The Ottoman translation of the Greek Declaration of Independence: some further considerations[1]

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In a collection of Hatt-ı Hümayuns (Imperial Edicts) at the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul, I located the Ottoman translation of the Greek Declaration of Independence. This article examines the terminology that Ottomans used to interpret the language employed by the revolutionary Greeks. The goal of this study is to examine Ottoman attempts to define the rebels and conceptualize the inner motive behind the revolt of their subjects. This article argues that confiscated documents such as the Greek Declaration of Independence contributed to the familiarization of the imperial authorities with the ideological background to the rebellion and the reasons that triggered it.

Introduction

Soon after the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, the insurgents became concerned with the question of how the territories under their control should be governed. From the very first month of the Revolution, Greeks experimented with the establishment of various regional organizations with which they sought to move beyond localism: the Peloponnesian Senate (*Πελοποννησιακή Γερουσία*); the Organization of Western Central Greece in Missolonghi (*Οργανισμός της Δυτικής Χέρσου Ελλάδος*); and the Legal

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1   The present article has as its starting-point E. Kolovos and L. Moiras, 'Παραδοσιακά λεξιλόγια, νεωτερικά περιεχόμενα: η οθωμανική μετάφραση της Διακήρυξης της Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας', in E. Kolovos and K. Kostis (eds.), *Κατανοώντας τον πόλεμο της Ανεξαρτησίας* (Athens 2022) 98–119, but takes into account newer bibliography and indeed reaches different conclusions.

Command of Eastern Central Greece in Salona, present day Amfissa (*Άρειος Πάγος της Ανατολικής Χέρσου Ελλάδος*).[2]

      When there arose the need to form a strong central government capable of running the war, administering fiscal affairs, and conducting negotiations with the Great Powers, the representatives of three provisional governments came together in the village of Piada, in the Northeastern Peloponnese, next to ancient Epidaurus, and adopted the Provisional Constitution of Greece (*Προσωρινόν Πολίτευμα της Ελλάδος*), on 15 January 1822.[3] In drafting the constitution, the representatives drew upon several liberal discourses and constitutional texts, as these had developed from the French Revolution onwards. Scholars have highlighted in particular the crucial role in these processes of Alexandros Mavrokordatos (1791–1865), and Theodoros Negris (1790–1824), both of Phanariot origins and well versed in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century constitutionalism, including that of that of Vincenzo Gallina (1795–1842), a former Carbonaro who had been invited to join the Assembly as an expert and who drew upon the radical republican tradition.[4] The first constitution was strongly influenced by the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), as well as by the French constitutions of 1793 and 1795.[5]

      After ratifying the text, the Greek Assembly issued the Declaration of Independence,[6] 'a momentous political and ideological text condensing the emerging principles of liberalism and the state-national ideology, which epitomized the new collective identity'.[7] The text

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2   N. Alivizatos, 'Assemblies and constitutions', in P. M. Kitromilides and C. Tsoukalas (eds.) *The Greek Revolution. A critical dictionary* (Cambridge 2021) 439–52 (442).

3   Alivizatos, 'Assemblies and constitutions', 443.

4   The conventional view of Greek constitutional culture assumes that it was born out of a binary opposition between secular and religious values, and that it was influenced by liberalism as a concept of political ideas based on the natural rights of the individual, national self-determination, liberty, constitutional government, consent of the governed, and so on: A. Hatzis, *Ο ενδοξότερος αγώνας. Η Ελληνική Επανάσταση του 1821*, tr. N. Roussos (Athens 2021). However, recent scholarship argues that during the first half of the nineteenth century liberals strove to find an accommodation between constitutional culture and enlightened forms of religion. These studies draw attention to the internal diversity of liberal thought and argue for the replacement of the concept of 'liberalism' by that of 'liberalisms'. Against this backdrop, the originality of the Greek constitutions lay not only in their creative adaptation of a number of different models, but also in the persisting influence of local institutional and intellectual traditions. See M. Isabella, *Southern Europe in the Age of Revolutions* (Princeton 2023), 26–27, and K. Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800–1850: stammering the nation* (Oxford 2018) 81–2.

5   M. Chehab, 'Philhellenism and constitutionalism: the first Greek constitutions', in M. Vöhler, S. Alekou, and M. Pechlivanos (eds.), *Concepts and Functions of Philhellenism. Aspects of a transcultural movement* (Berlin 2021) 211–24 (211).

6   Its principal drafter was the Greek politician and judicial officer Anastasios Polyzoides (1802–1873): N. Diamantouros, *Οι απαρχές της συγκρότησης του σύγχρονου κράτους στην Ελλάδα, 1821–1828*, tr. K. Kouremenos (Athens 2022), 160. For the full text, see https://library.parliament.gr.

7   N. Rotzokos, 'Το έθνος ως πολιτικό υποκείμενο. Σχόλια για το ελληνικό εθνικό κίνημα', in P. Pizanias (ed.), *Η Ελληνική Επανάσταση του 1821. Ένα ευρωπαϊκό γεγονός* (Athens 2009) 223–40 (228).

of the Declaration was crucial for justifying the revolution in national terms and asserting independence: the drafters announced that they had left the imperial community of the Ottoman Empire to join instead an international community of independent sovereign states.[8] At this stage, the text's audience was both the local Greek community and international public opinion.

On the other hand, after the engagement of the Ottoman authorities against a secessionist rebellion, the Sultan himself and the Sublime Porte were caught in a state of 'existential' insecurity, since the Greek War of Independence prevented the state from performing one of its main functions, its capacity to maintain order.[9] Under these conditions, the imperial elites employed a wide range of tactics to put down the rebellion.[10] Concomitantly, they attempted to define the rebels and to interpret the reasons that had triggered the insurgency. In this context, Ottoman translations of the intercepted Greek documents, such as public declarations or letters addressed to the Ottomans by the leaders of the Greek War of Independence, as well as confiscated despatches between the leaders of the rebels, provided the central state authorities with important material in their attempt to conceptualize the reasons behind the 'Rum sedition'.

