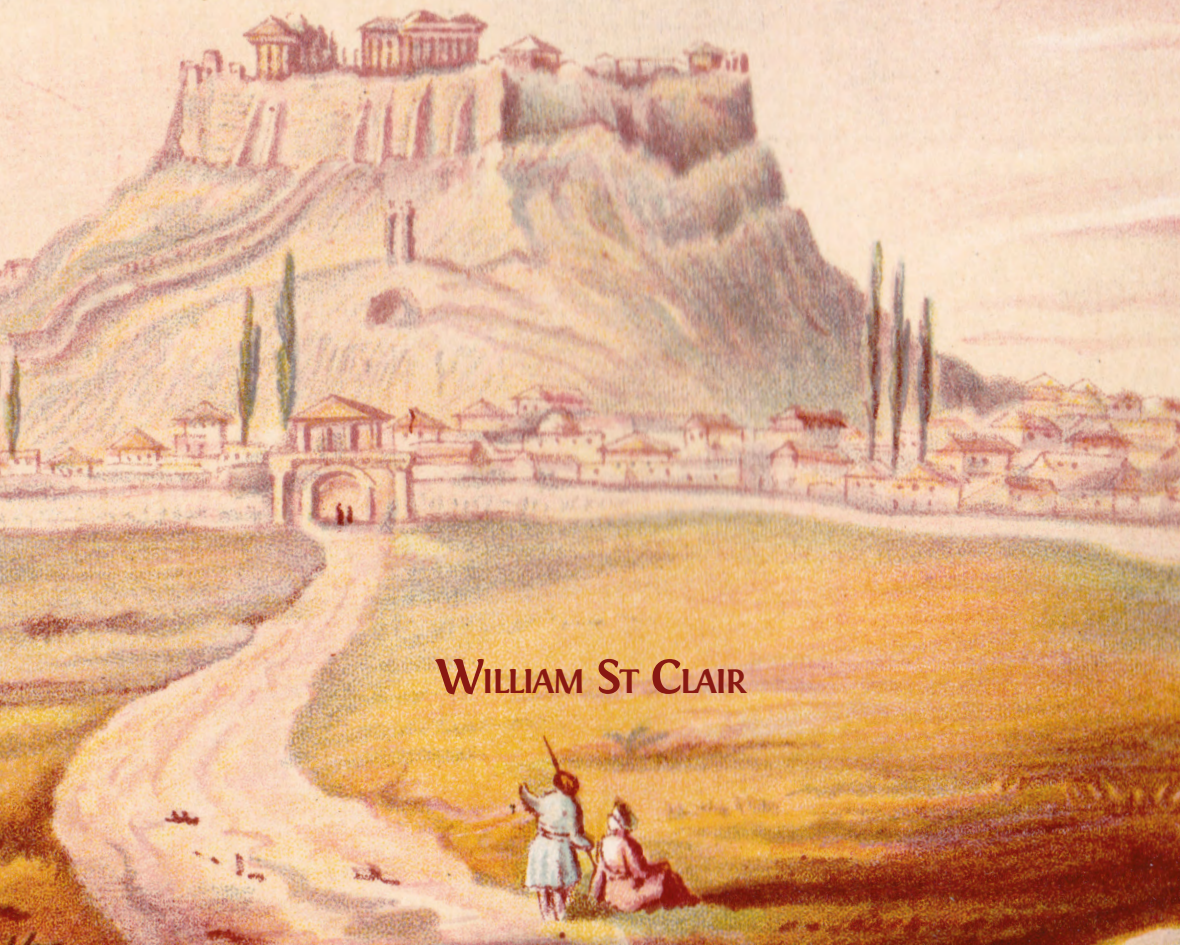
Who Saved the Parthenon?

A New History of the Acropolis Before, During and After the Greek Revolution



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https://www.openbookpublishers.com

ISBN Paperback: 9781783744619

ISBN Hardback: 9781783744626

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781783744633

ISBN Digital ebook (epub): 9781783744640

ISBN Digital ebook (mobi): 9781783744657

ISBN XML: 9781800642997

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0136

Cover image: Figure 2.7. 'View of the Acropolis from the banks of the Illysus, Sep[r] 1824.' Chromolithograph from a contemporary amateur picture. From: William Black, L.R.C.S.E., Surgeon, H.M.S. Chanticleer, *Narrative of Cruises in the Mediterranean in H.M.S. "Euryalus" and "Chanticleer" during the Greek War of Independence (1822–1826)* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1900), frontispiece. The chromolithograph was made by McLagan and Cumming of Edinburgh *c*.1900. Public domain.

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6. The Evidence

Any attempt to understand why the Greek Revolution took the form that it did, and the role played by the Parthenon and the other ancient monuments, involves examining a documentary record that is huge, rich, and varied. We have many official statements of their aims by the main active participants, a huge body of diplomatic correspondence, much of it printed, plus numerous personal reports of how the war was experienced by those who fought, some written by generals and admirals, others by officers, soldiers, and sailors. There are numerous accounts by onlookers, some of whom, in modern terms, would be regarded as war correspondents. We also have occasional reports of the voices of people, such as enslaved women and girls, that seldom featured in the main historiographical traditions that began during the Revolution and that have, in many cases, been followed by others until recent times.[1]

Of the printed accounts by eye-witnesses written in Greek, English, French, German, and Italian, some are immediately contemporaneous and others composed soon after with hindsight. By several orders of magnitude, the majority of such accounts were composed by foreigners who brought their own horizons of expectations to their interpretation of the events they recorded. What is reassuring, as far as reconstructing the course of events is concerned, is that the accounts, although composed independently by people from different backgrounds and from opposing sides, are largely consistent both with one another and with the smaller corpus of testimony used by predecessors. In many cases it is not hard to judge how far the accounts have been imbued, consciously or unconsciously, with the retrospective myth-making on which imagined communities depend and thrive, including notions of providentialism and determinism in their many forms.

1 Noted occasionally as they occur and in Chapter 14.

 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0136.06

Printed records are, inescapably, socially produced within the constraints of the book industries as they existed at the time and within the contexts of particular cultural and political economies, including technology, intellectual property, and the textual controls of censorship and self-censorship. Since they were expected to be encountered by wider constituencies of implied and intended readers than were known to the authors personally, it is useful to think of them as speech acts composed for a particular occasion. Besides the printed records, there is however also a large body of personal records in manuscript, much of it scarcely explored, that both adds to the printed accounts and, in some cases, since we know who were the intended and actual readerships, enables us to understand why the printed records took the form that they did.

Those documents written in Greek, including decrees by the Provisional Government, memoirs, and other papers composed by combatants and politicians, are extensive and are gradually being published online.[2] However, as it happens, only a few bear on the situation in and around Athens over which, for most of the time, the authors had little direct control. Indeed, some of the documents that are most directly relevant to recovering the role of the Parthenon in the conflict are at present only known from transcriptions, translations, and extracts made by others.[3]

As for the other main party to the conflict, around one hundred and fifty million documents produced by the Ottoman Government from its foundation around 1300 until its formal dissolution in 1920 are known to have survived, of which Esin Yurusev, in a book published in 2004, estimated that about twenty per cent had at that time been classified

2 Notably 'The Greek Revolution of 1821: Digital Archive. Greek archives relating to the Revolution of 1821.' A database of documents, including those of the Greek Government and provisional governments before independence, with more planned, is in progress. They are summarised by Beaton, Roderick, *Byron's War, Romantic Rebellion, Greek Revolution* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 318–29. https://www.act4greece.gr/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/1821_act4greece_EN-PDF-1.pdf

3 They are noted as they occur. Among the most notable are some of those transcribed by [Jourdain] *Mémoires historiques et Militaires sur Les Evénements de la Grece, depuis 1822, jusqu'au Combat de Navarin; par Jourdain, Capitaine de frégate de la Marine Royale, Colonel au Service du Gouvernement Grec* (Paris: Brissot-Thivars, 1828), cited as they occur.

analytically.[4] Writing in a book published in 2005, Caglar Keydar estimated that of 50,000 catalogue entries under just one classification: 'imperial decrees', in western terms often loosely referred to as firmans, around ten per cent relate to the Greek Revolution.[5] Among other documents known to exist but that have scarcely been noticed except in the pioneering work of Şükrü H. llicak, are the almost daily reports of the grand vizier to the sultan, the minutes of the Imperial Council, numerous manuscript comments by the sultan, and decrees sent to provincial governors almost every day.[6] Until the evidence of these documents is brought to bear, histories of the Greek Revolution are bound to remain incomplete and liable to be superseded. However, as far as the role of the Parthenon is concerned, although more documents are likely be found, including the texts of some of the numerous firmans summarized in Appendix A and elsewhere, enough is already available to enable the history of the building to be recovered to such a high degree of coverage, chronology, and detail that its contribution to the Revolution is unlikely to be superseded except at the margin.

