# Hellenic Culture and Greek Nationalism in Ionian Society, 1453—1821: An Overview

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There are many philosophical studies which concentrate on the cultural revival of Hellenic antiquity during the Modern era. Similarly, there are many historical studies which relate the violent events of the Greek Revolution of the 1820s. Oddly enough, few modern scholars have attempted to link together the separate historical paths of these two nationalistic movements. Until recently, it has only been through the biographical studies of selective Greek statesmen and soldiers in which the modern scholar could discern that a significant connexion might have existed between both cultural and political nationalism in modern Greece. In order to gain an historical perspective on this latter situation, a brief overview is presented which will trace the development of both cultural and political nationalism in one historical region of Greece, the Ionian Islands, from 1453 until 1821.

## 1. The Post-Byzantine Centuries, 1453—1774

During the era known as the 'Turcokratia', 1453—1821, when the Greek mainland served as one of the Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire, the Ionian Islands became an important maritime colony of Venice. Although it was often regarded as a microcosm of its Venetian counterpart, Ionian society was generally non-European in its outlook, and many native inhabitants of the Ionian Islands retained the cultural characteristics of their Hellenic origins despite several centuries of Venetian rule. While the native aristocracy, whose ancestors had colonized these islands during the Medieval era, spoke Italian and professed the Roman Catholic faith, the lower classes of Ionian society — who were descendants of the original settlers of these islands in pre-Venetian times—still spoke Greek and professed the Eastern Orthodox faith[1]). Like their Greek brethren on the mainland, the greater part of the

[1]) Cf. George Yannoulopoulos, State and Society in the Ionian Islands, 1800—1830, in: Balkan Society in the Age of the Greek Revolution. Ed. by Richard Clogg. London 1981, pp. 40—51.

Ionian populace retained the main cultural aspects of its Hellenic heritage, despite their political and socio-economic dominance upon a culturally-alien government located in Venice. Furthermore, the importance of these islands as an intermediate point between East and West strengthened the cultural connexions which existed between the Greek communities of both the Ionian Islands and Venice, especially as reflected in the availability of printed books for certain segments of the Ionian populace[2]).

From the standpoint of printed books, the Ionian populace was heavily dependent upon the Greek community of Venice. After the collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the fifteenth century, Italy became a haven for Greek scholars from the East, and their presence in Venice encouraged the revival of Hellenic studies in the West during the era most commonly-known as the 'Renaissance'. After its first publishing house was established in 1469, Venice led all the Italian cities in this cultural renascence and its Greek community acquired its own printing press in 1499, when *Zacharias Callierghis* published the "Commentaries on the Categories of Aristotle" by *Simplicius*[3]). Since a printing press was most likely not established in Corfu until 1800, nearly all the 1,000 titles made available to Ionian readers from 1494 until 1797 were printed by the Greek community of Venice, whose various publishers produced both liturgical texts of the Orthodox church in Modern Greek and translations of the ancient classics in Italian and Latin[4]). Unfortunately for Ionian scholars, the existence of these translated works indicated that the Hellenic classics were generally unavailable in their original ancient language, and this situation also included those edited versions of the original texts which started to appear during the early nineteenth century. Formal learning in the Ionian Islands was restricted to a few privileged individuals, and the absence of institutions of higher education at home obliged aspirant Ionian scholars to seek a proper education elsewhere in the West.

Until the establishment of the Ionian academy in 1816, nearly all Ionian scholars were educated on the Italian mainland in the university city of Padua. This city became the European centre for formal learning in both the sciences and the humanities after its annexation by the Venetian government in 1405, and many Greek citizens of the Venetian Empire sought a formal education at the University of Padua with the Western revival of Hellenic studies[5]). In 1463, *Demetrios Chalcocondylis* of Athens was appointed to the

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[2]) Cf. William H. McNeill, Venice: the Hinge of Europe, 1081–1797. Chicago 1974, p. 134.

[3]) Cf. Ibidem, p. 158; and Philip Sherrard, The Greek East and the Latin West. London 1959, pp. 173—175.

[4]) Cf. Emile Legrande, Bibliographie Ionienne. 2vols, Paris 1910, I, pp. 1—268.

[5]) Cf. Richard Clogg, Elite and Popular Culture in Greece under Turkish

first lectureship in Greek philosophy at this university, while his successor, *Nicolaos Leonicus Tomaseus* of Epirus, became in 1497 the first instructor to lecture on Aristotle from the original commentaries in ancient Greek, rather than relying on commentaries produced by Arab and Latin scholars in translation. By the first-half of the sixteenth century, the University of Padua had become the foremost centre of Neo-Aristotelian philosophy and it later served as the model for nearly all the Greek academies within the Ottoman Empire established from the seventeenth century onward[6]). Although many of its Greek graduates remained in Venice, at least seventy other Paduan alumni had returned to the Levant by 1570, establishing local schools in both Greece and the Slavonic countries. Though these returning scholars were mostly natives of Crete, which was another Venetian colony, a few originated from the Ionian Islands and their influence on the overall revival of Hellenic studies became rather significant during both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries[7]).