One of the most significant documents of this kind was the declaration of Ypsilantis (Fight for Faith and Fatherland), calling on all brave Hellenes (*secâatlü Yunanlar*) and Christians to rise up against the Ottomans.[11] The translation of the Declaration of Independence was of equal importance for the Ottoman interpretation of the Greek War of Independence.[12] We do not know the translator of the text and it is unclear whether the translation was produced locally or in the imperial capital.[13] If the

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8   D. Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence. A global history*, (Cambridge 2007), 30; M. Sotiropoulos, '"United we stand, divided we fall": sovereignty and government during the Greek Revolution, 1821–1828', *Historein* 20 (2021) 2–25 (10–11).

9   A. Zarakol, 'States and ontological security: a historical rethinking', *Cooperation and Conflict* 52 (2017) 48–68.

10   For Ottoman responses to the rebellion, see H. Erdem, 'Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers': Ottoman responses to the Greek War of Independence', in F. Birtek and Th. Dragonas (eds.), *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey* (London 2009) 67–84; H. Ş. Ilıcak, 'A radical rethinking of empire: Ottoman state and society during the Greek War of Independence (1821–1826)', PhD diss. Harvard 2011; E. Kolovos, Ş. Ilıcak and M. Shariat-Panahi, *Η οργή του σουλτάνου: αυτόγραφα διατάγματα του Μαχμούτ Β΄ το 1821* (Athens 2021); Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: governing Ottomans in an age of revolution* (Berkeley 2011).

11   Erdem, 'Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers', 79.

12   *BOA* (Presidency Ottoman Archives in Istanbul) *HAT* (Hatt-ı Hümâyun) 1222/47772, undated.

13   Aristeides Xatzis has established that early forms of the translations of the Provisional Constitution of Greece and the Declaration of Independence were published in the liberal French and English press (in the *Constitutionnel*, on 29 April 1822, and in the *Sun* and the *Morning Chronicle*, on 2 May 1822, respectively): 'Οι άγνωστες πρώτες μεταφράσεις του Συντάγματος της Επιδαύρου και τι μας αποκαλύπτουν' in *'Το βιώσιμο κράτος': Τιμητικός τόμος για την Κατερίνα Σακελλαροπούλου* (Athens 2022) 661–9. However, comparison of the texts reveals that the Ottomans translated the text directly from the Greek.

declaration was translated in Istanbul, we may assume that the document dates between February and April 1822 and that the translator was Stavrakis Aristarchis (1770–1822), then Great Dragoman of the Imperial Council. Aristarchis was an Armenian-origin Greek Orthodox Phanariot who had been appointed to replace Dragoman Kostaki Muruzi when the latter was executed by the Ottoman authorities on 5 April 1821.[14] In any case, the above-mentioned text offered the imperial elite excellent material to perceive the political language and the aspirations of the Greek rebels. Besides, the examination of the political vocabulary of the translation can broaden our understanding about the Ottoman intellectual perceptions of the Greek Revolution, according to the principles of *Begriffsgeschichte* (conceptual history), drawing on the history of terminology, historical philology, semasiology, and onomatology.[15]

Rums (*Rumlar*) and Greeks (*Yunanlar*)

The header of the Ottoman translation of the Greek Declaration of İndependence indicates that this proclamation was addressed to the 'Rum milleti' (*Rum milletine hitaben*). However, inside the text the Greek nation was described as '*Yunan milleti*'.

Recent works have demonstrated that, prior to the Greek Revolution, the word was rather a concept of ethnoreligious community than an institutionalized system.[16] By contrast, Yusuf Karabıçak, who has studied a comprehensive body of primary sources produced in the period after the French Revolution, has argued that millet had acquired the modern meaning of nation before the outbreak urst of the Greek Revolution.[17]

In the late eighteenth century, the prevailing meaning of the term *Rum milleti* was an empire-wide religious community with the Patriarch.[18] The Ecumenical Patriarchate of

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14   The Revolution disrupted relations between the ruling Muslim elite and the Greek Orthodox high–ranking officers. Most of the Greek Orthodox subjects employed in the translation service were removed because their loyalty was in doubt. Stavraki Aristarchis was the last Grand Dragoman. He was dismissed and murdered during his exile in Bolu (1822). The Ottomans had to recruit their staff from among the Muslim Community and Aristarchis was replaced by Yahya Naci Efendi, the first Muslim translator of the Imperial Council: Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 67–72.

15   R. Koselleck, *Futures Past on the Semantics of Historical Time*, tr. K. Tribe (New York 2004), 75.

16   It has been conventionally understood (under the anachronistic influence of the nineteenth century) that the millet system was the structural framework institutionalized by Mehmed the Conqueror for the administration of the dhimmis (*zimmi*) following the capture of İstanbul: Macit Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi. Mit ve Gerçek* (Istanbul 2007). This view has been challenged by modern research: B. Braude, 'Foundation myths of the millet system', in B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (New York 1982) 69–88 and M. Ursinus, 'Millet', in C. E. Bosworth et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn. VII (Leiden 1993) 61–4.

17   Y. Z. Karabıçak, 'Ottoman attempts to define the rebels during the Greek War of Independence', *Studia Islamica* 115 (2020) 68–71.

18   For the adoption of the term *Rum* in Ottoman parlance, see C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of one's own: reflections on cultural geography and identity in the lands of Rum', *Muqarnas 24* (2007) 7–26.

Istanbul was increasingly incorporated into the Ottoman administration system and the authority of the Patriarch of Istanbul was extended after the abolition of the autocephalous archbishoprics of Achris and Ipekion in 1766 and 1767 and the incorporation of their suffragans into his jurisdiction.[19] In this perspective, the term included all subjects of the Sultan who were Greek Orthodox, irrespective of their ethnic origin. Yet at the same time, in the context of the Greek Revolution, the word was used to describe a group of former Christian Orthodox subjects who rebelled against the empire and it was considered to be a separate entity, a nation.[20]

The translator of the Declaration used *Rum* and *Yunan* (literally Ἴωνες/Ionians) interchangeably to refer to the rebels. The Ottoman intelligentsia adopted the old Near Eastern designation of the Greeks, *Yunan* ('Ionians') in order to describe ancient Greek history and civilization. Muslim intellectual tradition lacked a precise notion on where to locate the Yunan, except for some vague generalities such as Athens being the glorious city of the ancient Greek philosophers or Macedonia being the country of Alexander the Great.[21]

