraisal of the Western Middle Ages, de Maistre stressed the role of the Papal Church and Latin as the bases of European civilisation. The controversy with the Counter-Enlightenment philosopher was not only of a dogmatic nature. It centred mainly on the question of European unity at a time when, following the fall of Napoleon, French power was on the wane while Russian power was at its peak. Which were to be the principles of this unity: the principles of royalist France with a divine mission, Catholicism and the power of the pope, or those of Orthodoxy as a religion with a historical world mission with Tsarist Russia and the Greeks in the central role?[41]

Through the prism of Eastern Orthodoxy, the Greeks and Russians recognised another East as the very opposite of a threatening, heterodox and barbarian Other. It was a European Christian East. In that view of the East, which is hardly the antithesis of Europe but regards itself as its very essence, there is an ambivalent counternarrative to the concept of Europe as the civilisation of Western Europe, identified with Catholicism and Protestantism, which poses a challenge to its claims to cultural and political dominance.

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[39] Stourdza, *Considerations sur la doctrine et l'ésprit de l'église orthodox*, pp. 160–170, 177; Parsamov, *Zhozef de Mestr i Aleksandr Sturdza,* p. 183.

[40] Maiofis, "*Vozzvanie k Evrope*" [Appeal to Europe], p. 477.

[41] Parsamov, *Zhozef de Mestr i Aleksandr Sturdza* [Joseph de Maistre and Alexander Sturdza], p. 118. For de Maistre's Russian period , see A. Markovich, "Zhozef de Mestr i Sent-Bëv v pis'makh k R. Sturdze-Edling" [Joseph de Maistre and Sainte-Beuve: Letters to R. Sturdza-Edling], *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* 33–34 (1939), pp. 379–456.

The Christian Family of Nations or the Orientalisation of the Ottoman Empire

The political concept of Europe as a Christian commonwealth reinforced the existence of the Ottoman Empire as a perennial Other in its vicinity. At the Congress of Vienna, the Ottoman Empire was included neither as a great power nor as a European power and hence remained beyond the pale of "civilised states".

When the Greek Revolution erupted in 1821 in the wake of the revolts of Pazvantoglu and Ali Pasha, European commentators were convinced that the Ottoman Empire was in a state of deep crisis. The Greek uprising further contributed to the orientalisation of views of the Ottoman Empire on a pan-European scale, though the wave of philhellenism was also a factor in reinforcing Greek and Russian European credentials.

Capodistrias, together with Sturdza and a network of diplomats spread throughout the "Ottoman East", envisaged an "eastern" enlargement of Europe consequent on the expulsion of the Ottomans from the continent. All of them abandoned their previous misgivings regarding the lack of maturity of the Christian subjects of the sultan, the Greeks included, to govern themselves,[42] and sought to bring the Greek War of Independence to a successful ending. By contrast, the self-appointed head of the Christian monarchs, Tsar Alexander, feeling threatened internationally by the uprisings in Spain and the Italian peninsula and internally by the revolt of the Semenovski regiment in late 1820, opted to do nothing in support of a struggling Christian people, the Greeks, thereby rendering a valuable service to the sultan (even though the latter was not cognisant of it). However, a considerable part of conservative international opinion in Europe did not heed Metternich and Castlereagh in their opposition to the Greek struggle but favoured intervention in support of the Greeks out of Christian sympathy as well as on the basis of the distinction between civilisation and barbarity.[43]

Among these conservatives was the celebrated writer Chateaubriand, who served as French foreign minister from December 1822 until 1824. In his influential *Note sur la Grèce* (1825) he berated the French king and other monarchs: "Will our century watch hordes of savages extinguish civilization at its rebirth on the tomb of a people who civilized the world? Will Christendom calmly allow Turks to strangle Christians?"[44]

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[42] Prousis, "Aleksandr Sturdza", p. 318.

[43] Ghervas, "Le philhellénisme d'inspiration conservative en Europe et en Russie", pp. 98–110.

[44] Quoted in William St Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free: The Philhellenes in the War of Independence*, Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2008, p. 270.