Among the most prominent of the many Ionian contributors to Neo-Aristotelian thought was *Theophilos Korydaleus* of Cephalonia. Born in 1570, he was educated in Italy, where he remained until 1619, when he returned home to teach both philosophy and medicine to Ionian students. In 1622, he was ordained by the Orthodox Church, and in 1625, he was appointed by Patriarch *Cyril Loukaris,* who was also a scholar of the Hellenic renascence, to reorganize the Patriarchal academy of Constantinople on the model established at Padua. Although he maintained his connexions with this important institution, *Korydaleus* also taught in Athens and was subsequently elevated as the Archbishop of Arta in 1640[8]). As an alumnus of Padua, he was a leading exponent of Western thought and he also produced several commentaries on Neo-Aristotelian philosophy. After his death in 1646, his academic works were frequently reprinted by the Greek publishers of Venice, and the philosophical principles of education which he had formulated in Italy were introduced to

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Rule, in: Hellenic Perspectives: Essays in the History of Modern Greece. Ed. by John T. A. Koumoulides. Lanham, Md. 1980, pp. 111—115; and Deno J. Geanakoplos, The Greeks: the Genesis of Modern Greek National Consciousness, in: Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation, 1821—1830. Ed. by Nikiforos P. Diamandouros et al. Salonica 1976, pp. 60—77.

[6]) Cf. Ph. Sherrard, The Greek East, pp. 173—175; and Ermanno Lunzi, Della Condizione Politica delle Isole Jonie sotto il Dominio Veneto. Venice 1858, p. 447.

[7]) Cf. W. McNeill, Venice, p. 179; and Τρύφωνος Ἐ. Εὐαγγελίδης, Ἡ παιδεία ἐπὶ τουρκοκρατίας. 2 vols; Athens 1936, I, pp. 12—15 & II, pp. 201—203. Cf. also Peter Mackridge, The Greek Intelligentsia, 1780—1830: a Balkan Perspective, in: Balkan Society ..., p. 64.

[8]) Cf. Cleobule Tsourkas, Les Débuts de l'enseignement philosophique et de la libre pensée dans les Balkans: La vie et l'œuvre de Théophile Corydalée, (1570—1646). Salonica 1967, pp. 20—181.

the Greek academies in both Bucharest and Jassy, as well as in the various academies of Greece which were sponsored by the Hellenic communities of the *diaspora*[9]). The earliest generations of Hellenic nationalists were inspired by his teaching methods, which also encouraged succeeding generations of Ionian scholars[10]).

Most prominent of all Ionian-born scholars was *Eugenios Voulgaris* of Corfu. Born in 1716, he studied briefly in Italy and was ordained as a deacon of the Orthodox church in 1737. After he finished teaching in the Greek academy of Jannina, *Voulgaris* served during the 1750s as the headmaster of the monastic school attached to the monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos, and it was during this decade that he wrote several treatises on logic and mathematics, as well as translating several philosophical works by Locke and Voltaire. After the monastic school was closed down, he taught during the 1760s in such cities of the Greek *diaspora* as Venice and St. Petersburg, and he was subsequently elevated as the Archbishop of Cherson in 1770[11]). Unlike such predecessors as *Korydaleus, Voulgaris* was not a true Neo-Aristotelian scholar, since he did not so much discuss philosophy in depth as he presented its basic precepts, and he differed radically from those contemporaries who recognized the importance of logic in the philosophy of knowledge. Nevertheless, his scholarly works were reprinted frequently, and he had a decided influence upon several of his students, including *Joseph Moisiodakis*, who later taught in the Greek academies of both Bucharest and Jassy, where a number of Greek scholars would teach several generations of students from both the mercantile and political classes of the Greek *diaspora*. Even more important, *Voulgaris* and his contemporaries partly influenced those scholars and others among these students, who would later plant the nationalist seeds of Hellenic consciousness in succeeding generations of Greek-speaking scholars[12]).

During the latter-half of the eighteenth century, the cultural renascence of Hellenic antiquity had encouraged the growth of a national consciousness. Through their treatment of classical studies, many Greek scholars of the *diaspora* had sought to regenerate the Hellenic race both spiritually and intellectually. Furthermore, they stressed that this regeneration would eventually

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[9]) Cf. G. P. Henderson, The Revival of Greek Thought, 1620—1830. Edinburgh 1971, pp. 13—17; C. Tsourkas, Les Débuts, p. 23; and Ph. Sherrard, The Greek East, pp. 176f.