Under this influence, Ottoman scholars exalted the ancient Greeks, a 'race' (*kavim*) that had been wiped out from history, and gave their civilization a prestigious, albeit semi-mythical, place of glory, wisdom, and virtue.[22] Various Ottoman chroniclers cited the most eminent ancient Greek philosophers. For example, Taşköprülüzade Ahmet Efendi (1495–1561), in his work entitled *Sciences of Government* (*Mevzuatü'l-ulûm*), characterized Plato and Aristotle as 'masters of wisdom'. Likewise, the polymath Katib Çelebi (1609–1657) composed *A Guide to the History of* [*Ancient*] *Greeks, Romans, and Christians for the Perplexed* (*İrşâd-ûl-hayârâ ilâ târîh-ûl-Yunân ve Rûm ve Nasara*, 1665) and *The Steps to the* Knowledge (*Süllemü'l-vüsûl*), in which he argued that 'thanks to Aristotle, science had progressed in several Muslim countries'.[23]

The celebrated Ottoman explorer and traveller Evliya Çelebi (1611–1682) included in his Travels (*Seyahâtname*) *Yunan* to refer to ancient Greece and its inhabitants, as also *lisan-ı Yunan* (Greek language) to describe the ancient Greek written language and its application in the discipline of epigraphy.[24] In the same vein Mahmud Efendi, the

19 P. Konortas, '"From tâ'ife to millet: Ottoman terms for the Ottoman Greek Orthodox community', in D. Gondicas and Ch. Issawi (eds.), *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism* (Princeton 1999) 169–79 (175).

20 Karabıçak, 'Ottoman attempts to define the rebels', 102.

21 F. Rosenthal, '*Yunan*', in P. J. Bearman et al (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edn. XI (Leiden 2002) 343–5.

22 M. Sariyannis, 'Εικόνες των αρχαίων Ελλήνων στις οθωμανικές γραμματειακές πηγές πριν από τον 19ο αιώνα', in O. Katsiardi-Hering, A. Papadia-Lala, K. Nikolaou and V. Karamanolakis (eds.), *Έλλην Ρωμηός Γραικός: συλλογικοί προσδιορισμοί και ταυτότητες* (Athens 2018) 229–44 (231).

23 H. Koç, 'XVII Yüzyılın Ortasında Osmanlı Coğrafyası'ndan Antik Dönemlere bir Bakış: Kâtip Çelebi'nin Eserlerinden Seçmeler', *Doğu Batı* 10 (2007) 262–8.

24 E. Kolovos, 'Ονομάτων επίσκεψις του Εβλιά Τσελεμπή', in O. Katsiardi-Hering et al. (eds.), *Έλλην Ρωμηός Γραικός: συλλογικοί προσδιορισμοί και ταυτότητες*, (Athens 2018), 281.

mufti of Athens, who lived in the city for several years, compiled in 1738 the *History of the City of Philosophers* (*Tarih-i Medinetü'l Hukema*) in which he discussed the history of ancient Athens. A striking feature of his book is the use of contemporary terms such as *Sultan* and *jizya* for rulers and institutions of ancient Athens. Mahmud Efendi's 'Ottomanization' of the text reflects his attempt to render his text comprehensible to his contemporaries so they could take lessons from his story.[25]

During the last decades of the eighteenth century the term *Yunan* underwent a conceptual shift and a spatial delimitation in some texts by Ottoman chronographers. Ahmed Cavid (d. 1803), a high-ranking bureaucrat and protégé of Sultan Selim III, composed the chronicle *The Garden of Facts* (*Hadîka-yı Vekâyi*) in which he described the events of the years 1790 and 1791 during the Russian–Ottoman War of 1787–1792. In his narration he used the phrase *vilayat-ı Yunan* (Greek provinces) as equivalent to the Balkan territories of the empire.[26] Another scholar and diligent observer of his era, Kethüda Said Efendi, commenting in his account *The History Kethüda Said Efendi* (*Kethüda Said Efendi Tarihi*) on Ottoman–Russian relations and the projects of Catherine the Great, argued that 'the consequences of the sedition instigated by the Empress of Moscow, will be the creation of Greek republics (*Yunan cumhurlarını*) that had once dominated over the "Roman lands" (*Rum-ili*).'[27] According to the imagined spatial demarcations of these texts, the term *Yunan* started also to be identified with the territories of the Balkan peninsula, where numerous subjects of the Sultan were of Greek origin. Nonetheless, the term did not abolish its traditional meaning and continued referring to the ancient Greeks.

On the other hand, the impact of the Enlightenment on Greek political thought provided the catalyst for the transition to a new national and liberal ideology, championed by the radical representatives of the Greek Enlightenment in the last decades of the eighteenth century. The awakening of a sense of a distinct identity among the multiethnic populations of the Ottoman milieu was one of the most significant and enduring implications of the cultural changes brought about under the influence of the European Enlightenment and the waves of revolution across the Mediterranean and the Americas.[28] Gregorios Konstantas and Daniel Philippides, the co-authors of *A New Geography* (*Νεωτερική Γεωγραφία*), criticized the identity advocated by the Patriarchate. They also tried to provide a precise delimitation of modern Hellas and disapproved of *Rum* as being identified 'with the terminology and the rhetoric of their tyrants'.[29]

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25   G. Tunalı, 'Another kind of Hellenism? Appropriation of ancient Athens via Greek channels for the sake of good Advice as reflected in *Tarih-i Medinetü'l Hukema*', PhD diss, Ruhr Universität Bochum 2013, 122–4.
26   Adnan Baycar (ed.), *Ahmed Cavid. Hadîka-yı Vekâyi* (Ankara 1998) 41.
27   Ahmet Özcan, *Kethüda Said Efendi Tarihi ve Değerledrimesi*, MA thesis, Kırklareli Üniversitesi, 1999, 70.
28   P. M. Kitromilides, 'The Enlightenment East and West: a comparative perspective on the ideological origins of the Balkan political traditions', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 10.2 (1983) 51–70 (55–7).
29   A. Koumarianou (ed.), *Η Νεωτερική Γεωγραφία των Δημητριέων. Βιέννη 1791* (Athens 1988) 107–21.