As for the role of the foreign powers, multi-volume edited collections of official documents that reported the international negotiations surrounding the establishing of the Greek state were printed long ago.[7]

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4 Yurusev, Esin, 'Studying Ottoman Diplomacy: A Review of the Sources', in Yurdusev, A. Nuri, editor, *Ottoman Diplomacy, Conventional or Unconventional?* (London: Palgrave, 2004), 169.

5 In his introductory chapter to Birtek, Faruk and Thalia Dragonas, editors, *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey* (London: Routledge, 2005), 3.

6 Ilicak, H. Şükrü, *A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821–1826*, PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 14 September 2011, 9 and 21.

7 Notably British Foreign Office, *Papers relative to the affairs of Greece, 1826–1832* (London: Harrison, 1835); Ubicini, *La question d'orient devant l'Europe: documents officiels manifestes, notes, firmans, circulaires, etc., depuis l'origine du différend / annotés et précédés d'une exposition de la Question des Lieux-Saints par M.A. Ubicini* (second edition Paris: Dentu, 1854); Driault and Lhéritier, *Histoire diplomatique de la Grèce de 1821 à nos jours* edited by J. E. Driault and Michel Lhéritier. With bibliographies (Paris: 1925–1926) and Prokesch-Osten, Anton, Graf von, *Geschichte des Abfalls der Griechen: vom türkischen Reiche im Jahre 1821 und der Gründung des hellenischen Königreiches aus diplomatischem Standpuncte* (Vienna: Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1867). Strupp, Charles, *La Situation Internationale De La Grèce (1821–1917): Recueil De Documents Choisis Et Édités Avec Une Introduction Historique Et Dogmatique* (Zurich: Die Verbindung, 1918). One hundred and forty-one official papers, mainly British, but including some Austrian and French, were published by Fleming, D.C., ed., *John Capodistrias and the conference of London (1828–1831)* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1970). And there are other documents

In 1833, even before all the outstanding questions had been settled, the Greek Government itself printed a summary of the main agreements under which independence would soon be internationally recognised.[8] Substantial extracts from the diplomatic correspondence of Lord Strangford, British Ambassador in Constantinople from 1821 to 1824, have been published online and in printed form, with commentary and many other primary materials, by Theophilus C. Prousis.[9] The diplomatic documents are indispensable for any attempt to understand the motives and changing policies of the powers as they developed year by year, month by month, letter by letter, conference by conference. The collections are, however, also monuments to assumptions about the ability of foreign governments to understand and to steer the course of events in faraway countries with different languages and traditions, not all of which were understood even by the Ottoman leaderships in Constantinople. And, even at the time, there were diplomats who questioned the usefulness of bombarding the Ottoman Government with unwelcome, often ill-informed, advice, if indeed the documents were ever even read except by the interpreters ('dragomans') through whom all communication passed.[10]

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produced by representatives of other western countries besides Britain and France that have scarcely been explored. For example Argenti, Philip. ed., *The Massacres of Chios: described in contemporary diplomatic reports, edited with an introduction by Philip P. Argenti* (London: Lane, 1932) was able to include diplomatic records from the embassies and consulates of Prussia, Austria, the Netherlands, the Two Sicilies, and Spain, and a financial document relating to a ransom from the Ralli family archives.

8 *Recueil des Traités, Actes et Pièces Concernans la Fondation de la Royauté en Grèce, et le Tracé de ces Limites* (Nauplia, Imprimerie Royale, 1833). The texts of the formal treaties and protocols governing British relations with the Ottoman Empire, the protectorate over the Ionian Islands and their later incorporation into Greece, and some Ottoman decrees or 'firmans' are usefully collected in a semi-official publication, Xenos, Stephanos, *East and West* (London: Trübner, 1865).

9 Noted with full references in the Bibliography.

10 For example Fontanier, V., *Voyages en Orient entrepris par ordre du gouvernement français de l'année 1821 à l'année 1829* (Paris: Mongie, 1829), 55 and 72. The crucial role of the dragomans is vividly shown in many of the documents printed in British Foreign Office, *Papers relative to the affairs of Greece, 1826–1832* (London: Harrison, 1835), which include examples of the dragomans being invited to conduct negotiations, sometimes in collaboration with the dragomans assigned to other countries, and the verbatim reports they produced of who said what to whom and when during meetings with Ottoman officials. A disparaging word portrait of the British Ambassador, Stratford Canning, who had some success in influencing the policies of the Ottoman leaderships by giving advice and who played a leading, probably decisive, role in the saving of the monuments of Athens from destruction during

As for the realms of ideas, discourses, and justifications, that both helped to drive the course of events and responded to them, the evidence, although also plentiful, reflects the huge differences in the historical circumstances, as well as in the laws, customs, and practices, of the participants. And there were huge differences too in the understanding among the active participants of the contribution of the fourth party to the conflict, the ancient Greeks, and what had survived from classical times both as written texts and as buildings on the ground, of which the Parthenon and the other monuments in Athens were, at the time of the Revolution, the most insistent visual reminders.

In terms of potential ability to get their message across, both locally and to wider publics and policy-makers overseas, the Greek Revolutionaries and their supporters had many advantages over their opponents. From the beginning a vast literature of printed books, contemporary memoirs and histories, proclamations, pamphlets, engravings, and later lithographs, poured from the bookshops and print shops of Europe and North America, almost all favourable to the Greek Revolutionary cause.[11] This body of texts, most of which circulated only in Europe, was one of the main means by which the prestige of the ancient Greeks was mobilized in support of the moderns. The Revolutionaries themselves began to receive printing presses from overseas from 1824, enabling them to make and circulate multiple copies of documents both in Greece and abroad. Although levels of literacy appear already to have been high in some regions, particularly in Athens, and many of the main participants were able to depend on oral reports and on others doing the reading and translating on their behalf, the Revolutionary side was able to mobilize the potentialities of print far more effectively than their opponents.[12]

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the war and its aftermath, to be discussed in Chapters 18 to 22, as the hectoring 'Sir Hector Stubble', is discussed in Chapter 20.

11 Many printed writings are noted by Droulia, L., *Philhellénisme: ouvrages inspirés par la guerre de l'indépendance grecque 1821–1833, répertoire bibliographique* (Athens, Publications du Centre de recherches néo-helléniques de la Fondation nationale de la recherche scientifique, [n.d.], 1974) and more have been discovered since. Much information about other forms of mediation, including pictures, newspapers, and material objects, such as ornamental pottery especially for France, is in Barau, Denys, *La Cause des Grecs, Une Histoire du Mouvement Philhellène (1821–1829)* (Paris: Honoré Champion Editeur, 2009).

12 The languages in use and the extent of literacy in Athens before the Revolution are discussed in Chapter 4.

By contrast, the Ottoman Government in Constantinople, right until the end of the war, while producing thousands of documents written in manuscript, did not possess a single printing press with which it could prepare multiple copies.[13] The Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople, the supreme authority of the Greek-speaking Orthodox, and itself an Ottoman institution participating in the millet system that acted as censor and licensor of texts printed in the Greek language, also did not print extensively at this time.[14] The extent of literacy among the many communities who lived within the Ottoman territories has not yet been systematically studied, but it was at best patchy, as was access to such written texts as they may have been able to read. The two main forms of the Albanian language, for example, spoken by the inhabitants of many places in what is geographically and politically now Greece, including Athens and its hinterland, and by many of the imperial troops recruited from the territories of modern Albania for the Ottoman army, were not yet written languages nor were their dialectics mutually comprehensible.

Visual Display and its Uses

At the time of the outbreak of Greek Revolution, the Ottoman Government, having largely denied itself the use of print and engraving, the two main technologies able to carry information and ideas across distance and time, relied mainly on public display and performance, as it had for hundreds of years, and on the reports, whether oral or written, that fanned out from witnesses of these displays and performances. One of the sights most commonly encountered by residents of Constantinople over many centuries was the Friday (the Muslim sabbath) procession of the sultan and the senior office-holders of the government, with their staffs, to and from the mosque. These processions, which were especially magnificent during the Festival of Bairam, were caught in visual form by a French artist, Antoine Ignace Melling, a long-term resident of the city, around 1800 when Selim III was sultan. A version, in reduced size, was

13 Noted by Stratford Canning, Kew FO 78/155, 28. As a voracious and indefatigable author and collector of official and other documents, Canning's remark deserves to be given respect, although there was, or had been until recently, a local press producing books and translations as will be discussed in Chapter 8.