[10]) Cf. Ariadna Camariano-Cioran, Les Academies Princieres de Bucarest et de Jassy et leurs Professeurs. Salonica 1974, pp. 6—39, 180—205, p. 393.

[11]) Cf. G. P. Henderson, The Revival, pp. 42—46; and A. Camariano-Cioran, Les Academies, p. 190.

[12]) Cf. G. P. Henderson, The Revival, pp. 50—62; and C. Th. Dimaras, A History of Modern Greek Literature. Transl. by Mary P. Gianos. London 1974, pp. 145—148. Cf. also P. Mackridge, The Greek Intelligentsia, pp. 69ff.

lead to political freedom from the Ottoman government[13]). In addition, the basic work of such Greek scholars as *St. Eugenios Giannoulis,* who founded the Greek school of Vrangiana in Thessaly during 1681, provided locations for those scholars to teach this doctrine, and they encouraged such adherents as *St. Kosmas Aitolos* to both promote and spread the cultural awareness of the Hellenic race. After he studied with *Voulgaris* on Mt. Athos, *St. Kosmas* personally established over one hundred primary schools in Greece, while he also preached an Hellenic crusade for freedom until his execution by the Ottoman authorities in 1779[14]). In spite of such political repression, this cultural awareness was encouraged by other scholars, who often fled to such cities as Venice, where the local Greek communities frequently published books and newspapers in their native language[15]). After they obtained a political sanctuary, these individuals could introduce nationalistic messages into their scholarly works, and one such scholar, *Adamantios Korais,* emigrated from Smyrna to Europe during 1772 in order to accomplish this task, as well as to obtain a Western education. Although he was not a true refugee seeking asylum from Ottoman repression, *Korais* spent a number of years in such European cities as Montpellier, where he devoted his life to classical studies. *Korais* stated that the Greek language was the direct link between the Greeks of the nineteenth century and those of ancient times, and he published the classical literature of Antiquity in the ancient dialect, prefacing each new edition with a nationalistic message in the modern idiom, urging the Hellenic race to overthrow its Ottoman oppressors through the study of its own cultural heritage. Although these editions would not appear in print until 1800, they would have a wide circulation in the Levant, where readers of the various Greek communities had developed a strong interest in both Modern and Ancient literature, and the publication of these editions was often subsidized by Greek merchants based in the Levant[16]). Accentuated by the events of the French Revolution, the Greek demand for the literary works of its ancestors encouraged the growth of Hellenic nationalism throughout the Levant; however, the native inhabitants of the Ionian Islands were rather slow to acquire this cultural awareness.

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[13]) Cf. Richard Clogg, Aspects of the Movement for Greek Independence, in: The Struggle for Greek Independence. Ed. by Richard Clogg. London 1973, pp. 19, 31; and R. Clogg, Elite and Popular Culture, pp. 113—115.

[14]) Cf. C. Th. Dimaras. A History, pp. 133f.; and Constantine Cavarnos, St. Cosmas. Aitolos. Belmont, Mass. 1971, pp. 28f.

[15] Cf. R. Clogg, Elite and Popular Culture, p. 119; and J. Geanakoplos, The Greeks, pp. 76f. Cf. also P. Mackridge, The Greek Intelligentsia, pp. 67f.

[16]) Cf. Ph. Sherrard, The Greek East, p. 181; R. Clogg, Elite and Popular Culture, p. 119; and The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770—1821. Ed. by Richard Clogg. London 1976, pp. 81—86.

Not surprisingly, the Ionian aristocracy was not readily attracted to the formal study of Hellenic culture, especially after centuries of Venetian domination. Because they received an education in the universities of Venice and Padua, most native aristocrats spoke Italian and, as previously stated, their private libraries usually contained Western translations of classical epics from Hellenic antiquity, since the Greek editions later produced by *Korais* were unknown in the Ionian Islands at that time; in fact, no printing press was established in Corfu until 1800[17]). Even then, nearly all publications originating from this island were official proclamations appearing in languages other than Greek, while the working language of the Ionian government was Italian — even during the subsequent occupation by Great Britain. Although they were exposed to the Greek language in the liturgies of the Orthodox Church, most Ionian aristocrats expressed themselves verbally in Italian, and even *Demetrios Solomos,* the Zantiote lyricist of the Greek national anthem, composed all his poetry in Italian until the advent of the Greek Revolution in 1821; still other Ionian aristocrats professed Catholicism and had no real use for the Greek language in their daily lives[18]). Few individuals from the Ionian Islands may have ever heard the nationalistic sermons of *St. Kosmas Aitolos,* unless they attended the Greek school at Vrangiana in Thessaly; even though it is quite possible that many Ionian inhabitants, especially among the mercantile classes, often found themselves on the Greek mainland. Indeed, it could be correctly said that Ionian Greeks were to be found throughout both the Levant and western Europe. Still, there were few Ionian scholars who intentionally reviewed the knowledge of Antiquity with a purpose towards liberating the Hellenic race from Ottoman rule. Along this same line, it was no wonder that the Ionian populace ignored an appeal made in 1799 by *Konstantine Stamatis,* a Zantiote expatriate working in Ancona for the French government, to assist their Greek brethren in a general revolt against Ottoman authority while the French forces were present in the Levant[19]). Since they were secure from Ottoman repression, the Ionian inhabitants lacked the political and socio-economic factors which would encourage such a rebellion, and

