

“Freedom or Death”: the adventurous qualities of an extravagant imperilment

Antonis L. Smyrneos*

Introduction

Historiography, like any discourse, essentially reflects "the enigma of the Sphinx"¹. It is a highly sensitive matter, a stake, not so much of rational processes between models and protocols, as the professionalization of history would expect, but mainly of personal and/or collective ontologies². In it, the rational intention is constantly undermined by the autobiographical³ (i.e. ideological, emotional, and moral) element of

* Antonis L. Smyrneos is Associate Professor of Modern Greek History, History of Modern Greek Education and History Teaching at the Department of Primary School Education at the University of Thessaly.

1. M. De Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. by Brian Massumi, foreword by Wlad Godzich, Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press 1986, p. 136.

2. An. L. Smyrneos, *Η ιστορία ως επίπύχωση: από μία Ιστοριογραφία βουλιμική σε μία ύδροκεφαλική Διδακτική της Ιστορίας*, Athens: Grēgorēs 2020, pp. 162-178.

3. Each theory/argumentation responds essentially to another, or more precisely, struggles against another and within this constantly dialectic dimension of thought: "indeed, there is no theory that is not a carefully prepared fragment of autobiography" while historiography itself is presented "often as the secret biography of historians". See, P. Valéry – Ch. Guenter, "Poetry and Abstract Thought", *The Kenyon Review* 16 (1954) 213 and B. Southgate, *History: What and Why? Ancient, modern, and postmodern perspectives*, 2nd ed., London/New York: Routledge 2001, p. 73.

its author, as well as of the authors of the strictly subjective, mediated historical sources he or she trusts. This perforated cluster is further undermined by the "regime of truth" (M. Foucault) concerning epochs and periods, compromises and expectations, memory and oblivion, personal and collective traumas and the various ambiguities of historical actions. This heterogeneous and often heterobarbarous mixture participates in varying percentages in the respective historiographical composition, without, however, avoiding being the inescapable, inherent condition of its authorship. The fundamental and laborious effort of the historian is to gain the trust of his fellows and his readers in general, while exerting a symbolic power, conscious or unconscious, over them. But, even when his argumentation is covered with the cloak of epistemology, especially through the psychoanalytically explorable defence mechanism of "rationalization", we must not miss the fact that "every scientific program is inextricably tied to a program of power [...]. The desire to convince and the desire to prevail are as inseparable as light and shadow"⁴. Moreover, it is obvious that even "the most ruthless critique, the implacable analysis of a power of legitimation" is not just a careless play of words, but a symbolic, polemical action that "is always produced in the name of a system of legitimation ... [which] is already underway and promises a new legitimacy ...", according to J. Derrida⁵.

Thus, Michel De Certeau will underline that "the historian is a poet of detail and, like the aesthete, he plays without stopping with the thousand harmonious sounds that a rare piece in a grid of knowledge stirs up..."⁶. Focusing simultaneously and successively on both the tree and the forest of the data and the contingencies of a historical drama, he

4. Fr. Dosse, *L'histoire en miettes: des Annales à la "nouvelle histoire"*, Paris: La Découverte 1987; translated in Greek by Angeliki Vlachopoulou, Heraklion: Crete University Editions 2000, p. 47.

5. Joan W. Scott, "History-writing as critique", in K. Jenkins, Sue Morgan and Al. Munslow (eds.), *Manifestos for History*, London/New York: Routledge 2007, p. 34

6. Michel de Certeau, "L'opération historique", in Jacques Le Goff - Pierre Nora (eds.), *Faire de l'histoire*, vol. I: Nouveaux problèmes, Paris: Gallimard 1974; translated in Greek by Claire Mitsotakis, Athens: Rappas 1975, pp. 50-51.

navigates their territory with extreme care, surgically reassembling his multifaceted material, in the hope -not always certain- of a fruitful and ultimately dialogical representation. For he is called upon to translate the past, often incomprehensible in its polymerism, into a linear narrative of events that he neither saw nor heard, but simply studied in the historical sources, in which he ends up becoming complacent.

With these premises in mind, we will approach the relationship between freedom and the Greek Revolution of 1821 through the well-known motto: "Freedom or Death". Our intention is to articulate and to some extent explore only three of its many emerging qualities, which are despair, individual and collective self-affirmation and the denigration/dehumanization of the Turks and Turkophiles. But these particular qualities are fermented and reconciled each time through the perspective and reality of violence. For this modern Greek society, born refined through the unremitting turmoil of the Revolution, was based on violence, supported by it, reproduced the Ottoman brutality that for centuries had been martyred and in many cases led to a state of extreme revanchism, which was often reported and denounced by both Greek and foreign historians and memoirists as early as the 19th century. The life of the Revolution was therefore deeply impregnated by its toxic violence and it is to this inextricable link between freedom and violence that we shall venture some remarks.

Freedom and the Greek Revolution: a relation of affection

Freedom and the Greek Revolution of 1821 are presented in a mutual and exclusive relationship. One always folds into the other. Everyone and everything talks about it and wants to talk about it. All the pre-revolutionary, revolutionary⁷ and post-revolutionary declarations, the archives, memoirs and histories of the Revolution, all willingly testify

7. St. Ploumides, «Ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ “Θανάτου” στὴν Ἑλληνικὴ Ἐπανάσταση (1821-1832): Ἰδεολογικὲς προσλήψεις καὶ πολιτικὴ πρακτικὴ», *Μνημῶν* 32 (2012) 71-72

to their inextricable relationship as if history had suddenly thickened around the vision of freedom, embraced it, to give birth to the Revolution. This freedom even functioned as a *passe-partout* concept, and even more so became a kind of "boundary object"⁸, which with an extreme elasticity permeated individual and social life, was claimed by all, facilitated their communication and helped to bring together all the communities with which it intersected, once giving rise to mutual understanding and cooperation. It acted as a strategy of negotiation between the different worlds that made up the human geography of the Revolution, having acquired a peculiar interpretative flexibility⁹.

The dynamism of this flexible "“frontier object”" could perhaps be detected in the well-known extract from Theodore Kolokotronis' speech to the high school students in Pnyx (1838). In it, one of the pioneers of the Revolution declared that "as the rain, the desire for our freedom fell on all of us, and all of us, both the clergy, and the preachers, and the captains, and the educated, and the merchants, young and old, all of us agreed on this purpose, and we made the Revolution"¹⁰.

8. According to the inventors of this concept: "boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual- site use. These objects may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation. The creation and management of boundary objects is a key process in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting social worlds". See, Susan Star and J. Griesemer, "Institutional Ecology, "Translations" and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology 1907-39", *Social Studies of Science* 19/3 (1989) 393.

9. Fotakos, at the beginning of his *Memoirs*, will affirm that "the idea of the liberation from the tyrants was deeply rooted in all the Greeks", and furthermore he will witness to the exceptional permeability of this idea, writing that "whatever the Greeks heard about their freedom, they believed it, so the common proverb "tell me what I want to hear and I'll immediately believe it" was applied. They believed in the invisible authority (of the Filike Eteria) and thought the words of the apostles were the words of God..."", see Fotios Chrysanthopoulos (Fotakos), *Απομνημονεύματα περί της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως*, Athens: Sakellariou 1858, pp. 1, 9.

10. Journal *Αἰών* (=Aeon), 1st year, nr. 15, 13.11.1838, p. 61.

A superficial reading of the passage could reasonably lead to the perception that it expresses one more “national myth” for wide post-revolutionary consumption, as it is usually said, since we have many testimonies, and even from Kolokotronis himself, that the resistances and differentiations towards liberation were diverse and dynamic from the very beginning of the Revolution. A second reading, however, would recognize the stormy character of the desire for freedom, from which, as in the case of the rain, there was no steady and watertight shelter: its desire was extraordinarily characterized by porosity, it was everywhere, it watered everything, it made vulnerable and transformed the consciences and subconscious of people, even those who, out of cowardice, prudence or various interests, initially wanted to distance themselves. Thus “we agreed”, without a time specification, could mean the final homogenization of the revolutionary corpus, albeit with some variations here and there, unworthy of consideration after the end of the Revolution¹¹.

The relation of freedom to the Greek Revolution is possible crystallized in many instances, but perhaps the two fundamental poetic texts of Dionysios Solomos, the *Hymn to Liberty* (1823) and the *Free Besieged* (1834-1847), are the ones that attest to it with exquisite clarity, but also in ways that combine with our working hypothesis. In the first case, this Solomos’ premise, which was later revived in the context of national hymnology, is from the outset embedded with brutality and death: “I know you by the blade / of the sword, the terryfing [blade], / I know you from the appearance, / which with force measures the earth”. As

11. It is possible, however, that with the passage of time the memory (and the decision) of Kolokotronis, for many reasons, retained only the joyful moments of a unanimous brotherhood, such as the one that occurred after the capture of Kalamata (23 March 1821), as he himself recounts: “While I was on my way, I saw that the Greeks had an eagerness and all the people was with the holy icons on hands, making supplications and thanksgivings; It seemed to me then to cry from the eagerness I saw. The priests were chanting: “at the river of Kalamata we kissed each other and set off”. See, Theodoros Kolokotronis, *Διήγησις συμβάντων τῆς ἐλληνικῆς φυλῆς ἀπὸ τὰ 1770 ὡς τὰ 1836*, Athens: H. Nikolaidis Philadelphus 1846, p. 52. He chose to use this joyful memory also for pedagogical reasons, towards an audience of mostly young students, in the difficult context of the movements against king Otto I.

the first interpreter of the hymn, Spyridon Trikoupis, remarked: "while the poet attempts to praise the freedom of Greece, he does not lower it from the heavens, nor does he adorn it with the symbols of divinity that are customary in poetry. The freedom of Greece has been buried with her heroes; so the poet opens the graves, takes it out of the sacred bones buried there, and presents it as all Greek"¹².