14 For its reliance on the British state, and its warships, to send letters securely see the examples in Appendix E.

included in two pictures inserted as frontispieces into a book published in France in 1817, reproduced as Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1. 'The march of the sultan to [and from] the mosque during Bairam' Hand-coloured engravings.[15]

15 Tancoigne, J.M. *Voyage à Smyrne, dans l'archipel et l'ile de Candie, en 1811, 1812, 1813 et 1814; suivi d'une notice sur Péra et d'une description de la marche du Sultan. Par J. M. Tancoigne, attaché en 1807 à l'Ambassade de France en Perse, et depuis Interprète et Chancelier du Consulat de la Canée; Ouvrage orné de deux gravures, chacune quadruple du format in-18, et représentant le Cortège du Sultan, d'aprés un dessin colorié de M. Melling* (Paris: Nepveu, 1817). Both images slightly abridged. A fuller description is given by Pertusier, Charles, Officier au Corps Royal de l'Artillerie, attaché' à l'Ambassade de France près la Porte Ottomane, *Promenades pittoresques dans Constantinople et sur les rives du Bosphore, Suivies d'une notice sur la Dalmatie* (Paris: Nicolle, 1815), i, 391–411. Descriptions in words of the performance of power in the long eighteenth century, including ambassadorial audiences with the sultan and the grand vizier, are frequent. Visual presentations, which are more rare, are included in books such as Baltimore, Lord, *A tour to the East, in the years 1763 and 1764, with remarks on the city of Constantinople and the Turks; also select pieces of Oriental wit, poetry and wisdom* (London: printed by Richardson and Clark, 1767), who made a point of claiming that he was not influenced by predecessors. A later picture that shows the entrance to the palace where the Friday procession began, one of the most frequented areas of central Constantinople, is shown as Figure 6.2.

It was the custom for money to be scattered, and for the sultan and many of the high officials to sacrifice three sheep daily during the festival, one of which was publicly killed by the sultan's own hand. The meat that was distributed was enough, it was said, to provide food for the poor for several months, and also to enable the Ottoman leaderships to present themselves as protectors.[16] And there were many other such displays, including the ceremonies marking the arrival of foreign ambassadors and the public performance of international friendship.[17] In this society where display and performance were of greater importance than words or pictures, outsiders, including the settled European community, understood the need to translate the former into terms with which they and their fellow-Europeans were not only more familiar, but that gave a durability and mobility to these other media of communication that consumed themselves as they occurred. In innumerable books prepared by western European writers and artists who lived there, the Ottoman Empire, including the territories that were to become the nation state of Greece, was presented as a vast and varied costumed theatre, caught momentarily in static form.

What the local residents of Constantinople made of the displays is hard to recover without potentially confusing the responses of actual viewers with those implied, and hoped for, by the rhetorics. Those observers, like some of the viewers of the picture, might recognize the office-holders from their distinctive ceremonial costumes, such as the procession led by the grand admiral on horseback, (capitan pasha) who had special responsibilities for the islands of the Archipelago, and followed by the grand vizier and others. The bearded rider at the right of the first image is the Reis Efendi, the secretary of the sultan's council, who, in the absence of a Foreign Minister at this time, was the official

16 Habesci, Elias, *The present state of the Ottoman empire, containing a more accurate and interesting account … of the Turks than any yet extant. Including a particular description of the court and seraglio of the Grand Signor…translated from the French manuscript of Elias Habesci, many years resident in Constantinople, in the service of the Grand Signor* (London: Baldwin, 1784), 105.

17 Descriptions of some of the ceremonies of welcome, including transcribed speeches by the Dragomans, are given by Ferté-Meun, Comtesse de la, *Lettres sur le Bosphore, ou Relation d'un voyage en différentes parties de l'Orient, pendant les années 1816, 1817, 1818 et 1819,* Deuxieme édition *revue, corrigée et augmentée de deux lettres et de la Chapelle de la dernière heure, l'histoire grecque* (Paris: Locard et Davi, 1822) who was present at some in 1817. Those in English, by Byron, Lady Elgin, and others, that are better known, are consistent with her account.

that the ambassadors normally dealt with. The sultan himself is shown in the second image.

Non-Muslims would, we may be confident, understand that, whatever rights and privileges were accorded to other communities recognized by the millet system, the Ottoman Empire was primarily a Muslim state, in which the civil and religious authorities shared power, reinforcing one another's claim to legitimacy, including in relation to the Shia Muslim state located in what in modern terms is called Iran or previously Persia. Individual Ottoman office-holders were frequently disgraced, sometimes summarily put to death. A map of the courts of the Seraglio made in the 1820s shows the 'Niches in which Heads are laid' on either side of the 'Sublime Porte', the only gate from the outside world into the first court of the imperial palace, which performed their cautionary role whether or not they were occupied.[18] In the middle of the first court where all visitors were kept waiting and had time to look around was a 'Pillar where Pashas' heads are exposed', a reminder that none, however elevated, could escape Ottoman justice.[19] After the displays of power came the displays of glory, including a library of religious books, numerous female slaves, mostly white-skinned Georgians and Circassians, and male eunuchs, mostly black-skinned from Africa, and a collection of jewelled turbans, all presented among colourful carpets and mirrors that intensified the perceived size of the room. Those 'presents' made by foreign ambassadors that were 'composed of massive gold or silver' were mostly sent to the mint to be melted down, coined money being a convenient way of mobilizing real resources, including armies and navies, that provided the enforcement.[20] Unlike in Europe, the Ottoman Government was not a hereditary or family-based aristocracy. Those non-Muslims who were willing to

18 Inserted in Walsh, Rev. R., L.L.D., *A Residence in Constantinople during a period including the commencement, progress, and termination of the Greek and Turkish revolutions* (London: F. Westley & A.H. Davis, 1838), i, opposite 349. The two niches were described, at a time when they were empty, by Pertusier, i, 408. At the time of the presentation of Ambassador Adair in May 1810, when Canning arranged for Byron to participate in the procession, one of the niches exhibited 'among others, the head of the Pacha of Bagdat, a brave young man, cut off by treachery, after a desperate resistance.' Footnote to Byron's *Bride of Abydos*, first published in 1813. They are not mentioned in any of the elaborate ceremonies described by Ferté-Meun.

19 Walsh, i, opposite 349.

20 Dalloway, 24.

change their religious affiliation, and even slaves who were granted freedom by their masters could rise to high office, as many did.

For centuries the ambassadors of European countries were obliged to comply with elaborate ceremonies, fixed, arranged, and enforced down to the last detail as if they had been scripted and the participants coached and rehearsed. We many descriptions of these. Some took the form of ritual humiliation, at least in their origins, aimed at viewers who might be impressed by such treatment of foreigners. Of course, the foreigners themselves, the centres of attention, while sometimes being co-opted into the staging, saw things differently, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century they were not only excused from such discourtesies but treated with elaborate respect.

Figure 6.2, a picture made following a visit by an artist in 1834, when the fighting of the Revolution was mostly over, shows a party of dignitaries emerging from the entrance to the sultan's palace on the viewer's left, with the niches where sacks of severed ears and heads were frequently displayed during the Greek Revolution clearly visible.

Figure 6.2. 'Fountain near the Baba Hummayoun, or Great Entrance into the Seraglio' Steel engraving.[21]

21 Allom and Walsh, *Constantinople and the Scenery of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor, Illustrated in a Series of Drawings from Nature by Thomas Allom. with Descriptions of the Plates by the Rev. Robert Walsh, L.L.D., Chaplain to the British Embassy at the Ottoman Porte* (London: Fisher, 1838), ii, 6.

Besides the frequent displays in times of peace, the Ottoman Government also relied on display in times of war and of internal rebellion, including during the Greek Revolution, when the same instruments were applied as in earlier centuries. Much of what was, until recently, recounted by historians about Ottoman public displays of victories over their enemies, external or internal, came from accounts by western Europeans, some of whom had resided and done business there, and in recent times these accounts have been liable to be discounted by post-colonial theorists as so deeply imbued with western orientalism as to be untrue. However, with the increased availability of primary records, and without implying any kind of moral equivalence, a more evidenced account becomes possible. To take one example, the practice of displaying the severed heads of defeated enemies and disgraced officials, with brief notes in words, 'titlets', as the Europeans said, or 'Yafta', affixed like labels in modern museums, as shown in Figure 6.3, for example, was portrayed by a long-term resident who was present when this was done.