These new ideas are reflected in the text of the Declaration of Independence. The rebels claimed their right to political self-determination 'as the descendants of the wise and 'beneficent' nation of the Hellenes, contemporaries of the enlightened and well governed peoples of Europe' (Απόγονοι του σοφού και φιλανθρώπου Έθνους των Ελλήνων σύγχρονοι των πεφωτισμένων και ευνομουμένων λαών της Ευρώπης). The nationalized reconstruction of the past was the core ideology of the Greek movement of independence.[30] The translator of the Ottoman text employed the term *Yunan milleti* to describe this distinctiveness of a part of subordinated subjects who claimed to be privileged with moral virtues and humanitarian values and whose loyalties to imperial institutions had suffered significant erosion ('Dirayet ve irfan ve merhamet ve şefkatı meşhur olmuş Yunan milletinin hakları ve cem'i umurlarını kavaid ve kavanın-ı müstahkemeye tatbık ile muntazam ül hal olan Avrupa milletlerinin hem-muasırları').

This differentiation in the definition describes the awareness that the Ottoman state elite had of the emergence and the independence of part of the Rum milleti. After the first years of the Greek Revolution, Ottoman chronographers and the documents compiled by the empire's statesmen used more frequently the term *Yunan* to refer to their insurgent subjects. For example, Şânizâde, the chronographer of the Porte, argued that the Greek Revolution 'was incited by teachers, preaching the idea of freedom and clergymen who recruited their eschatological prophecies concerning the foundation of an independent Greek state (*Zuhur-i Devlet-i Yunan*)'.[31]

In an imperial decree sent to the Ottoman commanders and governors of the north Balkan provinces, advising them to be extra vigilant with regard to a possible war against Russia, Mahmud II asserted that 'if we withdraw the Muslim troops from Wallachia and Moldavia and appoint Rum voivodes, their kind would gather around them, because of the millet-wide character of their sedition and the Rums have rallied around the fallacious idea of capturing the so-called Greek realms ('Rumların zum-ı batılları gûya Yunan memalikin zabt itmek üzere ittifak oldukları derkâr')'.[32] In the years that followed, the Ottoman authorities employed the term *muhibb-i Yunan* to describe the Philhellenic committees set up to collect money, provide ammunition, and send medical and food supplies for the benefit of the Greeks.[33] In 1828, after the destruction of the Ottoman fleet anchored in Navarino Bay and prior to the start of hostilities against Russia, Sultan Mahmud II made a *jihad*-like public declaration in order to mobilize the Muslims of the empire. The declaration highlighted that:

> The bandits of Morea and [the Aegean] Islands caused many losses and numerous [Muslims] became martyrs. Many women and children were

30 Rotzokos, 'Το έθνος ως πολιτικό υποκείμενο', 239.

31 Z. Yılmazer (ed.), Şânizâde Mehmed Atâ'ullah Efendi, *Sânîzâde Tarihi* II (1223–1237/1808–1821) (Istanbul 2008) 1082.

32 H. Ş. Ilıcak (ed.), *Those İnfidel Greeks. The Greek War of Independence through Ottoman archival documents II* (Leiden 2021) 1088.

33 *BOA, HAT 45575*, 10 Safer 1842 (13 September 1826).

enslaved [by the infidels]. Those who recklessly and foolishly dare and persist on calling themselves with the unspeakable nonsense Greek government (ve kendilerine Yunan hükümeti ıtlakiyle lisana alınmaz türrehhât ve şenaata cüret ve ısrar ederek) continue to fight the Muslims [...].[34]

Independent nation (*millet-i müstakile*), liberty (*serbestiyyet*) and fatherland (*vatan*)

The translator of the Ottoman text used *millet* to describe the modern concept of nation as a political subject of self-determination and added the crucial phrase *millet-i müstakıla* to describe the emerging independent (Greek) nation. It is important to comment on the term *müstakıla*, since it determines and defines the modern concept of the millet. The word derives from the Arabic verbal noun *istiklal,* and in classical Ottoman usage the expression *müstakıla* was in no sense a political term: it was used of those subjects who used to pay the *jizya* tax as a distinct group,[35] as well as to the properties and the lands where access was limited. For example, in an imperial decree dated 1622, a woodland area (*koru*) that belonged to the glebe of the Xeropotamos Monastery in Ierissos, labeled as 'private and independent' (*mahsus ve müstakıl*) and only the monks had the right to exploit the timber.[36] In addition, *müstakıla* was used to convey the notions of 'separate, detached, unlimited', or even 'arbitrary', and occasionally it could be used in a political context, of a dynasty, a region, or a part of a city not totally subject to a higher authority, From the eighteenth century onwards the term could be also used to designate an absolutist monarchy.[37]

With respect to the French Revolution, *müstakıla* still bore was its traditional association with the arbitrary: in the view of the Ottomans, the Jacobins were planning 'to abolish the absolute government (*hükûmeti-i müstakile*) and to leave the conduct of affairs to the common folk (*avam-ı nas*)'.[38] Yet, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, under the influence of European political ideas, the term underwent a conceptual shift and acquired the modern meaning of political sovereignty.[39] Şânizâde argued in his account that during the First Serbian Revolt (1804–1813) the leader of the rebels, Karađorđević, desired to establish an

34   *BOA, HAT* 1318/51356 -A, Undated.

35   E Kolovos, 'Χωρικοί και μοναχοί στην οθωμανική Χαλκιδική 15ος-16ος αιώνες: όψεις της οικονομικής και κοινωνικής ζωής στην ύπαιθρο και η Μονή Ξηροποτάμου ΙΙ', PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2008, 85.

36   E Kolovos, 'Χωρικοί και μοναχοί σ', 210–1.

37   P. J. Vatikiotis, 'Istiklal', in E. van Donzel et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn. IV (Leiden 1997) 260.

38   Y. Z. Karabıçak, 'Local patriots and ecumenical Ottomans: the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople in the Ottoman configuration of power, 1768–1828', PhD diss., McGill 2020, 196.

