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Christian Elites of the Peloponnese and the Ottoman State, 1715–1821

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Abstract
This paper examines the political 'system', behaviour and attitudes of Christian landed elites in the Ottoman Peloponnese in the decades preceding the Greek Revolution of 1821. Particular attention is given to the relationship between these important local power-holders and the *Filiki Etairia* (Society of Friends), the secret organization that set the revolution in motion. Questions raised by earlier scholars concerning the motivations which led the notables to join this venture are reconsidered here in light of the aims disclosed in previous separatist plots and a closer reading of the interactions between the notables and the *Etairia* leadership. These help to indicate what the proposed revolution meant to those involved from a standpoint of opportunities and risks, as well as the assumptions contained in contemporary elite notions of sovereignty.

Keywords
Balkans, Greek War of Independence, nationalism, Ottoman Empire

Histories of the Greek Revolution of 1821 often begin with a review of the preceding century of intellectual revival known to scholars as the Greek Enlightenment or *Diafotismos*. This term refers to the diffusion within the Greek-speaking world of books and ideas as well as new forms of print culture, such as newspapers and philological journals, then popular in the West. The subject of diaspora looms particularly large in this story as the key centres for both the publication and consumption of Enlightenment-era Greek literature were the cities of Vienna, Venice, Paris, Smyrna, Bucharest, Constantinople and several others of larger and smaller size in between. Most of the translations of Western texts that

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circulated within this Greek-speaking 'public sphere' were similarly the work of intellectuals trained in the diaspora, very many of whom were Orthodox clerics.

The Greek Enlightenment was therefore an urban phenomenon, the advocates of which represented themselves as occupied in a project of material and cultural revival intended to engender a similar 'moral revolution' in the hearts and minds of their slumbering countrymen back in the patrie.[1] The capital necessary for sustaining this enterprise came meanwhile from a range of sources, including a small number of high-placed churchmen and the *Fanariot* elite of Constantinople. But perhaps the greatest financial contribution to contemporary Greek letters was made by diaspora merchants. As one historian has observed, 'the pathways of Greek commerce' were also 'the transportation routes of the Greek book'.[2] This pattern also appeared to hold true for the Greek national movement, as illustrated in one important instance by the fact that the *Filiki Etairia* (Society of Friends), a secret organization of patriots that set the revolution of 1821 in motion, had been established seven years earlier by three Greek diaspora merchants in the city of Odessa.

However, when the revolution broke out it was not waged by bands of diaspora merchants and intellectuals, but by a completely different group of people – one whose involvement in the Greek Enlightenment, based on the textual evidence, was minimal.[3] Attention abruptly shifts here to a body of Christian land-owning elites (Gr. *prouchontes, proestoi*; Tr. *kodjabashis*),[4] referred to collectively in English as 'primates', who played a major leadership and provisioning role in the later struggle. In the memoirs of such figures, which began to appear in the years following the revolution, readers suddenly hear from people who were largely invisible in pre-revolutionary intellectual and cultural affairs.[5] These same notables were nevertheless considered by Greek nationalists to be critical to the fortunes of their movement and were subject to a major recruitment effort.[6] This campaign ultimately enjoyed a considerable amount of success, a fact which raises important questions about the political attitudes and motivations of those involved and their previous engagement with the ideas embraced by the *Etairia* and its founders.

Questions of this kind were not completely absent from the minds of contemporary Greek reformers, as indicated by public expressions of interest in the state of educational affairs in the Peloponnese – a land which sometimes appears in this literature as a *terra incognita* – and the extent to which it too was experiencing the revival of arts and letters occurring elsewhere within 'the nation'. The editors of the Vienna-based *Hermis o Logios* (1811–21), the most influential Greek philological journal of the day, for example, published in 1819 a letter they had received from a student of Peloponnesian origin attending an academy in Italy. 'You ask me for news about the condition of education in the Peloponnese', the writer begins before reporting that the region had indeed 'begun to wake up during the year 1800 from the deep sleep of ignorance, in which for many years it had slumbered'. Stirred in part by 'the fame, which rang out everywhere regarding the admirable acts of its patriotic neighbours', the Peloponnesians had themselves finally begun to rediscover 'the holy love of education' and embark on a programme of

popular enlightenment.[7] According to one scholar, perhaps 'ten or so' schools were operating in the Peloponnese by this time, most of which had been established by the Church, with additional support from local merchants and primates.[8]

These efforts notwithstanding, educational developments in the Peloponnese appeared to lag behind those occurring elsewhere in the Greek-speaking world; nor was the province easily reached by publishers and periodical entrepreneurs who had difficulty finding agents or other means of distributing their goods in the region.[9] For these and other reasons, the landed elites of the Peloponnese had less frequent contact with contemporary intellectual and ideological innovations than the Greek-speaking inhabitants of Vienna or the cities of the Levant, centres of commerce and cultural production where some measure of the day's business was conducted in public spaces such as the coffeehouse or commercial lodge.[10] This is not to suggest that the Peloponnesian notables were completely sealed off from the outside world, and in fact some were regularly found in Constantinople where they were engaged in both official and unofficial tours of duty as representatives of various local interests to the Porte. The geographical trajectory of primate life is reflected in the records of the *Filiki Etairia* which show that virtually all of the members of the 'political class' from the region who joined the conspiracy were inducted either in their Peloponnesian patrie or Constantinople (the vast majority in the former) – a geographical specificity that does not hold for any of the other groups depicted in the sources.[11]

Nevertheless, the primary and secondary works dealing with the lives of the Christian notables offer a glimpse of a world, again, in which attentions were largely directed inward. Even the forays to Constantinople, as one scholar observes, must be understood as the means by which provincial notables sought 'to transfer to the palace lobbies the conflicts which frequently threatened' their local interests.[12] The leading primates were indeed caught in a 'vicious circle', writes another, where the success of their efforts to attain power and status immediately invited challenges from rival families, provincial authorities and the central government.[13] Few, in fact, managed to avoid serious reversals of fortune, whether in the form of confiscations of goods and property or the imprisonment and execution of leading family members.[14]

The studies cited above provide a picture, in summary, of the Peloponnese as a particular theatre of political action in which the interests of the leading Christian elites were variously linked. All participated in the functioning of 'a system', a term used in contemporary sources, and had numerous dealings with fellow notables with whom they competed for offices, or served alongside in provincial bodies. Any attempt at reconstructing the political imagination of these same elites and the sentiments with which they met the overtures of the *Filiki Etairia* must take into account these basic conditions of primate life and the manner in which they informed attempts at collective action in the past. When moved in this fashion, whether in response to internal or external threats to the old order, such as the revision of Ottoman traditions or the encroachment of foreign powers (and here it must be remembered that the *Etairia* was not initiated by the primates), the

separatist impulses of the notables appeared to settle first upon the object of the Peloponnese. This Peloponnesian consciousness, as it might be called, is reminiscent of the *Landespatriotismus* or territorial patriotism spoken of in relation to the noble classes of Central Europe, and one which, when mobilized, tended towards the protection of 'historic rights'.[15] The corporate sentiments accruing from membership in this 'political class', as the leading notables identified themselves, were further bolstered by the notion of a distinct Peloponnesian constitution and political history, represented by events such as the Venetian conquest of the province in 1684, the Turkish re-conquest in 1715, and the Orlov Revolt of 1770.

The factors cited above are sometimes overlooked by scholars who tend somewhat reflexively to project the sensibilities or aims of the nationalist bourgeoisie and intelligentsia onto all those who participated in the Greek and other revolutions of the period.[16] In those cases where the attitudes of the primates are given special attention, their behaviour is sometimes explained by reference to a theoretical framework in which the mentality of various actors is plotted at some point on an axis between tradition and modernity. The primates may have been less far along in this course than others, these studies infer, however their participation in the revolution shows that they too were affected by the types of ideas that had exerted an influence (though earlier and more profoundly) on their contemporaries in other parts of the empire and the diaspora. One scholar for example writes that the notables were 'divided between a number of contradictory realities' – that is, remaining fundamentally part of the Ottoman world while exposed to 'the ideas of the Enlightenment' – and appears to associate the revolutionary drift in their behaviour to the rising influence of the latter.[17] Another suggests, more generally, that all who 'met each other through the revolution' and took part in its various administrative bodies 'were connected by ideological principles; or, more accurately, through their alliance to the national idea, the modern political ideology in accordance with which the Greek national movement had been created and organized in previous years'.[18] This issue has been treated finally in slightly more circumspect fashion by Padelis Lekas who acknowledges that the participation of the magnates in the revolution remains a problem. How indeed were they 'radicalized', he asked, given their 'innate conservatism', before resorting himself to the types of explanations surveyed above which place more or less emphasis on the effects of ideological infiltration.[19] The revolutionism of the primates continues, therefore, to intrigue scholars, and perhaps especially those who equate this type of behaviour with a different class of actors or are inclined to see all who participated in the struggle as engaged in an undertaking fundamentally aimed at 'breaking with the past'.[20]

Although the ideas expressed by the authors noted above are worthy of reflection, to explain the actions of the Peloponnesian notables by such means alone may be to err, as Lekas writes himself of a different subject in the previously cited article, on the side of 'too much theory'.[21] Specifically, this paper addresses the motivations of the primates by investigating the interests and aims expressed over the course of previous secessionist intrigues in which they took part – events which

provide important and even necessary context for assessing their actual dealings with the *Filiki Etairia*. These events help to indicate the manner in which the Peloponnesian notables responded to the various opportunities and threats posed by the local and international developments of the period and indeed reveal a pattern of behaviour consistent with that of contemporary nobilities in central Europe, who, as Peter Sugar once described, were 'often revolutionary', but yet held fast to a patriotism that was 'exclusive, tradition bound, and estate conscious'.[22] A reconsideration of the aims disclosed in the notables' various interactions with the *Filiki Etairia* helps furthermore to illuminate what the proposed revolution actually meant to those involved from a standpoint of risks and rewards, as well as the assumptions contained in their notions of sovereignty. By attempting a closer view of what was actually being communicated to the primates, and what they were communicating in return, it may be possible to grasp the palatability of an endeavour that otherwise appears so at odds with the conservatism commonly associated with this group of actors. Suffice to say, it is not so obvious that in seceding from the Ottoman Empire the Peloponnesian notables were equally seeking to 'break with the past.'