The pillar that displayed the severed head (from which the soft tissue had been carefully extracted) was an unignorable fixture between the first and second courts of the palace, whether it was in use or awaiting its next exhibit. On the wall was what the British Embassy chaplain, the Rev. Robert Walsh, shown in western costume in this image, called a Yafta. It was said that a British businessman offered to buy the head so that it could be shown to paying visitors as a freak show in London, but since Ali's head was to be given an elaborate funeral with the heads of his sons who were also judicially put to death, this was refused.

Since the Yafta had served its purpose Walsh was able to obtain it and make a copy in lithograph, as shown in Figure 6.3.

And, thanks to the gradual, long delayed translation into western languages of the long work of Evliya, those who cannot read the Ottoman text can now appreciate that these practices were not aberrations from a norm, or outbreaks of disorder, but were deeply embedded in the traditions of Ottoman society. In his account of the wars of the 1690s in which Evliya took part, he notes many instances of prisoners being put to death, of the cutting off of heads, of the practice of scalping and salting the severed heads, usually performed by prisoners awaiting their turn to be put to death, and the loading of wagons with the heads among other trophies to be sent on a long march through the passes

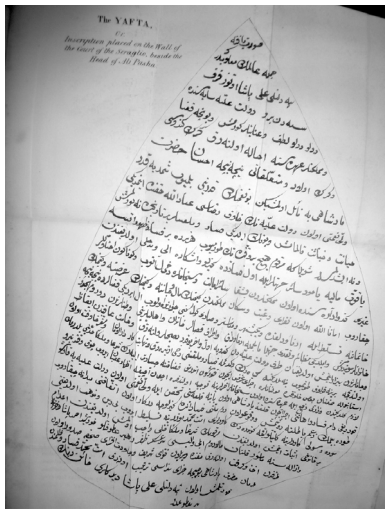

Figure 6.3. 'The Yafta inscription placed on the Wall of the court of the Seraglio beside the head of Ali Pasha', 23 February 1822. Lithograph.[22]

and the main towns for display at Constantinople.[23] For one celebration in Constantinople, Evliya describes a parade of the senior officials of the court in the presence of the sultan with their formal identifying costumes, with soldiers, guns, and captured booty, including thousands of severed heads with six thousand fixed on the points of the lances of the Ottoman cavalry, plus eleven thousand handcuffed prisoners on their way to the galleys and dockyards, described by Evliya as 'all full of sorrow and oppressed by their slavery and looking round dejectedly'.[24]

The Revolutionaries themselves also sometimes proudly displayed the severed heads of their enemies, and used images to carry the fact of such displays to wider viewerships.[25] They also put male prisoners

22 In Walsh, Rev. R., LL.D, M.R.I.A., *Narrative of a journey from Constantinople to England* (London: Westley, second edition, 1828), opposite 429, with translation into English at pp. 429–32.

23 Numerous examples in Evliya Çelebi, *The Book of Travel* (*Selected fragments of volume 5*) edited by Helena Dolińiska, from translation by Andrej Doliński (London: Caldra, 2001).

24 *Ibid.*,121.

25 For example, an image dated 1827 reproduced by Beaton, Roderick, *Greece, Biography of a Modern Nation* (London: Allen Lane, 2019), no 5, entitled in faulty classical Greek, 'Trophy of the Hellenes against the Barbarians, erected by General Karaiskakis, in the place Plovarma.'

to death and enslaved women. An instance was noted by John Carne, a correspondent, as having fallen 'under the writer's observation in Greece, during the atrocities of the war', written later in a vaguely biblical style that presented himself as the hero of his story: 'In the storming of one of the towns, a Turkish aga had been desperately wounded, and afterwards closely imprisoned: his wife and daughter were forbidden all access to him. In what accents of despair and anguish did they implore to be admitted but for an hour to his presence; for they were told of his sufferings and loneliness, and fancy coloured the picture darkly. Each day, also, they dreaded to hear that he was put to death; for he was a man of rank and wealth, and had fought bravely against, the Greeks. The traveller had free access to the captive, and each day that he visited the wife and child, his coming was to them like that of an angel, for he brought tidings of his safety, and imparted brighter hopes of the future. But their eager affection and solicitude, the look of despondency and then of rapture, the breathless attention with which they listened to the father's message — were inexpressibly moving. They also were captives in the gloom of a dim and spacious chamber, where few friends or acquaintance cheered the weariness of the day: each prayer for liberty was offered to the oppressor in vain: and the prisoner was slain, even when he believed that "the bitterness of death was past."[26]

Ottoman Attitudes and Policies

During the Greek Revolution, and during some particularly eventful periods of the conflict almost every day, the hand-written public imperial decrees of the Ottoman Government, or firmans, by which the authorities attempted to direct events and influence opinion, were posted on the Porte where they might be understood by those who knew the language and could read its scripts. Firmans were also posted in mosques, although whether in provincial cities or only in Constantinople, I have been unable to ascertain.[27] At times during the

26 Carne, John, *Lives of Eminent Missionaries* (London: Fisher, 3 volumes, 1833–1836), ii, 321. Carne had first visited the eastern Mediterranean in 1821, accompanied by a nephew of the famous traveller, Edward Daniel Clarke, as a prospective missionary. His account of refugees in the Peloponnese in a later journey, towards the end of the Revolution, is noted in Chapter 14.

27 An example from 1827, a measure forbidding residents to move during the crisis, is reported in Kew FO 352/17 B.

war, the British and French ambassadors employed a member of the embassy staff, usually Monsieur Chabert (sometimes Chaubert), the Oriental Secretary, to visit the Porte, to copy or summarize the new firmans, and to translate them into French. A selection was copied by clerks and sent to capitals in Europe, with many now available among the British National Archives at Kew.[28] Until more become available direct from the archives in Istanbul, the reports and copies that made their way to Kew are the main resource for understanding Ottoman attitudes and policies to the Greek Revolution. Fortunately they are voluminous.

Most of the presently available Ottoman documents offer a view from the top, and it cannot be assumed that the ideas and policies promulgated at the centre were shared at the peripheries. In an attempt to control news, the 'rumour-mongers' who queried, supplemented, or offered alternatives to the officially-approved versions of events were sometimes put to death.[29] And laws against what was translated as 'witchcraft' were used to silence those who predicted disaster. In general, on the Revolutionary side too, those who wrote the documents were, with important exceptions, not those did the fighting. However, even on the Ottoman side, where the problem of recovering opinion is especially acute, a few texts have recently become available that suggest that the differences between central and local discourses were not great.[30]

The highest offices in the Ottoman Empire were open to all comers, irrespective of family, but the main dragomans were hereditary

28 I give dates in the current, 'New Style' Gregorian, calendar introduced in western European countries from 1582, but in Greece not till 1923, by which time the difference from the 'Old Style' calendar was about two weeks. For Ottoman documents, that used a Muslim calendar, I have also used the modern calendar, although since the sources are not always explicit about which calendar is being used, errors in dating may have occurred.

29 Erdem, Y. Hakan, "Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers": Ottoman responses to the Greek Revolution' in Birtek, Faruk and Thalia Dragonas, editors, *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey* (London: Routledge, 2005), 76.

30 Notably Laiou, Sophia, 'The Greek Revolution in the Morea According to the Description of an Ottoman Official' in Pizanias, Petros, ed., T*he Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event* (Istanbul 2011), 241–55. Laiou prints the text of a manuscript in the University of Marburg that contains an account, composed not later than 1823 by Mîr Yusuf el-Moravî, a Muslim of Nauplia, survivor of an agreement involving the Acropolis of Nauplia, in whose negotiation he participated, which was followed by a massacre and expulsion similar to what occurred at Athens. One feature is the absence of the language of nationalism, which suggests that it was still unfamiliar.

dynasties, some with a continuous history back to Genoese merchants who had settled in the city centuries before. British ambassadors might come and go, some already experienced, some out of their depth, but their dragomans, such as those from the Pisani family, who were expected to speak and write in half a dozen languages, were permanent.[31] Formally members of the Ottoman court, the dragomans did more than translate documents from one language to another, fraught with difficulties though that was at a time when the Ottoman leaderships did not share many of the assumptions of the western diplomatic representatives. Like other intermediaries, they tended to arouse suspicion in both sides. Were the dragomans accurately reporting the views of western envoys? Could they be trusted to keep confidentiality? As a guild, the dragomans appear to have shared knowledge with one another, so that, for example, communications by the British ambassador to the Porte might find their way to the French ambassador and vice-versa. An image of the most important of the dragomans is reproduced earlier in this book as Figure 4.7.