In the second case, the Zakynthian poet will describe the relationship between freedom and slavery, as was inspired and developed in the "little threshing floor" of Mesolongi during its second siege (1825-1826). The beauty of the spring nature and the moral freedom of the besieged fighters who provoked death, which in turn constantly raped their consciences, are poetically intertwined in this life's work of Solomos, who was ready to award their bravery the crown of immortality: "For eternity, which barely fits them / Eyes and face seem to be their meditations; / Their most deep souls tell them great and many things..."

To these two poetic pillars of the interdependence between freedom, revolution and violence will be added a third one, which seems to be constituted by the dominant motto of that period of conflagration, "Freedom or Death", followed, however, by its unavoidable mnemonic: "No Turks alive in the Morias [i.e. Peloponnese], or in the whole world"... Some of the qualities that seem to emanate from this verse will be discussed below.

The exploration of qualities: *despair*

The revolutionary motto "Freedom or Death"¹³, borrowed from the

12. *Γενική Έφημερίς της Ελλάδος* (=General Gazette of Greece), n. 5, Nafplion, 21.10.1825, p. 19.

13. According to Fotakos, outside the fortress of Karytaina, where the Turks had been confined, the doctor and apostle of the Filiki Eteria, Constantine Pelopidas, who had the title of "Directore of the Army", "was the first to make a long-shaped seal, like a finger, with the inscription "Freedom or Death"; this was used to seal the stores of the Turks", so that only from them the supply of the combatants could be ensured, see Fotakos,

French Revolution¹⁴, defined the nature of the Greek Revolution in 1821 in an absolute way. It gave it the aspect of a total, inexorable and inescapable conflict, as well as the form of a “holy war” between the two religions, which further fuelled its total expression. The long-awaited freedom was directly intertwined with death, posing and imposing a radical dilemma, to which a deterministic outcome was proposed. This signification suggests first of all that the initiators of the motto and then its perpetrators and implementers sought to salvage and spread the fact that their struggle was situated in a fiery context of despair. This ultimate despair, as one of the essential promoters of freedom, is therefore the first quality we could derive from this motto. In many sources of the time, and later, despair is marked as a fundamental variable with which the fighters were confronted on a daily basis and which determined their behavior¹⁵.

However, the dynamic of despair has always been two-faced. On the one hand, it signalled the –sometimes irresistible– tendency towards nihilism, resignation, desertion¹⁶ or “subjugation” (rayae), but on the

op.cit., p. 28.

14. M. Larrère et al. (eds.), *Revolutions: quand les peuples font l'histoire*, Paris/Berlin 2013; translated in Greek by G. Koukas, Athens: Dioptra 2018, p. 79.

15. Th. Kolokotronis, *op.cit.*, pp. 170-171. Admittedly, at least as described by the Greek historians of the time, a feeling of desperation possessed also the Turks and in at least one case there was a correspondence with the same Greek feeling. Thus, before the fall of Tripolitsa, the besieged Turks, determined to surrender from one point onwards, “were fearing [...] and some fanatical and desperate among the Turks, indifferent to the danger of the many and to themselves, considering in the same way their own lives or death in any way or manner”. M. Oikonomou, *Ιστορικά της Ελληνικής Παλιγγενεσίας ἢ ὁ Τερός τῶν Ἑλλήνων Ἀγῶν*, Athens: Papalexandres 1873, pp. 47, 209; N. Spiliadis, *Απομνημονεύματα ... διὰ τῆς χρησιμεύσεως εἰς τὴν νέαν Ἱστορίαν τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, Athens: H. Nikolaidis Philadelphus 1851, p. 237.

16. “The deprivation of such a leader, who was Plapoutas, has inspired fear and cowardice in the unprepared peasants, and many of them have been deserted”; see, M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, p. 158. “Great sorrow and despair” was also brought about by the murder of Antonis Nikolopoulos among his soldiers at the battle of Vlachokerasia; see, Ambrosios Frantzis, *Ἐπιτομή τῆς Ἱστορίας τῆς Ἀναγεννηθείσης Ἑλλάδος*, vol. II, Athens: Victoria Press K. Kastorchis and Co 1839, p. 6. The same historian will elsewhere describe a similar situation of despair. When the Arcadians, receiving a letter

other hand, it highlighted the privilege of an extremely persistent but creative intervention in history, a robust reversal of nihilistic, discouraging facts and statistics. The heterobarous content and premise of this duplicity permeated from beginning to end the Greek Revolution, fermented within it, became its daily companion and trading partner. Thus, it is testified, for example, that in Polygyros in Chalkidiki the inhabitants "suspecting that a massacre was about to take place, and in desperation and excitement they said let us die, but defending ourselves: let us be slaughtered, after we have slaughtered them! They took up arms and rushed into the commanding house on May 19 and killed the commander and the 18 soldiers under him ... On hearing this news, the Mütesselim, Yusuf-Bay, was furious and impaled the envoys, who were taken as hostages, cutting off their heads [...] this inhuman event aroused the feeling and right of defence, and forced all the villages to imitate the example of Polygyros..."¹⁷

This desperation brought the combatants to a climax, a borderline point, which exemplified their revolutionary conduct. Borrowing Jacques Julliard's words in the context of the French Revolution, it could be similarly argued that "as experienced by its protagonists, the revolution is not simply a "powerful time", a privileged moment in history, but an awareness of history as a whole, past, present and future, a "moment of eternity"..." or, as J. Michelet will note, "time no longer existed, time was gone ... everything was possible, the future had become the present [...] that is to say, time no longer existed, there was a "flash of eternity"¹⁸. Despair with its twofold dynamic was the

signed by Kolokotronis and Papaflessas (23 March 1821) from Kalamata that they were coming to their aid with 10,000 soldiers (!), asking them at the same time to be united, so that "as lions they can tear them [the Turks] to pieces and send them to the Tartars of Hades", the protosyngellos Frantzis realized that the letter said nothing about ammunition, which they did not have, "and that is why the foolishness was greater for everyone". Then he bit his tongue in despair, "but what could he do? For the scene was now risen, and he ought to show again fortitude, even when he was accustomed to lies". A. Frantzis, *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 370, n. 1.

17. M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, p. 185.

18. J. Julliard, "La politique", in: Le Goff - P. Nora, *op.cit.*, pp. 269-270, 280.

driving force, capable of destabilizing or uplifting not only revolutionary behaviour but also human nature itself, when subjected to its once extraordinary psychosomatic tensions at that time. In fact, Karaiskakis' military experience is said to have once resulted in the statement that "the cowardly man infects the troops like a plague; but the a desperate coward becomes a courageous fighter"¹⁹, a statement that could possibly reflect his own effort to “shape” the consciences and emotions of his disorderly soldiers in a masterly, as it is testified, way²⁰.

The *self-assertion*

The second quality we can draw from the revolutionary motto "Freedom or Death" was the individual self-affirmation of the combatants and the collective self-affirmation of the whole or at least large sections of the revolutionary corps. The memory of previous failed uprisings, the critically small number of revolutionaries, the reluctance of the others to participate in the struggle for various reasons, the lack of ammunition and military training, the difficulty of finding food, the multi-leadership of the revolutionary military bodies, the conflicts between the chieftains and their sometimes uncoordinated actions, combined with the enormous fear of the numerous and powerful war-machine of the Turks, the ruthless brutality they had known very well in the previous centuries, made the revolutionary enterprise in general, statistically at least, extremely precarious. The desperate decision to attempt at all costs to dismantle the mixture of these entrenched weaknesses, especially after the first successes at Valtetzi and Doliana, offered the militants, in addition to the much-coveted spoils, an invaluable quality, the potentiality of which, we suspect, many had been unaware or had not heard of until then. It is the quality of self-affirmation, because for the first time "in this memorable

19. G. Gazis, *Βιογραφία τῶν ἡρώων Μάρκου Μπότσαρη καὶ Καραϊσκάκη*, Aegina: National Press 1828, p. 28.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 21

battle freedom was reassured to the Greeks [...]"²¹. As Fotakos will write, then: "the Greeks took great courage to no longer fear the Turks, and began to ask where the Turks were, not as before, when they said the Turks were coming and were leaving"²². This sense of self-esteem even led them to a kind of sudden excitement, so surprising and dynamic that it had the immediate result of indiscipline, which was certainly dangerous for the completion of the struggle: "But discipline was missing from this camp, because all the villagers who had gathered no longer had the Turkish master over their heads. This sudden change made the simpler people more foolish, it seemed to them that it was strange and unbelievable to take away from their masters the weapons and glory"²³.

It was the unexpected thrill of an experience unknown to many, usually unfamiliar with war until then, which overturned the centuries-old coercive conviction that the Turks were unbeatable and any attempt at confrontation with them was doomed from the start²⁴. Often revolutionary preparations were therefore made "with holy enthusiasm", after they had "made the sign of the cross and called upon divine help with hope and enthusiasm, and with the conviction that this was the will of God"²⁵. To illustrate the different directions that such an exaggeration could take, it is worth at this point to contrast the fervour of these early experiences

21. N. Spiliadis, *op.cit.*, p. 136.

22. Fotakos, *op.cit.*, pp. 76-77.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 29. He will also mention that in the early days of the Revolution, when the chieftains were trying to tell their soldiers "what the revolution would be", they were so impatient that "they could not agree and neither went nor came, because they were determined to see the Turks, where they would be subjugated and it was a great miracle for them...". *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 28.

24. Another intoxication will again be described by Fotakos, who during the capture of Tripolis, shuddering from "the stoning and the crackling of the bones" of the defeated, tried to oppose, but was forced to remain silent, afraid "lest they give me one beat too; such was their intoxication for killing Turks!". *Ibid.*, p. 125.