If, finally, the aims of the primates who joined the *Etairia* did not correspond exactly with those espoused by the conspiracy's leaders (and these were never explicitly stated), they did not entirely conflict with them either. This point is illustrated particularly well in the correspondence between the notables and the *Etairia*, the two parties engaged in a process of negotiation where the 'national' element occupies a secondary place and even appears to have been appropriated by the elites involved as a means of accomplishing a rather different end: an autonomous, Peloponnesian 'gentry-republic', to borrow a term used in other European settings, in which the 'historic rights' of the primates could be firmly secured and passed on intact. The *Etairia* obtained in this rather prosaic manner the support of a powerful social force that was critical to the formation of a broader movement. Viewed in this light, the story of the Peloponnesian primates belongs not only to Greek history, but is also relevant for the larger study of nations and nationalism and the manner in which these concepts became more fixed in the consciousness of the period. Although the attitudes of the Peloponnesian primates towards these same ideas may not be so readily charted, their participation in the revolution was crucial to the success of a venture that became closely associated with the national problem in Europe, and, through its issue in the creation of a nominally independent Hellenic Kingdom, appeared to substantially elevate the status and legitimacy of national identity as a basis of political sovereignty.[23]

Peloponnesian Government during the Second *Tourkokratia*

The Peloponnese has been described above as a distinct political theatre in which the fortunes of the leading Christian primates were variously linked. These relationships were solidified through marriage bonds but also by participation in the administrative apparatus of the Ottoman state, which, following the termination of

Venetian rule in 1715, treated the province as a separate administrative unit.[24] As in other contemporary examples, the political consciousness of the Peloponnesian primates was in some measure consonant with the political boundaries and structures to which they were subject. The offices encompassed within this administrative framework therefore merit a brief review.

At the top of the Peloponnesian power structure was the *Mora Valisi* or governor, who was appointed by the Porte to a one-year term of office. Although this appointment could be renewed for an additional year, the frequent change of governor, given this official's importance in the local balance of power, was a major source of inter-elite conflict and intrigue throughout the 'Second' Turkish-era. The Peloponnese was further divided into 24 districts (Tr. *kaza*), in which the affairs of the Christian populations were overseen by a local magnate, raised by election to the official status of *proestos* (*kodjabashi*), of often long-standing tenure.[25] The *Mora Valisi* governed with the aid of two councils. One, the *Divan*, consisted of Ottoman officials appointed by the Porte. A second was composed of two or three *proestoi* (elected in a general meeting of all the *proestoi* of the province), an equal number of Muslim *ayan*, and the Christian 'Dragoman of the Morea'.[26] The Dragoman, also chosen by the Porte, worked closely with the governor, dealt with foreign dignitaries and oversaw relations with other provinces within the empire. The Peloponnesian primates were also entitled to maintain *Vekils*, or emissaries, in Constantinople who defended their 'rights' to higher imperial authorities. Finally, in some parts of the Peloponnese, namely the Mani, a condition of partial autonomy also prevailed. However, here, as elsewhere, the recognition of the Ottoman state was a highly coveted source of legitimacy, as attested by the fact that the last Christian 'hegemon' of the Mani (a coastal region at the southern tip of the peninsula) during the Ottoman era, Petros Mavromichalis (1765–1848), was referred to by Muslims and Christians alike with the evocative title of *Petrobey*.[27]

In addition to their relationships with other leading Christian families of the province, the primates were in regular contact with Turkish elites, typically referred to as *ayan*, as well as senior officials of the Ottoman state. Of the 22 documents, for example, in the archive of the primate Kanellos Deligiannis (1780–1862) from the years 1779–1821, six are in Turkish, while another three are from Turkish correspondents in Greek.[28] The archive of the primate Andreos Lontos from the years 1789–1821 contains the names of over ninety Muslim officials and notables.[29] Items such as these indicate a relatively high level of interaction between the two communities of elites,[30] although the greater weight of economic and political power rested on the Muslim side.[31] The Muslim minority controlled, for example, over 60 per cent of all property in the Peloponnese.[32] This situation may help to explain, one scholar suggests, the aggressive pursuit of office on the part of Christian notables who viewed state salaries as an important source of funds given the relative poverty of the rural domains under their control.[33] Additional sources of income included the collection of property taxes, sales of product, interest from loans, and 'gifts' received in compensation for services rendered on behalf of those seeking to advance their interests with the Porte or local authorities – the ability to exploit this latter

opportunity being highly influenced, again, by the acquisition of state offices. The records of some high-ranking Christian families are in fact so complex, observes one researcher, that it is impossible to ascertain their total annual income.[34]

Although the offices and institutions depicted above appear to have been in place for most of the eighteenth century, their precise origin remains in doubt. Nevertheless, scholars give some weight to the claims of Deligiannis that they dated to the Venetian expulsion from the Peloponnese in 1715.[35] Driven to revolt, wrote Deligiannis, by their despotic Catholic rulers, 'all the *prokritoi* of the districts offered their patrie' to the local Ottoman warlord in 1714 with the promise of their support in its re-conquest. When asked, in return, to explain their demands 'for rights and privileges', the former answered that 'they desired a Democratic Administration (*Dimokratikin Dioikisin*)', the author providing the Turkish original ('*Ragia Ibaret*' [sic]). On learning of the proceedings, the Sultan decreed that 'the Peloponnese would be ruled from this time forward as a *Ragia Ibaret*'. 'And until our revolution of 1821', Deligiannis continued, 'it was administered democratically without the local Turks being able to interfere in any local matter concerning the districts, but only the *kotsiambasidies*, the *prokritoi*, and the *dimerogerontes* of each community to decide on the laws and extent of local taxes'.[36] United in this fashion, the Christian and Ottoman forces handily expelled the Venetians and for the next fifty years, wrote Deligiannis, the Peloponnese 'passed through a period of peace which our ancestors called the good time (*kalon kairon*)'.[37]

Among the points that stand out in these passages is Deligiannis's use of the term 'democracy'. This might be described as a condition of local autonomy in which the Christian communities were left to the care of traditional leaders. The author offers a glimpse in this case into the political consciousness of local elites who saw no inconsistency between such a state of affairs and 'freedom'. A similar sentiment is expressed in the words attributed to Ioannis Mavromichalis, a key participant in the Orlov Revolt, when arguing with a Russian ally over matters of strategy. Angered by the other party's superior attitude, Mavromichalis is said at one point to have retorted: 'Though you have under your command all the forces of your empress, a slave you will always be, while I am the leader of a free people'.[38] The assumed embodiment of the popular will in the figure of the territorial elite is conveyed again in Deligiannis's ridicule of the leadership capacities of a *Fanariot* opponent in the internal conflicts that broke out during the revolution: 'Not having a patrida', wrote Deligiannis of his rival, 'he had thus not a single soldier' to follow him into war.[39]

The perspective of figures such as Deligiannis on the subject of Peloponnesian democracy was not, of course, shared by all of their contemporaries. As another memoirist from the region wrote, 'The *kotsabasides* or *prouchontes* were not chosen by the people as some say, but they were rather a body united for their own interests'. 'Some might call this unconscionable and dishonourable conduct a civilized and democratic system', continued the writer, 'but who asked the poor peasants?'[40] Most historians tend to agree that the Peloponnesian notables enjoyed a level of political autonomy much greater than their peers, Christian or Muslim, in

the central regions of the empire and are similarly sceptical of the notion of 'free elections of elders and primates'.[41] Although these same scholars often reprise Deligiannis's account of the events surrounding the end of Venetian rule, most further suggest that Ottoman authorities would probably have left a significant amount of local control to the primates without much prompting.[42]

If, finally, documents from the period reveal many linkages between the Christian and Muslim communities of the Ottoman Peloponnese they do not imply that there prevailed a completely untroubled atmosphere of multi-cultural coexistence. Local Christian landed elites, Muslim notables and provincial authorities were involved in a protracted competition for power in which the imperial capital played a critical role as the centre of influence to which all appealed in order to promote their interests or defend themselves against the ambitions of rivals. Unfortunately, dealings at this level did not always suffice to pacify the divided parties or prevent episodes of violent score-settling.[43] Inter-communal frictions at the elite level appear, in fact, to have escalated around the middle of the eighteenth century, as illustrated by the deaths of several leading primates and clerics – expressions perhaps of a growing level of strife exacerbated by the decline of the *timar* system of landholding, and the advent of tax farming.[44] This development, which was paralleled by the growing strength of local Muslim notables, who played key roles in the new tax collection and disbursement regime, is frequently cited as a significant destabilizing event in local elite relations and a major factor in the outbreak of the Orlov Revolt (1770).[45]

Accounts of this event place particular emphasis on the actions of leading primates such as Panagiotis Benakis (1720–71) of Kalamata (southern Peloponnese), who were led by the increasing power of the local *ayan* to accept the overtures of the Orlov brothers – court favourites of Catherine the Great who sought to combine a revolt in the Peloponnese with an attack on Ottoman defences elsewhere – with the apparent aim of converting the province into a protectorate of the Russian Empire.[46] Support for the venture was obtained from Christian elites throughout the province, although some key figures such as the chiefs of the Mani were initially reluctant to commit. These misgivings were borne out by later events: a Russian fleet did appear off the coast of the Mani in 1770, however its size and contingent of troops was much smaller than expected.[47] The subsequent fighting was marked by horrific intra-communal violence followed by an invasion of Albanian irregulars unleashed upon the rebellious province by the Porte as the Russian-Peloponnesian alliance began to fail. These same forces later proved resistant to Ottoman authorities, who sought, after nearly ten years of turmoil, to restore some semblance of order to the region. The first document in the Deligiannis archive is, in fact, related to this event and consists of a letter from the Dragoman of the Royal Fleet dated 27 June 1779 ordering the Christian leaders of the Peloponnese to mobilize the populace against the intruders.[48] It declared:

> Most honourable elders (*gerons*) and primates (*proestotes*), and esteemed captains, and remaining men smaller and larger of Mistra, we greet you. Our highest, most

> courageous, compassionate, righteous and long-lived master Gazi Xasan pasha, captain pasha . . . has given permission to all the common Christian people (*ragayiades*) of the Morea, to strike down the wild Albanians with whatever possessions they may have going to those who do so . . . Show now your manliness and draw together all the *reaya* who carry arms . . . and remove from the face of the earth all those found in your territory, not leaving a single one of them alive.[49]

Given the severity of these upheavals, it is not surprising that mention of the Orlov Revolt appears often in primary sources from subsequent years.[50] Ottoman views of the event include the reflections of Soulieman Penax effendi (1740–85), an official of Peloponnesian birth who reported to his superiors on the causes of the revolt and the steps required to prevent its recurrence. Penax was highly concerned in this case with disciplining the Christian notables and included among his recommendations the stipulation that their tenure as *kodjabashis* be limited to a single year, with a five-year interlude between terms of service – a reform intended to inhibit their ability to amass great estates and establish political linkages. 'When entering every year different people', as Penax explained, 'they will not be able to form alliances.'[51] In general, the Orlov Revolt emerges in this account as proceeding from the avarice of the local Christian notables and its exploitation by Russian empire-builders for their own particular ends. Modern scholars have taken a less polemical, but not dissimilar view. One often-cited historian, for example, writes:

> Further research on the pan-Moreot clash of interests might suggest that the resulting insurrection was not so much a rebellion against the Porte itself as a reaction by some against the regional Turkish interests, which were threatening those of certain Christian notables. In the new order of things, Benakis may have viewed himself at the head of the Morea, somewhat like the beys of the Mane in the period that followed.[52]

The ideological dimension is largely absent in this reading, as it is in several other recent accounts of the event.[53]

Napoleonic Era Conspiracies

Penax effendi's appeal in the wake of the Orlov Revolt that primate liberties be curtailed appears to have gone unheeded, as many of the leading Christian families of the Peloponnese succeeded in recovering their former fortunes and status. New threats to the political stability of the province meanwhile emerged in the form of the Napoleonic Wars. These conflicts radically altered the political situation in Southern Europe in ways that had major implications for the security of the Ottoman Empire. The belligerent powers gave particular attention to the Peloponnese – a region which, in the aftermath of the French occupation of Italy and the Ionian Islands, appeared to loom as a future theatre of conflict. Subsequent French overtures to elites in the province inspired similar moves on

the part of the British, who even appear to have considered a pre-emptive invasion.[54] In addition to fostering an atmosphere of suspicion between ruler and ruled, the on-going international crisis had the effect of creating new political options for those subject to unfavourable shifts in the local balance of power. The tensions obtaining from this situation were expressed in a number of violent episodes, including the execution of several leading primates (Gravidis Palamidis in 1796, Sotirakis Lontos in 1812 and Ioannis Deligiannis in 1816), the expulsion of the klefts from the Peloponnese in 1805,[55] and the formation of various secessionist plots in which Christian and Muslim elites were found to collaborate.

A leading and often independent role in these events was played by the Christian chiefs of the Mani, who were at that time involved in a fierce conflict amongst themselves for control of the *beylik*.[56] The encroachment of foreign powers seems, in fact, to have heightened the intensity of these intrigues by introducing the prospect of powerful new allies, as well as enemies, to the contending parties.[57] One of the key figures in this struggle was the previously-cited Petros Mavromichalis, amongst whose overtures to French officials in Italy and the Ionian Islands were persistent requests for a loan of 50,000 piasters, a sum deemed necessary to collect allies, secure control of the *beylik*, and consummate a proposed alliance. Implicit in these talks was the assumption that the Mani would remain subject to a higher power, but would benefit by moving from the Ottoman to the French imperial sphere. The current geo-political situation appeared, in fact, to place local chiefs, such as Mavromichalis, in a strong bargaining position with their imperial suitors.[58] It is important finally to note that this very same diplomatic stance, in which professions of obeisance to a higher authority mingled with prideful claims of dominion over local affairs (not to mention the urgent request for financial aid), were reprised in Mavromichalis's later dealings with the *Etairia*, behind whose machinations was thought to be the Tsar.

Another contemporary example of an opportunistic bid by leading Peloponnesian primates to exploit the international setting to their advantage is presented by the case in 1808 of an alliance between Christian and Muslim notables. Here again the conspirators aimed to detach the province from the Ottoman Empire and convert it into a semi-autonomous French protectorate. The immediate catalyst for this venture was the appointment of Veli Pasha as *Mora Valisi* in 1807, a decision which proved controversial to many Muslim notables who believed that the new governor showed too much favour towards Christian elites, abused his tax-levying authority, and, perhaps most of all, shared the centralizing designs of his father, the infamous Ali Pasha of Ioannina, to whom they would ultimately be forced to surrender control of their dominions.[59] These last two concerns held as well for the Christian notables; however, resistance from this quarter also appears to have been influenced by the fact that some leading primates, notably Sotirakis Lontos, enjoyed more favour with Veli than others.[60] Lontos's rival, Ioannis Deligiannis, is indeed often portrayed as a leading force behind the series of secret talks held between Christian and Muslim elites over the question of how to best meet the danger before them.[61] These discussions led to a

remarkable resolution: The creation of a nominally independent Peloponnese under the protection of France.[62] 'Rejoicing in their agreement', wrote Kanellos Deligiannis later of the event, the two parties 'immediately made a frightful oath, the one on the Koran, the other on the Gospels . . . that from this point forward they would consider themselves as brothers'. The Peloponnese would thereafter be ruled in an equitable fashion, with 'all of its sections administered by a body of two Christians and one Turk'.[63] The primate Panagiotis Papatsonis, whose father was also present at these meetings, provides a similar description of the proceedings, although his picture of the administrative arrangement is more detailed: 'In those parts where there were all Christians or more Christians than Turks', wrote Papatsonis, 'the administrative body would consist of two Christians and one Turk, and where again the Turks were more numerous than the Christians there would be two Turks and one Christian'. At the head of this apparatus would be 'a French high commissioner'.[64]

The existence of this plot is corroborated by evidence from the French archives and is widely accepted by historians.[65] Writing, for example, in 1834, one of the first Greek historians of the revolution, Ioannis Filimon, reflected with a mixture of horror and awe on the alliance and the vow of those involved to wage their struggle under a flag 'bearing the symbols of both the Crescent and the Cross'. 'What a mindless, false combination!' (*pia asyllogistos apati syndiasmou!*), Filimon recoiled in disgust at the words before judging the demise of the project as 'surely for the best'.[66] Documents in French archives contain further details about the correspondence between imperial officials in Corfu and representatives of the '*confédérés de Morée*', which support what Filimon, Deligiannis and other Greek authors have written about the plot.[67] These include an 1808 letter from Yakoub Aga, brother of the Peloponnesian notable and 'confederate' Ali Farmakis, to the French imperial commissioner in Corfu concerning the interest of 'many agas of the Morea' to enter into correspondence with him, with the aim 'that you will deliver us from our cruel enemy, who, I assure you, is also yours'.[68] In addition to mentioning his brother, Yakoub cites several other leading Muslims from the region who were also part of the plot. A number of these, including Yakoub himself, are named in the Deligiannis account of the conspiracy.[69] Yakoub's letter was accompanied, finally, by the report of a fellow emissary and confederate, the Christian primate Giorgios Sisinis, also named by Deligiannis, who provided the French officials with further detail on the situation in the region and the aims of the patriots.[70] Like Yakoub, Sisinis claimed that 'all the inhabitants of the Morea' desired that the Emperor 'take pity on them, deliver them from the oppression of their tyrant and place them under his protection', requesting further that 'their religions and customs (*moeurs*) be respected'.[71] Although this delegation was not mentioned in the Deligiannis narrative, the dispatch of Farmakis, Kolokotronis and Petrobey, described above by Filimon was cited by Deligiannis and is also supported by documents in the French archives.[72]

The remarkable vision of an independent Peloponnese governed 'mutually' by the local Christian and Muslim magnates was thwarted by the British conquest of

the Ionian Islands in 1809, an event, Deligiannis lamented, which 'foiled all of our hopes'.[73] Still, the plot presents an interesting example of elite mobilization, highly contingent in nature, across confessional divides, as well as a glimpse of the types of post-Ottoman political existence that came to the imagination of those involved. This vision of coexistence was not, it should finally be noted, completely novel: included, for example, among the documents from the pre-revolutionary era published by Filimon is a survey by Christoforos Perraivos (1773?–1863) of the political dispositions of Christians and Muslims throughout the Balkans in which the latter observed that 'many Turkish Beys (''*Tourkous Beides*'') and Agas' could be enlisted in a war against the Porte, 'they being enemies of Ali Pasha, provided only that their religion and property is not threatened (*fthanei monon va inai asfaleis eis tin thriskeian tous kai ipostatika tous*)'.[74]

In the case of the Christian primates, the intrigues against Veli did not end with the French eviction from the Ionian Islands. The conspirators now turned for support to Constantinople, an initiative for which Deligiannis and his allies were denounced to Veli by Lontos and subsequently imprisoned.[75] Despite the arrests of Deligiannis and his comrades, the opposition to Veli succeeded nevertheless in gaining his replacement in 1812 by Iceli Ahmet, a change that proved fatal for some of the former pasha's allies, including Lontos, who was executed shortly thereafter. The primacy of the Deligiannis faction was nevertheless short lived: Iceli Ahmet was himself replaced in 1815 by Sakir Ahmet, who, in the following year, had Ioannis Deligiannis beheaded.