In translating even an uncontentious speech of welcome to a foreign ambassador by the grand vizier, the Dragoman of the Porte was expected to affect to tremble and stammer as a bodily sign that performed the great respect that he was presumed to feel.[32] And they were in constant danger of being accused of plotting against the state. Among the first to be judicially put to death on the outbreak of the Revolution was the Dragoman of the Porte, Prince Constantine Mourousi, whose name suggests that he was an Orthodox Greek, whose head was displayed on 16 April 1821 with the explanation given here as filtered from an Ottoman version by the British embassy staff: 'This is the head of the traitor Costaki, the current *dragoman* of the Divan, who dared to join and to become allies with the accursed who have had the temerity of starting the sedition and the treason in Wallachia and in Moldavia; and having been confirmed that he took part in this affair, and his treason having

31 The role of the dragomans is discussed in a number of essays in Yurdusev, A. Nuri, ed., *Ottoman Diplomacy, Conventional or Unconventional?* (London: Palgrave, 2004), and de Testa, Marie and Gautier, Antoine, *Drogmans et diplomates européens auprès de la Porte ottomane* (Istanbul: Isis, 2013).

32 Ferté-Meun, Comtesse de la] *Lettres sur le Bosphore, ou Relation d'un voyage en différentes parties de l'Orient, pendant les années 1816, 1817, 1818 et 1819,* Deuxieme édition *revue, corrigée et augmentée de deux lettres et de la Chapelle de la dernière heure, l'histoire grecque* (Paris: Locard et Davi, 1822), 80.

been brought to light, it is for this reason that he has suffered capital punishment.'[33]

Since 1936, when G.M. Young remarked that 'the greater part of what passes for diplomatic history is little more than the record of what one clerk said to another clerk', greater attention has been paid to the contribution of public opinion to the processes of policy formation.[34] And, since Young's time, there have been numerous printed studies of the opinions of various publics, especially in western European countries, that helped to influence the attitudes of governments as well as individuals, and therefore, ultimately, to help shape the course of events. Some of these studies make extensive use of contemporary manuscripts, and include letters and reports direct from participants in Greece. The letters by the Austrian consul and antiquary, Georg Gropius, written from on the spot in Athens are especially valuable, not because he was a foreigner but because of his unique opportunities to witness what occurred. As much a participant as an observer, Gropius had made his life in the city with his Greek wife and family in the years before the outbreak of the Revolution; he remained there as the events of the conflict unfolded, and for some years later.[35] In addition to those letters that have made their way as copies into the British archives at Kew, others from the archives in Paris of the French consul and antiquary Fauvel have recently been published.[36] More may be discoverable in Vienna.

Communication Difficulties during the Revolution

The war was fought at sea as much as on land. The modern map at Figure 6.5 shows the main locations with their political boundaries. At the start of the Revolution the whole territory shown was part of the Ottoman Empire apart from the Ionian Islands, formally 'The United

33 Kew Ambassador Strangford to Foreign Secretary Castlereagh 21 April 1821, FO 78/98, 86–89, transcribed by Prousis.

34 The phrase quoted by Talbot, Michael, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661–1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2017), 1, from *Victorian England* (Oxford: OUP, 1936), 103.

35 A portrait with his family made shortly after the Revolution is included as Figure 13.1.

36 Clairmont, Christoph W. ed., *Fauvel: The First Archaeologist in Athens and his Philhellenic Correspondents* (Zürich: Akanthus, 2007), 180–87.

States of the Ionian Islands', that were a British protectorate. During the war the islands, including the outlier Cerigo, were garrisoned. Much of the business of the British authorities there involved the ships of the Ionian merchant marine, which flew the British flag and were able to claim British protection.

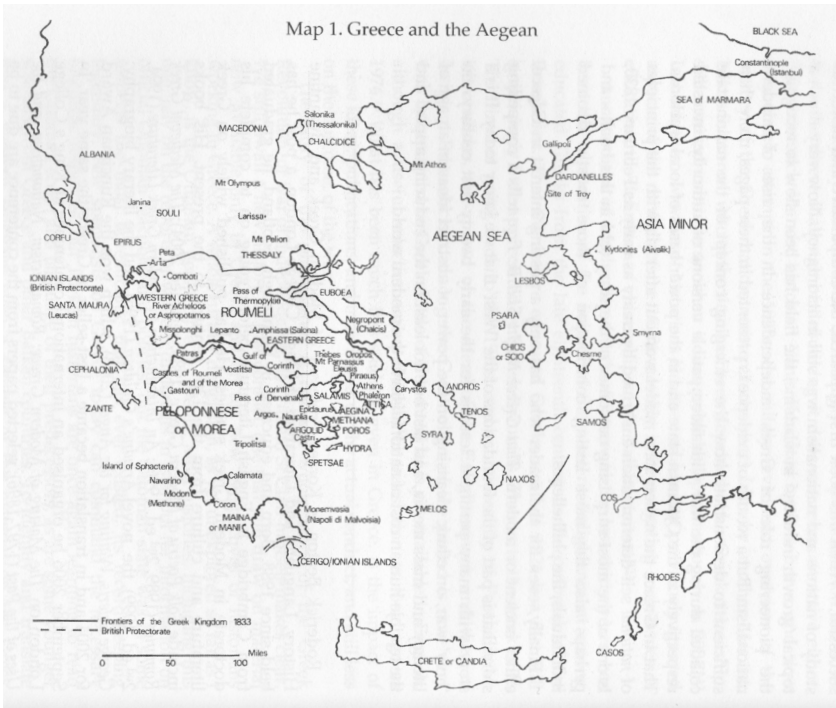

Figure 6.5. Greece and the Aegean at the time of the Revolution. Modern map.[37]

In an age before steam ships and electric telegraphs, the speed of communication both within the regions where fighting was occurring and beyond was heavily dependent on the technology of sailing ships and on messengers on foot or on horseback carrying packages across the mountain passes. The geographical limitations are more easily imagined using a contemporary map, as shown in Figure 6.6.

37 From St Clair, William, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, revised edition (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2008), opposite 1.

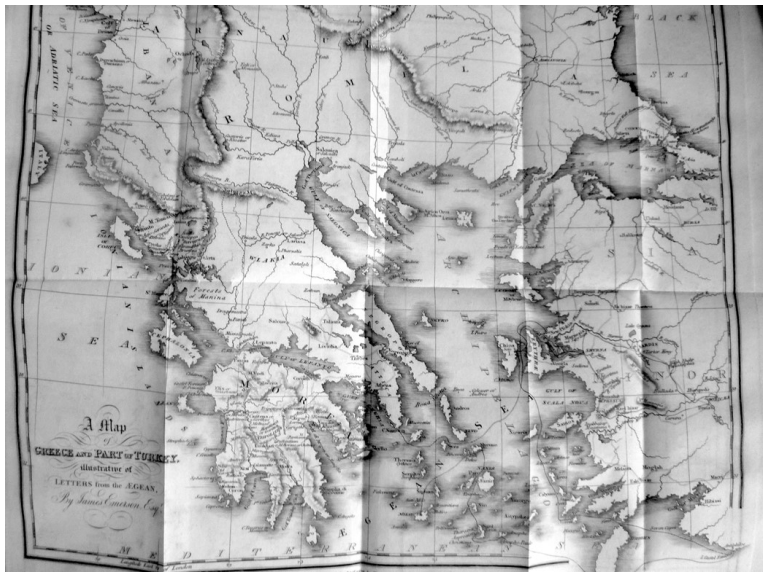

Figure 6.6. Contemporary map illustrating the places principally involved in the Greek Revolution. Folded engraving.[38]

This map, chosen as typical from among many to be found in accounts prepared at the time, brings out the crucial importance of the sea for communications and how the deep gulfs and reliance on mountain passes limited the movements of armies and their supplies by land.[39] The geography also offered many opportunities to intercept messengers by land and by sea, making communications, whether written or oral, both risky and uncertain.

During the long eighteenth century, as in earlier times, vessels sailing down or up the Adriatic from or to Venice were reasonably secure. But those sailing through the Mediterranean from west or east faced greater risks. The dangers faced by sailors in the narrow strait between the island of Cerigo and Crete, known as 'The Arches',[40] were discussed in Chapter 4.

38 Inserted in Emerson, James, *Letters from the Aegean* (London: Colburn 1829).

39 As another good candidate, a 'theatre of war' map was provided by Jourdain, *Mémoires historiques et Militaires sur Les Evénements de la Grece, depuis 1822, jusqu'au Combat de Navarin; par Jourdain, Capitaine de frégate de la Marine Royale, Colonel au Service du Gouvernement Grec* (Paris: Brissot-Thivars, 1828).

