

2008

Eastern Orthodoxy Under Siege in the Ottoman Levant: A View from Constantinople in 1821

Theophilus C. Prousis
University of North Florida, tprousis@unf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ahis_facpub



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Prousis, Theophilus C., "Eastern Orthodoxy Under Siege in the Ottoman Levant: A View from Constantinople in 1821" (2008). *History Faculty Publications*. 13.
https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ahis_facpub/13

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of History at UNF Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of UNF Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [Digital Projects](#).

© 2008 All Rights Reserved

EASTERN ORTHODOXY UNDER SIEGE IN THE OTTOMAN LEVANT: A VIEW FROM CONSTANTINOPLE IN 1821

by

Theophilus C. Prousis
University of North Florida

The Fourteenth Annual James W. Cunningham Memorial Lecture
on Eastern Orthodox History and Culture
University of Minnesota
7 November 2008

RESEARCH on Imperial Russia's contacts and connections with Eastern Orthodox communities in the Levant in the early nineteenth century aroused my interest in how Britain, that other edge of Europe, related to the Ottoman Empire during this tumultuous period. Traders, travelers, envoys, consuls, and others registered their impressions and observations in myriad writings, providing historians with a treasure trove for probing the Eastern Question, the nineteenth-century European dilemma of what to do with the surprisingly resilient Ottoman Empire, still possessing strategic lands and vital waterways in the Near East. Russian and British archival and printed sources widen our perspective on the history of the Eastern Question, transforming what many scholars have portrayed as a largely one-dimensional military, naval, and diplomatic subject into a multi-faceted and more animated picture, with strategic objectives intertwined with commercial, religious, and cultural endeavors.¹ Manuscripts and archives, from Russian and British collections, reveal vivid stories on religion, trade, piracy, rebellion, and intrigue, allowing us to reconstruct the various interactions between the peoples who lived, traveled, traded, and served in the Ottoman Levant.²

My recently published book, based on Foreign Office documents at the National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom, presents largely untapped British consular records on the state of the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century, an epoch fraught with internal and external pressures triggered by war, revolt, secessionist agitation, the breakdown of effective governing institutions, and European intervention.³ British consuls, stationed in Preveza,

Constantinople, Smyrna, Cairo, Alexandria, and Aleppo, compiled countless reports on a range of subjects. Their writings chronicled ongoing challenges from rebels, pashas, and pirates; conveyed images and scenes of sectarian hostility; detailed the intricacies of consular and commercial transactions; and documented the insecurity and uncertainty of Ottoman-European treaty contracts in an age of upheaval. By relating specific incidents and episodes, these eyewitness communiqués offer insight into the dynamics of European rivalry, intrigue, and influence in the Ottoman Empire during a time of profound change and chronic unrest. Rich in texture, detail, and nuance, these snapshot accounts underscore the problems that comprised the Eastern Question and resonate with contemporary relevance, describing commercial competition, religious conflict, smuggling, regional warlords, plundered antiquities, outside interference, and the ambiguity of borders in the Ottoman East.

My current research focuses on the copious unpublished correspondence of Lord Strangford, Britain's ambassador at the Sublime Porte during the turbulent years from 1821 to 1824.⁴ Based on the information he received from British consuls in the Levant and the intelligence he gleaned from European diplomats and Ottoman foreign affairs officials in Constantinople, Strangford reported regularly to the Foreign Office in London. His writings, enough to fill a projected four-volume collection of his dispatches, extensively covered the major consequences of the Greek revolt, in particular the religious nature of the Greek-Ottoman clash, the threat of hostilities between Russia and Turkey, the challenge to British commercial and strategic interests in the Levant, the destruction of the island of Chios, and the mediation of European envoys like himself to thwart a wider conflagration in the Near East.⁵ For the talk this evening, in keeping with the spirit of the James W. Cunningham Memorial Lecture series on Eastern Orthodox history and culture, passages from Strangford's letters to Foreign Secretary Castlereagh during the first, and arguably the most critical, year of the Eastern crisis that exploded in 1821 highlight the British envoy's perception of the embattled condition of Eastern Orthodoxy in the sultan's realm.

The Greek Revolution, erupting in the Danubian Principalities in March 1821 and extending to the Morea, Attica, Thessaly, Macedonia, and the Aegean Archipelago, spawned an Eastern cataclysm with European-wide repercussions.⁶ The established order of legitimacy confronted the principles of liberty and nationality. The revolt morphed into the prolonged Greek War of Independence, a struggle that drained Ottoman resources and revenues, produced an independent Greek kingdom, and inspired revolutionary outbreaks in Europe, Russia, and the Balkans. Already in the first few months of the insurrection, European envoys at the Porte had to cope with the messy and seemingly intractable realities of the Eastern emergency: the rise of sectarian strife, the upsurge in piracy, the disruption of trade, and the risk of war between Russia and Turkey, especially after the Russian legation severed official ties with the Porte and left Constantinople in the summer of 1821.