Another well-known figure with similar views was the conservative philosopher Louis de Bonald, editor with Chateaubriand of the journal *Mercure de France* and an acquaintance of Sturdza from conservative aristocratic networks. An article of Bonald's was published in the Russian journal *Vesntik Evropy* (Messenger of Europe) in October 1821, which was a translation from a piece he had written in the *Journal de débats* (on 30 August 1821) entitled "Contemporary History: On Politics. On Turkey". De Bonald, in contrast to other conservatives such as de Maistre, Metternich or Tsar Alexander (and his successor Nicholas I), rejected the argument that the Greeks had revolted against their lawful ruler. This was not the case, for they were not true subjects within a lawful state, but "tributaries" and "slaves" of the sultan, and thus their uprising was legitimate.[45]

Oikonomos in Odessa delivered a number of speeches to justify the Greek uprising to the local Greeks and Russians. Sturdza, for his part, tried to influence European public opinion by publishing his views in French in a series of letters, entitled *La Grèce en 1821 et 1822* (published in 1823 in Paris), exploiting to its full extent the Chios massacre of 1822 which, he made sure to stress, proved Ottoman barbarism.[46]

Sturdza argued that the Ottomans had conquered the Byzantine Empire and reduced the Christian inhabitants to a condition no better than slavery. Both Oikonomos and Sturdza delegitimised Ottoman sovereignty by pointing to the constant arbitrariness of Ottoman rule towards its Christian subjects, which extended to all aspects of life, private and public, and demeaned the individual at all conceivable levels. As Sturdza aptly put it, for one to be a lawful sovereign, "he should have earned his authority by the manner of his use of power."[47] He cited various historical analogies, from Alexander the Great to contemporary European states, in order to prove that the Ottoman state had followed a different evolutionary path and not that of "adopting them and uniting with them" (that is, with its conquered subjects) through laws, moral principles and politics and through respect for the idea of religious tolerance. In the Ottoman case, the conquered Christians were exempted from the laws of the state. He and Oikonomos argued that for the rights of the conqueror to be lawful they should be based "on the national and human rights [*anthropika dikaiomata*, as he called them in Greek] of the conquered". To the extent that the sultan's state

[45] Luis de Bonald, "O Turtsii" [On Turkey], *Vestnik Evropy* [Messenger of Europe], 19 (October 1821), pp. 210–218.

[46] A portion of these letters were translated into Greek in 1851 and published in the Greek newspaper *Αιών*, leading to a surge of debates in the Greek public sphere, see *Αιών*, 28 April 1851–19 May 1851, nos. 1155–1161.

[47] Sturdza, *Αιών*, 5 March 1851, 1.

did not recognise another higher authority than itself, it could not be one with the civilised European nations for it did not recognise human rights as they were generally accepted in Europe. Oikonomos, on his part, upheld the right of a "nation" to break away from an oppressive state.[48]

Oikonomos, who shared Sturdza's views, assured his Greek-speaking public in Russia that "we are members of the wider family of Christian faith which reigns in Europe", who struggle "as descendants of the valiant Atreidae and as followers of saints Theodore, George, Demetrios and other pious generals of the church".[49] Moreover, apart from Christianity the Greeks evidently shared with their European brothers the common socioeconomic characteristics of present-day European civilisation, such as the attributes of learning, arts, commerce and navigation. In this vein, the Ottomans by contrast were part of the alien world of Islam, their mores barbarian; they were savages, violent, effeminate and decadent. The Ottoman Empire was a stagnant, despotic power. They were barbarians untouched by the gifts of European civilisation, bound as they were by the tenets of the Koran which regards all others civilisations with disdain. The Koran was culturally against the sciences (philosophy, mathematics and physics), which were regarded among the pillars of European civilisation. Hence any attempt at reforming the Ottoman Empire was futile.[50]

An interesting aspect of Sturdza and Oikonomos' arguments was their historical approach to the Ottoman state regarding its future. The attempts at modernisation by Mahmud II (and previously by Selim III), evidently emulating the example of Peter the Great, had divided Western European opinion, with some regarding them as doomed attempts at reform, and others acclaiming them. In the Russian milieu during that period, the prevailing view was that they had no future and could not halt the inevitable decline of the Turks, whose corruption was endemic. This was the time when the military and political differences between the Russians and the Ottomans was redescribed as relations between Europe (Russia) and the Orient (Ottoman Empire).[51] The intensity of the Russo–Ottoman antagonism, with the future of the Balkans at its epicentre, provided the basis for the development of orientalism within

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[48] Oikonomos, "Προτρεπτικός προς τους Έλληνας" [Hortatory speech to the Greeks], in *Λόγοι εκκλησιαστικοί εκφωνηθέντες εν τη Γραικική Εκκλησία της Οδησσού κατά το αωκα'–αωκβ' έτος* [Religious addresses in the Greek Church of Odessa in 1821–1822], Berlin: Typografias tis Akadimias ton Epistimon, 1833, pp. 257.