25. M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, p. 165. Frantzis will also note that "the drivels" of Papaflessas "moved everyone to enthusiasm [...] and [...] all these follies seemed to be beneficial, because if the Greeks did not want to reach such enthusiasm, being overburdened and blunted by the Ottoman oppressions ... undoubtedly the Greeks would fail in everything...".

of the 1821 Revolution with the fervour of some other insurgents many years earlier, at Ioannina in 1611, as described at length by Maximus of the Peloponnese in his treatise against Dionysius the Philosopher and his followers in that tragically failed rebellion:

And I end up wondering, how did those who decided to do this not realize or did not consider that they were pursuing the impossible? For if they lost (the territory) while in possession of it, because they could not defeat those who were now in power –though they were few– or repulse them, how now, when they are few and without weapons and at the same time without the rest of the war preparation, those who outnumber them in almost everything, and have more power and seem to breathe fire, did the fools think that they could defeat them? With what weapons, with what strength, with what numerical superiority, with what good advisors, without whom nothing of what must be done can be done, did you fools conceive of acquiring such courage? Do you not see that all those who hold power submit to this tyrant here, because they fear him to an excessive degree, and in spite of having too much power to prevail against him, only if they wished? Why then, what you have done so foolishly, do they not do? Have they not an abundance of arms? Rather the contrary. Have they not soldiers? Have they not wealth? No ships? No one could claim that. What, then, do they need good advisors? And which of them is not a good counsellor, or is not clothed with wisdom? [...] With shepherd’s crooks and agricultural bars, you fools, to meet the task of defeating enemies who are like breathing fire, being you unarmed against those who are armed with powerful weapons; being you naked against those who are protected by armour and have practised the art of war, without even seeing that it is a dream illusory to fight them? Alas for the stupidity, the paralysis, the greatest madness! [...] Is it possible for people who are drunk and unarmed in everything to attack and fight against enemies? For men who are farmers and shepherds, harsh and miserable and without any experience of warlike situations cannot accomplish such acts.²⁶

26. D. M. Sarros, «Μαξίμου ἱερομονάχου τοῦ Πελοποννησίου, Λόγος στηλιτευτικὸς κατὰ Διονυσίου τοῦ ἐπικληθέντος Σκυλλοσόφου καὶ τῶν συναποστησάντων αὐτῷ εἰς Ἰωάννινα ἐν ἔτει 1611, μετὰ σχετικῆς Εἰσαγωγῆς», *Epirotika Chronika* 3 (1928) 194-195, 198. It is, however, characteristic that in this passage and in other parts of the

The juxtaposition of these two temporally distanced, intoxicating revolutionary processes is perhaps capable of indicating the pendency and the always risky element of insurrections; this uncertainty that is a constant feature of daring ventures²⁷.

In the case of the Greek Revolution, however, in this intoxication and temerity, in this harsh haste against conventional realism, the sense of pride of an oppressed nation, which was essentially a sense of differentiation from their sovereigns, was gradually grown and strengthened: we are better and we can defeat you... This self-assertion could also be interpreted, in a way, as deconstructive for the ancestral past. The differentiation was manifested not only towards the Turks, but also towards their own ancestors, both immediate and distant, during the Ottoman domination, because the latter, despite their many occasional bloody rebellions, had not managed to throw off the yoke, as it seemed that it would be possible for their concrete descendants, their «πολλῶ κάρονες [=much more better]», to do so.

Moreover, this quality is consistent with the image, which the revolutionaries themselves wanted Europeans to get from their revolutionary movement. Just as before the Revolution, so during it, it was the common desire of the people in power, chieftains, politicians and ecclesiastics, to seek, for symbolic and real reasons, the favour of Europe. The attitude of Kolokotronis was a characteristic one. When Demetrius

same work, which is even said to have been widely circulated at the time, Maximus, considered by many scholars as a "Turkophile", does not hesitate to call the Ottomans "tyrants", a fact that undermines the definitive epithet attributed to him.

27. This striking ambiguity of actions will be typically seen in Kolokotronis' well-known post-revolutionary remark that "the world said we were crazy; if we weren't crazy, we didn't make the revolution ... now that we have won, where we have ended our war successfully, we are blessed, we are praised; if we were not successful, we would be blamed and cursed". And he will go on to give the vivid example of a ship pulling away from the harbour in the storm, where another 50 or 60 ships were anchored. So when "(the ship) sails, trades, earns, comes back safe", then the other sailors praise it, denouncing their own captains as "worthless". But if that ship "did not prosper" and was lost, then everyone would blame its captain as a "scoundrel", who "caused pain and suffering to so many people". See, Th. Kolokotronis, *op.cit.*, pp. 190-191.

Ypsilantis arrived in the Peloponnese to take over the leadership and the notables opposed him, arose at a certain point "a riot to kill the notables who did not want to leave the administration free, as Ypsilantis wanted". Then Kolokotronis "went out and reassured them by his speech". "After becoming, at first, their companion", he assured them first of all that "he also desires the killing of the rulers". But he invited them to assure him "what the world and the other Christians and the kings of Europe will say; they will praise it or blame it; they will say that the Greeks did not rebel to kill their tyrant Turks, but they are killing themselves and are killing their notables and are not worthy of their freedom"²⁸.

28. Fotakos, *op.cit.*, p. 85; M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, pp. 192-198. This behaviour of Kolokotronis towards the notables must be combined with the information given again by Fotakos that after the siege of Tripoli the young adjutant confided to his captain the reaction of Demetrios Deligiannis against him. He then replied: "Act as if you had told me nothing; now that the Holy God has willed and strengthened us and we have taken Tripoli, let them say what they will. They are right, my son; for they see these slain (and he showed the Turkish corpses), with whom they had power together; now the nation has the power. If they thought that they were making the revolution to succeed the Turks and take their place, they were wrong". Fotakos, *op.cit.*, p. 132. Thus, despite Kolokotronis' own assertion later that "'our own revolution does not resemble any of those that are taking place in Europe today. The revolutions of Europe against their administrations are civil wars; our own war was the most just, it was nation against nation...", an assertion necessary to protect the Revolution from the dreaded European reaction to Jacobinism, it is a fact that not only the national, but also the social character of the Revolution is often projected, directly or indirectly, in the narratives of its protagonists. Th. Kolokotronis, *op.cit.*, p. 190. Such a typical attitude of the revolutionaries towards the pre-revolutionary authorities is the harsh response they gave to the bishops and notables who were miserably imprisoned in Tripoli, who, in a letter forced by the Turks to sign ("which in their languor they signed, drowning all sense of indignation against the Turks"), urged them to repent and submit to the Sultan again: "You have always been pleased with the power and always walking in its spirit and will, you defend it even now; and you have been rewarded with six months of torture in prison...". M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, p. 211; N. Spiliadis, *op.cit.*, p. 240. Frantzis, however, gives a different interpretation of this cruelty. He claims that they responded in this way in order to deceive the Ottomans again that the bishops and the notables knew nothing about the revolution. A. Frantzis, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 54.

The *denigration/dehumanisation* of Turks and Turkophiles

It is a fact that the motto "Freedom or Death" was put forward to denote the radical rupture of the coercive and involuntary pre-revolutionary bonds between the Muslim and Christian communities, but also as a necessary condition of the revolutionary process in general²⁹. The pre-revolutionary period was strictly considered an "Ancien Régime", any kind of restoration of which had to be prevented at any cost. The urgent and absolute denigration of the enemies and their occasional partners, Ottomans, Jews, and Turkish-minded Greeks, by the insurgents was proclaimed by the revolutionary texts as a *sine qua non* for the success of the Revolution. Ioannis Philemon will testify that "the war had a general character throughout the Turkish territory, where Greeks and Orthodox in general lived. And as the Greeks persecuted every Turk everywhere as a common enemy, so the Turks always regarded every Greek Orthodox everywhere as a revolutionary in spirit, though not a revolutionary in fact"³⁰. Philemon's differentiation between "revolutionary in spirit" and "not revolutionary in fact" characteristically indicates a primary uncertainty that was established over the revolutionary project and was maintained, under certain conditions, until almost its end, as can be seen from the desperate struggle of Kolokotronis against Nenekos and his comrades, which ended in the assassination of the latter³¹.

Thus, the denigration/dehumanization of Turks and Turkophiles constitutes, according to our hypothesis, the third quality that emerges

29. As is always the case, some people used this motto without taking into consideration its immense impact, causing Frantzis to reproach those who "fled to Europe in safety and wrote as if they were announcing predictions from the oracular tripod: "either we shall all be liberated or you alone shall be perished"" in contradiction to "those who are truly suffering and in danger... [those] who endured the heat of the day and the frost of the night within and outside the state...", who moreover were sidelined by the Bavarian regime after the Revolution. See, A. Frantzis, *op.cit.*, vol. II, p. 534.

30. Io. Philemon, *Δοκίμιον Ἱστορικόν περὶ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ἐπαναστάσεως*, vol. III, Athens: P. Soutsas and A. Ktenas 1860, p. 243.

31. T. A. Stamatopoulos, *Οἱ τουρκοπροσκυνημένοι καὶ ὁ Κολοκοτρώνης*, Athens: Kalvos 1974, pp. 46-73.

from this revolutionary motto, a quality that, like the previous ones, was developed through a direct fictional process³². At this point it needs to be emphasized that, contrary to what is usually projected under the influence of an inflexible, deferred positivism, always ideologically biased, this myth-making must be distinguished from deception and falsehood, concepts that have an irrevocably negative meaning (even if sometimes the myth-making itself reinforces that meaning³³). For it is a fact that in all the circumstances of his life "every man mythologizes from all the resources of his body and soul ... [from which] the myth flows like sweat"³⁴. Especially in the conditions of extreme danger of a war or a

32. Paolo Rossi, emphasizing this two-sided dimension of revolutions in general, will remark that "revolutions have precisely this feature: not only do they turn towards the future and give life to something primitive, but they also construct an imaginary past, which usually and in general terms takes on negative attributes", by adding as an example that "in nowadays we know very well that the myth of the Middle Ages, as an era of barbarism, was precisely a myth constructed by the culture of humanists and by the founding fathers of modernity". P. Rossi, *Η γένεση της σύγχρονης επιστήμης στην Ευρώπη*, trans by. P. Tsiamourias, Athens: Ellenika Grammata 2004, pp. 22-23.