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[17]) Cf. Β. Π. Παναγιωτόπουλος, Προτάσεις του Π. Μαρκίδη-Πουλίου γία 'εγκατάσταση 'ελληνικές τυπογραφίας στήν 'Ιόνιων πολιτεία (1800), ιν: Πρακτικὰ Τρίτου Πανιονίου Συνεδρίου. 2 vols. Athens 1967, I, pp. 292—297. Cf. Colonial Office 136/380 (hereinafter C. O. 136): *Simpson* to *Campbell,* 27 Dec. 1815.

[18]) Cf. C. Th. Dimaras, A History, pp. 224—245. The nationalist influence of *St. Kosmas Aitolos* cannot be totally discounted, since he did visit both Corfu and the lesser islands — as well as nearby Prevesa — during 1775—1776.

[19]) Cf. Movement for Greek Independence, pp. 163—166; Β. Π. Παναγιωτόπουλος, Προτάσεις, pp. 292—297; and 'Αικατερίνη Κουμαριάνου, 'Ενεργείες του Κωνσταντίνου Σταμάτη γιά τήν 'απελευθέρωση τῆς 'Ελλάδος, 1798—1799, in: Πρακτικά Τρίτου Συνεδρίου, I, pp. 154—157.

the long era of Venetian rule had also prevented the growth of the *klephtic* tradition in Ionian society. On the mainland, Greek outlaws known as *klephtes* had fled from the villages to wage a tradition struggle against the Ottoman authorities, and these same outlaws were often hired in an alternative role, known as *armatoles,* by these same authorities to maintain security in the Greek and Albanian mountains. After the French forces had successfully been expelled from the Ionian Islands in 1798—1799, these individuals offered their services to the Russian authorities in Corfu, while such noted outlaws as *Theodoros Kolokotronis* were recruited for the Greek Light Infantry, which assisted the British forces in the various military campaigns in the Mediterranean world during the Napoleonic wars[20]). Indeed, it was this dual role as both bandits and guards that substantiated the Western stereotype of the Greeks as mercenaries without any true patriotic sentiments. Though the Ionian Islands served as a sanctuary for such outlaws in past decades, their cultural traditions did not greatly increase the Hellenic awareness of the Ionian aristocracy, whose nationalist sentiments were not developed until much later.

## 2. The Napoleonic Era, 1789–1815

During the Napoleonic era, the Ionian populace slowly increased its general awareness of its Hellenic heritage. Although they were not really affected by Ottoman political repression, the native inhabitants of the Ionian Islands were continuously subjected to the maladministration of the Venetian government, and the inequalities of Ionian society caused many local residents to welcome the occupation of their homeland by other foreign states during the Napoleonic era[21]). They were indeed elated by these various occupations because each military campaign in the Levant would leave them with additional experience of self-government, and the native poets of Zante commemorated each successive occupation in verse, while the subsequent formalization of an Ionian republic under British protection proved to Greek-speaking communi-

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[20]) Foreign Office 348/6 (herinafter F. O. 348): *Foresti* to *Morier,* 22 May 1806. Cf. Movement for Greek Independence, pp. 167—174; Dennis N. Skiotis, Mountain Warriors and the Greek Revolution, in: War, Technology and Society in the Middle East. Ed. by V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp. Oxford 1975, pp. 308—319; A. E. Vacalopoulos, History of Macedonia, 1354—1833. Transl. by Peter Megann. Salonica 1973, pp. 563—577; and Theodoros Kolokotrones, The Klepht and the Warrior. Transl. by Mrs. Edmonds. London 1892, pp. 109—126.

[21]) Cf. James Lawrence McKnight, Admiral Ushakov and the Ionian Republic. Unpubl. Ph.D. Thesis, Madison Univ. of Wisconsin 1965, pp. 4f. and 100ff.; and Arthur Foss, The Ionian Islands. London 1969, pp. 30—38 and 185—192.