[49] Ibid., pp. 271, 295.

[50] Ibid., p. 252.

[51] Victor Taki, "Orientalism on the Margins: The Ottoman Empire under Russian Eyes", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12/2 (2011), p. 350.

the Greek Orthodox communities, which according to Milica Bakić-Hayden, is a "nesting" phenomenon, for the orientalist rhetoric was embraced by both West and East, which made the boundaries between the two categories unclear.[52] As Ussama Makdisi, who examines the formation of the Ottoman orientalist discourse as a modernising project, put it: "In an age of Western-dominated modernity, every nation creates its own Orient."[53]

Sturdza argued that the Ottoman state was bound to disappear not because of Ypsilantis' revolt but as a result of its internal shortcomings, which were driving the empire to inevitable decline. In this context, he referred to the views that Dimitrie Cantemir (the great Moldavian man of letters and scholar, first a prince in Moldavia, then an exile in the Russia of Peter the Great, with an intricate knowledge of the Ottoman Empire) expressed in his *History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire*, which was published in London in 1734 and translated into various languages, remaining a classic work until the mid-nineteenth century.[54]

A little later, Capodistrias, in Geneva on leave from the Russian foreign ministry, set up an informal network of Greek intellectuals, linked one way or another with Russia, including Andreas Moustoxydis,[55] the Phanariot Iakovakis Rizos-Neroulos and Ignatius, metropolitan of Hungro-Wallachia, to assess the history and future of the Ottoman Empire. Among others, two questions were entertained: first, the relationship of the Ottoman power with Asia and, second, whether the reasons for its decline were exogenous (the sheer progress of Europe) or mainly endogenous, the fact of being Islamic with all that this implied, and inherently corrupt.[56]

Capodistrias and his circle were convinced that the Ottoman state was "unreformable", in a state of inevitable decline, while the Greeks, as a secularised/

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[52] Milica Bakić-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia", *Slavic Review* 15/4 (1995), pp. 917–931. For the second part of the 19th century, see Haris Exertzoglou, *Εκ Δυσμών το φως; Εξελληνισμός και Οριενταλισμός στην Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία (μέσα του 19ου–αρχές του 20ου αιώνα* [Ex occidente lux? Hellenisation and orientalism in the Ottoman Empire (mid 19th–early 20th centuries)], Athens: Eikostou Protou, 2015.

[53] Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism", *The American Historical Review* 107/3 (2002), p. 768.

[54] Sturdza, *Αιών*; Institut Russkoi Literaturi, *Arkhiv Sturdzy,* A.S. [Alexandra Sergeevicha], O.R. [Department of Manuscripts] (henceforth IRLI), f. 288, op. 1, d. 22, "Kopiia zapiski o grecheskikh delakh [Copy of a note concerning Greek affairs]", l. 2–3a, n.d.

[55] Julia V. Ivanova, *Greki Rossii i Ukrainy* [Greeks in Russia and Ukraine], St Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2004, p. 53.

[56] Konstantina Zanou, "Ο Ιωάννης Καποδίστριας, ο Ιακωβάκης Ρίζος Νερουλός και η νεότερη ιστορία της Ελλάδος" [Ioannis Capodistrias, Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos and the modern history of Greece], *Μνήμων* 30 (2009), pp. 141–178.

modernised community, had retained their national character in spite of centuries of Ottoman rule. Capodistrias, writing when the Greek struggle was at a critical stage (due to the military victories of Ibrahim Pasha in 1825–1827), claimed that the Greeks represented the progressive force in the region and that scientific inquiry was bound to prove the historical necessity of the Greek War of Independence in light of Ottoman decline and backwardness.[57]

The aim of the Greeks and Russians was, of course, to demonstrate their progressiveness in comparison to the Ottomans. In Western Europe, the same comparison was aimed at revealing the Eastern elements of Russia, as emerges in de Bonald's original French article, which was published in Russia in a censored version that omitted the part where he mentioned communalities between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. In a sense, the Western orientalisation of Russia was similar to the Russian and Greek orientalisation of the Ottomans.[58] The Russians and Greeks, who were aware of this downgrading, stressed the positive European characteristics of the Russian state. Among the characteristics of the Russian state order, Oikonomos included, for instance, freedom, piety, respect for human rights and for religion, power and effective state functioning.[59]