33. Despite the fact that they had negative results, the spreading of rumours and falsehood had a peculiar positive contribution to the successful revolutionary process. Thus Fotakos will remark that "it was common to write lies ... this invention was sent by God". See, Fotakos, *op.cit.*, p. 56. In another report he will also emphasize that "the Archimandrite [Papaflessas] ... showed great spirit and extraordinary activity, and at first he was so persuasive in his speeches that many times he himself believed his deceptions to be true". Ph. Chrysathopoulos [=Fotakos], *Βίος του παπᾶ Φλέσσα. Συγγραφείς μὲν ὑπὸ Φωτάκου ἐκδοθεῖς δὲ ὑπὸ Σ. Καλκάνδη*, Athens: Nomimotis 1868, p. 35. Finally, Oikonomou notes: "The true and praised but even the false news that spread like lightning from everywhere in every corner of Greece, especially during the first two months from 25 March to 25 May [1821], gradually transmitted flame and courage, but also shame to those Greeks who had not yet participated in the struggle". M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, p. 225.

34. A. Smyrneos, *Η Ιστορία ὡς ἐπιπτώωση*, *op.cit.*, p. 184. Reinforcing this expansive framework, Claude Lévi-Strauss would describe the aim of his research as "to demonstrate not that people reason through myths, but that myths operate in people's minds without their knowing it". L. Wittgenstein would remind us that, after all, "a whole mythology is established in our language", while R. Koselleck would point out that "history as a science lives by metaphorical expressions. This is our anthropological presupposition...", while the danger is that "our empirical research will naively accept metaphors as they come to us". Cl. Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. J. Weightman and D. Weightman, New York: Harper and Row 1970, p. 14; J. Mali, *Mythistory: The Making of*

revolution, fiction is the one that can substantiate the very survival and evolution of a man or a people, because it creates a motivation and self-confidence, courage and determination and makes him overlook the discouraging, realistic statistics that reasonably predict his defeat, and moreover it can more easily mobilize groups of people towards a particular goal.

The result, therefore, of a long-lasting brutality on the part of the Ottomans, the denigration of the latter was reinforced by the enthusiastic preaching of the Modern Greek Enlightenment³⁵, to find a concrete expression in the exercise of merciless violence against Muslim soldiers, prisoners and civilians. The injunction "No Turks alive in the Morias, or in the whole world" seems to have determined, to a certain extent, the choices of the revolutionaries, but it is a fact that it was not always in the direction of the massacres, as it is usually interpreted. On various occasions, the chieftains urged the Turks trapped in the fortresses to make a pact ("trattato") with them and surrender voluntarily (even stressing to them the responsibility they would have towards their God if they did not obey³⁶), with the promise to transport them, in foreign ships, safely to the Turkish-occupied territories, as e.g. in Smyrna. And it is a fact that this was sometimes the case, but it caused terrible reprisals to the Greek civilians in these territories. And when the imprisoned Turks refused the Greek offers of evacuation or delayed to take the decision to do so, this was either because they were waiting for a large Turkish force, which they

a *Modern Historiography*, Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press 2003, p. 22; R. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. T. S. Presner et al., Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press 2002, p. 7.

35. Despite some contradictions of political and diplomatic nature, it is typical the affirmation of Adamatios Koraes in *Σάλπισμα Πολεμιστήριον*: "A nation barbaric, filthy, of a different language and religion, in short, a Turkish nation has fallen, my children, on me, your poor mother, Greece, like a mighty whirlwind". The same attitude was held at *Ἄσμα Πολεμιστήριον*: "My fellow compatriots, until when shall we be slaves of the wicked Muslims, the tyrants of Greece? The hour of revenge has come, O friends, now." *Σάλπισμα Πολεμιστήριον*, Alexandria: Atromitos the Marathonian Press 1801, p. 10; *Ἄσμα Πολεμιστήριον τῶν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ περὶ ἐλευθερίας μαχομένων Γραικῶν*, [Paris 1800], reprinted by the Centre for Modern Greek Studis/NHRF 1983, p. 1.

36. Io. Philemon, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 96.

hoped would free them, or because they feared (especially their leaders) the merciless punishment by the Sultan for their voluntary surrender, since in such a way the Ottoman prestige would be destroyed³⁷. On the other hand, the killing of prisoners was not always a given, because they were often used for various tasks, military or otherwise, or exchanged for Greek prisoners³⁸.

But all these peaceful effects of the fierce anti-Ottoman imperative cannot silence the parallel, harsh reality of Greek revanchism; a revanchism which, following the above imperative, could also be interpreted as "subaltern genocide"³⁹ or "genocide from below", the use of genocidal practices by the oppressed against their oppressors, a fact that has also occurred in many past and contemporary circumstances in human history. Describing the fall of Tripoli and the massacres of the defeated, Fotakos will note that "there was no Turk who did not have two and three enemies; for they never thought that their rayans would rise up and demand their freedom; and disaster came upon their heads"⁴⁰. In some cases, as it happened in Tripoli, Agrinio, Lagadia

37. See, for example, the proposals of Kolokotronis to those trapped in Palamidi. Th. Kolokotronis, *op.cit.*, pp. 118-121. Also, the Turks of Neokastro, who were starving from the Greek siege, sent a letter to the Turks of Methoni to help them urgently, otherwise "they want to surrender the Royal Castle to the Greeks, and let the plague be on their (those of Methoni) necks, and afterwards they should give explanation to the King". A. Frantzis, *op.cit.*, vol. I, p. 392. The same is witnessed at the siege of Tripolitsa, where the Turks mobilized "indirectly" 3,000 Ottoman women, who gathered in front of the administration palace and demanded that the commander capitulate to the Greeks, in order to avoid disaster and give their word to God and the Sultan, a capitulation which was finally achieved by this trick. A. Frantzis, *op.cit.*, vol. II, p. 52-53

38. On the issue of Greek and Turkish prisoners, see Ap. Vakalopoulos, *Αίχμαλωτοι Ελλήνων κατά την Έπανάσταση τοῦ 1821*, Athens: Herodotus 2000. See also Dem. Ypsilantis' appeal for the non-killing of Turkish prisoners for the same reasons in Io. Philimon, *op.cit.*, vol. IV, p. 233.

39. N. A. Robins - A. Jones (eds.), "Introduction", in *Genocides by the Oppressed: Subaltern Genocide in Theory and Practice*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2009, p. 3.

40. Fotakos, *op.cit.*, p. 130. The same would be argued by the German philhellene General Norman, accusing the Europeans who had become aware of and reacted to the violence of the revolutionaries, of misunderstanding the fact that "a revolution that breaks out after 400 years of slavery cannot be done in order and without cruelty. Narratives of the suffering of the Greeks during the years of slavery justify the savagery

or Mendenitsa of Locris, we observe their extermination, for reasons that vary, of course, depending on the circumstances, but which also revolve around the inexorable necessity of a differently heinous act, now legitimized by the new revolutionary law.

Thus, in Mendenitsa, which is the least known case, the voluntary surrender of the Ottomans who had been enclosed in Frankish castle, together with the bektashi dervishes of its famous Turkish teke, was followed by their merciless massacre, despite the promises of the revolutionaries for amnesty (13 April 1821). But this massacre was also combined with the extermination of 2000 Turkish prisoners, which was decided shortly afterwards at Kobotades (20 April 1821), before the battle of Alamana (23 April 1821). The reason given was the inability of the revolutionaries to guard such a large number of hostages and also to prevent the possible defection of the prisoners to the armies of Köse Mehmet Pasha and Omer Vrioni, who were descending to suppress the revolution in Eastern Central Greece. The reason for defection also occurred on other revolutionary occasions, when Turkish captives, peasants or soldiers, were captured. However, it is remarkable that at times the urgent necessity of a real and symbolic break with the pre-revolutionary past was also brought forward. The first historians of the Revolution usually tried to interpret, but not always to justify, the Greek atrocities, either because they themselves were eyewitnesses who did not at all share such a savage outcome or because they were writing their works in a post-philhellenic period, in which the discourse on the atrocities of the revolutionaries could be combined with the dominance of banditry in the new Greek state and thus reinforce the disparagement

of the revolutionaries. There is no family that does not have reasons for revenge." Also, the French philhellene J. Raybaud, despite his vehement opposition to the massacres of Turkish civilians in Tripoli, also tried to justify the revengefulness of the revolutionaries, when he referred specifically to Kekhayabei, the military commander of the city, noting that "such was the terror he caused the Greeks, that they were all willing to sacrifice any hope of booty if only he would fall into their hands to enjoy his martyrdom". K. Simopoulos, *Πώς είδαν οι ξένοι την Επανάσταση του '21*, Vol. I, Athens: Politistikes Ekdoseis 2004, p. 85, n. 144, and p. 57.

of the Greeks by European public opinion⁴¹. Ioannis Philemon, referring specifically to the destruction of Mendenitsa's teke and the massacre of the dervishes, will insist that "there was no reason for the destruction of that building, so beneficial to all those passing through of any gender and religion... But is the rational thinking and leniency heard at such a time?"⁴²

But in some cases historians will also record the causes of these atrocities, which seems to have been circulated a lot among the revolutionaries as an excuse. It was the inculcation-exculpation process through the sacrifice of enemies and the addiction of the revolutionaries to bloodshed. Thus, Nikolaos Spiliades will argue that since the dilemma of the revolutionaries was "to free themselves or to be completely extinguished, their salvation required that they all stain their hands in the blood of their tyrants in order to get used to killing their enemies...". But he will add that this addiction was also necessary, "because there were some who considered killing Turks as a sin, and wept because of that". He will even quote the information that, in order to prevent such religious opposition to the revolutionary practice, "the bishop of Elos, Anthimos, proclaimed that those Christians who killed Turks were allowed to receive the holy communion"⁴³. In Mani, the bishop of Karyoupolis, Cyril Germos, went so far as to issue a Great Aphorism against that Greek "who would henceforth like to speak of rapprochement with the Muslims"⁴⁴.