The Primates and the *Etairia*

As indicated above, the deaths of these two prominent Christian chiefs in connection with the change of governor raise important questions regarding the role of factionalism in the separatist plot against Veli. Specifically, did the venture signify an attempt by the weaker faction of notables not only to free themselves from the menace of despotic rule, but also to reduce the power of their local rivals? A similar type of question has been directed, as we see below, towards the problem of primate enlistment in the *Filiki Etairia*. In pursuing this line of enquiry, scholars have given particular attention to the series of formal 'agreements' made between various leading Peloponnesian families following the execution of Deligiannis in 1816.

According to an earlier researcher, these compacts, in which the united parties claimed to be acting in the interests of the 'patrida' and the 'system of fraternity' against unscrupulous 'outsiders', provide a view of the 'shifting coalitions of the hour'.[76] Of particular interest is an item from the Lontos archive regarding an 'Agreement between the Turkish archons of the Morea and Hellenic primates of various districts (*kazas*), concerning mutual support against attacks or disturbances from other parts or those of mean upbringing.' In addition to the signatures of two Muslim notables are those from members of the Lontos, Zaimis, and Deligiannis families.[77] While depicting a possible reconciliation between the rival factions, the document is of further interest for the people who are not mentioned, notably

the Perroukas brothers, a family which had risen in status following the deaths of the Lontos and Deligiannis patriarchs.

These shifts in the balance of power feature prominently in Dimitrios Stamatopoulos's recent attempt at explaining the *Filiki Etairia*'s success in gaining recruits among many of the same Peloponnesian notables cited above.[78] Supplanted by the Perroukas faction in Constantinople, Stamatopoulos contends that the Deligiannis family may not just have been led to make peace with its former enemies, but even 'to participate in a different type of political organization [e.g. the *Etairia*]'. In contrast, the Perroukas family, enjoying a 'preferential relationship . . . with the Ottoman centre', manifested a lesser 'degree of rebelliousness'.[79] This is an intriguing thesis; however, it should be noted that the Perroukas brothers also joined the *Etairia* – and at roughly the same time as many of the other leading Peloponnesian elites, that is, over the period 1819–20 – and played a major role in subsequent plotting.[80] This point is not necessarily fatal to Stamatopoulos's thesis as it could be argued that the enlistment of a few leading primates, coming so soon after the factional upheavals of the previous years, placed a certain degree of pressure on the remaining families to take part, if only to monitor the activities of their rivals. Still Stamatopoulos's account of a meeting of *Etairia* primates at Vostitsa (northern Peloponnese) in February 1821 of which the elder Perroukas brother, who did not attend, was highly critical, must be read in light of the fact that those primates who did attend were equally dismissive of appeals made there by *Etairia* advocates for immediate action.[81] Here as elsewhere, the primates, although fully implicated in the plot, tended to counsel for delay. Perhaps most questionable is Stamatopoulos's remark that the weaker faction viewed 'disengagement from the old Ottoman society's hierarchy of values and formation of a nation-state as the only viable possibilities on the political horizon'.[82] Documents from the period give, in fact, little sign that the older 'hierarchy of values' was in jeopardy.

In summary, the role of factionalism in the primates' enlistment into the *Etairia* remains an important area of enquiry. However, if the 'rebelliousness' of some primates placed pressure on their more reticent peers, so too did the actions of other figures. Some scholars in fact argue that the primates were influenced by reports of the Society's success in recruiting large numbers of people from other quarters of Peloponnesian life into its ranks.[83] This point recalls an important stream in Greek historiography represented by scholars such as Giannis Kordatos who in an influential earlier work sought to distil the 'social meaning of the Greek Revolution'.[84] Histories written in this vein dwell especially on the relationship between the primates and the *klefts* or bandits. In this view, the enlistment of the *kleft* captains by *Etairia* agents placed pressure on the Greek magnates who feared for the consequences of their scheming and perhaps viewed membership in the Society as a means to maintain control over an unruly body of men with whom they had often clashed in the past.[85] If, in other words, the reaction of the Peloponnesian notables to the growing power of Ali Pasha marks an instance of elite mobilization against a threat from above, their involvement in the *Etairia* may

represent, in some measure, a similar closing of ranks in response to a rising threat from below.

Theories of this kind appeared very early in accounts of the Greek Revolution and even enter into Deligiannis's memoir, as where the author bristles against the 'blasphemies' he and his peers were forced to endure from those who claimed that the revolution came from the people and that 'the primates only joined the plot when they recognized that they could not stop it and consequently obtained a premier place in the Society'. 'However, every wise Hellene knows', Deligiannis objected,

> that the people, the mob, is not preoccupied with or thinks of freedom, nor does it have any sense of patriotism. In all ages and epochs it is always the more distinguished and learned, those having property, wealth and other advantages, who have influence and move the people, and these always follow.[86]

Unfortunately, Deligiannis's account of his own enlistment in the *Etairia*, which he claims occurred in 1817, conflicts with other sources which suggest that this took place considerably later.[87] It is also notable that he was initiated by Panagiotis Sekeris, a wealthy 'greater-merchant', who came originally from the Peloponnese, a fact which suggests that even in far away Constantinople, Deligiannis tended to associate with others of his home region and rank.[88] Class appears indeed to have played an important role in his induction to the Society, as portrayed again in the memoir where the author refers to an incident involving his older brother Anagnostis and an *Etairia* agent who attempted to solicit their interest in the plot. 'To hear such things', writes Deligiannis, 'from the mouth of a man who was no more than a chaser after fortune (*tixodioxtou*) and completely insignificant appalled them [the primates] and they told him that such was not their business and advised him to refrain from the same'.[89] Returning to his patrida, Deligiannis writes that he began immediately to 'proselytize' on behalf of the *Etairia* and succeeded, with the help of a few comrades, in obtaining the support of 'most of the important men and prelates of the Peloponnese'. However, these accomplishments were compromised by the excessive zeal of a fellow plotter who initiated another 'class of men that were incapable of contributing anything'.[90] This latest attempt at revolution from above was to be directed, Deligiannis infers, by the leading houses of the Peloponnese, the principals of which would manage the impending transition of power from one political state of existence to another.

The sentiments described in the passage above are clearly displayed in correspondence conducted by the primates and members of the local ecclesiastical estate with the *Etairia* leadership. Upon joining the plot (*en masse* in the words of one scholar),[91] the notables quickly sought to have their authority over local affairs formally recognized. In June of 1820, a letter to this effect on the 'Thoughts of the Peloponnesians concerning the forming of a System', was delivered by envoys to the still unknown supreme leader of the conspiracy in Russia.[92] The authors asked that several directors (*eforoi*) be designated from among the leading primates and

ecclesiastics of the province, and their positions confirmed by official documents, who would confer with the Society's leader on plans and initiatives consistent with conditions in the Peloponnese. The authors also asked that the leadership proclaim that all of the Society's members in the province give their complete obedience to the named directors who would in addition have the power to discipline any deemed intransigent or a threat to the common good. The 'Peloponnesians' further requested that all funds contributed to the Society from members in the region remain in the province.[93]

The notables received an answer in the fall of 1820 via a letter from the *Fanariot* Alexander Ypsilantis, who, in addition to identifying himself as the leader of the Society, consented to the request for the appointment of local directors and the retention of funds.[94] Ypsilantis named as *efors* three ecclesiastics and five primates, with two additional primates designated as treasurers (chosen from among the signatories of the original letter). In succeeding passages, Ypsilantis decreed that every member of the Society in the Peloponnese must give the aforementioned directors respect and obedience, however, the *efors* must themselves obey the orders of the General Director and not put in motion any action on the part of the Society without obtaining 'our opinion'.[95] For one scholar, these words indicate that Ypsilantis 'recognized the superiority of the primate element in the political affairs of the Peloponnese and gave the organization of the Society to members who held high places in the church and local administration; however, as if fearing the undertaking of initiatives that might escape his oversight, [the letter] specified that [the Society leadership] would have the last word on every initiative'.[96]

The dialogue depicted above indicates that the *Etairia* leadership and the primates were highly concerned over boundaries of power and gives notice of interests and claims that might be future sources of friction, although there is no mention in these documents of post-revolutionary aims. The Peloponnesian notables and religious elites also showed themselves to be under the assumption that Russia was to play a leading role in their liberation and they indeed directed numerous requests for more precise information on this front to various outside parties. Despite these ambiguities, the *Etairia* and the primates appear to have reached a temporary working relationship. Unfortunately, a resurgence of factionalism broke out among the latter over the assignment of leadership positions and the control of finances, with offense being taken by certain notables such as Perroukas who had not been named by Ypsilantis as one of the local directors. These internal conflicts might have been serious, one researcher suggests, if not for the arrival of a new governor on the scene with orders from Constantinople, according to *Etairia* informants, to violently disabuse the local primates of any revolutionary sentiments.[97] With the Porte then engaged in a military struggle against Ali Pasha and suspicious of how the crisis might be exploited by other parties, the primates had indeed arrived at the assumption by the end of 1820 that pre-emptive violence on the part of the Ottoman state was imminent.[98] In summary, the rising fear of discovery and reprisals, shortage of resources and incomplete control of a venture

that had such profound implications for their own fortunes placed the primates in an uncertain and increasingly tenuous position.