39   For the evolution of these terms in Ottoman Egypt and the acquaintance with secular nationalism and the related notions by Arab thinkers of the same era, see A. Ayalon, *Language and Change in the Arab Middle East: the evolution of modern political discourse* (Oxford 1987) 16–28.

independent government (*müstakıl hükûmet*) in the districts inhabited by the Serbian people (*Sırp reaya*).[40] Thus, in the translation of the Declaration, the new meaning of *müstakıl* seemed to have prevailed.

Intimately intertwined with that term *serbestiyyet* (liberty), which the Greek rebels laid claim to in their Declaration ('bundan evvelce serbestiyyetimizi ilan ve işaa ile'). *Serbestiyyet* in classical Ottoman usage meant a lack of limitations and restrictions, and most frequently appeared in connection with *timars* (grants of revenues assigned to the feudal cavalry).[41] The term underwent a conceptual shift during the 1760s when it was used to assert political liberty, individual freedom, and even independence: the war against Russia in 1768 was declared for the protection of Poland's *serbestiyyet*.[42]

The events that took place during and after the French Revolution, especially the abolition of the monarchy and the public execution of Louis XVI, and the export of revolutionary ideas among the Orthodox Christian subjects of the Sultan, after Bonaparte's Italian campaign (1796–1797) and Egyptian expedition (1798–1801), reshaped the Ottoman understanding of the concept of liberty. By the turn of the nineteenth century, *serbestiyyet* had come to be equated with sedition.[43]

In this regard, Atıf Efendi, the Ottoman chief officer of the foreign affairs (*reisülküttab*), submitted in 1798 a memorandum to the Porte in which he evaluated the French Revolution just before Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition. He explained that the mob leaders of the 'sedition' propagated 'so called equality (*müsavat*) and freedom (*serbestiyyet*) for the attainment of ultimately worldly happiness'.[44]

This new concept of *serbestiyyet* was well established by the Greek Revolution. Es'ad Efendi, the chronographer of the imperial court, argued in his account that 'Russia and the other Great Powers misled the infidels to sedition, promising that they would taste freedom (*lezzet-i serbestiyyet*) and guaranteeing the establishment of a Greek Republic (*Yunan Cumhuru izhar diyerek*)'.[45]

The engagement of the Ottoman intelligentsia with the modern ideas of the French Revolution had also another dimension. In his account, Şânizâde gave his advice about how to prevent the disintegration of the empire. This Ottoman chronographer invoked the basic principles of French political vocabulary and favoured their adoption for the salvation of the empire:

40 Yılmazer, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi I*, 611.

41 B. Lewis, 'Serbestiyet', *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 41 (2011) 47–52.

42 Y. Z. Karabıçak, 'Defending Polish liberties: a conceptual and diplomatic history of the Ottoman Declaration of War on Russia in 1768', *Ab Imperio* 1 (2022) 133–65.

43 Y. Z. Karabıçak, '"Why would we be Limberte?" Limbertè in the Ottoman Empire, 1792–1792' *Turcica* 51 (2020) 248. See also H. Yılmaz, 'From Serbestiyyet to Hürriyet. Ottoman statesmen and the question of freedom during the late Enlightenment", *Studia Islamica* 111 (2011) 202–30.

44 Y. Z. Karabıçak, '"Why would we be Limberte?" 229.

45 Ziya Yılmazer (ed.), *Vakanüvis Es'ad Efendi tarihi: (Bâhir Efendi'nin zeyl ve ilâveleriyle): 1237–1241 / 1821–1826* (Istanbul 2000) 571–2.

It is necessary to act like the French nation (*Franseız Milleti gibi*), which has achieved great industrial progress due to its national unity (*ittifak-ı milliye*). They have focused on the implementation of equality (*müsavat*) and brotherhood (*uhuvvet*) and on the cultivation of an ardent devotion to the fatherland (*mahabbet-i memleket*), and they have advanced on well organized countries, destroying their armies under the motto 'freedom or death' (*el-Hürriyetii ve'l-mevtü*).[46]

Şânizâde underscored the meaning of fatherland (*memleket* or *vatan*) and promoted the idea that Ottomans should share devotion to their own *patrie*. In Ottoman parlance *vatan* meant merely birthplace, and the idea that it might be populated by a specific nation (*millet*) was alien to the Ottomans until the mid-eighteenth century. Of course there was nothing exceptional in this, as the language of nationalism was still emerging during this period across the world.

Ebubekir Ratıb Efendi, the Ottoman ambassador to Vienna during 1791 and 1792, was one of the first Ottomans who recognized the emergence of a new type of state in Europe and connected the concept of nation with that of fatherland.[47]

What about the spatial boundaries of the *vatan* to which the Greek rebels laid claim? The translation of the text of the Declaration was illuminating in this aspect, since the 'Greek lands' (Memalik-i Yunaniyye) would be composed of eastern and western Central Greece, the Morea, and the other Aegean islands ('ibdida canib-i şarkta olan ve saniyen canib-i garbta olan Memalik-i Yunaniyye ve cezire-I Mora ve cezayir-i sairenin'). The spatial boundaries of the Greek fatherland were confined to those areas, and the Ottomans had to intensify their efforts to quell the rebellion in that region.

Natural rights (*hukuk*), laws (*kavaid ve kavanın*), and the 'Turkish Yoke' (*hükümet- i cebbârâne ve kahhârâne -i Osmaniyyeyi*)

The Greek rebels declared in Epidaurus that they 'had been motivated by the principles of natural rights and their desire to be governed by wise laws when they embarked upon their war against the Turks"'(από τοιαύτας αρχάς των φυσικών δικαίων ορμώμενοι, εκινήσαμεν τον πόλεμον κατά των Τούρκων). They also stated that the object of their struggle was to 'reconquer their rights to individual liberty, property and honour, rights enjoyed by all the well governed neighbouring peoples of Europe' (Ο κατά των Τούρκων πόλεμος ημών είναι πόλεμος εθνικός, πόλεμος ιερός, του οποίου η μόνη αιτία είναι η ανάκτησις των δικαίων της προσωρινής ημών ελευθερίας, της ιδιοκτησίας και της τιμής, τα οποία εν ω την σήμερον όλοι οι ευνομούμενοι και γειτωνικοί λαοί της Ευρώπης τα χαίρουσιν).