41. Thus Spyridon Trikoupis, who will mention the siege of the castle of Mendenitsa, but will omit the subsequent massacre of the Ottomans, will claim, almost apologizing to his original European audience, that the Greeks in the case of the Kobotades "despite the pleas ... pretending, as if they had never lacked excuses in sin, that they had caused the invasion of enemies outside to be accompanied by other enemies within". Sp. Trikoupis, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Έπαναστάσεως*, London 1860, p. 225.

42. Io. Philemon, *op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 89-90. On the contrary, when he will refer to the massacre decided in Kombotades, he will note that this decision "is certainly considered to be inappropriate and cruel, but taking into account the time and the morale of the Turks, it is a work of absolute necessity ... [because] the law of common salvation dictated the decision of the chieftains in Kombotades". *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192.

43. N. Spiliadis, *op.cit.*, p. 46

44. F. C. H. Pouqueville, *Histoire de la Régénération de la Grèce: comprenant le précis des*

Furthermore, one of the two historians who briefly described the massacre of the Ottomans in Mendenitsa, Lambros Koutsonikas, will remark that the chieftains had distributed the captured Turks to the neighbouring villages and "in order to implicate the villagers", they ordered to kill them, "so that through this implication the idea of submitting to the Turk was excluded for them"⁴⁵. It is testified that a similar blackmail tactic was used by Kanellos Deligiannis to kill the Turks in Lagadia, when the latter learned that his fellow countrymen intended to "submit... and thus he implicated his entire province"⁴⁶. For the same reason, Karaiskakis, after the victory of the Greek troops at Arachova, using the very same Ottoman ritual, erected the "Trophy of the Greeks against the barbarians" with the heads of the dead Turks "in the form of a tower", in order to "make the inhabitants of the village look guilty in the eyes of the Turks, and to make them lose hope of submitting to the enemies again"⁴⁷. Moreover, in response to the accusations of some Europeans about the barbarity of the Greek insurgents, Christos Byzantios will make the same explanation for the "political necessity" of exterminating the captured Turks, "so that they will not be incriminated and will not be seen as apostates by the Sultan"⁴⁸. Finally, as Dimitrios

événements depuis 1740 jusqu'en 1824, vol. II, Paris: Firmin Didot 1824; translated in Greek by X. Zygouras as *Ίστορία τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ἐπαναστάσεως ἤτοι ἡ Ἀναγέννησις τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, Athens 1890, p. 310.

45. L. Koutsonikas, *Γενικὴ Ίστορία τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ἐπαναστάσεως*, vol. II, Athens: D. Karakatzanis "Evangelismos" Press 1864, p. 49.

46. Fotakos, *op.cit.*, pp. 32-33. Also Papaflessas "in order to incriminate the Corinthians and the other inhabitants of Dervenochori, who were still listening to the orders of the mother of Kiamil-bey and were afraid to take the arms as if they were ignorant ... he opened the tower of Sofiko and gave permission to the soldiers to grab some things from inside ...". This event resulted in the killing of some Greek prisoners in retaliation, while "from that time onwards Turks and Greeks were separated from those places". *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

47. D. Aenian, *Ὁ Καραϊσκάκης ἢ τοῦ Καραϊσκάκη βιογραφία καὶ λεπτομερῆς ἔκθεσις τῆς τελευταίας ἐκστρατείας αὐτοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν*, Chalkis: Kon. M. Arseniades 1834, p. 110.

48. Christos Byzantios, *Ίστορία τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν Ἐπανάστασιν ἐκστρατειῶν καὶ μαχῶν...*, Athens: K. Antoniadis 1874, p. 30.

Ypsilantis' adviser, Panayiotis Anagnostopoulos will argue, the aim of the massacre of Turkish prisoners was, on the one hand, "to get them ... [the combatants] used to bloodshed" and, on the other hand, to achieve their collective implication, which would prevent their voluntary return to Turkish sovereignty. It was therefore necessary "to be exposed [...] as far as the Ottomans were concerned, so not to ask in any other case, i.e. in a temporary state of despair, betraying the struggle, to justify in front of the Ottomans that they had been forced by the great ones to lift their arms against them"⁴⁹.

Certainly, it could be argued that these interpretations of the Greek atrocities were an afterthought and do not in themselves reflect the harsh realities of that time. It was not a deliberate and ubiquitous effort to implicate the Greeks through those savage practices, but was invented afterwards in order to accelerate and formalize even more the rupture between the two communities. For there were cases in which it is testified that the killing of Turkish civilians was done either because of individual revenge, or in confusion and embarrassment of reacting to situations that met the conditions of deadlock, or because of a combination of various factors⁵⁰.

A typical such circumstance as the eyewitness Michael Oikonomou, was the one where, after the fall of Tripoli, "many other women [were saved], but in a state of misery because of sickness and hunger, and they

49. K. Simopoulos, *op.cit.*, vol.II, p. 34, n. 41.

50. In the case, for example, of the capture of Neokastro, it is testified that "it was surrendered [...] to the besiegers by treaty, but due to the slow execution of what was agreed upon by the Turks, many villagers from the surrounding villages, who had hated the Turks individually and were seeking revenge, flocked there, the fortress being already entirely occupied by the Greeks, while the Turks themselves were also staying there, the Turks having been given small cause which eventually took dimensions, the Turks were slaughtered in return." M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, p. 204. In a similar way, Frantzis will describe these scenes, considering that the massacres were not "premeditated", nor was it the wish of the chieftains, but "born ... from their memories of what the Greeks had suffered under the Ottomans during the Turkish rule...", and from the fact that the Ottomans "with their usual insolence, and arrogance towards the Greeks, and as if they still had the upper hand over them...". A. Frantzis, *op.cit.*, vol. I, p. 398.

came out of the city almost half-naked ... They stayed there overnight as savages, exhausted by cold, hunger and sickness, suffering and mourning, asking for bread and clothing ... begging ... either to be fed or to be killed so that they might not be tormented by hunger, sickness and cold in the open country". This terrible sight brought close several "curious" Greeks, who disagreed about what to do with them: some sympathized with them but left in embarrassment, others said it was better to kill them, since they too were asking for it, others doubted whether they should be treated in the surrounding villages, as this would spread the disease that was already sweeping the villages of the Peloponnese. Others, finally, "knew that it was perhaps more politically advantageous under the circumstances to foster the racial enmity between Turks and Rayahs and the like". But from this "confusion of tongues" they were suddenly brought out by a "sharp, wild and in the urgent heat shout of an agitated soldier" ("Get out of the way, what are you guarding them for? Get rid of them") and the one shot was followed by "a thousand others", resulting in the death of all of them...⁵¹.

The "Stockholm Syndrome" and its "healers"

Neither the Greek unfair practices, nor their possible causes were omitted by the early historiographers and memoirists⁵². The consolidation of the Revolution in the consciousness of the Greek insurgents did not happen immediately to everyone, since the advent of the "revolutionary moment" of each individual depended on many factors, ontological, political and/or contextual. Having as a typical, extreme example the children of the forced recruiting and the harem's women, we could assume that, in conditions of autocracy such as the Ottoman regime, with non-Muslims being considered second-class citizens, there was at times and places a

51. M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, pp. 217-218.

52. Frantzis will not even hesitate to admit that "all that has happened is ... indescribable, which is rather a work of atrocity or revenge". A. Frantzis, *op.cit.*, vol. I, p. 400.

traumatic conflation of Christian victims and Muslim perpetrators, to which the former had necessarily succumbed, after four centuries of cruel dominion and dozens of failed, bloody uprisings⁵³. This defensive function was probably more widespread, especially among those who were forced to live without any possibility of escape under Ottoman rule, including the poor and the marginalized, those who lived in areas that were in a minority compared to Muslims or who had no access to the communal or ecclesiastical authorities to defend them. The subjugated people must therefore have developed a complex survival mechanism, a painful folding of the self, performing an involuntary mechanism of identification or attachment, to which they embraced a habitual indifference, suffering the emotional paralysis that this entailed, in order to protect themselves from the anxiety and fear of the threat and reprisals inflicted by the perpetrator⁵⁴. The victim in this imbalance of power, addicted to the constant threat of various forms of abuse from birth and for generations,

53. Frantzis, describing the dramatic negotiations between the Greeks and Turks before the fall of Tripoli, he will note that the Turks "having the arrogance of superiority ... still imagined that the Greeks had in their souls the fear and cowardice before the the Ottoman power, without the unfortunates feeling the Greeks' unproven courage against the Ottomans...". Also, he who was particularly compassionate to the Ottomans for their suffering due to the Revolution, will mention that during the besiege many of them, mostly Aghas and Spahs, while were unarmed and captives, "with this Ottoman high-mindedness and arrogance, they abused the Greeks" and spoke to them contemptuously ("they called out "you Roman" as if to say "you infidel, you dog"" or said to them "where are our rayahs?"), so that they irritated them too much and then they proceeded to massacre everyone, young and old, without the clergy, the politicians or the chieftains, although they tried, being able to stop them. A. Frantzis, *op.cit.*, vol. II, pp. 58, 66-67.