40 Wines, quoted by Larrabee, *Hellas Observed*, 211. Rapalje, who was there in 1822, provides much information about life at sea in these waters in the era of small

Typical times for transmitting information to Paris, one of the main centres to which and from which information flowed, have been compiled from primary contemporary sources:

Constantinople 31–45 days
Athens 52–61 days
St Petersburg 18–31
Vienna 11–20 days
London 4 days.[41]

Much of what was regarded as news in the western European capitals was therefore unavoidably out of date. And the dates of reading could be widely separated from the dates of writing. Much information was misleading and some had been falsified.[42] The times taken for policy guidance sent from the European capitals to reach embassies in Constantinople were also long and unpredictable, even if decisions were made quickly as seldom happened. Although, during the Greek War, the international negotiations reported in the printed collections may have appeared to be occurring almost continuously and there was far more consultation and exchange of information among the main powers than ever before, the extent to which decision-making could ever be centralised was more severely limited than it was to become with the advent of steam ships in the later 1820s.

When the crisis broke in the spring of 1821, the British Ambassador Lord Strangford, for example, received no dispatches from Foreign Secretary Castlereagh (then known as Lord Londonderry) in London until September of that year and only seven in the whole of 1822.[43] Long though these delays were, they were however a dramatic improvement over what was normal during the decades of European war that had come to an end with Napoleon's defeat in 1815. When the twenty-four-year-old Stratford Canning first went to Constantinople as British minister plenipotentiary in 1810, letters from the government

sailing ships, 231. Lord Baltimore in his book describes his tour to the East as 'from Naples through the Arches to Constantinople in the Year 1763'.

41 Dimakis, Jean, *La Presse Française, face à la chute de Missolonghi et à la bataille navale de Navarin: recherches sur les sources du Philhellénisme française* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976), 51–53.

42 'nouvelles fausses'. Dimakis, 56.

43 Noted by Cunningham, 'Lord Strangford and the Greek Revolt', in *Anglo-Ottoman Encounters*, i, 191.

in London had to make a three-thousand-mile journey by sea, and on one occasion Canning did not receive a single official communication for fifteen weeks.[44]

The ambassadors of Britain and France were able both to gather and to send information with the help of a squadron of naval vessels, whose commanders, although not under their direct command, normally took guidance from them. Other European countries, including the Russians and Austrians, also sent warships to the war zone, to be followed latterly by the Americans. The British and French, and to a lesser extent the others, also had access to reports from a network of consuls in numerous ports all over the eastern Mediterranean who, in theory, although not in practice, were excluded from discussing political matters.[45] Consuls and their staff enjoyed valuable privileges, being exempt from tax, free to travel throughout Ottoman lands without the need for internal documents, exempt from arrest and allowed to leave when recalled. Under local law their houses could not be entered or sealed off. And in the event of danger, consuls were permitted to wear a white turban, becoming temporary honorary Muslims without incurring any of the obligations of that status.[46] It was common for the same local man to hold the consulships of two or more European countries, flying its flag and wearing a different uniform on different days, although M. Paul, at Patras, who held a consular appointment from eight different European countries was exceptional.[47] The honorary Franks, whose appointments were often in effect hereditary in old established local families, were not always respected by their less privileged Orthodox neighbours and they caused some visitors to

44 Lane-Poole, Stanley, *The Life of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, K.G.* (London: Longman, two volumes, 1888), i, 92.

45 See especially the reports by William Meyer, the Consul-General in Albania of which examples are given in Appendix E.

46 Copy of translation of a berratt given by Sultan Mahmoud, 'the conqueror of the world whose authority is derived from the Divine Will' in Wilkinson, William, late British Consul at Bucharest, *An account of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia: with various political observations relating to them* (London: Longman, 1820), 199–202.

47 B Bartholdy, J.L.S., *Voyage en Grèce fait dans les Années 1803 et 1804 Contenant des détails sur ïa manière de voyager dans la Grèce et l'Archipel; la description de la vallée de Tempe'; un tableau pittoresque des sites les plus remarquables de la Grèce et du Levant; un coup-d'ceil sur l'état actuel de la Turquie et de toutes les branches de la civilisation chez les Grecs modernes; un voyage de Négrepont, dans quelques contrées de la Thessalie, en i8o5, et l'histoire de la guerre des Souliotes contre Ali-Visir, avec la chute de Souly en 1804. traduit de l'allemand, par A. du C***** (Paris: Dentue, 1807), ii, 50.

raise a sardonic eyebrow, but on many occasions during the war, with no more power than the authority of their flags, the consuls were to save many lives.

For the western countries, having secure communications was itself an instrument of policy. In the spring of 1821, for example, in response to a request from the Ottoman Government, Ambassador Strangford arranged for ships of the British navy to carry Ottoman orders to the semi-independent Barbary states, in which they were commanded by the imperial government to send their ships to help put down what were then seen as local disturbances in the Aegean islands. Operating out of Algiers, Tunis, and other North African ports, the Barbary states, with their fast ships, preyed on Mediterranean shipping, enslaving, selling, and ransoming any human beings that had an exchange value. By the time London heard what Strangford had done, by which time it was obvious to all that a full-scale revolution and international crisis was rapidly unfolding, he was instructed in a personal letter, to which only he had the cypher, never to mention the episode, a secret that has been kept out of the history books till now.[48]

Among other direct means of attempting to shape events that were available to the foreign ambassadors, money was the most often used but also the best hidden. Drawing on the credit of their governments, ambassadors were able to borrow and spend large funds on, for example, contracting with merchant shipping for a wide range of purposes, including taking refugees and freed slaves to safety. Exchanging gifts was normal, especially on formal occasions such as the arrival of an ambassador or the concluding of a treaty.[49] And it was not then the custom on the Ottoman side to distinguish between presents given as a mark of personal favour and those that were official and public. Nor were official promises always honoured or honoured quickly. For example, in 1810, Sir Robert Adair, the British ambassador was still attempting to claim the gift of money that had been made to Lord Elgin as part of the exchanges that formed part of the treaty of 1800, but by then, as a result of the falling exchange rate of the Ottoman piastre, the value of the claim

48 Foreign Secretary to Strangford 5 August 1821 Kew FO 78/97, opposite 43.

49 Lists of presents given by and to Lord Elgin on 25 May 1799, and others exchanged by his successors in 1809 on the resumption of peace, are in Kew FO 78/64, 3.

in pounds sterling terms that had been 2,000 at the time was not much more than half.[50]

The ambassadors also paid money to influential officials. In a letter to the Foreign Secretary Castlereagh in January 1822, Ambassador Strangford sought approval to pay the immense sum of one thousand Ottoman purses (between twelve and thirteen thousand pounds sterling in the money of the day) to the Reis Efendi (Reis ül-Küttab) Halet (Meḥmet Saʿid Ḥālet Efendi) who was 'too wealthy to be tempted by an inconsiderable sum.'[51] In the absence of a foreign ministry, Halet was responsible for Ottoman relations with foreign countries, and he was the adviser to the sultan with responsibility for the policy of violent repression. If the proposed gift of the money, as Strangford hoped, averted or postponed a war between Russia and Turkey, as seemed likely, and the outbreak of the Revolution presaged the extermination of the Orthodox, it would have been money well spent.[52]

The file does not record whether Strangford obtained approval either to make this payment or some lesser amount. Around 1903, the file was marked 'not to be shown to strangers', and contrary to the provisions of the British Public Records Acts, it was not opened until 7 May 1959. The files do however record that in July 1821, some months before, when it still looked as if the Greek Revolution could be quickly crushed, Halet had, at Strangford's request, arranged for an imperial *firman* ('Vizieral letter') to be sent to the commander of the Ottoman forces in Greece and to the local cadi in Athens ordering them to protect the ancient monuments of Athens. That episode will be discussed in Chapter 7 with the main documents transcribed in Appendix C.[53]

As for what the parties knew about what was actually happening during the Revolution, what is now known as intelligence, in some western European countries, letters were routinely intercepted and read by the local secret police. The British routinely read diplomatic correspondence sent from London. Their officials in Corfu and the

50 Adair to Foreign Secretary, 15 June 1810, Kew FO 78/68, 251.

51 Kew FO 78/106 15.

52 For the importance attached by Castlereagh to preventing such a war: Prousis, Theophilus C., *Lord Strangford at the Sublime Porte (1821): The Eastern Crisis*, volume i (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010), 38, 52.