The dialogue between Ypsilantis and the Peloponnesian notables concerning the delineation of power and the intention of the latter to obtain official recognition of their primacy over local affairs bears remarkable similarities to one that took place slightly earlier between the notables of the Mani and the *Etairia*. As indicated above, the chiefs of this region, although closely linked with elites throughout the Peloponnese, also displayed a facility for independent action. The leadership of the *Etairia* faced, therefore, a number of challenges when seeking to draw Petrobey and other notables of the Mani into the plot. Not only were these figures formidable power-holders in their own right, they were also old rivals. Those assigned with the task of recruiting them would therefore have to be sensitive to their sense of historical rights as well as the suspicions each harboured for the aims of their rivals.

These points were highlighted in a letter Petrobey addressed to the leadership of the Society on joining the conspiracy in 1818 (after having been led to believe that there was Russian backing).[99] Petrobey described in this piece the obstacles he faced as 'hegemon of the Spartans' in preparing his patrie for the coming struggle. Although 'the modern Spartans', he wrote, had managed, 'amidst the general calamity' suffered by 'the race', to retain their freedom, their enemies, not being able 'with arms to accomplish their aims, turned to treachery, spread factionalism among the higher placed with promises of power, and managed to ignite a civil war . . . and so our unfortunate patrie came to suffer all the evils of pestilence and want'. Desperate to obtain the funds necessary to deal with the province's many ills, Petrobey was ultimately forced to take on a great debt with the Ottomans, who 'in order to be sure that I would not waste it, insisted that I send them two of my sons as pawns'.[100]

Although Petrobey's request for financial aid went unanswered, *Etairia* agents were able to mediate the conflict between the three leading families.[101] The results of these negotiations are captured in a remarkable *Etairia* document from 1819 which indicates, if in sometimes ambiguous prose, the relationship that would henceforth prevail among the chieftains as well as their duties in the coming struggle with respect to Sparta, the Society, and their 'general patrie Greece' (*tis genikis imon patridos Ellados*). The document provides, in fact, a revealing view of the manner in which this group of Peloponnesian elites and their suitors drew upon and manipulated an older tradition of discourse to reach a common understanding of aims.

The text begins:

> We three families, as stronger and more capable than the others of our patrie Sparta, promise with this fearful oath, that from now on there will reign in our bodies one soul, one harmony, one will, and that no cause whether of internal or external origin will be able to break or weaken this holy bond.

The desire of the chieftains to maintain the peace and balance of power between their families and disavow any bid to unilaterally profit from the venture is

expressed amidst several other passages in the agreement, such as where the parties declare that:

> Whatever order the Kingdom [an apparent reference to the Russian court] or our Race presents to us, which aims for the benefit of the common patrie, will be viewed and acted upon eagerly and energetically by us, provided however we do not dishonour any of the esteemed of our patrie, in other words the aforementioned captains, but toward the honour and virtue of all we will proceed, without any self-interest.

With these important issues resolved, the signatories come at last to one of the more crucial passages of the document: 'Just as it wishes *only upon us*', the parties explain near the end of the text, '*to have the entire burden of our patrie's good government placed*, similarly every other command our Race makes of us we accept and will put into effect as an indispensable duty without any hesitation and resistance' (emphasis added).[102]

Documents such as these indicate the openness of the Peloponnesian notables to the possibility of political change, but also the type of political change that they envisioned. In the words of an earlier scholar, 'A bargain had been struck: The Maniotes would acknowledge and come to the aid of the 'general fatherland' in return for recognition of their traditional social and political position in the 'particular fatherland'.[103] Although I largely agree with this view, the emphasis might be modified to reflect the interests and opportunism which local chiefs such as Petrobey had shown in the recent past. It was not so clear in this case if the Maniotes were coming 'to the aid' of Greece, or if a unified Greece (and its foreign sympathizers) loomed as a means to secure a larger measure of control over the beleaguered patrie. It was highly beneficial, again, that the *Etairia* had no explicit plan concerning how a future, independent Greek state would be governed. The leaders of the movement did not at least express any ideas that would have conflicted with the interests and 'historic rights' of the Peloponnesian 'political class'.[104] This latter point may in fact help to indicate what these figures were ultimately fighting for: a 'free Greece' in which the various provinces would have a closer association but where local political affairs would largely go on as before. There are occasional references to extending aid to the remaining parts of 'Greece' and it seems that the elites and Christian populations of these and other lands under Ottoman rule would be natural allies for their cause. But 'national' impulses of this kind, if novel, were driven in some part by security imperatives: all of the ventures cited throughout included provisions for obtaining the aid of a foreign power, but the chances of success were certainly further improved by raising a local movement of the largest possible size.

As indicated above, statements occasionally appear in contemporary sources which show that the Peloponnesian notables were aware of their patrie's failure to keep pace with educational initiatives in other parts of the Greek-speaking world. These passages offer some evidence that the *Diafotismos* had found its way into the Morea, and it is important to avoid the error of portraying local intellectual

life as entirely insulated from contemporary innovations. There are, in fact, moments in the sources when the protagonists display a consciousness of larger events and the sense that by joining the Society they were associating themselves with a new and even alien world of ideas. In his recollections, for example, of the years preceding the 1821 revolution, the previously-cited Kontakis briefly described the events that led up to his initiation in the *Etairia*. Thoughts of independence were first inspired in him he recalls by the moving words of a visitor to his province in 1816. In the following year he found himself in Tripoli (central Peloponnese) where he noticed a figure on the street in '*Frankish dress*'. 'Having as mentioned', he writes, 'this idea in my mind of freedom I thought that he might be such a man himself and invited him to my house'. His intuition proved correct: Not only was the stranger in foreign clothes patriotically inclined, he was also a member of the *Etairia*, into the ranks of which Kontakis was entered the following day.[105]

Still, Kontakis's memoirs also represent very well the 'silence' alluded to above regarding extra-Peloponnesian figures and events. When moved, for example, to record for posterity their life histories, the primates tended to embark on a history of the modern Peloponnese.[106] The editor of the Papatsonis volume even writes that 'these memoirs could be viewed as *Peloponnisiaka* (''Peloponnesian Souvenirs'') for they are almost completely concerned with events in the Peloponnese'.[107] The unique characteristics of this genre stand out especially sharply when placed alongside other testimonies of pre-revolutionary times represented in the works of the *Diafotismos*, a body of literature which evokes a far different and outward-looking world of books, foreign places and ideas.[108] The use of memoirs presents, of course, special challenges to historians, and it is tempting to see the primates' nostalgia for the past, if it may be called such, as coloured in some measure by the troubles they faced in later years.[109] However, events and documents from the revolutionary era offer some confirmation of the attitudes expressed in these sources and indicate how strenuously those involved sought to defend their status, as illustrated in one important instance by the assassination of Kapoditrias by members of the Mavromichalis clan, an event that marked the end of a short but volatile conflict between the centralizing impulses of the new president and the chieftains of the Mani.[110] Documents from the Deligiannis archive provide additional views of the hazards confronted by the primates in these unsettled times and the need to suddenly deal with a wide range of actors and political bodies – all of which had serious implications for older loyalties and traditions of authority.[111] Particularly revealing is a 'promissory' agreement dated 9 August 1824, in which the signees are made to affirm that having been appointed as 'representatives' of Karytaina, they promise 'to support the rights of this district without the exception of any part or village, as well as the chiefs Deligiannoi [plural], Kolokotroni and Koliopoulou', and secondly 'to refer and to struggle for Peloponnesian rights [possibly laws: *dikaia*] without disregarding these or to agree with the other parts of the realm (*epikrateia*) which seek to reduce the evident (*profanon*) rights of the Peloponnese, its noblemen (*evpatridon*) and its defenders (*promaxon*)'.[112]

Conclusion

Although Greeks from the diaspora played a decisive role in representing the revolution and encouraging international perceptions of its character and aims, the motivations driving all who took part in the event were highly diverse.[113] To be sure, the 'true' aims and aspirations of the patriotic intelligentsia and bourgeoisie are not immune from deeper critical investigation; however, their immediate object is largely assumed to have been that close political unification of 'the nation' evoked within various streams of contemporary European discourse. But what of the political imagination of the primates, who give much less evidence of involvement with this wider world of ideas?

Judging from a review of preceding events, it does not follow that the aims of the primates concerning the type of polity they expected to issue from the termination of Ottoman rule were of a kind that necessarily disclose the influence of a major reorientation in thought, or that in attempting to secede from the Ottoman Empire they were similarly seeking to effect a fundamental 'break with the past'. The Peloponnesian notables had in fact taken part in earlier secessionist plots that were highly contingent in nature and give little notice, based again on their aims, of profound ideological influence. Certainly, one of the more notable features of this story is the bold secessionism displayed by the Peloponnesian notables and the comparative ease with which they were able to imagine a post-Ottoman political existence; the province was conceived as migrating in each case from one imperial sphere to another, its internal system intact.[114] In these ventures they had even practised a kind of independent foreign policy, engaging their erstwhile allies in a process of negotiation that reappears in their dealings with the *Etairia* and which, in retrospect, was consistent with their custom of sending envoys to the Ottoman court.[115] The actions of the Peloponnesian primates recall, in fact, the behaviour of landed elites in other parts of contemporary Europe and the European colonial world who reacted in similar fashion to the crises of the era and were quite capable of revolutionary action in the defence or recovery of 'historic rights'.

And yet beneath the expressions of collective action and unity voiced over the course of these affairs, were struggles between the leading primates; conflicts that must be factored into the analysis of previous events, as well as their mass enlistment into the *Etairia*. This latter phenomenon suggests a certain fear or countermobilization among those involved in response to the threat of displacement by rivals – an attitude that is not surprising given the fact that the overtures of the *Etairia* arrived in the immediate aftermath of a particularly intense period of internal conflict – but also the ambitions of a 'second or third class of men' with whom the primates frequently had to contend in their roles as local chiefs. And yet despite the fissures and power struggles cited above, it is doubtful that by enlisting in the *Etairia*, the primates envisioned, much less sought, to bring about an end to 'the system'. This type of behaviour is frequently termed 'opportunistic', which indeed it may be, provided that there is also some recognition of the defensive or pre-emptive quality of such actions.