54. Typical in this respect is the testimony of the British traveller and doctor Henry Holland, a few years before the Revolution (1812-1813), during his visit to Eleftherochori in Lokrida one winter evening: "Our arrival, and the ferocious manner in which our Turkish attendants broke into the house, produced at first much alarm; the eldest daughter of one of the families, who in another sphere of life, might have been a beauty, was hurried away into a neighboring hovel; in the faces and the manner of those who remained, there was silently expressed an habitual expectation of ill-usage, which it was painful to the mind to contemplate". H. Holland, *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia, etc. during the Years 1812 and 1813*, vol. I, London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown 1815, p. 384.

was forced to see the world through the eyes of the abuser⁵⁵. We could therefore argue that many of the Greeks at that time (but also the rest of the subjugated people) had a kind of “Stockholm Syndrome”⁵⁶ and slow therapeutic process, unknown anyway at that time, but an unrelenting blackmail, a violent and merciless, internal and external rupture to achieve their disengagement. But who would be able to “cure” by neutralizing the influence of this Syndrome? Its exceptional and radical “healers” were first of all the chieftains, either for reasons of personal revenge, since many of them had established relations of tolerance, profit and mutual hatred with the Turks in the pre-revolutionary period, or because of their harsh mountainous training, which required violent, rigid decisions, or because of the pressures of compulsory recruitment, which also sometimes came up against the unwillingness or fear of the Greeks to participate in the War of Independence. The chieftains, acting sometimes in an authoritarian manner and sometimes by softening the wishes of their disorderly soldiers, constantly sought to discipline them by suppressing even those who opposed them⁵⁷.

But the role of the “healers” was also played by politicians and erudites, who even theorised this fierce opposition between the two communities, as can be seen from the proclamations of the National

55. Perhaps this is the attitude that Oikonomou wanted to reveal, when he mentions that at the beginning of the Revolution "the unquenchable hatred between Greeks and Turks had not ... yet generalized, nor had the ancient racial enmity, which the young people did not know, been kindled". M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, p. 134. However, a testimony to the contrary will be offered by Swan, a chaplain of an English frigate, who during the Revolution will state that "the Greeks are not generally barbarous and bloodthirsty as they seem to be in times of frenzy. They treat their prisoners with great kindness, as I have ascertained from undisputed witnesses. The Turkish women are so devoted [to them] not wanting to abandon them...". K. Simopoulos, *op.cit.*, vol. II, p. 370, n. 135.

56. It would be extremely interesting to study these disorders of Stockholm Syndrome, as well as those of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), concerning the period before, during and after the Greek Revolution, as, despite the time distance and the rarity of the evidence, it would be possible to interpret more fruitfully some revolutionary and post-revolutionary behaviours.

57. In fact, the punishments that hung over them and/or were carried out were cruel. Fotakos, *op.cit.*, pp. 35, 58-59, 91.

Assemblies. According to some scholars, they were also responsible for the absoluteness of the motto "Freedom or Death", which was not a reflection of the collective will of the Greeks, but simply a radical projection of the pioneers of the Filiki Eteria [=Society of Friends] and some learned Greeks. They gave an almost ethnic cleansish and/or genocidal meaning to that Greek-Turkish conflict, influenced by the Jacobinism of the French Revolution, in which this motto was first heard⁵⁸. In fact, the revolutionaries, by exercising such a brutal "political practice", were going against the tradition of rebellions in the Ottoman Empire, whereby "it was a constant Ottoman practice that, after the bloody repression, "paternal" leniency towards the rebels should follow as soon as possible"⁵⁹. Thus, after the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, the Sultan's "professed" desire was "not to allow a private individual to abuse an innocent rayah", respecting "the principle that subjects who behave in a peaceful and quiet manner, engaged only in their work, or those who, though once guilty of rebellion, have since returned to the path of submission and true repentance, must again, as before, be under the blessed protection of my Sublime Port"⁶⁰.

As a result of this "invented" by the revolutionaries contraposition, a wide dissemination of "propaganda texts"⁶¹, put forward by their leaders and/or later historians is emerged. These texts were intended to subvert the penitentiary "imperial normality"⁶² of alternating brutality and leniency to the Ottomans and urged mass extermination of the oppressors, thus carrying out a "political instrumentalization"⁶³ of death,

58. Sp. Ploumides, *op.cit.*, pp. 75, 78.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 73-74.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*, p. 81. This "instrumentalization" is often accused as a propagandistic quality of discourse, but in the name of a completely imaginary objectivity, which treats historical phenomena with a supposed detachment. Apart from the fact that such an attitude is completely unrealistic and ahistorical, there could never be an outcome of a historical drama, even at the high and extreme level of a revolution, if its discourse did not function instrumentally and manichaeistically, with either beneficial or destructive consequences

while treating the conflict "in terms of holy war"⁶⁴. In any case, we believe that the most important and most guiding role in the "treatment" of this "Stockholm Syndrome" was played by the senior and junior clergy, who, having a great influence especially among the less educated Greeks of the time, attempted to completely disentangle that irresistible complex of fear, cowardice, despair and religious guilt for the murders of the combatants, in principle, non-Christians. This clergy, subject to the same "Stockholm Syndrome", albeit under sometimes different conditions, is attested, especially by the sources of the Greek Enlightenment erudite, to have been burdened with the accusations of his various collaborations with the conqueror and his appeasing declarations that Ottoman slavery was the long-term price of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine sins of rulers and people⁶⁵. This cleric therefore directly engaged not only in

(depending on the perspective of each historian).

64. *Ibid.*, p. 78. The direct consequence of these and similar, seemingly neutralized, views is the historical blaming of the revolutionaries exclusively for the destruction of the pre-revolutionary "peaceful" and "tolerant" coexistence of Greeks and Turks and for the violent and unjustified breaking of Muslim "paternalism". Such views, which are directly aligned with the official Ottoman view of the "ingratitude" of the revolutionaries towards a constantly "benefiting" Ottoman power, which take into account the "Sultan's declared desire" to exercise regular charity towards his subjects, simply obey a recent ideological use of history, directly analogous to the traditional one, which is systematically denounced. It is no coincidence that in this argumentation the frequent references to the work of George Finley, who literally exhausts himself in defaming the Revolution and its protagonists, play a significant role, instead presenting the Ottoman image in the most unflattering terms possible, ranging from the fully justified necessity of the Sultan's callous reaction to the inherently condescending and benign personality of Mahmoud II himself. It becomes obvious, however, that the historiographical "demythologization" in question is not the unshakable guardian of the "truth" of the past, as it is projected, but is simply a "re-mythologization", fully embedded within the inherent fictional capacity of man operating under the influence of his ontology, re-imagining with a different "pre-decision" and in the context of a pre-established "possible history" what he reads in the historical sources. See A. Smyrneos, *Η Ιστορία ως έπιπτώχωση...*, op. cit., pp. 162-178. Cf. R. Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. K. Tribe, New York: Columbia University Press 2004, σ. 151.

65. It is generally known that a series of pre-revolutionary texts, such as the *Anonymous of 1789*, the *Memorandum* by Koraes (1803), the *Rossanglogallos* (1805), the *Hellenike Nomarchia* (1806), the *Livellus against the Bishops* (1810) and *Crito's Reflections* (1819),

a struggle to eradicate the previous accusations, but also in a narrow resonance of the revolutionary impulse, performing, we might say, a kind of timely and provisional suspension of the Gospel, the Gospel of forgiveness, patience, humility and non-vengeance⁶⁶.

For within the framework of the evangelical provisions we have, in the period immediately preceding the Revolution, the example of the Neomartyrs, which reasonably suggests the idea that only their voluntary sacrifice, which would not in any case include the death of the religiously others, would be tolerated and acceptable within the Orthodox Church. Moreover, the wide dissemination of the neomartyr narrative through the *synaxaria* is at least one indication of its dynamic spiritual influence on the Orthodox populations. Thus, it is not clear in which way the widespread cult of the civilian Neomartyrs, who were even associated with the Kollybades contemplative movement, participated in the

expressing the most radical tendencies of Modern Greek Enlightenment, reproduced with particular intensity its anticlerical components, accusing the Orthodox hierarchy directly and mercilessly of collaboration with the Turks as well as of moral corruption, a binomial denunciation of irresistible influence on the people, as they believed.

66. The interpretation of this innovative behaviour of the clergy goes beyond the intentions and limits of this study. Certainly, not only patriarchal encyclicals praising "the most merciful and heroic Sultan Mahmut II, the exact guardian of Justice and Epicureanism", but also specific acts of servitude, must be considered in the context of the institutional and pragmatic constraints imposed by centuries of Ottoman rule on the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the necessity of the survival of the subjugated, even through this institution, but also of the once acute pathologies of the churchmen, justified and unjustified, by the standards of that time, of course. On the other hand, the interpretation of persons and actions in an oppressive in every respect past from the safe perspective and ontology of the present is, in principle, an extremely arbitrary, anachronistic and tendentious historical enterprise. However, without excluding personal reasons of controversy or personal interpretations of the Revolution, it is worth emphasizing that the Revolution, at least at its beginning, sharpened the differentiations against the various pre-revolutionary norms, creating a new normality, which very quickly, aided by the revolutionary momentum, became widely dispersed. On the other hand, it is known that even during the Ottoman rule, many clergymen of all ranks had already differentiated themselves from full submission, in body and spirit, to the Ottoman dictates, paying for it with torture, exile and their own lives.

preparation of the national revolution, which changed the pattern⁶⁷. For already from its beginning⁶⁸, and throughout the 19th century, we have a remarkable “paradigm shift”, where the baton in the national-religious narrative is passed from the Neo-martyrs to the Ethno-martyrs⁶⁹ and the neo-martyr narrative is “nationalised”⁷⁰.