In criticising the colonialism on the part of Western Europe, which he blamed for forgetting the onslaught of the Turks on the Christians of southeastern Europe, Oikonomos sought to underline Russia's leading European role in crushing the Ottomans by land and sea. He concluded that by doing so "Russia saved the honour of Christian Europe".[60] According to Sturdza and Oikonomou's milieu, the development of the Greeks based on the fruits of European civilisation (which indisputably included Russia) was not only a process emanating from the West, but also a process coming from the North, which was made possible due to the salutary policy of Peter and Catherine the Great towards the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire.[61]

Interestingly, both intellectuals regarded Russia as undeniably a European power and a channel of "modernisation" for the Balkans, while the Russians regarded Greek education, from the days of the polymath Mikhail Lomonosov in the first part of the eighteenth century, as the channel of the transmission of Europeanism. The Russians were "the successors to medieval Greco-Byzantine Christianity" and "the rightful heir to the pagan classical Greek culture

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Taki, "Orientalism on the Margins", p. 340.

[59] Konstantinos Oikonomos, "Περί φιλογενείας" [On philogenism], In *Λόγοι εκκλησιαστικοί* [Religious addresses], p. 74.

[60] Oikonomos, "Προτρεπτικός" [Hortatory speech], p. 263, 265.

[61] Sturdza, *Αιών*.

that educated Europeans everywhere celebrated as the mother of Western civilisation".[62] Furthermore, "Russia as successor received its faith from Greek hands, hence it was their 'natural liberator'." Russia as the successor of Greece was also its protector, its daughter "which had to repay an ancient debt to its older, yet at the same time younger, relative and heir to Greek antiquity".[63]

The mirror of the Ottoman East was instrumental for both Greeks and Russians in perceiving themselves as Europeans. In both cases, the Ottoman East functioned as the eastern otherness, assuring the Europeanism of the two societies, in contrast to the "Asiatic Turks". In the same sense but in different terms, the Greek South (from the Russian perspective) and the Russian North (from the Greek perspective) were essential to presenting each other as European.

From Ambivalence towards the West to a Critical Stance towards Europe

Following Greek independence and the formation of the Kingdom of Greece, the inhabitants of the new polity experienced a shift from a mythical state to a concrete reality – to the contradictions of the Eastern Question, to the cynicism of European realpolitik and to the necessity of satisfying the interests of the Great Powers. The Europeans seemed arrogant towards the small Greek kingdom while the Greeks, for their part, examined anew their sense of gratitude towards their European protectors, increasingly seeing themselves as being humiliated by the European "colonial gaze" towards them.[64]

In the Russian environment in the early 1820s, there was a shift and reassessment of the Holy Alliance and the possibility inherent in the alliance of a dialogue between different Christian creeds. The outcome was a recoiling from the ecumenical utopia and a greater appeal to Russian Orthodoxy as more authentic, tolerant and more attuned to the defence of the subjected Christians.[65]

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[62] Alexander M. Martin, "The Invention of 'Russianness' in the Late 18th–Early 19th Century", *Ab Imperio* 3 (2003), p. 131.

[63] Andrei Zorin, *Kormia dvukhglavnogo orlia* [Feeding the two-headed eagle], Moscow: NLO, 2001; Andrei Zorin, "Eden in Taurus: Catherine II's Journey to Crimea in 1787: Political and Cultural Intentions", in *Unravelling Civilisation: European Travel and Travel Writing,* ed. Hagen Schulz-Forberg, Brussels: P.I.E.–Peter Lang, 2005, p. 227.

[64] Stella Mane, "Πολιτισμική σύμμιξη Δυτικής Ευρώπης και σύγχρονης Ελλάδας διαμέσου της 'κατασκευής' του ελληνικού κράτους (1821–1862): Ο ρόλος της ελληνικής αρχαιότητας" [Cultural mix between western Europe and modern Greece through the 'construction' of the Greek state (1821–1862): The role of Greek antiquity], in *Ο ελληνικός κόσμος ανάμεσα στην Ανατολή και τη Δύση, 1453–1981* [The Greek world between east and west, 1453–1981], ed. Asterios Argyriou et al., Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 1999, pp. 465–466.