In the case of the primates, one finds, in summary, earlier patterns of behaviour that throw light on their actions in 1821. This is not to argue that previous episodes of collective elite mobilization in the Peloponnese were directly connected and express an unwavering defiance of Ottoman rule, passed down over time from one generation to the next. I suggest instead that given the persistence of certain key conditions – a relatively high level of autonomy, an 'empowering' state system in the form of political institutions and responsibilities that encouraged the formation of a corporate mentality among the leading houses, and aspects of a shared history exemplified in events such as the Orlov Revolt – the conditions were present for a high degree of territorially-centred corporate sentiment and, in times of particular stress, collective action, among this key group of elites. Once embarked on such a course, 'history', represented in the memory of past events and heroic deeds, lay close at hand to legitimate each new venture or imbue it with a grander meaning.[116]

Although the Christian notables of the Peloponnese did not possess the feudal titles often associated with the claims of nobility, the combination of their economic power, official state recognition and investment with political authority, encouraged a corporate mentality similar to that expressed in the sense of 'political nationhood' present elsewhere in Europe, and shared by their peers in other parts of the Ottoman world.[117] 'Like local communities so tied to the center', one leading scholar has in fact recently observed of local power-brokers elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, 'the elites' distinctiveness and interests were recognized by the center, and became legitimate while deals were struck. However, in unavoidably using local notables as the basis of indirect rule, the center also recognized and reinforced their distinctiveness, bolstering later claims for more independence'.[118] Although this particular author does not employ Peloponnesian sources in her study there is room to argue that the points made above would apply well in this context. The reasonably successful reception of the *Filiki Etairia*'s plot amongst the Christian elites of the province was not in this case a mere reflection of the overwhelming power of nationalist ideas or necessarily the fruit of a previous period of ideological gestation. The notion of a Greek nation was in many respects, to be sure, a novel and revolutionary concept. However, it was also one which did not conflict, at least as proffered, with the interests and 'historic rights' of the local primates, or the establishment of a truly secure, and perhaps in their way of thinking, 'free', Peloponnese.

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Notes

1. Virtually every form of print culture encountered in the period was depicted in this fashion, to say nothing of the school, theatre and library-building campaigns. Note,

for example, the case of Rigas Velestinlis (1757–98), whose first 'patriotic' work was a translation of the French novelist Rétif de la Bretonne. See R. Velestinlis, *Skoleion ton delikaton eraston* (Vienna 1790). See also the 'exhortatory' literature, a body of work that forms a distinct genre, collected by F. Iliou in *Dia tou Genous ton Fotismon: Aggelies Proepanastatikon Entypon (1734–1821)* (Athens 2008).

2. This was particularly true of a certain type of Greek book – 'learned' works of foreign origin whose production was often supported by the aid of subscribers. This system (dating to 1749) was more commonly used for secular rather than religious books. The latter, which still constituted the majority of Greek books published over the period, had a more reliable consumer base and source of financial support. F. Iliou, *Istories tou Ellniikou Vivliou* (Iraklion 2005), 81–95.
3. Note the general absence of any mention of the primates in journal editorials, the dedicatory pages of new books or the lists of subscribers often published with the same. Iliou, *Dia tou Genous ton Fotismon*.
4. *Proestos* was an official position and refers to a sectional chief, as discussed below.
5. However, if not participants in this exchange of ideas, the primates were sometimes pilloried in satirical works which implicated them in the impoverishment of the peasantry. See e.g. K. Dimaras, ed., *O Rossanglogallos* (Athens 1990), 22–6.
6. These were, according to Koliopoulos and Veremis, the possessors of 'real power'. J.S. Koliopoulos and T.M. Veremis, *Greece: The Modern Sequel* (New York 2002), 13.
7. Evidence of revival was visible in the founding of new schools and the growing enthusiasm for education expressed in the example of young Peloponnesians who 'flocked to the Academies of wise Europe to obtain those lights which their patrie was not then able to give them'. 'It is notable', the writer concluded, 'that last year four more young men entered academies in wise Europe, followed this year by several others. I say notable because all those studying in Italy are from the first families of the Peloponnese, a fact which permits us to conclude that patriotism is rising in those parts', *Hermis o Logios*, 1 June 1819, 581–2.
8. M. Pylia, *Les notables moreotes, fin du XVIIIe debut du XIXe siècle: fonctions et comportements* (Paris 2001), 92. Named by this author among the latter is the Deligiannis family of Karytaina, the patriarch of which, Ioannis (1738?–1819), emerges in his son's memoir in the guise of a Peloponnesian nation-builder who 'supported the rights of Christians' not only of his province 'but all of the Peloponnese'. The object of his aims was to enlighten 'the Peloponnesian people' of their 'true interests and the manner in which the civilized nations of the world lived'. K. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. 1* (Athens 1957), 27–8. Kanellos reports that he was himself 'given a few lessons' at the local Dimisanis school. The latter was established in 1764. K. Xatzopoulos, *Ellinika Scholeia stin periodo tis Othomanikis Kyriarchias (1453–1821)* (Thessaloniki 1991), 306.
9. In their search for a representative to increase sales in the Peloponnese, the publishers of *Hermis o Logios* could apparently get no closer than Athens. *Hermis o Logios*, 1 August 1817, 379.
10. See e.g. the descriptions of the Smyrna commercial lodge in the 15 October 1817 (520–30) and 1 November 1817 (549–67) editions of *Hermis o Logios*.
11. Of the approximately fifty Peloponnesians identified as '*politikoi*' in Filimon, all but one was inducted in the Peloponnese or Constantinople. I. Filimon, ed., *Dokimion Istorikon*

peri tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos, vol. 1 (Athens 1859), 387–416; see also A. Fotopoulos, *Oi Kotzambasides tis Peloponnisou* (Athens 2005), 256–7.

12. D. Stamatopoulos, 'Constantinople in the Peloponnese: The Case of the Dragoman of the Morea Georgios Wallerianos and Some Aspects of the Revolutionary Process', in A. Anastasopoulos and E. Kolovas, eds, *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1700–1850* (Rethymno 2007), 150.
13. Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 343–5.
14. Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 225; Pylia, 'Conflits Politiques et Comportements des Primats Chrétiens en Morée, avant la Guerre de l'independance', in *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1700–1850*, 138.
15. Reference is made to political traditions elsewhere in Europe where nobility was associated with membership in 'the nation'. For a useful discussion of these and other typologies of European nationalism, see X-M. Núñez, 'Nations and Territorial Identities in Europe: Transnational Reflections', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2010), 669–84.
16. See e.g. C. Keyder, 'The Ottoman Empire', in K. Barkey and M.V. Hagen, eds, *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building* (Boulder, CO 1997), 30–3.
17. Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 16.
18. N. Rotzokos, 'The Nation as a Political Subject: Comments on the Greek National Movement', in P. Pizanias, ed., *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event* (Istanbul 2011), 153–4.
19. P.E. Lekas, 'The Greek War of Independence from the Standpoint of Historical Sociology', *Historical Review*, Vol. 2 (2005), 175. Ideological conversion of elites is stressed more generally in A. Wimmer and Y. Feinstein, 'The Rise of the Nation-state Across the World, 1816–2001', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 75, No. 5 (2010), 770.
20. As Lekas argues elsewhere: 'The Greek War of Independence ought to be viewed as the specifically ''Greek exit'' from traditionality', Lekas, op. cit., 166, 175. Keyder places similar stress on the effect of ideas transmitted into the Balkans by the bourgeoisie. Keyder, op. cit., 30–3.
21. Lekas, op. cit., 161–83.
22. P. Sugar, 'Nationalism in Eastern Europe', in J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith, eds, *Nationalism* (Oxford 1994), 174.
23. See e.g. E.D. Weitz, 'From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions', *The American Historical Review,* Vol. 113, No. 5 (2008), 1313–43.
24. A. Kyrkini-Koutoula, *I Othomaniki dioikisi stin Ellada: I periptosi tis Peloponnisiou (1715–1821)* (Athens 1996), 22.
25. T. Gritsopoulos, *Ta Orlofika: I en Peloponniso epanastasis tou 1770 kai ta epakoloutha avtis* (Athens 1967), 7. At the village level, two *dimogerontes* were elected each year to manage local affairs. These elders also travelled once a year to the capital of their district to participate in the election of the *proestos;* the latter's election required the confirmation of local Ottoman officials. For an example of these transactions see *Istorikon Arxeion tou Stratigou Andreou Lontou (1789–1847*), Vol. 1. (Athens 1914), 2–5. Note finally that the forms of communal leadership described above were practiced elsewhere in the Ottoman Balkans. See e.g. S. Ivanova, 'Varos: The Elites of the *reaya* in the towns of Rumeli, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries', in A. Anastasopoulos, ed., *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire* (Rethymno 2005), 201–56.