Saint Nikodemos of Mount Athos, who wrote and published the extremely daring for that time *Neon Martyrologion* (1799), was certainly not sparing in his derogatory characterizations of the oppressors of the then “captive” Greek Orthodox people⁷¹, giving a clear indication of his

67. One of the reasons could be that the dissemination of the neo-Martyr narrative, as popular and non-institutional at first, did not deeply touch the consciences of many of the mainly upper clergy, nor was it adopted by them, either because of personal intolerance towards such a self-sacrificial model, or because it was seen as a threat to their statutory position within the Ottoman institutions, or both.

68. “After we escaped alive from the war and returned to the village of Valtetzi, we saw the slain Christians and none of us came near them. We were shaken by our fear because for the first time we saw people killed... And Kolokotronis, in order to encourage us, took the pieces of each of the dead, cut them up and told the soldiers around us that they were saints and that they would go to heaven as martyrs, and then we approached and buried them”. Fotakos, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

69. G. Tzedopoulos, «Ἐθνικὴ Ὁμολογία καὶ Συμβολικὴ στὴν Ἑλλάδα τοῦ 19οῦ αἰῶνα. Οἱ Ἐθνομάρτυρες», *Mnemōn*, 24 (2002) 116-143.

70. See, S. D. Petmezas, “On the formation of an ideological faction in the Greek Orthodox Church in the second half of the eighteenth century: the *Kollyvades*†”, *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique moderne et contemporain*, 2 (2020) 36. Of course, apart from their differences, the two martyrdoms converged not only in the invocation of the same God, but also in the questioning and lifting of the subordination of the Orthodox to the Muslims, which was accomplished by these sacrifices, with the consequence of the symbolic humiliation of Islam. G. Tzedopoulos, *op.cit.*, p. 112.

71. Without naming the Ottomans directly (just only once), he calls them “infidels” who “will remain unrepentant in the day of judgment”, “wretches blinded by the prince of the darkness of this age, and by the passions”, “the one-faced monotheism of the infidels, which is a disguised impiety that can easily deceive the mind”, “the savage faces of tyrants”, he calls Christians to reject “both the mark where the beast gave you, that is, the devil, and the image of the beast, that is, the head of the religion of the infidel”, while the new martyrs are “an example of patience to all Orthodox Christians who are tormented under the heavy yoke of captivity”, who even call upon “all Christians who are occasionally forced to martyrdom” to imitate them. Nikodemos of Mount Athos, *Νέον Μαρτυρολόγιον...*, Venice: Ed. Nikolaos Glykys from Ioannina 1799, pp. 5-30.

personal detachment, and that of the Orthodox Church itself, from them and their tyrannical power. On the other hand, however, he proposed through the *Martyrologion* an implicitly blatant model of resistance, completely different from the later revolutionary one and fully imitative of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ⁷². In fact, citing the vision of St. Acacius the Younger of Kavsokalyvia, he will even go so far as to purify even "the heavy offerings" that the "Agarens" forced the Orthodox to give to the Ottoman authorities, "informing" the latter that they were doing this, along with other "hardships", only to make the Christians deny their faith⁷³. This attitude of Nikodemos was already absolutely infuriating the anticlericalists of his time, such as the anonymous author of *Libel against the Bishops*, who would denounce the "Synaxaries and Martyrologies... and other blasphemies with which the black-clothed and black-hearted have despised the nation"⁷⁴. Since the numbers of the Neomartyrs (or at least their records) became more numerous at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, we observe that an internal but also external spiritual conflict was developing between the pre-revolutionary ecclesiastical-hesychastic devotion to the tradition of the martyrs and its gradual overthrow and transformation under the influence of the Enlightenment. This conversion will take place formally at the beginning

72. Describing the "horrific martyrdom of the Holy Martyr Seraphim" (1601), Saint Nikodemos will refer to Dionysius the Philosopher, calling him "a malicious and ill-intentioned man" who operated with "demonic synergy", "unworthy of his profession". *Ibid.*, p. 59.

73. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

74. G. Tzedopoulos, *op.cit.*, p. 111. This same attitude infuriated many years later the patriarchal chronicler Manuel Gedeon, who would sharply denounce this martyrdom as "Athonite-Japanese hara-kiri". With a strong alibi, therefore, the statement of a prominent member of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, F. Iliou then chose to cling to it in order to construct his contestation of the value of the sacrifice of the New Martyrs. See. F. Iliou, «Πόθος Μαρτυρίου: από τις βεβαιότητες στην άμφισβήτηση τοῦ Μ. Γεδεών. Συμβολή στην ιστορία τῶν νεομαρτύρων», *Ta Istorikà*, 23 (1995) 281. Nikodemos' attitude also irritates his later readers, who are certain that the Neomartyrs, in carrying out "the renovation of the whole Orthodox faith" as he himself wrote, merely re-invented "the imaginary community of the Orthodox in terms that today we would call "fundamentalist"». G. Tzedopoulos, *ibid.*, p. 114.

of the Revolution, dragging in its torrent also the greater part of the clergy, resolving in that way all its dilemmas⁷⁵.

This fundamental rupture, therefore, we assume that it forced the hesychastic tendency that was operating, in whatever ways possible, within the Orthodox society of the time to fold back and survive underground, secretly, both during and after the Greek Revolution. The latter, with its acute and rapid dynamics, forced every opposing voice -and consequently also the hesychastic one- either to be silenced or to be transformed, constituting a dominant, militant national-religious narrative, which is known to have privileged the secular, national, extroverted element more than the religious and introverted one. But this -otherwise understated- mixture allowed the hesychastic Orthodoxy, despite its external failure to dynamically direct the developments in post-revolutionary Greece (this was not its purpose after all), to clandestinely persist but also to operate in a hybrid, inconspicuous-conspicuous way. Under the shell of the state-ecclesiastical power, this marginal popular-hesychastic religiosity was able to go in and out of the everyday life and perceptions of the masses, to influence with flexibility each time a part of the people, expressing an oral and "invisible" discourse against the official, formal, political, journalistic or ecclesiastical discourse, to follow oblique paths, carrying out a secret diffusion to the rest of society with various, positive or negatively (depending on the point of view), receptions⁷⁶. Often this religiosity, whether loud or silent, when it was perceived, was defined in terms of fanaticism and superstition

75. Perraivos will note that everyone was submitted to the impulse of the revolution, for anyone who resisted "was regarded as a Turkophile, and even more so the bishops and notables were exposed to the danger as having a continuous relationship with the Turks, being delegates of their provinces in front of the Turkish authorities. See, Ch. Perraivos, *Απομνημονεύματα πολεμικά*, Athens: Andr. Koromilas 1835, vol. I, p. 3; Io. Filemon, *op.cit.*, vol. III, p. κα'.

76. As Skopetea will point out, unlike in Serbia, in Greece "popular orthodoxy lives a life of obscurity, from which -until the time of Papadiamantis- it is retrieved only through extreme manifestations, individual or collective explosions (i.e. the cases of Papoulakos or Makriyannis) ...-. E. Skopetea, *Τό "Πρότυπο Βασίλειο" και ή Μεγάλη Ιδέα. Όψεις του έθνικού προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα*, Athens: Polytypo 1988, p. 407.

by the hegemonic, state-ecclesiastical discourse of that time, when it felt threatened by its "anti-discipline" and its "functional totalitarianism" and "the monosemy of the system"⁷⁷.

Among the many testimonies of that suspension of the Gospel, let us limit ourselves here to the report of Fotakos, according to which the bishops "gave their permission" to the spiritual fathers and other priests "to encourage the Greeks during their confession to revolt, and to consider it as forgiven from a religious point of view, because God has made all men free"⁷⁸. Thus, with the biblical invocation of a divine freedom, after the "baptism of fire" of a usually uneven military confrontation, only one step was left to follow the "baptism of the massacre" of Turkish prisoners and civilians, which slowly acquired its revolutionary and post-revolutionary legitimacy: "The revolution is the moment when the transition from illegal to legal violence is accomplished"⁷⁹.

Such a case seems to have occurred with the massacre of the dervishes of Mendenitsa, known as philanthropists towards Ottomans and Christians⁸⁰. Their flexible, syncretistic religiosity, a kind of "religious

77. M. de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien. 1. Arts de faire*, Folio essais, Paris 1980.

78. Fotakos, *op.cit.*, p. 7. "Indeed, the very use of the verb "συγχωρῶ" [= to forgive], may possibly indicate an essential awareness on the part of the Greeks of the moral and religious pendency and ambiguity of those ecclesiastical operations". A. Smyrniaios, «Τόποι μαρτυρίου Ἑλλήνων, Τούρκων καὶ Ἑβραίων στὴν Ἑλληνικὴ Ἐπανάσταση: Ἐνας ἀμφισθενὴς καθαγιασμὸς τοῦ ἡρωισμοῦ καὶ τῆς βίας;», in *Πολεμικὲς Συγκρούσεις καὶ Τόποι καθαγιασμοῦ τοῦ Ἀπελευθερωτικοῦ Ἀγῶνος κατὰ τὴν Ἐπανάσταση τοῦ 1821. Proceedings of the 6th Conference of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece*, Athens: Archontariki 2018, p. 262.

79. M. Larrère, *op.cit.*, p. 11. Obviously here, as everywhere else, we have variations, as in the case of the impetuous revolutionary bishop of Elos, Anthimos, who rescued a Turkish prisoner from the vengeful fury of the soldiers. As Voutier will report, "the prelate mentioned Saint Basil, who forbids communion for twenty years to one who kills a defeated enemy. But whoever kills forty armored opponents is blessed... The soldiers said "amen" three times and dispersed in silence". K. Simopoulos, *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 46-47.