ties everywhere that an Hellenic nation could be established, even if it possessed only nominal independence[22]). With this model, nationalist appeals calling for the creation of an Hellenic state on the Balkan mainland finally attracted Ionian attention, and the Ionian populace was particularly drawn by the nationalism of *Righas Velestinlis*. After he served as an instructor in the Greek academies of both Constantinople and the Danubian Principalities, *Velestinlis* resettled in Vienna, where he called upon the various ethnic groups of the Balkan peninsula to form a political commonwealth under Greek leadership by overthrowing their Ottoman oppressors, and he even formulated several constitutions which would govern this Balkan commonwealth, as well as composing both an Hellenic "Rights of Man" and a "Song of War" anthem[23]). Although *Velestinlis* was deported from Austria and subsequently executed by the Turkish authorities in June 1798, his revolutionary ideas appealed to Greek-speaking individuals everywhere during the Napoleonic era and his works, including translations of French writings on Democracy, were republished in 1800 by *Petros Markidis-Poulios*, a Greek publisher from Venice who was also a personal friend of *Velestinlis*, and it was this individual who established the first independent press in Corfu[24]). Since many Ionian inhabitants were illiterate, especially among the agrarian and working classes, the same traditions of Hellenic antiquity which *Velestinlis* used in his revolutionary tracts were disseminated by the Orthodox clergy to their parishioners throughout the Levant, including the Ionian Islands. Even though the Ecumenical Patriarchate ignored the revival of classical studies, Archbishop *Typaldos of Cephalonia* persistently called upon all Greeks — includ-

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[22]) Cf. Catherine Koumarianou, The Contribution of the Intelligentsia towards the Greek Independence Movement, 1798—1821, in: Struggle for Greek Independence, pp. 73—80; and Γεώργιος Θ. Ζώρας, 'Ο Ναπόλεων Βοναπάρτης εἰς τὴν ἑπτανησιακὴν και τὴν λοιπὴν ἑλληνικὴν ποίησιν τῆς ἐποχῆς του, in: 'Επτανησιακὰ Μελετήματα. Ed. by G. Th. Zoras. 5 vols. Athens 1960—1970, V, pp. 131—162.

[23]) Cf. Movement for Greek Independence, pp. 149—162; Douglas Dakin, The Formation of the Greek State: Political Developments until 1823, in: Greece in Transition. Ed. by John T. A. Koumoulides. London 1977, p. 25; and Linos Politis, A History of Modern Greek Literature. Oxford 1973, pp. 102ff.

[24]) Β. Π. Παναγιωτόπουλος, Προτάσεις, pp. 292—297; 'Ο τύπος στὸν ἀγώνα, 1821—1827. Ed. by Αἰκατερίνη Κουμαριάνου. 3 vols, Athens 1971, I, p. 43; and Παναγιώτης Χιώτης, 'Ιστορία του 'Ιονίου κράτους ἀπὸ συστάσεως αὐτοὺ μέχρις ἐνώσεως (ἐτή 1815—1864). 2 vols, Zante 1874—1877, I, pp. 356—367. Cf. also R. Clogg, Elite and Popular Culture, in: Hellenic Perspectives, p. 123; Movement for Greek Independence, pp. 86—88; L. Politis, A History, pp. 124—136; and F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, Travels trough the Morea, Albania and Several other Parts of the Ottoman Empire to Constantinople. London 1806, pp. 57f.

ing the Ionian populace — to rebel against Ottoman rule, despite the warnings of Patriarch *Gregory V* that all such revolutionaries would be excommunicated from the Orthodox Church. Infused with revolutionary ideologies during an era of European political change, the Hellenic nationalists ignored this warning, especially those few Ionian intellectuals and other inhabitants who would later participate in the Greek Revolution of 1821—1831.

One such revolutionary intellectual was *John Capodistria*. Born in Corfu during 1776, Capodistria epitomized the life of an Ionian aristocrat. Registered in the *Libro d'Oro,* the official book of all Ionian royalty, his family consisted of landed aristocrats whose descendants had emigrated during the fourteenth century from Trieste to Corfu, where his father — *Antonios Capodistria* — became a leading figure in local politics. Although baptized in the Orthodox faith, he spent his adolescence in local schools provided by the Roman Catholic church, and since his native tongue was Italian, his knowledge of the Greek language was acquired later from private tutors. At the age of eighteen, *Capodistria* began his medical studies at the University of Padua, where previous generations of Ionian aristocrats had studied various subjects in the Neo-Aristotelian manner. During periods of vacation, he resided in Venice where his knowledge of Antiquity was increased by the classical studies encouraged by the Hellenic community of this maritime city. *Capodistria* had finished his studies by the time that the Venetian republic had formally been annexed by Austria, so that he began his public career soon after his Ionian homeland was liberated from the French forces by the Russian navy in 1798—1799. As a physician, he directed the health department of the Ionian government and he subsequently became the Foreign Minister of the Septinsular Republic in 1806, when the Ionian Islands experienced a period of home-rule under Russian supervision. During his prestigious career, *Capodistria* worked closely with Count *Mocenigo,* the Russian viceroy, in formulating the Ionian constitution of 1803, and he directed the defence of the island of Santa Maura against a threatened attack by *Ali Pasha,* the Albanian despot of Jannina, during 1806. With the reoccupation of the Ionian Islands by the French government in 1807, *Capodistria* followed the precedent of his fellow-countrymen by emigrating to the Continent, where his diplomatic responsibilities in the service of the Russian government during the later years of the Napoleonic era eventually resulted in his promotion as the junior Foreign Minister for Tsar *Alexander I.* It was during this portion of his long diplomatic career that *Capodistria* would come into very close contact with the British government, because it had already gained political control of his Ionian homeland at a time when the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the Balkan mainland attempted to overthrow their Ottoman oppressors with, oddly enough, the assistance of the Ionian populace[25]).