26. For a fuller picture of the Peloponnesian administrative system, see Gritsopoulos, op. cit., 7–11; M. Sakellariou, *I Peloponnisos kata tin devteran tourkokratian (1715–1821)* (Athens 1939); Kyrkini-Koutoula, op. cit.
27. Here again, this tendency was visible elsewhere in the Ottoman Balkans. As another writes: 'Greek, and also Ottoman, sources amply testify to the fact that prominent Christians at least bore family names and adorned their names with markers which declared their superiority over common *zimmis* (*aci, kyr, -aki*)'. A. Anastasopoulos, 'The Mixed Elite of a Balkan Town: Keraferye in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire,* 266.
28. *Arxeion Kanellou Deligianni. Ta Eggrafa, 1779–1827* (Athens 1993), 17–37. Of the remaining items in the archive, another is a Greek translation of a Turkish document. Deligiannis reports that his older brother Theodorakis was indeed 'fluent in the Turkish language'. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. 1*, 67. These latter mainly relate to property transactions between the Deligiannis family and local *ayan*. *Arxeion Kanellou Deligianni*, 20–5.
29. *Istorikon Arxeion tou Stratigou Andreou Lontou*, 310–13.
30. One of the documents from the Deligiannis archive refers, for example, to the family's involvement in a church-building project, a venture that was traditionally discouraged by Ottoman authorities. The letter in question was addressed to an acquaintance of the Deligiannis in Vienna, a point which also demonstrates that the primates had contact with the diaspora communities across Europe. *Arxeion Kanellou Deligianni*, 34.
31. See Anastasopoulos for a survey of the privileges belonging to *ayan* and *proestoi* in other parts of the Balkans as well as the advantages accruing to the former 'in the context of Ottoman institutions', Anastasopoulos, 'The Mixed Elite of a Balkan Town', 259–67.
32. Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 14; N. Sarris, *Proepanastatika Ellada kai Osmaniko Kratos* (Athens 1993), 99. Within this cohort was a still more dominant trio of Muslim landholders whose holdings dwarfed all others. In order of wealth, these were Kâmilbey of Corinth, Arnantoglou of Tripoli, and Hotoman-zâde of Elide.
33. Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 343
34. Ibid.
35. Venice had conquered the Peloponnese in 1684.
36. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. 1*, 18. Note that the transliteration of *ragia ibaret* (*Ραγιὰ Ιμπαρέτ*) in the Deligiannis memoir raises problems as the term does not have a perfect Turkish match.
37. Ibid., 18. Papatsonis (1800–1888) gives a similar account. P. Papatsonis, *Apomnimonevmata apo ton xronon tis Tourkokratias mexri tis Vasileias Georgiou A* (Athens 1960), 27.
38. K. N. Sathas, *Tourkokratoumeni Ellas, 1453–1821* (Athens 1962; reprint of 1869 edition), 488. The statement appears with a few variations in other sources. See e.g. K. Zisios, ed., *Oi Mavromichaloi. Syllogi ton peri avton grafenton* (Athens 1903), 25–31.
39. The individual in question was Dimitrios Ypsilantis, brother of the *Etairia* leader, Alexander. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. II* (Athens 1957), 13.
40. The author of these remarks, Fotios Xrysanthopoulos (1798–1878), was himself a diaspora merchant and Peloponnesian native. Although he has harsh things to say about the primates, Deligiannis and others are spoken of elsewhere as patriots of the first order. F. Xrysanthopoulos, *Apomnimonevmata peri tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos* (Athens 1960; reprint of 1899 edition), 42–3; see also by the same author *Vioi Peloponnision Andron* (Athens 1960; reprint of 1888 edition).

41. Pylia, 'Conflits Politiques', 137. Another writes: 'the Moreot kodjabashis... to a greater extent than their brethren elsewhere on the Greek mainland, were powerful and aggressive partners in the Ottoman power structure of their province.' J. C. Alexander, 'Some Aspects of the Strife among the Moreot Christian Notables, 1789–1816.' *Epeteris Hetaireias Stereoelladikon Meleton*, 5 (1974–1975), 474.
42. Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 41, 63–4.
43. Deligiannis recounts for example the vigilante style murder of a local Muslim which he and his brothers commissioned in retaliation for the death of an ally, the hired assassins leaving the dead man's dismembered body in a sack, 'in the public road', in which they also placed a note stating 'this will be the reward for anyone who dares to murder a primate', Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. 1*, 83.
44. For a review of the violence in the Peloponnese during these years, see Fotopoulos op. cit., 235.
45. In the words of one, the introduction of tax farming in the Peloponnese, which this scholar traces to 1747, precipitated 'continuous struggles among local notables, both Muslim and Christian'. Y. Nagata, *Studies on the Social and Economic History of the Ottoman Empire* (Izmir 1995), 105. For additional background see S.N. Faroqhi, ed., *The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839* (Cambridge 2006); H. Inalcik, ed., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, vol. 2, 1600–1914* (Cambridge 2004).
46. See again Gritsopoulos, op. cit.; F. Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1768–1777: The First Crisis* (Princeton, NJ 1989); N. B. Rotzokos, *Ethnafimisi kai Ethnogenesi: Orlofika kai Ellinike Istoriografia* (Athens 2007).
47. Sarris, op. cit., 109–10. By the time Orlov's flotilla arrived off the Ionian Islands in the early 1770 tensions were mounting: 'This war will be the most atrocious ever seen', wrote an Italian observer as the fleet made its way into the Eastern Mediterranean, 'because the Turks will slaughter any Greeks they capture, and no quarter will be given by Greeks or Muscovites to Turks or Jews', cited in F. Venturi, op. cit., 41.
48. The Dragoman of the Fleet, also known as the chief interpreter of the Sultan, was a Christian [Nikolaos Mavrogenis (d. 1790)]. However, unlike most of those who held this position, Mavrogenis was not of the *Fanar*.
49. *Arxeion Kanellou Deligianni*, 17–18.
50. These tensions were encouraged by the continuous threat of war between Russia and the Porte. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I*, 46–7. See also the memoirs of Papatsonis and Kontakis (1782–1854), whose grandfather was among the victims of the violence ensuing from the revolt. Most of the figures cited here had similar stories to tell, including the previously cited Petrobey, whose uncle's death in the days following the Russian withdrawal became the subject of popular lore. K. Kontakis, *Apomnimonevmata* (Athens 1957), 18; Zisios, op. cit., 25–31. Ioannis Deligiannis was also involved in the plot and one of the many who took refuge on nearby islands before receiving pardons from Ottoman officials.
51. Sarris, op. cit. 294.
52. J. Alexander, *Brigandage and Public Order in the Morea, 1685–1806* (Athens 1985), 49. This account is reprised in Fotopoulos, op. cit., 236. See also Sarris, op. cit. 37–43, and Kyrkini-Koutoula, op. cit. 171.
53. Nagata, a notable exception, writes that the local Christian notables were 'inspired... by the thought of Nationalism in Europe through their commercial activities with Europe.

As a result they had been put in an ambivalent situation'. However, the author provides no supporting evidence. Nagata also departs with most recent historians by considering the revolt as having the character of a 'national independence movement', Nagata, op. cit. 106, 108.

54. French efforts included the dispatch of the Stephanopoulos brothers, Greeks from Corsica, to the Peloponnese in 1797. Their experiences were published in D. Stephanopoli, *Voyage de Dimo et Nicolo Stephanopoli en Grèce pendant les anneés V et VI* (Paris 1800). These activities, along with British countermeasures, are discussed in Alexander, *Brigandage and Public Order*, 60–7.
55. Banditry appears to have grown substantially during the era, although the exact causes remain in question, leading to a *Firman* in 1805 ordering their suppression. The language of the decree placed particular blame on the notables who were accused of using the klefts as a means to impose further exactions on the *reaya*. Alexander, *Brigandage and Public Order*, 89–90.
56. Note that the Mani had been administratively separated from the Peloponnese in 1776.
57. Political affairs in the Mani are described in Alexander, *Brigandage and Public Order,* 66–7.
58. J. Savant, 'Napoléon et la libération de la Grèce', *L'hellinisme contemporain*, VI (1952), 106–9. As John Petropulos wrote, Mavromichalis's 'constant need for money was... the outcome of having to provide largesse in order to maintain extensive political influence', J. A. Petropulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833–1843* (Princeton, NJ 1968), 69.
59. Veli is portrayed more sympathetically elsewhere and even appears as something of a well-meaning 'enlightened despot' in Kyrkini-Koutoula, op. cit. 107–14. For background on Ali Pasha see K. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece* (Princeton, NJ 1999).
60. Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 351–2; Pylia, 'Conflits Politiques', 138–9.
61. These events are discussed in Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I*, 47–50. Kontakis also mentions a gathering of 'Turkish and Christian primates to discuss the ways in which Veli Pasha (son of Ali Pasha) might be evicted from the Peloponnese', Kontakis, op. cit., 23. See also the memoirs of Xrysanthopoulos who writes that in their distress the ayan 'sought the Greek *kotsabasides* as comrades'. Xrysanthopoulos, op. cit., 41. Kanellos Deligiannis provides finally a rather extensive list of attendees. In addition to his father and older brother, 15 other primates and four Metropolitans are also mentioned. The Muslim contingent included four original signatories as well as 16 others who were shortly brought into the plot. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I*, 50–1. For the role factionalism played in the plot see e.g. Stamatopoulos, op. cit., 151.
62. Napoleon's occupation of the Ionian Islands (1797) also had a decisive effect on the previously-cited Rigas. C. M. Woodhouse, *Rhigas Velestinlis: The Proto-Martyr of the Greek Revolution* (Limni 1995), 104–5
63. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I*, 50.
64. Papatsonis, op. cit., 40. Not surprisingly, this affair received a hostile treatment in earlier Greek historiography. For one scholar who had seen the Papatsonis manuscript (but not the Deligiannis) such reports had no credibility, 'for the Christians and Turks of the Morea could never unite themselves in a common patriotic enterprise', G. Vlaxogiannis, *Kleftes tou Moria* (Athens 1935), 186n.
65. Deligiannis's account is reprised in Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 54, 352; Pylia, 'Conflits Politiques', 139–40; Kyrkini-Koutoula, op. cit. 117–18; Fotopoulos, op. cit. 226.