The translator of the Declaration rendered the 'national and holy war of the nation' (πόλεμος εθνικός, πόλεμος ιερός) as a *milletçe muharebe*, a millet-wide struggle, without

46   Yılmazer, *Vakanüvis Es'ad Efendi tarihi I* 208.
47   Fatih Yeşil, 'Looking at the French Revolution through Ottoman eyes: Ebubekir Ratib Efendi's Observations', *Bulletin of SOAS* 70/2 (2007) 301–2.

reference to its sacredness. When referring to natural rights the translator applied the terms *hukuk* and *imtiyazat* (Bu misillü hukuk ve imtiyazat). The term *hukuk* in Ottoman parlance originated from the Islamic tradition and signified legal rights or claims and corresponding obligations according to *sharia*.[48] Islamic law differs in various aspects from the modern concepts of human rights and natural laws, which emerged in eighteenth century western Europe and which rely on a secular system of thought that values human want, needs, and experiences over supernatural concerns. On this way of thinking, individual rights of liberty, honour, property, and self-determination were gained through a struggle against an authoritarian state and delegitimized regimes. Islamic law, by contrast, is based on revelation and its raison d'être is the establishment of divine order on earth.[49]

One of the first modern uses of *hukuk* as being equal to rights has been identified as being influenced by the French Revolution. In 1798, Atıf Efendi, the Ottoman chief officer of foreign affairs, in his memorandum to the Porte commenting on the post-revolutionary situation in France, translated the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen as *hukuk-u beşer beyannamesi*.[50] Likewise, *imtiyazat* were the commercial privileges and capitulations granted by the Ottoman rulers to foreign merchants residing in the imperial domains or the *zimmi* subjects of the Sultan.[51] In the Ottoman translation of the Greek Declaration of Independence, the term *imtiyazat* embraced for a first time a political context tantamount to human rights.

The concept of laws was expressed by the phrase *kavaid ve kavanin-i müstahkemeye'* (reliable rules and regulations). The terms *kavaid* and *kavanin* are the plural forms of kaide (ordinance) and kanun respectively. Ottoman *kanun* played a crucial role in forging perceptions of imperial authority, combining Islamic principles and secularity. *Kanun* originated as *fermans* and embodied the doctrines of Islamic law, customs and laws derived from Central Asia's Mongol and Turkish tribal traditions, and local customs adopted by the multiethnic milieu of the former Eastern Roman Empire. Thus, *kanun* was sets of regulations issued by individual Sultans on different occasions, in order to establish the authority of the ruler and reinforce the sustainability of the imperial order.[52] The desire of the Greek rebels to govern themselves by 'just laws' ('να διοικηθώμεν με νόμους δικαίους') was translated as

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48 'Hukuk', in B. Lewis et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd edn. III (Leiden 1986) 551.

49 B. Aral, 'The idea of human rights as perceived in the Ottoman Empire', *Human Rights Quarterly* 26/2 (May 2004) 454–82 (461).

50 A. Arıvan, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim*, (Istanbul 1982) 214.

51 H. İnalcık, "İmtiyazat. The Ottoman Empire", in B. Lewis et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn. III (Leiden 1986) 1178–89.

52 L. T. Darling, 'Kanun and kanunname in Ottoman historiography', *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 9/1 (2022) 151–77; H. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: the classical age 1300–1600* (London 1973) 135–45. At this point, it is important to note that the term k*avanın* emerges in the text of Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhâne (1839), where it is demonstrated that 'reforms necessitate the introduction of new laws to achieve well-functioning administration ((*hüsn-i idare zımnında bazı kavanin-i cedide vaz ve tesisi*).

rightful rules (*bundan sonra kavaid-i adile ile mahkum olmak*). The connection of the notions of *kanun* and the traditional concept of *adalet* (justice), which in the 'pre-modern' Ottoman Empire meant a personal quality of an ideal ruler rather than a characteristic of a legitimate social order,[53] indicates that the Ottomans used a kind of 'secularized' Islamic vocabulary to understand the attempt of their subjects to create a new order.

The right to honour was translated as '*ırz and şöhret*'. The Sultan's claim to protect the honour of his subjects was one of the legitimizing strategies of the early-modern Ottoman state: the protection of honour was interwoven with the protection of sexual honour and the maintenance of order in society, especially in the provinces where local power brokers and their centrifugal activities were threatening the 'honour' of the state.[54] By contrast, the translator omitted to render 'right to property'.

The 'harsh scourge of Ottoman rule' ('η σκληρή του οθωμανικού κράτους μάστιγα') was translated '*hükümet-i cebbârâne ve kahhârâne-i Osmaniyyeyi*'.[55] The adjectives *cebbâr* and *kahhâr* had been bequeathed to the Ottoman intellectual terminology from the Quran, where they can be traced in various verses. When these words are attributed to God, they bear positive connotations: they indicate the 'reformer, the invincible, and the absolute source of power'. However, when referring to a person, station, or institution they acquire a negative meaning, that of 'tyrannical' and 'despotic'.[56] A state of this nature produces *zulm*, oppressive acts of illegal taxation, unruly violence, bribery, corrupt governance, and oppression of *reayas* by the servants of the sultan.[57]

Such a portrayal of the Ottoman state legitimized the Greeks in rising against their imperial government. In the text of the Declaration, the rebels were seeking to link themselves with the 'civilized nations' of Europe: countries and peoples were distinguished as either 'civilized' or 'uncivilized' ('barbarians'), with Europe the basis of comparison.[58] Against this background, the revolutionaries were justifying their

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'Tanzimat Fermani', in M. Ö. Alkan (ed.) *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce 1. Cumhuriyet'e Devreden Düşünce Mirası, Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi* (Istanbul 2001) 449–51 (449).

53   B. Ergene, 'On Ottoman justice: interpretations in conflict (1600–1800)', *Islamic Law and Society* 8/1 (2001) 52–87 (58).

54   B. Tuğ, 'Gendered subjects in Ottoman constitutional agreements, ca. 1740–1860', *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 18 (2014) 22–43 (27–8).