53 Hamet, who had served as Ottoman Ambassador to France, and is pictured in the ceremony of coronation of Napoleon, was suspected of having become too close to the French and was put to death by order of the sultan in 1822.

other Ionian Islands over which Britain exercised a formal protectorate, intercepted and copied letters under the pretence of quarantine.[54] Some correspondents knew that their letters were being read and may have been guarded or oblique in their choice of words.[55] But we only know of the attempts of Edward Blaquiere to circumvent what he called 'the old game of Humbug' because his letter was intercepted and made its way into the British official archives.[56]

In the places on land and sea where the Revolutionary War was fought, communication was especially difficult and unreliable. As far as the European powers were concerned, letters sent by sea were reasonably secure, for even if the ship itself was likely to be captured, a packet of letters could be kept tied to a cannon shot, ready to be dropped overboard.[57] But, in a war in which sea piracy was common, only warships could ensure that important messages reached their intended recipients. The provisional Greek Government, while always claiming to be in control, and aiming to give that impression in their statements and decisions, found it hard to persuade commanders of local forces to unite or even to move their men. The Revolutionary factions, always afraid of allies changing sides or making accommodations, stationed agents on the roads to intercept the correspondence of rivals.[58] The British embassy, as another instrument of policy, sometimes provided secure communications to participants, helping, for example, to ensure that a formal letter from the Patriarch of Constantinople, the head of the Greek Orthodox Church, asking the Greek Revolutionaries to return to their allegiance to the Ottoman sultan was delivered.[59]

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54 See Dakin, Douglas, *British Intelligence of Events in Greece, 1824–1827: A Documentary Collection* (Athens: National Historical Society, 1959).

55 Noted with references to primary documents by, for example, Bouvier-Bron, Michelle, Jean-*Gabriel Eynard* (*1775–1863*) *et le Philhellénisme Genevois* (Geneva: Published by Association Gréco-Suisse, 1963).

56 Dakin, *British Intelligence*, 152.

57 Noted by Charles Robert Cockerell, later a famous architect in the neo-Hellenic style, who had direct experience, in Cockerell, C.R., *Travels in Southern Europe and the Levant, 1810–1817. The Journal of C.R. Cockerell, R.A. edited by his son Samuel Pepys Cockerell* (London: Longman, 1903), 5.

58 An example noted by Jourdain, ii, 216. For interceptions among the different revolutionary forces, see, for example Howe, Samuel Gridley, *Letters and Journals* (Boston: Estes, *c.*1907), i, 201. An example from 1829 noted by Finlay, *The Journals and Letters*, i, 4.

59 Transcribed in Appendix D.

Missives among the Greek Revolutionary forces were liable to be intercepted, as were messengers thought to be carrying oral communications, for example those caught attempting to slip through enemy lines during a blockade or siege were liable to be interrogated. Men found carrying mathematical instruments and drawings were sometimes summarily put to death.[60] And, in mainland Greece, a terrain of high mountains, narrow passes, and deep gulfs, official letters by Ottoman commanders carried by hand by the corps of runners known as 'tartars', were likewise liable to be intercepted by the Greek Revolutionary forces. Sometimes the information obtained was passed to representatives of the powers, although because, with some exceptions, we only have versions that have been translated into European languages or summarized, we cannot be certain that the texts were not manipulated.[61] And, as was discussed in Chapter 4, a detailed map of Athens and the Acropolis made by a French military engineer in 1826 at the behest of the Greek Revolutionary commander, Gouras, is so misleading about its military strength that it may best be explained as a *ruse de guerre,* intended to deceive.

There is also one printed document of extraordinary value that deserves its own mention alongside the extensive archive of papers that have also been preserved. When Thomas Gordon wrote in the Preface to his two volume *History of the Greek Revolution* published in 1832, that 'the contest between the Greeks and Turks has employed so many pens, that he who now ventures to write on that hackneyed and apparently exhausted subject must begin by explain his reasons,' his claim to be adding to and correcting predecessors was more than a conventional apologia.[62] Having lived in Ottoman lands even before the Revolution, and already in 1821 fluent in the Turkish and Greek as well as modern

60 An example noted by William Meyer in a letter of 6 July 1822. Meyer, William, Consular reports, ii, 149.

61 Examples in Appendix C, to be discussed in Chapter 14. An intercepted letter from an Ottoman commander setting out his military plans in the spring of 1824 is referred to as having been sent to the British philhellene Edward Blaquiere as evidence of the urgency of the need for arms, but unfortunately was not transcribed; it is noted in Stanhope, 335.

62 Gordon, Thomas, *History of the Greek Revolution* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Cadell, 1832). Since the Preface is dated 1 November 1832, it is unlikely that the book became available to be generally read until 1833.

languages, as well as being a wealthy man who knew many of the Revolutionary leaders personally, who took part in the conflict both as an experienced soldier and as a supplier of arms and money, and who made his home in Greece after independence, Gordon's qualifications to write on the matter were unsurpassed.

People who knew him in Greece on campaign found him silent and dour.[63] And, as many of his own letters attest, he could be sardonic.[64] But in public at least he never doubted the justice of the Greek cause or the value of the Revolution, to the extent of sometimes deliberately preventing news of what was actually happening in Greece from being broadcast while the war was still raging and its outcome uncertain.[65] Indeed in his printed history he sometimes comes across as admiring prowess in war for its own sake. He recounts the fights and victories of both the Greeks and their enemies in a heroic tradition that, like the many commemorative pictures of the war that circulated throughout the nineteenth century, seems especially hard to sympathize with in a modern world that has experienced two world wars in which nationalism was amongst the main drivers. Well versed in the historiographical conventions that modern Europe had revived from the ancient pioneers, Hecateus, Herodotus, and Thucydides, Gordon sought out primary evidence, gathering and reprinting contemporary documents, comparing them with oral accounts, and describing events in extraordinary detail, especially the numbers involved: those killed and wounded; weapons used; even in many cases the number of artillery and mortar shots fired. Indeed the fact that his work breaks off shortly after the Battle of Navarino in 1827, at a moment before the war was over and while Athens was still in the hands of the Ottoman army, and that his intended third volume, which may have included general reflections, was never completed, reinforces the impression of his history that he sees and understands the war mainly as one violent

63 His 'prudence, caution, taciturnity', said to be characteristics of people from Scotland, were noted by Charles Fallon, General Sir Richard Church's secretary during the fighting for the Acropolis of Athens in 1827. Church papers BL Add MS 36566, daily journal of Charles Fallon, 2.

64 An example is quoted in Chapter 16. But see also his ill-informed dismissal of the 'trumpery firman' in Appendix C.

65 Noted in Chapter 16.

event after another occurring simultaneously as well as sequentially in different places on land and sea. More a chronicle than an analytical history, his two volumes provide a near contemporary record of battles and campaigns from which it is easy for the modern reader, if he or she wishes, to offset the author's implied ideology and to identify the silences, such as, for example, his lack of interest in justificatory narratives or in the role of ancient monuments. Paradoxically it is Gordon's attention to establishing military facts narrowly defined that gives his book its unique modern value.

The Ottoman Perspective

In the historiography of the Greek Revolution, extensive though it has been from soon after the fighting ended, and at times before when authors thought it had ended, what has been conspicuously missing until recently has been any access to the mindsets, worldviews, opinions, policies, memories, and aspirations of the Ottoman Governments, leaderships, and populations, except for what was filtered through the reports of others, mainly from the west, who often brought misunderstandings as well as prejudices to encounters. Among the biggest changes in recent times, whose full potential for understanding the past of many countries will take years to unlock, has been the gradual cataloguing and making available of the vast archive of Ottoman records held in Istanbul, and the emergence of scholars and historians able not only to read them but to situate them in wider contexts, including the misunderstandings and prejudices the Ottomans brought to the same encounters, and the efforts made by the warring parties to explain their attitudes and policies.

As Nuri A. Yurdusev has written: 'The Ottoman Empire was a composite polity with multilingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious communities. It ruled over a vast area that extended from Central Europe to Transcaucasia, from Poland to Yemen, and from Morocco to the Persian Gulf.' Its historical experience over six centuries cannot be 'reduced to sweeping generalizations.'[66]

Although during the Greek Revolution there were few occasions when anyone anywhere was reasonably well-informed with

66 Yurdusev, A. Nuri, editor, *Ottoman Diplomacy, Conventional or Unconventional?* (London: Palgrave, 2004), 3.

up-to-date news or intelligence on what was occurring, what we can say with confidence is that for much of the time the British and French ambassadors in Constantinople were better informed than either of the main belligerents. While the war itself was fought with weapons and, asymmetrically, with words and images, the historiography both at the time and for long afterwards relied, to an extraordinarily extent, on documents collected, transcribed, and translated in the books of foreign visitors both private and official.