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[25]) Cf. C. M. Woodhouse, Capodistria. London 1973, pp. 3—108.

Indeed, along with their brethren of the Hellenic *diaspora,* many inhabitants of the Ionian Islands joined the *Philiki Etairia*[26]). Dedicated to the political liberation of the Hellenic race, this secret society was founded in 1814 by several Greek merchants of Odessa, a Russian port on the Black Sea, and its overall organization was divided into several ranks as its membership was enlarged gradually to include representatives of nearly all the skilled trades and professions of the Greek *diaspora*[27]). Since many former inhabitants of the Ionian Islands resided in these Hellenic communities, those expatriates serving as Russian consuls were able to recruit new members throughout the Levant, and they even enrolled *Ali Pasha* of Jannina, along with many Greek chieftains who alternately fought and served the Ottoman authorities in Greece. Strangely enough, many of these latter individuals had become members in the mistaken belief that *John Capodistria* headed the *Philiki Etairia* with the royal sanction of Tsar *Alexander I.* This delusion was accidently perpetuated by the visit of *Capodistria* to Corfu in 1819, when he met with many Hellenic nationalists who expected him to lead a Greek uprising against Ottoman rule[28]). Although he adamantly denied all formal connexions with this secret society, *Capodistria* inadvertently facilitated its growth in the Ionian Islands, since local membership increased greatly after his visit to Corfu. In addition, his detailed memorandum on the political amelioration of the Hellenic race was circulated widely throughout the Balkan penisula by this secret society on the eve of the Greek Revolution[29]). As many Ionian inhabitants were adherents of Freemasonry, they were eager to join also such other secret organizations as the *Philiki Etairia,* even though its alleged leader was not at all a member[30]).

As stated above, *Capodistria* refused to either join, or assist, the *Philiki Etairia* because he did not agree with its expressed principles of revolution as a means to liberate the Hellenic race from Ottoman oppression. During the

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[26]) Κώστας Καιρόφυλας, Ἡ Ζάκυνθος καὶ ἡ ἑλληνικὴ ἐπανάστασις. Corfu 1938, p. 22.

[27]) Cf. George D. Frangos, The Philiki Etairia: a Premature National Coalition, in: Struggle for Greek Independence, pp. 87—94; Douglas Dakin, The Greek Struggle for Independence. Los Angeles 1973, pp. 41—49; and Movement for Greek Independence, pp. 175—200.

[28]) Π. Χιώτης, Ἱστορία, I, pp. 310ff.; D. Dakin, Greek Struggle, p. 47; Frangos, The Philiki Etairia, p. 96; and Δίνος Κονομός, Ἰωάννης Παπαδιαμαντόπουλος, Ὁ διοικητὴς τῶν ἐλευθέρων πολιορκημένων. Athens 1967, p. 11.

[29]) Cf. Ἐ. Πρεβελάκης, in: Πρακτικὰ Τρίτου Συνεδρίου, I, pp. 289—328: Π. Χιώτης, Ἱστορία, pp. 310—330; and C. M. Woodhouse, Capodistria, pp. 199—205.

[30]) Cf. D. Dakin, Greek Struggle, pp. 41ff.; and Ἰωάννης Κ. Βασδραβέλλης, Ἡ Φιλικὴ Ἑταιρεία, ὁ Καποδίστριας καὶ ἡ ρωσικὴ πολιτική. Salonica 1968, p. 12.