66. I. Filemon, *Dokimion historikon peri tis Filikis Etairias* (Navplion, 1834), 110–12.
67. See e.g. J. Savant, 'Napoléon et la libération de la Grèce', *L'hellinisme contemporain*, IV (1950), 475. These documents suggest that French officials were more cautious about the project and concerned about the confederates' ability to survive an early test of strength with Ali Pasha.
68. Ibid., 334–5.
69. In addition to Farmakis and Sisinis, those mentioned by Deligiannis and Yakoub include, Sayid Aga of Patras, Moussa Aga of Vardounian. Savant, *L'hellinisme contemporain*, IV (1950), 336. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I,* 50–1.
70. Savant, *L'hellinisme contemporain*, IV (1950), 336.
71. Ibid.
72. Included within the archives is a letter from French commissioner Bessieres to his superiors concerning the visit of Petrobey in 1809 requesting 'in the name of all the others the protection of His Majesty' as well as armaments. J. Savant, *L'hellinisme contemporain,* IV (1950), 478; Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata,vol. I*, 55.
73. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I,* 56.
74. These observations were recorded in 1817. Filimon, *Dokimion Istorikon peri tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos*, 135. This same Perraivos was an accomplice of Rigas Velestinlis who sought to foment a Pan-Balkan revolt against the Porte and reorganize the empire into a multi-ethnic and religious unitary state.
75. The placement of these two major Christian figures on opposite sides of the conspiracy raises questions about the role of factional rivalry in the very inspiration of the plot. Internal cleavages have also been used as a means to explain the Muslim involvement in the plot. As Pylia writes, the Muslim conspirators were of Albanian origin; the author further suggests that the major *aghas* (Kâmilbey, Arnantoglou) did not participate in the 'separatist movement' because they were more conscious of their own interests and 'above all, their identity', Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 353. Deligiannis writes that these former were excluded from the plot as they could not be trusted. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I,* 51. The sudden death of Farmaki, a key figure in the plot, may help to explain the failure of the two groups of notables to sustain their collaboration.
76. Alexander, 'Some Aspects of the Strife among the Moreot Christian Notables', 488–9; Pylia, *Les notables moreotes*, 359. Both Pylia and Alexander agree that the term 'patrie' does not have a 'national' character in these texts, but refers to the Morea.
77. *Istorikon Arxeion tou Stratigou Andreou Lontou*, 89–90. This 1820 document bears a hint of duplicity as the three Christian signatories had by this time become members of the *Filiki Etairia*.
78. Stamatopoulos, op. cit.
79. Ibid., 153, 160–1. Stamatopoulos raises an important point concerning how displacement at Constantinople threatened Deligiannis's property interests. On a related note, the expropriation of Muslim land merits further research as a potential factor in notable 'rebelliousness'. Primate silence on the fate of these properties (later collected as 'national lands') is indeed conspicuous; remarks attributed to *Etairia* apostles further suggest that suspicions of this kind were not wholly absent. Fotopoulos, op. cit., 290.
80. Ibid., 260. Dimitrios Perroukas joined in Constantinople in 1820; Xaralambos and Ioannis in Argos in 1819. Filimon, *Dokimion Istorikon peri tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos,* 408.
81. Fotopoulos, op. cit., 289–91.
82. Stamatopoulos, op. cit., 161.

83. Fotopoulos, op. cit., 269-70.
84. G. Kordatos, *I Koinoniki Simasia tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos tou 1821* (Athens 1946), 122.
85. English readers can find this thesis in N. Kaltchas, *Introduction to the Constitutional History of Modern Greece* (New York 1940).
86. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I,* 99. Deligiannis appears to be responding here to Nikolaos Spiliadis (1785–1867) whose own memoirs were published in 1851. See N. Spiliadis, *Apomnimonevmata dia na xrisimevsosin eis tin Nean Ellinikin Istorian (1821–1843), vol. 1* (Athens 1972; reprint of 1851 edition), 10–11.
87. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I*, 80–2. Other sources suggest the years 1819 or 1820. Filimon, *Dokimion Istorikon peri tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos*, 406. These events also coincide in the Deligiannis narrative with a sudden change in the taxation policies; these stresses are described in documents from the archive. See *Arxeion Kanellou Deligianni*, 25–7.
88. Previous histories have shown that a large number of those who first joined the Society were minor merchants and occasionally destitute. See e.g. E. Protopsaltis, *I Filiki Etairia* (Athens 1964).
89. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I*, 80–2. The embarrassment suffered by the agent was experienced by others of his station. See e.g. E. Xanthos, 'Apomnimonevmata', in G.P. Kournoutos, ed., *To Apomnimonevma, 1453–1953* (Athens 1959).
90. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. I*, 82.
91. Fotopoulos, op. cit., 260
92. Filimon, *Dokimion Istorikon peri tis Filikis Etairias*, 336.
93. Ibid., 336–7. The list of primates who took part in these deliberations and appear as signatories of the letter described above includes Ioannis Perroukas.
94. Ibid., 340.
95. Ibid., 340.
96. Fotopoulos, op. cit., 278.
97. Ibid., 279.
98. Ibid.
99. The recruiting agent (Perraivos, again), made his rounds in the dress of a Russian Army officer. Although impressed by the news of the Tsar's support, Petrobey sought confirmation from other sources and sent two letters through an emissary to the Russian Foreign Minister, Ioannis Kapodistrias (1776–1831), a native of the Ionian Islands, in St Petersburg. Although these letters, dated November 1818 and August 1819, have been lost they were apparently read by Kapodistrias, who, in consultation with the Tsar, strenuously sought to dissuade Mavromichalis from embarking on the proposed course of action. Zisios, op. cit., 52. Note that this letter never reached Petrobey, its carrier having been murdered en route – an incident that has led to suggestions of conspiracy. See e.g. C. M. Woodhouse, *Capodistria* (Oxford 1973), 219–21. Kapodistrias quit the tsar's service after the outbreak of the revolution and was later named the insurgent nation's first president. Ironically, his tenure was cut short by assassination at the hands of the Mavromichalis family in 1831.
100. The letter is dated February 1819. Zisios, op. cit., 53–6.
101. Mavromichalis, Grigorianos and Troupakidis.
102. Filimon, *Dokimion Istorikon peri tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos*, 158–61. The present translation differs slightly from that found in G. Frangos, 'The Philike Etairia: A Premature National Coalition', in R. Clogg, ed., *The Struggle for Greek Independence* (London

1973), 98. The term 'captains' is, for example, considered here to be another reference to the signees of the agreement and not (as Frangos suggests) the klefts.

103. Frangos, op. cit., 98.
104. See *Etairia* documents from the Sekeris archive in Filimon, *Dokimion Istorikon peri tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos*, 387–416.
105. Kontakis, op. cit., 28, italics added. Other sources suggest this occurred in 1819. Filimon, *Dokimion Istorikon peri tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos,* 397.
106. Kontakis notes at the beginning of his memoir state that after a review of his genealogy he would 'pass on to a historical introduction of events in the Peloponnese chiefly from 1769 to the revolution of 1821', Kontakis, op. cit., 8–9. The Deligiannis memoir begins 'Everyone knows that the Peloponnese was the last to fall into the heavy yoke of the aristocracy of the Venetians. . . ', Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata*, *vol. I*, 18.
107. Papatsonis, op. cit., 60.
108. How different, for example, are the memoirs of the Peloponnesian merchant Xrysanthopoulos whose reconstruction of the revolutionary era begins with a reference to the French Revolution and evokes the name of famous scholars such as Korais. Xrysanthopoulos, op. cit., 25.
109. The difficulties faced by the 'Greek *ancien régime*' in the independence era are discussed in Koliopoulos and Veremis, op. cit., 11–43. These included the economic burdens of the war as well as new challenges to their power by rivals from the *Fanar*.
110. Petrobey, imprisoned at the time, denied having any role in the incident. However, he remained an unapologetic critic of the assassinated president. See his 'Political Testament' in Zisios, op. cit., 249–54.
111. The Epidavros Constitutional Assembly of December 1821–January 1822, which was proposed by Ypsilantis 'in order to obtain national recognition of a unitary state with a supreme leader', had nevertheless to take into account the interests of the 'Peloponnesian primates' (Anagnostis Deligiannis, Andreas Zaimis and Mavromichalis were among those present). In the final document, 'the regional authorities were recognized and their autonomy acknowledged'. Revolution, civil war, foreign intervention and the creation of the Greek Kingdom ultimately forced a recalibration of political attitudes and indeed Anagnostis, Zaimis, and Mavromichalis showed some capacity for adaptation, being later identified as the leaders of embryonic 'parties', Petropulos, op. cit., 20, 62, 83.
112. *Arxeion Kanellou Deligianni*, 106. This document appears to relate to a period immediately before the outbreak of civil war in 1824 when Deligiannis, Lontos, and Zaimis, in alliance with Kolokotronis, sought to challenge the provisional government, and sound out opinion in other parts of Greece. Deligiannis, *Apomnimonevmata, vol. II*, 191–3.
113. As others write, the Greeks of the diaspora 'appeared to exert an influence far greater than their numbers. . . would have suggested'. This was especially true in the case of the ideological representation of the Greek cause. Koliopoulos and Veremis, op. cit., 13.
114. See, for example, the comparative difficulties of imagining a post-imperial existence for landed elites within the Spanish Empire. J. Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton 2006) and A. Annino and F-X. Guerra, eds, *Inventando la nación. Iberoamérica siglo XIX* (Mexico City 2003).
115. This tendency was perhaps further encouraged by the fact that the Peloponnese was often treated by foreign powers as a distinct objective of foreign policy. 'The conquest

of Greece depends on the taking of the Morea', wrote an advisor to Napoleon in 1797. Savant, *L'hellinisme contemporain*, IV (1950), 324.

116. Figures like Petrobey also clearly recognized the value of evoking the concept of 'Mother Hellas' in their representations to the outside world, as illustrated in his address 'to the European courts' on becoming 'Hegemon' of the Messinian Senate formed after the outbreak of the revolution. The 'Ottoman tyranny', Petrobey declared, had left 'the unfortunate Peloponnesian *Graikous*' with nothing but a voice to express their groans. With this they asked 'for the aid of all the refined European races... To speak most directly, our mother Hellas, from whom you too were enlightened, demands your philanthropic assistance, and funds, and arms, and counsels', Zisios, op. cit., 64–5.
117. Ivanova, op. cit., 231.
118. K. Barkey, Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective (New York 2008), 296.

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