[65] Maiofis, *"Vozzvanie k Evrope"* [Appeal to Europe], p. 509.

Moreover, the new revolutionary waves that appeared in 1825 in Russia itself with the Decembrists, and later on in 1830 and 1848, starting with Paris and spreading across Europe, pushed the new tsar, Nicholas I, to elaborate plans for the consolidation of his imperial power with a reaffirmation of autocracy. In this framework, his education minister, Count Uvarov, first put forward the triad of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality". Sturdza regarded Nicholas' reign positively and approved its new ideological emphasis on religion and nationality. But he felt that Russia had not become a truly Christian state as he had envisaged it during the cataclysmic reign of Alexander.

In 1829 Sturdza resigned from office, but in 1830 he wrote a memorandum to the Russian foreign ministry regarding Russian–Greek relations from the St Petersburg Protocol (1826) to 1830. The idea behind the memorandum was similar to the Uvarov triad (even though the latter had not yet been put forward).[66] It stressed the idea that thanks to it sharing a religion with the Greeks, Russia, contrary to the other powers, was the only power capable of guaranteeing Greek independence and the rights of the new state and of doing so with due regard to the dignity of the Greeks.[67] The fundamental element binding huge Russia and tiny Greece was, of course, their common Orthodoxy. On this basis, Russia could contribute to ensuring the following: first, that the future monarch of Greece would be baptised an Orthodox Christian, to avoid the country falling under the sway of Catholicism (Sturdza was also uneasy with the fact that some Greeks were Catholics); second, that Greece would not be alienated from the spiritual influence of the Patriarchate, for otherwise Greece would fall prey to the commercial and other interests of Britain and, moreover, that the beneficial Russian influence would not be limited; and, third, that Russian religious support and the active role of the Russian Church would be forthcoming, with the sending of distinguished theologians to Greece. Sturdza believed Britain and France would exploit Greece as a mere colony and thus regarded them as the main rivals of Russia.[68] On the other hand, the successful incorporation of

[66] For the study of the transfer of official nationality to the larger and very different world stage through foreign policy, see Lucien J. Frary, *Russia and the Making of Modern Greek Identity, 1821–1844*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 13.

[67] IRLI, f. 288, op. 1, 20, "Zapiska ob ustanovlenii otnoshenii Rossii i Gretsii, January 1830 [Note on the establishment of relations between Russia and Greece, January 1830], pp. 20–47.

[68] Ibid. For Russian foreign policy towards the Greek state, see Lucien J. Frary, "Russian and National Identity and the Independent Church of Greece", in *Culture and Identity in Eastern Christian History*, ed. Russell E. Martin and Jennifer B. Spock (2009), p. 44. For Greek-Russian relations in the first decades of the Greek state, see Barbara Jelavich, *Greece During the Reign of King Othon, 1832–1835*, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1969; Charles

Sturdza's homeland, Bessarabia, within the Russian fold was seen as a clear sign of Russia's beneficial civilising role in the Balkans.[69]

Orthodox Christianity and its role in the development of the new Westernised Greek state was a constant concern of Sturdza as well as Oikonomos. Both of them shared the wider "orientalist gaze" towards the Neohellenes and continued to regard religion in close connection with the education of both boys and girls, including those from agrarian families, and the education of clerics, as vital for progress, enlightenment and morality. Their main concern was evidently the retention of the unity, integrity and clarity of dogma and the unalloyed Orthodox tradition. Both of them were convinced that Orthodoxy was not merely a Russian or Greek cause, but was linked to Byzantium, prior to its Hellenisation by Greek nationalism, and that there existed a cohesion and unity among the various churches of Orthodox Christianity that had a global dimension. As Sturdza wrote in 1838 to Oikonomos: "Let us remember the words of the Apostles, that Christ founded an ecumenical Church and not national churches."[70] This message was threatened by the various evangelical missions, which worked and propagated Western Christian dogmas in the Orthodox East, including those with an educational aim, such as the Biblical Society. Both men also discerned a danger from within the bosom of Orthodox societies. Sturdza, as a "conservative" philhellene and early Slavophile, adopted a critical stance towards the Petrine Reforms and sensed a danger emanating from the Protestant-oriented Orthodox Russians, such as Theophan Prokopovich during the reign of Peter the Great. In the Greek case, he saw this kind of policy in the main rival of Oikonomos, Theoklitos Farmakidis, the architect of the autocephalous Greek Church.[71]