years from 1816 until 1820, he was offered the leadership of this secret organization on several occasions by its Ionian agents, but he had refused it each time. Although anxious to witness the political liberation of the Hellenic race, *Capodistria* advised patience since he felt that a political solution to this matter could be achieved by diplomatic means, whereas an armed urprising against Ottoman rule would only create a Levantine crisis which might result in another Russo-Ottoman war[31]). The Tsar concurred with this reasoning because he viewed Hellenic nationalism as a revolutionary threat which would disturb the European *status quo,* as well as violate the political principles that he had formulated during the founding of the Holy Alliance at the Congress of Vienna during 1814—1815. To avert a Levantine crisis, both statesmen decided that the *Philiki Etairia* should be closely watched by the Russian government, and this decision wrongly gave the Greeks of the *diaspora* to understand that the Hellenic struggle for political independence would be directed from St. Petersburg, especially as the leadership of this secret society was assumed in 1819 by General *Alexander Ypsilantis,* an aide-de-camp of the Tsar who was also an ardent nationalist of Hellenic descent. While his father had previously been the *Hospodar* (governor) of Wallachia in the Danubian Principalities, *Ypsilantis* and his family had resided in Constantinople, where they had employed *Righas Velestinlis,* the Hellenic nationalist, as a private secretary and tutor before his execution in 1798, and it was their expulsion from the Ottoman capital in 1806, when war was declared between the Russian and Ottoman governments, which encouraged the future Russian general officer to become a leading figure in the struggle for Hellenic independence[32]). Oddly enough, the Greek aristocrats of Constantinople, known collectively as *Phanariotes,* would not willingly participate in this nationalist struggle, since such revolutionary activities would destroy their functionary roles in the Ottoman government as civil servants, diplomats, translators, and so forth[33]). By contrast, since he had not been a member of this privileged society since 1806—1807, *Ypsilantis* could become a revolutionary, even though it was *Capodistria* whose name was still mistakenly connected with the *Philiki Etairia* by many Ionian inhabitants, and it was this situation which soon attracted the attention of the British authorities in Corfu, thus further increasing their basic mistrust of this Ionian Greek statesman.

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[31]) Cf. D. Dakin, Greek Struggle, pp. 46—48; and C. M. Woodhouse, Capodistria. pp. 162—166.

[32]) Cf. D. Dakin, Greek Struggle, pp. 47—49.

[33]) Cf. Cyril Mango, The Phanariots and the Byzantine Tradition, in: Struggle for Greek Independence, pp. 54—59.

## 3. The Greek Revolution, 1821

At the head of an armed force of Hellenic nationalists, General *Alexander Ypsilantis* initiated the earliest action of the Greek Revolution on 5 March 1821. As the leader of the *Philiki Etairia,* he had notified his agents in Albania and in the Peloponnese about his plans to initiate major rebellions in both Greece and the Danubian Principalities, and nearly all the Hellenic communities of the Peloponnese were prepared for a general uprising by January 1821. In addition, he had corresponded about his revolutionary plans with such Ionian members of the *Philiki Etairia* as *Viaros Capodistria,* the older brother of *John Capodistria,* and he had assigned to these Ionian members the responsibility for alerting their brethren throughout the Hellenic *diaspora* about these expected uprisings[34]). Although his activities were known to the Russian government, *Ypsilantis* had nevertheless been allowed to proceed unhindered with his plans for a Greek rebellion, since *John Capodistria* felt that his responsibility as an aide-de-camp to the Tsar would finally prevent him from leading an armed rebellion against the Ottoman government. Unfortunately for all concerned, this reasoning was incorrect and the recent initiation of native rebellions in both Albania and Wallachia convinced this Russian general that an opportune moment had arrived for an overall rebellion against Ottoman authority in the Balkans[35]). After his own Greek forces crossed into the Ottoman province of Moldavia from the Russian province of Bessarabia, a similar rebellion would be initiated in Greece by his younger brother, *Demetrios,* and much support in this particular rebellion was expected from Ionian volunteers, who subsequently crossed over from their own insular homeland to the Greek mainland with the assistance of such agents as *Ioannis Vlassopoulos,* an Ionian expatriate who worked as the Russian consul in Patras. With his assistance, hundreds of Ionian volunteers were present at Kalavrita on 6 April 1821, when Bishop *Germanos* of Patras proclaimed the official start of the Greek Revolution, and these volunteers were soon organized into their own regional units[36]). Unexpectedly, the Hellenic struggle for political independence was soon confined to Greece, because *Alexander Ypsilantis* possessed an armed corps of only 4,500 volunteers in the Danubian

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[34]) F. O. 78/103: *Meyer* to *Castlereagh,* 15 Mar. 1821. Cf. C. M. Woodhouse, Kapodistrias, in: Struggle for Greek Independence, p. 120; Π. Χιώτης, Ἱστορία, I, pp. 327—348; and D. Dakin, Greek Struggle, p. 48f.

[35]) Cf. E. D. Tappe, The 1821 Revolution in the Rumanian Principalities, in: The Struggle for Greek Independence, pp. 135—155: and Ἐλευθέριος Πρεβελάκης, Ἡ Φιλικὴ Ἑταιρεία, ὁ Ἀλὴ Πασάς καὶ οἱ Σουλίωτες, in: Μελετήματα στὴ μνήμη Βασιλείου Λαοῦρδα. Ed. by Louisa B. Laourdas. Salonica 1975, pp. 456—465.

[36]) F. O. 78/98: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh,* 25 May 1821. Cf. Π. Χιώτης, Ἱστορία I, pp. 354—363; and K. Καιρόφυλας, Ἡ Ζάκυνθος, pp. 74f., and p. 143.