55   The translator took care to eliminate the word 'Türk' from the original text (ο κατά των Τούρκων πόλεμος ημών), a term referred to Anatolian peasants and nomads and not to the ruling dynasty, and to replace it with the adjective 'Ottoman' (Osmanlı). The Ottomans were aware that 'Turk' was equivalent to Ottoman in any European source, diplomatic or otherwise: C. Keyder, 'A history and geography of Turkish nationalism', in F. Birtek and Th. Dragonas (eds.), *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey* (London 2009) 1–17 (9).

56   B. Topaloğlu, 'Cebbâr', *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 7 (1993) 181–2; B. Topaloğlu, 'Kahhâr', *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 24 (2001) 169–70.

57   Ergene, 'On Ottoman justice', 74.

58   A. Heraclides and A. Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: setting the precedent* (Manchester 2015) 31.

cause, excluding the Ottomans from the 'civilized' world. The Ottomans were to realize the repercussions of their depiction as 'barbarians' when they had to cope with the tremendous impact of the Chios massacre on European public opinion.

The state-building process through the translation of the Declaration

The Provisional Administration (*Προσωρινή Διοίκησις*) was translated *hükümet* (government). Additionally, the translator used the word *komiti* to designate the phrase 'the only lawful and national Administration' (*η μόνη έννομος και εθνική Διοίκησις*) of the original text. Komiti is a loanword from French *comité*. From the 1840s Ottoman statesmen used the term to refer to 'seditious organizations' that undermined the integrity of the imperial territories. For example, Kostakis Musuros, the first Ottoman ambassador to Athens, sent a dispatch to the Porte in which he explained that the Christian subjects of the Sultan who sought asylum in the Greek Kingdom 'were occupied with the formation of committees for the purpose of inciting the *reayas* of the Exalted State and encouraging their exodus to Greece ('cemaat terkibine meşgul olacak komiteler tertib reaya-ı Devlet-i Aliyye'yi taglit ve ihlal ve Yunanistan'a firara teşvik')'.[59] From middle of the century *komiti* was used to designate an assembly (*meclis*), such as a branch of a larger organization, that meets to investigate and discuss an issue of special importance.[60]

The phrase 'to organize a political dispensation our fatherland' (ανελάβομεν την πολιτικήν της πατρίδος μας διάταξιν) of the original text was designated as '*vatanımızın hükümet-i mülkiyyesi*'. '*Mülkiyye*' is a derived word from the Arabic *mulk* (royal power, possession, and therefore governance). Roughly by the 1830s, in the Ottoman Turkish parlance the form *mülkiyye* became the customary Ottoman term for civil administration. Findley argues that it is not clear exactly when the term acquired this sense and suggests that Muhammad All's reforms in Egypt may have contributed to this development.[61] However, the term was already in use before the Greek Revolution,[62] and this explains its use in the text of the translation of the Greek Declaration.

The entirety of the Greeks (*Πανελλήνιον*) was given the rendering '*cem'-i Yunanlılar*' and the National Assembly (Εθνοσυνέλευση) rendered ~~as~~ *Millet Cemiyyeti*. In the last years of the eighteenth century, after diplomatic integration with Europe through the establishment of residential embassies in major European capitals (London, Vienna, Berlin, and Paris) during the reign of Selim III, Ottoman statesmen and the Sultan became familiar~~ized~~ with the economic, social, military, political, and administrative

59   *BOA, I.MTZ* 4/79-1, 18 Teşrin-i sani 1844 (30 November 1844).

60   Ş. Sami, *Kâmûs-i Türkî* (Istanbul 2001) 1115.

61   C. V. Findley, 'Mulkiyya', in C. E. Bosworth et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edn. VII (Leiden 1993) 547.

62   E. L. Menchinger, *The First of the Moderns:. the intellectual history of Ahmed Vasif* (Cambridge 2017) 167.

institutions of the European countries. They also became acquainted with the function of national assemblies and parliaments and with their crucial role in shaping state policies. For instance, the Ottomans were aware of the decision of the French National Assembly to declare the First French Constitution (September 1791) when King Louis XVI informed Selim III that 'the papers declaring the new order (*nizam-ı cedid*) that was approved and decided upon by the national assembly of France (*cemiyyet-i milliye-i Franca*) were submitted to our pure direction and its acceptance was decided by our side as it was the beneficent outcome of the desires of the majority of the nation (*millet*)'.[63]

A few years later, Mahmud Râif Efendi, the chief secretary of Yusuf Agâh Efendi, the first permanent Ottoman ambassador to Berlin (1793–1797), in his account in French (*Journal du voyage de Mahmoud Raif en Angleterre*) provided the Porte with useful information concerning British institutions including the constitution, parliament, armed forces, political parties, and trade companies. Commenting on the British constitution, Mahmud Râif Efendi asserted that:

> It differs from all others, being a mixture of monarchy and republic. Only Parliament, composed of two chambers, the Lords and Commons, has the right to create laws, while the king alone has the right to have them carried out. it is not to be concluded from this that the king has no power over Parliament. Firstly, the laws created by Parliament are in force only after the king has sanctioned them; moreover, the king convenes and adjourns Parliament when he pleases [...]The constitution of England is therefore one composed of three powers – that of the people, or the House of Commons; that of the Lords; and that of the king – and in all decisions these three powers should be in agreement.[64]

The British constitution recognized the King as a legitimate authority, since it granted him substantial, if limited, executive power and the right to intervene in Parliament's functioning. The situation was different in Greece: sovereignty resided with the people (*ahali*) and governmental authority emanated from them through their deputies (*vekiller*). The term *vekil* comes from the Arabic verbal noun *wakala*, and it referred to persons appointed to substitute for others, delegates, representatives, and proxies.[65] In the late Ottoman Empire this word was also used for the deputies of the Parliament, and in the text of the translation we can trace one of the earliest known uses with its modern connotations. The same applies to *nazır* (minister). Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the title was held by middle-rank Ottoman bureaucrats, but during the Tanzimat period was applied to ministers.[66]

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63   Karabıçak, 'Ottoman attempts to define the rebels', 78.
64   M. A. Yalçınkaya, 'Mahmud Râif Efendi, the chief secretary of Yusuf Agâh Efendi, the first permanent Ottoman-Turkish ambassador to Berlin (1793–1797), *OTAM* 5 (1994) 384–434 (425–6).
65   B. Aybakan, 'Vekalet', *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 43 (2013) 1–6.
66   M. Genç, 'Nazır', *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 32 (2006) 111–2.