Oikonomos, now a resident of Greece, was, as we have said, one of the leading figures in the debate concerning autocephaly. He was not against the autocephalous idea as such – rather he tended to regard it as an inevitable evil – but he called for a more subtle and gradual change that would not break the links between the Eastern Orthodox spirit with the new national one, so as to avoid at all costs a severing of relations between the Patriarchate and the new

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H. Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821–1852*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969; Olga E. Misiurevich, *Stanovlenie natsional'nogo gosudarstva v Gretsii i russkaia partiia v 1837–1844* [The making of the Greek national state and the Russian party, 1837–1844], Moscow: Dialog–MGU, 1997.

[69] G.L., f. 1, no. 31, Sturdza to Oikonomos, Asylo, 29 July 1843.

[70] G.L., f. 1, no. 8, Sturdza to Oikonomos, Odessa, 4 August1838.

[71] Ibid.

Greek state and endangering its orientation towards Russia.[72] In the same spirit, Sturdza, while accepting the autocephalous church, stressed the importance of the unity of the Mother Church, and of the lawful creation of the Greek Church, opening the road for the reunification with the Mother Church that would also keep it within the Russian sphere of influence.

Concluding Remarks

As an intellectual, Sturdza was all his life connected intellectually and emotionally with St Petersburg, Moldavia, Western Europe, Constantinople, the Balkans and Athens. He wrote in Russian, Moldavian and Greek. He also wrote in French or translated his works into French, while remaining faithful to his youthful ambition to interpret the true version of Europeanism from the point of view of the Orthodox European East, defining the latter as modern and as a symbol of cultural superiority and political power. Sturdza and Oikonomos and their wide network were associated with the heritage of Voulgaris and Theotokis, which included a sense of ethnic or national identity, linked, however, with the Orthodox ecumenical worldview, a view associated with the power and prestige of the Russian state.

The Orthodox world and the Orthodox East, key concepts in the arsenal of Sturdza and Oikonomos, were increasingly on a collision course with the Latin/Protestant West. Thus alienation from the West was inevitable.

Sturdza remained consistent and did not change his conviction that the Ottoman state, with or without European assistance, was unreformable, because he continued to believe that Christianity and civilisation were identical concepts and that the Ottomans had to be ejected from Europe because of their barbarity that stemmed from Islam.[73] The Crimean War seemed to reinforce such an interpretation. Until his death, Sturdza believed that messianic prophecies would be fulfilled and that in the coming war the enemies of Orthodoxy would be defeated in the East as well as in the West.[74] Fortunately, he did not live long enough to see his expectations dashed with the Treaty of Paris of 1856.

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[72] Elli Skopetea, *Το "Πρότυπο Βασιλείο" και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα: Όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα (1830–1880)* [The "model kingdom" and the Great Idea: aspects of the national problem in Greece (1830–1880)], Athens: Polytypo, 1988; Kitromilides, "Από την ορθόδοξη κοινοπολιτεία" [From the Orthodox commonwealth], pp. 156–160; Paraskevas Matalas, *Έθνος και Ορθοδοξία: οι περιπέτειες μιας σχέσης. Από το "ελλαδικό" στο βουλγαρικό σχίσμα* [Nation and Orthodoxy: vicissitudes of a relation, from the Greek to the Bulgarian schism], Heraklion, Crete University Press, 2002.

[73] G.L. 7.9: Sturdza, *Dukhovnaia zhizn' i dykhovnaia slovesnost' na Vostoke* [Spiritual life and spiritual literature in the east], Odessa, 1849.

[74] IRLI, O.R., no. 7 "La guerre actuelle au point de vue Biblique".

As ideas do not only circulate in space but also in time, the clash between Western and Eastern Christianity was a central idea in the Slavophile environment in its critical stance towards aspects of Western Europe though not of Europe per se. Gradually the position occupied by the "Orthodox world" in the Russian milieu was supplanted by Slavism, like "a youth in an aging world", as Sturdza put it early on.