Principalities, and this force was quickly defeated by the Ottoman army. Nevertheless, Ionian volunteers had participated even in this premature campaign, and thousands more such volunteers were ready to join the Greek forces in the Morea.

Although their own homeland was free of Ottoman repression, the native inhabitants of the Ionian Islands were among the earliest volunteers in the Greek Revolution. Inspired by the revolutionary ideologies of such traditional nationalists as *Righas Velestinlis,* these volunteers identified themselves with the principles of Hellenic nationalism, and their membership in the *Philiki Etairia,* which was open to all socio-economic classes in the Greek *diaspora,* facilitated their organization into an Ionian corps which was secretly transferred to the Greek mainland on the eve of the actual outbreak of hostilities[37]). In spite of ecclesiastical threats of eternal excommunication, as well as Ottoman imprisonment, the members of the Ionian corps participated in the major battles fought in the Peloponnese by the Greek forces during 1821, while Ionian seacaptains — illegally displaying the Ionian and British colours — formed their own naval squadrons within the Hellenic navy[38]). Furthermore, all these Ionian units were supported logistically by the civilian populace of the lesser Ionian islands, who supplied these organized units with both munitions and victuals under the direct supervision of the Ionian clergy. Indeed, the Ionian clergy even followed its armed parishioners and other Greek units throughout the Peloponnese during the initial year of this ethnic revolt, while Ionian citizens of every occupation and social class, which included those native aristocratic individuals who had taken a serious interest in their Hellenic origins, actively participated in the Greek Revolution [39]). Nevertheless, the Ionian corps of volunteers was nearly decimated during the initial months of the actual hostilities, when it fought a superior force of Ottoman troops in two battles near Lala in June 1821, and a subsequent defeat at Peta on 16 July 1822 resulted in its formal demobilization. Though these battles were later commemorated in both Greek poetry and song, they also discouraged potential volunteers from the Ionian Islands from further enlisting *en masse* with the Hellenic forces, and it was these same defeats which also attracted the attention of the British authorities in Corfu[40]).

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[37]) F. O. 78/103: *Meyer* to *Castlereagh,* 14 Apr. and 20 May 1821. Cf. Π. Χιώτης, Ἱστορία, I, p. 374ff.

[38]) C. O. 136/1148: *Hankey* to *Ross,* 21 May 1821; and F. O. 78/99: *Hankey* to *Strangford,* 10 July 1821. Cf. Π. Χιώτης, Ἱστορία, I, p. 378ff.

[39]) C. O. 136/1084: *Adam* to *Residents,* Private 27 May 1821; and C. O. 136/436: *Adam* to *Maitland,* 5 June 1821. Cf. Π. Χιώτης, Ἱστορία, I, p. 415.

[40]) C. O. 136/1085: Ionian Chiefs to the Beys of Lala, 1 June 1821; and F. O. 78/103: *Meyer* to *Castlereagh,* 15 July 1821. Cf. Φότιος Χρυσανθόπουλος, Ἀπομνημονεύματα περὶ τῆς ἑλληνικῆς ἐπαναστάσεως. 2 vols in 1 vol.; Athens 1960, I, p. 126f.; and Νικόλαος Δραγούμις, Ἱστορικαὶ ἀναμνήσεις. 2 vols in 1 vol; 3rd ed.; Athens 1925, I, p. 133f.; and Π. Χιώτης, Ἱστορία, I, pp. 40—45.

## Conclusion

After the political changes which occurred during the Napoleonic era, the native inhabitants of the Ionian Islands had finally acquired a semblance of their Hellenic identity. Although the homeland of these individuals was theoretically independent, as well as totally free from the political repression of the Ottoman government, their affinity with Hellenic nationalism had slowly been developed by the Western revival of Greek culture, and they became willing participants in the Greek Revolution when this cultural revival had assumed a violent manifestation. Worried about the possible consequences of this situation, the British authorities in Corfu would attempt to isolate the Ionian Islands from the actual hostilities of the Greek Revolution with a formal proclamation of neutrality. Unfortunately for these same authorities, such proclamations could not easily deter the nationalist sentiments of the Ionian inhabitants, and many such individuals were glad to leave their homeland, finding its political atmosphere both frustrating and oppressive under British rule. With the promulgation of the Constitutional Chart in 1817, the native aristocrats had lost all the feudal and political privileges which they had enjoyed during the Venetian era, and their attempts to restore such ancient privileges were quickly defeated by the British authorities in Corfu, who proceeded to transform the Ionian Islands into a model British colony. Anxious about the pro-Greek policy of the Russian government and its effect upon British interests in the Levant, these same British authorities attributed the revolutionary sentiments of the Ionian populace to *Capodistria,* who was wrongly viewed as the leader of the *Philiki Etairia,* and thus was subsequently held responsible for the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in 1821.