The translator of the Declaration did not omit to mention the structure of the emerging Greek government. In particular, he wrote that the component bodies of this administration would be three: the executive, the legislatature, and the judiciary ('İş bu hükümet üç nevi cemiyete münkasım olup bir icra-yı umura memur ve biri umurun istişarine memur ve biri umur-i şer'iyyenin ruyet ve faslına (?) memurdur'). This kind of administration with three separate but equal branches of government, as codified in the United States constitution, was totally alien to the Ottomans, and from this point of view the text of the Declaration was an important contribution to the familiarizing of the Ottomans with modern political notions and systems.

The leaders of the Greeks

The Ottoman Empire, like the other contemporary empires, was an extended polity linked to a central power by indirect rule. The central government exercised military and fiscal control over each major part of its domains and, despite Mahmud II's centralization project on the eve of the Greek Revolution,[67] tolerated the exercise of power through intermediaries, in return for devotion to, as well as compliance and collaboration with, the centre.[68]

These intermediaries, the leaders, and especially the Phanariots and the high-ranking clergy were, according to the authorities, the real culprits of the Revolution: either because they 'seduced the innocent *reaya*', or because they failed to prevent the spread of the rebellious spirit. The method adopted by the state to suppress the rebellion was to destroy those who were conspirators but leave the others in peace.[69]

The Ottoman statesmen were collecting intelligence to built up a detailed picture about the 'instigators' of the rebellion. Thus, at the end of the translation, the translator recorded the names of the signatories and the ministerial appointments, as in the original text of the Declaration. He also added explanatory notes on some names. For example, he mentioned that Alexandros Mavrokordatos was the President of the National Assembly (*Aleksandro Mavrokordato reis-i cemiyyet-i millet*), and later, at the section of ministerial appointments, provided the additional information that Mavrokordatos was 'the chief boyars of the *firari* (fugitive) Karaca (Bu Karaca işaret kılındığı vechle firari Karaca'nın baş boyarıdır).[70] In the same vein, the translator wrote that Theodoros Negris was one of the boyars in the service of the Phanariot ruler of Moldavia, Scarlatos Kallimaki (*işaret olunan İskarlat'ın*

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67   For more details, see A. Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: crisis of the Ottoman order in the age of revolutions* (Palo Alto 2016).

68   C. Tilly, 'How empires end', in K. Barkey and M. von Hagen (eds.), *After Empire. Multiethnic Societies and Nation Building: the Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, Habsburg empires* (Boulder 1997) 1–11 (3).

69   Erdem, 'Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers', 71.

70   Yanko Karaca was the voyvoda of Wallachia since 1812. In 1818 he fled to Genoa after quarrelling with Sultan Mahmud II's powerful adviser, Halet Efendi. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 57.

boyarlarındandır).[71] The translator also attributed the draft of the Declaration to Anthimos Gazis and Gregorios Konstantas (_mersûm için müellif-i ketb olduğu mervidir)_.

Conclusion

The Greek War of Independence was a very important channel for modernist ideas in the Ottoman territories. The imperial authorities sought to identify the ideological background and the reasons that triggered the rebellion of their subjects. In this context, the confiscation of various documents compiled by the insurgents was of crucial importance for interpreting the political language of the Greeks. The Declaration of Independence did not accommodate the Ottomans to modern constitutional and liberal ideas.[72] However, it was one of the most significant documents of this kind: 'an ideological laboratory' of the Ottomans in their efforts to contextualize the background of their subject's insurgence.

The consequences of the Ottomans' engagement with these ideas and the establishment of the independent Greek Kingdom reshaped the Ottoman ideological sphere and the social and political foundations of the empire. The reforms launched to prevent the disintegration of the 'Well-Protected Domains' led to the proclamation of the Tanzimat Edict of 1839, which actually codified this new relationship between the government and the subjects on the basis of the protection of 'life, honour and property'.

Since the Ottomans had perceived the political goal and the national aspirations which fuelled the revolt among their Christian subjects, why then did the central state elite label the Greek rebels 'infidels (_Rum kâfirleri_') brigands and bandits' (_izbândit and eşkıyâ_) who threaten the 'Millet-i Islam' and undermine the integrity of the Exalted State? And why did the Ottomans characterize the Greek Revolution with terms such as 'conspiracy' (_fesâd_), 'provocation' (_fitne_), 'betrayal' (_ihânet_) and 'sedition' (_ısyân_) that was carried out by the 'ungrateful _reayas_'?[73]

First of all, the elaboration of these ideas in the Ottoman political mind was no easy task, not least since the bureaucracy was a composite body comprising persons with very different educational backgrounds. Thus, old terms from the Islamic tradition with different connotations in the imperial context may have led to the misinterpretation of the new ideas.

Yet a more fundamental explanation is that the Ottomans evaluated the revolt as an internal issue concerning the security of the empire. By declaring the Greek Orthodox

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71   For the political career of Scarlatos Kallimaki, see Philliou, _Biography of an Empire_, 55–64.

72   In an earlier Greek version of this article, Kolovos and Moiras argued that the political language of the imperial authorities was inadequate for interpreting the terms and the ideas of the text of the Declaration of Independence. Thus, the Ottomans resorted to traditional terms in order to contextualize the new political notions and ideas. From this point of view, the text of the Greek Declaration of Independence was the major factor that led to extensive changes in the indigenous vocabulary of state. Kolovos and Moiras, 'Παραδοσιακά λεξιλόγια' 115–16.

73   See the terminology in the documents published by Ilıcak, '_Those Infidel Greeks'_.

subjects brigands, they denied them the status of a belligerent nation. They deliberately undermined the 'Moreot affair' as a domestic issue, in order to prevent intervention on the part of the Great Powers. The recognition of their Greek Orthodox subjects as a distinct nation fighting for its independence would legitimize both the struggle of the Rum milleti and the involvement of European powers. However, the Ottomans were disinclined to 'inter-imperialize' the crisis and launched to re-establish the order with their own terms.

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