The Congress of Vienna was perhaps a favourable moment for the promotion of the idea of the equality of the Orthodox East in Europe in light of the rise of Russian power. Russia gradually lost its prestige as the leader of Europe, especially following the revolutions of 1848, and the image of the country that saved Europe from Napoleon was replaced by the image of the arbitrary policeman of Europe, which curbed liberalism and national self-determination (as seen, for instance, in the intervention to help quell the Hungarian revolt against Austria in 1848). Moreover, under Nicholas I's reign Russia was reinvented as a monarchical power through the conservative triad of absolutism, Orthodoxy and nationality. Within the spirit of Romanticism, the tsar and a portion of the Russian elite shared the conviction that Russia had embarked on a distinct road to development, different from that of the contemporary Western powers, and this was encapsulated in the principle of absolutism. The end of the Crimean War was a great humiliation for the Russians, not least because the defeat meant Russia's loss of status as the greatest European power, a status based on the memory of 1815 and the Russian march into Paris.

In Greece, prior to the final outcome of the Crimean War, an anonymous pamphlet with the telling title "Hellenism or Russianism" was an early Greek attempt to present the Greek nation as the bulwark of the civilised West against the "uncivilised" and "conquering" North (Russia and the Balkans) and as a rejuvenating element in the Western-style reforms of the Ottoman Empire aimed at preventing its decline.[75] In the Greek environment, the Orthodox East acquired the meaning of the "Hellenised" East.

The Crimean War was to mark the decline of mutual interest between Greece and Russia and to close the historical cycle of "the Russian hope". We could say that the death of Sturdza and Oikonomos symbolises the end of an era and the emerging alienation between the Russian world and the Greek state. The common value of Orthodoxy and the bonds between Greeks and Russians, which had been in place since the days of Catherine the Great, seemed out of place

[75] [Konstantinos Dosios], *Ελληνισμός ή Ρωσσισμός; Ήτοι η μεταξύ Αγγλίας και Ρωσσίας απόρρητος και εμπιστευτική διαπραγματεία περί του ανατολικού ζητήματος μετά προλόγου και σημειώσεων* [Hellenism or Russism? That is, a secret and confidential negotiation between England and Russia on the eastern question], Athens: Typografeio S.K. Vlastou, 1854.

with the nationalisation of Orthodoxy, which from the mid-nineteenth century onwards left the way open to competition and rivalry between Greece and its erstwhile protector.[76]

The peripheral character of both Russia and Greece rendered them both a subject and an object of orientalism. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, when the West defined – and established – itself to its contemporaries as the epitome of progress and human development, the hegemonic position of the West was internalised by the Russians as well as by the Greeks, inevitably posing the existential question: where do we belong, to the East (as the East of Christ and not of Xerxes, to paraphrase an expression by Vladimir Soloviev)[77] or to the West? Such questions produced narratives of either antithesis or conversion, and in the latter case the Greek could be seen as the most ecumenical human being, the only all-embracing European (*o katholikos Evropaios*), as Markos Renieris put it in his essay "Le dualisme grec".[78] Dostoevsky, 30 years later, echoing the early Slavophiles, saw the Russians playing this role. In his famous speech on Pushkin, he stated that for one to become a true Russian he should reconcile all European disputes in a pan-human Russian spirit.[79]

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[76] Ada Dialla, "Το Ανατολικό Ζήτημα και οι ελληνορωσικές σχέσεις: 'ο εσωτερικός εμφύλιος πόλεμος της ορθοδοξίας'" [The Eastern Question and Greek-Russian relations: "internal wars inside Orthodoxy"], in *Grecheskii mir XVIII–XX vv. v novykh istoricheskikh issledovaniiakh* [The Greek world during the 18th–20th centuries in recent historical studies], Moscow: Sovremennik, 2006, pp. 51–68.

[77] Vladimir Soloviev, "Ex oriente lux", From the Ends to the Beginning: A Bilingual Web Anthology of Russian Verse, accessed 18 September 2019, http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/mdenner/Demo/texts/ex_oriente_lux.html.

[78] "Le dualisme grec", *Le Spectateur de l'Orient* 2 (10/22 September 1853), p. 9. See also Paraskevas Matalas, "Μεταξύ Ανατολής, Δύσης και Βορρά: η διαμάχη για την έννοια του Ελληνισμού στα μέσα του 19ου αιώνα" [Between East, West and North: the dispute over the concept of Hellenism in the middle of the 19th century], in Argyriou, *Ο ελληνικός κόσμος* [The Greek world], pp. 481–493.

[79] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Dnevnik Pisatelia: Izbrannye stranitsy* [The diary of a writer: selected pages], Moscow: Sovremennik, 1989, p. 536.