80. This is testified by the 17th century Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, but also, shortly before the Revolution, by the Pelion erudite Argyris Filippidis in his work *Meriki Geografia*. Ch. Cheimonas, «Ἡ Φθιώτιδα κατὰ τὰ τέλη τοῦ ΙΗ' αἰῶνα», *Fthiotika Chronika*, vol. II (1981), p. 175. Eliya Çelebi, *Ταξίδι στὴν Ἑλλάδα. Ἀπὸ τὴ Θοράκη ὠς τὴν Ἀττική*,

bricoleur"⁸¹, seems to have had a particular influence on the Christian population⁸² and it is known to have been used as a missionary tool for their gentle, harmless and voluntary Islamization⁸³. But this inter-religious osmosis was perceived by the chieftains as extremely dangerous, since it "contradicted the absolute segregation between Christians and Muslims, imposed by the strict revolutionary law" and was "at least a potentially disruptive element in the development of the Revolution, which always operates on terms of unrelenting ferocity against its opponents"⁸⁴.

Thus, the motto "Freedom or Death", followed closely by the imperative "No Turks alive in the Morias, or in the whole world", contributed decisively to the radical alienation of the two communities. But it would be one-sided to argue that these mottos underwent a sudden parthenogenesis with the beginning of the Greek Revolution, since for centuries the subjugated Greeks had been taught by their masters "an extremely elaborate "brutality curriculum", which they in turn, together with fear and despair, were expected to systematically internalize. The internalisation of this trauma passed easily from individual to collective memory, creating a rich store of sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit, unmanifested revanchism, which in each case dynamically, albeit

trans. N. Cheiladakis, Athens: Ekati 2010, p. 141.

81. A. Smyrnaioi, *Μὲ τὰ μάτια ἑνὸς Μετσοβίτη ἀγωνιστῆ: ἡ Μενδενίτσα Λοκρίδας στὰ 1833*, Athens: Memphis 2021, p. 19.

82. H. Inalcik, "Dervish and Sultan: An Analysis of the Otman Baba Vilayetnāmesi", in Idem (ed.), *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: essays on economy and society*, Bloomington: Indiana University Turkish Studies 1993, p. 26.

83. Ēr. Geoffroy, *Introduction to Sufism. The Inner Path of Islam*, transl. R. Gaetani, Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom 2010, p. 191; H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: religion and society between Europe and the Arab world*, Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press 1993, p. 89. It is a fact, however, that the dervishes always maintained a controversial relationship with the Ottoman administration, which eventually disbanded their religious orders after the extermination of the Janissaries in 1826, and later under Kemal Atatürk in 1925. J. Norton, "The Bektashis in the Balkans", in C. Hawkesworth, M. Heppell and H. Norris (eds.), *Religious Quest and National Identity in the Balkans*, New York: Palgrave 2001, pp. 181-185.

84. A. Smyrneos, *Μὲ τὰ μάτια ἑνὸς Μετσοβίτη ἀγωνιστῆ*, op.cit., pp. 29-30.

tacitly, shaped the character, habits and expectations of the conquered"⁸⁵. But also the terrible hardships of the Greco-Turkish war itself, during which the combatants were sometimes, as in Ibrahim's time, "in such a miserable state that even their human condition was in question; they were as black as brass and as dry as skeletons and miserable spectacles"⁸⁶, it was to be expected that they would strengthen the tendency towards revanchism, which was further intensified by the reprisals that the Turks were in any case exercising in the war⁸⁷. The resonance of the Greeks' perennial and contemporary suffering⁸⁸ came to reverse the roles of victim and perpetrator, willing to interpret retaliation with particular sharpness as an act of justice before God and human beings.

Finally, the threat to the unanimity of the Revolution that brought the "subjugation" intensified even more the desperation of those combatants who insisted on their final predominance and, because of this, increased their brutality towards the "subjugated". Vasileios Petimezas, for example, would warn Kolokotronis of the divisive influence exerted by those Greeks who had "defected" under Ibrahim's tempting proposals, and the spying work they further carried out on behalf of the Turks: "trust is lacking (and I here where I am have a suspicion), we are told one thing and they believe another [...] we do not know who are the Greek-minded and who are the Turkish-minded, and watch out that we do not get it... mobilize all the weapons, blow 'em up all"⁸⁹.

85. A. Smyrneos, «Τόποι μαρτυρίου», *op.cit.*, p. 239.

86. A. Frantzis, *op.cit.*, p. 480, n. 3.

87. Thus, the Ottoman Lalians, before leaving their village for good, ordered the impalement of "some prisoners for revenge...", while the Greek, who at the port of Patras directed his torpedo boat against the Turkish ships but failed, "was captured by the Turks and burned alive". M. Oikonomou, *op.cit.*, p. 160, 174.

88. Studying the issue of the genocidal practices carried out by the oppressed towards their oppressors, E. Lindner will argue that the fear of the former, not only for the past they have suffered, but also for their possible future humiliations, is "a fundamental justification for genocidal murder". E. G. Lindner, "Genocide, Humiliation, and Inferiority. An Interdisciplinary Perspective", in A. Jones, N. A. Robins (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 140. Cf. K. Deliyannis, *Άπομνημονεύματα*, ed. by G. Tsoukalas, vol. I, Athens 1957, p. 16.

89. T. Stamatopoulos, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

Freedom therefore presupposed the threat, the fear, the violence of retaliation, when persuasion and entreaties were quickly or slowly exhausted: "That if we do not first exterminate these anti-Christians, we cannot make progress against the Turks...", Demetrios Meletopoulos would also write⁹⁰. Kolokotronis' threats followed that he would burn the subjugated villages if they did not refuse Ibrahim's subjugation charters, threats which in most cases were ineffective, because the subjugated soon retreated and apologized. Then the chieftains would grant them, in return, "the subjugation charter of the nation"⁹¹, leading eventually to the re-homogenisation of the revolutionary project. It is a fact that the threat of the subjugation mobilized those who remained firm in the revolutionary cause more than any other threat. The fear was that if the subjugation charters sent to Constantinople by the Kütahi and Ibrahim increased, then "when the Minister of England or other great power appealed to the Sultan for Greece to answer them, which Greece? Greece is subjugated, here are their subjugation charters; then the powers had nothing to respond to, and we would be perished..."⁹².

Postscript

The revolutionary motto "Freedom or Death" ran through the entire bloody experience of the Greek Independence War, subverted the despair of the combatants, questioned the pragmatic reliability of statistics, was passed on to post-revolutionary historiographies, was mythologized and used in the later military adventures of the Greeks as a precious imperative and legacy. We have attempted in this paper to approach only three -of the many-qualities that could be extracted from this slogan: despair, individual and collective self-affirmation and the denigration/dehumanization of Turks and Turkish-minded people. Each of them

90. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

91. Th. Kolokotronis, *op.cit.*, p. 199.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

is in many ways intertwined with the others and all of them have a common background: they are all tied to violence.

In any case, the great narrative of Freedom in the Greek Revolution is full of various micro-histories, the composition of which is necessarily modified under the rather abrasive surface of the present that is the anachronism, but also within the ontology of each historian, so that the representations are ultimately subjective, partial and never irrevocable. Thus, the perception of the Revolution's declarations and, in general, of the historical sources concerning the Greek War of Independence in the light of a mirrored, reflexive reasoning, as is exactly the case with any discourse, rather overlooking and/or silencing the ambiguous and ambivalent meaning of each statement, the once volcanic background of the circumstances and ontologies that led to its eventual birth, thus sterilizing the historical research⁹³. Moreover, the search for “pure” and immaculate situations and personalities within the Revolution, certainly in accordance with the moralistic expectations of the historian in question, also sterilizes the research, because it runs up against the dead end of such a survey. The ever-mixed human nature, morally ambiguous, in times of intense crises rarely clarifies but rather exaggerates its mixedness, with the result that an algorithmic, political-economic approach to the historical past gets only halfway⁹⁴.

The Revolution did not necessarily bring to light the best or the worst element of each fighter; heroism and betrayal alternated, at least in some; mercy and cruelty were found in succession even in the same persons; praise and slander marched together, once until the end of

93. Trying to depict somehow this constant fluidity reflected in the historical sources, Carr will note: "No document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought – what he thought had happened, what he thought ought to happen or would happen, or perhaps only what he wanted others to think he thought, or even only what he himself thought he thought". See, E. H. Carr, *What is History?*, London: Penguin Books 1990, p. 16.

94. Bloch will highlight that "human actions are essentially very delicate phenomena, many aspects of which elude mathematical measurement". M. Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1992, p. 22.

the Revolution and even beyond. A historiographical composition that –directly or indirectly– focuses only on the failures of the Greeks of the Revolution to prove themselves morally intact, to move unhindered towards Europeanization and to embrace the protections of the modern and temporary “regime of truth”, probably stems from a carefully concealed puritanical perception of things. This perception, feeling the immediate fear of being challenged in a really difficult way, recurses to ideological anachronism as a refuge⁹⁵. But if history is the dense index of human being’s ventures, then historiography must also agree to its narrative tightrope walking, to seek a reflection and a re-contextualization of historical traces, since the “other” of history, i.e. the past, is the one that is never bound, but instead "explodes within the scientific process"⁹⁶. And this is especially the case when historiography deals with the extreme phenomena of a revolution, completely alien to its own study experience, since, in principle, it is never possible to assume either its suffering or its dilemmas.

95. The recognition that historians, precisely as humans and not as robots, regardless of their ability or honesty, necessarily “fictionalize” when handling texts, could perhaps lead to the "rejection of a Whig historical hermeneutic (which is very often encountered, even today), the dismantling of the often rigid missionary nature of historical discourse and the establishment in the midst of historiographical triodes of an additional quality of democratisation. Against the overblown, penitentiary monotheism of demythologizing rationalism, the democratic polytheism of a re-mythologizing fiction is called upon to be erected, undermining the absolutist project of the former". See A. Smyrneos, *Η Ιστορία ως έπιπτώχωση*, op.cit., p. 205.