Among the British National Archives at Kew are tens of thousands of contemporaneous manuscripts, records of how the British Embassy, supported by the consulates and the warships, corresponded with all parties in the conflict both at the highest governmental level, including the sultan, his cabinet, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, and locally, including with the provisional Greek Government, and the Revolutionary and the counter-Revolutionary military commanders. As for documents first produced in Athens itself, they were probably plentiful, but since almost none survived the Revolution when the town of Athens was burned down, they are now mainly known from the copies made by others.[67]

Especially useful to the British Ambassadors were the reports of William Meyer, Consul-General for the region that is now north-western Greece and Albania, stationed in Preveza.[68] Most British consular officials were drawn from locally born families employed by the Levant Company, whose direct knowledge of Britain was at best at second hand, and whose education and expertise was largely confined to dealing with local matters of tariffs, trade, and shipping, including the interests of citizens of the Ionian Islands, whose shipping enjoyed British protection.[69]

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67 The paucity is noted by Stathi, Katerina, 'The Carta Incognita of Ottoman Athens', in Hadjianastasis, Marios, ed., *Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination: Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 182, referring to the then-forthcoming work by Balta, Evangelia, *Ottoman Studies and Archives in Greece* (Uxbridge: Gorgias Press, 2016).

68 A large selection of his reports during the early years of the Revolution was published in *Epirus, Ali Pasha and the Greek Revolution, Consular Reports of William Meyer from Preveza, edited by* E. Prevelakes; K. Kalliatake Mertikopoulou (Athens: Academy of Athens, 1996). Two volumes covering 1821 and 1822.

69 The network of British consulships, with explanation of their status, is discussed, with extracts, by Prousis, Theophilus C., *British Consular Reports from the Ottoman Levant in an Age of Upheaval, 1815–1830* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2008).

William Meyer, by contrast, who arrived in 1820, the year before the Revolution broke out, had been recruited in Britain especially for the role as part of a professionalization of the instruments of British policy. Son of an immigrant from Germany, and educated in the ancient classics at Eton College and Cambridge University, Meyer spoke several modern European languages and quickly learned Greek and Turkish.[70] Although, as a consular official, Meyer was formally forbidden from discussing political matters, he was the recipient of many communications from both the Greek Revolutionaries and the Ottomans. In particular as early as 1822 he established a personal relationship with Reschid, at that time a rising officer in the Ottoman army, who was to be responsible for the capture of Missolonghi in 1826 and of Athens in 1827, and who was to be appointed grand vizier, the highest office of the Ottoman Empire, a post he held from January 1829 to 17 February 1833.[71] Reschid, whose role in the saving of the Parthenon during the Revolution, and in the negotiation that ended the war, was to be as important as that of any individual mentioned in this book, used Meyer as a trusted channel of communication with the British Government.

When Stratford Canning was the British ambassador in Constantinople, the embassy collected innumerable documents, including eye-witness accounts, whenever they could, many written in Greek, others in Ottoman Turkish and in other languages. Every morning, after a cold bath and prayers, the indefatigable Canning would be in his workroom by six, taking breakfast with members of his staff at nine. The room was arranged into many tables, one for each topic, and he shifted his chair from one to another, reading and writing, 'quill in his hand', for ten or twelve hours.[72] Canning, in modern terms a workaholic, was tireless in pressing his government's diplomatic aims on the governments to which he was accredited, demanding meetings as well as sending diplomatic notes. And it was not only his own words

70 Summarised from the Biographical Note in Meyer, *Epirus*, i.

71 The fullest account in English of Reschid's extraordinary career that I know of is in David Urquhart's *Spirit of the East*, ii, 331–34. Reschid was also known by his previous title, Kutayah Pasha, variously spelled in European transcriptions, and later as Roumeli Valessi or superior governor of southern European Turkey, as was noted by Urquhart, *Spirit*, ii, 334. He is not to be confused with Mustafa Reschid Pasha, with whom Canning worked closely in the 1840s and later in implementing the modernizing reforms. Lane Poole, ii, 104.

72 As described by Cunningham, i, 161.

that Canning wanted to be heard and heeded. He relentlessly drove the junior embassy staff to translate and copy documents and send them to London. Some of his dispatches have so many attachments that they can be read as excursions into contemporary history. And as Steven Richmond, his recent biographer, has remarked: 'Throughout his career his colleagues were also worn down by his relentless capacity for work.'[73] Later in his career Queen Victoria, normally a conscientious reader of dispatches from embassies, complained that 'he [Canning] has always so much to say it is sometimes quite alarming.'[74] In 1896 after Canning's death his family deposited a huge collection of personal papers in the national archives at Kew, some of which allow us to see behind the tidied-up documentation sent to London.

Documents, especially diplomatic documents, however apparently comprehensive, do not normally record the off-the-record conversations when bargains were suggested, explored, or provisionally struck. They omit what David Urquhart, who at a critical moment acted as Canning's confidential messenger in his dealings with Grand Vizier Reschid, called the 'whispers' with which diplomacy 'changes all things past, corrupts all things present, and disposes all things to come.'[75] Whispers were however, it turns out, more frequently turned into documents than Urquhart realized, and much of what he thought was personal correspondence was printed long ago.[76]

As for the French, extracts from the archives of the French Admiralty, including personal reports by Admiral de Rigny, who played a large part in saving the Parthenon and other monuments from being destroyed, are included in printed works.[77] But, at present, we only know of some

73 Richmond, Steven, *The Voice of England in the East: Stratford Canning and Diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire* (London: Tauris, 2014), 140. We have an account of how one member of his staff in the early 1850s, Eustace Clare Grenville Murray, harboured a deep dislike of the ambassador that he exposed in a series of anonymous publications, as will be discussed in Chapter 19.

74 Quoted by Richmond, 13, with a note on the source, Charlotte Canning, the wife of George Canning's son, later a Viceroy of India.

75 Quoted by Robinson, Gertrude, *David Urquart* [sic], *some chapters in the life of a Victorian knight-errant of justice and liberty* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1920), xii, from Urquhart's *The Portfolio* New Series ii, no v.

76 Bolsover, G.H., 'David Urquhart and the Eastern Question, 1833–37: A Study in Publicity and Diplomacy', *The Journal of Modern History*, 8 (4), December 1936, 444–67.

77 Notably Jurien de La Gravière, le vice-amiral, *La station du Levant* (Paris: Plon, 1876) and Debidour, A., *Le général Fabvier: sa vie militaire et politique* (Paris: Plon, 1904).

important documents and of the decisive events to which they refer from the archives of other countries including those of the Ottoman Empire.

In addition, at the British Library, there is another large, and also mostly still unexplored, archive of the personal and official papers of General Sir Richard Church who was the employed commander-in chief of the Greek Army in 1827 at the time of the battles and the surrender of the Acropolis to the Ottoman army. He and his staff kept a military diary of events day by day and also conducted a huge correspondence, partly in preparation for writing a history of the Revolution, of which he drafted many chapters but that he never completed. Those who wrote the papers in the Richard Church archive, being members of the Greek forces and not officials of the British government, had no knowledge of the behind-the-scenes talks described in the archives at Kew, although it is possible that at one moment of crisis, which involved the monuments, he was the recipient of whispers.[78]

And there are other archives, notably the papers of Thomas Gordon, another participant, who was both a funder and a historian of the Greek Revolution, held at Aberdeen University. We have the journals of Comte de Caraman in the British Library along with other manuscripts, and yet more primary materials in the Library of the Royal Institute of British Architects.[79] Among these papers there are documents about the role of the Parthenon and the monuments in the war whose evidence I am able to deploy in this book for the first time. And we can expect more. We may, for example, learn whether the Ottoman military documents that relate to Reschid's army's operations in Athens in 1826 and 1827, which are archives as yet unexplored at the time of writing, may require the account I offer in this book to be modified and not just amplified.[80] Meanwhile we already have more than enough to go on.

78 Discussed in Chapter 19, 'The Silence'.

79 Noted in Bibliography and footnotes as appropriate.

80 The existence of the papers, with the Ottoman reference numbers, is noted by Stathi, Katerina, 'The Carta Incognita of Ottoman Athens' in Hadjianastasis, Marios, ed., *Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination: Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 181. They are likely to feature in the full publication of the Ottoman map edited by Tolias and Eldem to be discussed in Chapter 4, said at the time of writing to be underway.