The religious and nationalistic fervor of the Greek-Ottoman collision became readily evident as each side perpetrated excesses that escalated the feud into a war of retribution. The prominent Balkan historian Leften Stavrianos has argued effectively that large-scale massacres against the defenseless repre-

sented “an inevitable accompaniment, perhaps, of a struggle that pitted, at one and the same time, Greek subjects against Turkish overlords, Greek peasants against Turkish landowners, and Greek Christians against Turkish Moslems.”⁷ In the volatile spring and summer of 1821, random attacks occurred against Greek churches, shops, and *reaya*,⁸ in Constantinople, Smyrna, Salonica, Crete, and Cyprus, often in retaliation for Greek aggression against Turks in the Morea and Moldavia and for Greek confiscation of Turkish properties. These assaults not only intensified denominational animosity but transformed the revolt into a conflict driven by the quest for sacred revenge, a struggle in which national identity heightened religious division.⁹ Mutual atrocity and reprisal eroded a tradition of tolerance, coexistence, and interaction that had long characterized relationships between the empire’s various sectarian groups at the grassroots level of society. A mosaic of pluralistic but segmented confessional communities, with separate identities but shared experiences, began to fracture after living together in relative peace and harmony.¹⁰ The religiously tinged nationalism unleashed by the War of Independence gave rise to simmering discontent in a heterogeneous Ottoman dominion.

The insurrection incited indiscriminate mob violence and janissary rage against Greek residents of Constantinople, as described in the eyewitness testimony of Reverend Robert Walsh, chaplain at the British embassy.¹¹ Victims included Greeks of rank and influence suspected of complicity in the revolt, but the most notorious reprisal struck the leadership of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Despite the encyclical of Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorios V denouncing the rebellion and exhorting Orthodox Christians to remain loyal to the sultan, the Porte considered him guilty of treason because he had failed to fulfill his basic duty as head of the Eastern Orthodox community, namely, to ensure that his flock obeyed and submitted to Ottoman rule. The patriarch’s public execution, on Easter Sunday in April 1821, together with the persecution of numerous bishops and clergy, provoked widespread attacks against Greek churches and property in Constantinople, prompted outrage and reproach from European envoys at the Porte, and ignited Russian Orthodox sympathy and support for Greek coreligionists. Moreover, the defiled corpse of the patriarch—left hanging in public for three days, dragged through the streets of the capital, and tossed into the Golden Horn—symbolized Ottoman suppression of Eastern Orthodox Christians and turned the Greek rising into a sanctified national crusade.¹²

The turmoil in Smyrna, the most prosperous and vibrant Ottoman commercial port at the time, demonstrated the unraveling of Ottoman imperial authority and the collapse of public order during the initial stage of the Eastern convulsion. Descriptions by Russia’s consul-general, Spyridon Destunis, and by Britain’s consul, Francis Werry, painted an alarming picture of the breakdown of effective local government in the face of urban unrest, sectarian discord, social confusion, and trade dislocation.¹³ Life in Smyrna seemed precarious, having to endure random violence by Turks and Greeks, retribution by unruly janissaries, closed stores and shops, and Greek flight to the harbor and adjacent islands. The anguish and anxiety felt by those residents adversely affected by the disarray exemplified the potential for social and political anger that lurked just beneath the surface of Ottoman society, especially when the

central government faced critical internal and external pressures. The troubles in Smyrna underscored the need for governmental and administrative reform, an institutional restructuring that would restore stability, protect private property, maintain public security, and guarantee personal safety. Food shortage, trade disruption, and mob aggression reinforced religious tension and drove many Greeks and European consular staff to seek haven on European ships anchored in the Smyrna harbor. With telling detail, Destunis and Werry captured the commotion and hostility that typified the denominational strife in this bustling emporium.

Maritime fallout added fuel to the fire. The Greek revolt exacerbated the peril of piracy in the eastern Mediterranean, all the more so as the Greek rebel fleet routinely raided Ottoman and European maritime transport. Indeed, the Aegean Archipelago, according to a prominent scholar of Ottoman Smyrna and the Levant trade, “became almost impassable,” as Greek privateers targeted Ottoman, European, and even American commercial ships.¹⁴ Not just piracy but also Ottoman-imposed restrictions hampered the trade of European powers, in particular Russia and Britain, in the Black Sea. Ottoman officials inspected Russian-flagged merchant vessels that traversed the Straits, primarily as a precaution against arms and supply shipments to insurgents from Russia’s Greek communities in Odessa and elsewhere along the northern shores of the Black Sea. When Greek defections from the Ottoman merchant marine, as well as Greek piracy, endangered food deliveries to Constantinople and the Ottoman army, the Porte closed the Sea of Marmara to grain traffic and made Russian vessels sell their goods to Ottoman state warehouses. Russia’s Black Sea grain exchange plummeted, shipping and insurance rates soared, and several Odessa firms lost revenues. These commercial consequences of war and rebellion in the Near East jeopardized the continued economic growth not just of Odessa but of the entire region of southern Russia.

Trade in Ottoman waters became risky business for Britain as well. British-flagged carriers, moving grain and other cargoes from Black Sea ports, faced scrutiny and pressure when passing the Straits. The Porte ordered the confiscation of some of these transports in order to provision the capital and the army, while others had to sell their merchandise at prices at or below market value, thereby undercutting expected Levant Company profits. Ottoman customs authorities also detained British vessels, sometimes for thirty to forty days. British diplomatic and Levant Company officials, echoing Russian protests, complained to the Porte by invoking the Treaty of the Dardanelles (1809) and other agreements that stipulated unobstructed commercial passage. To British and Russian objections, the Porte asserted the prerogative to pre-empt grain and other foodstuff cargoes deemed indispensable by the government in wartime, regardless of the trade concessions granted to European states. As a result, Ambassador Strangford, together with John Cartwright, British consul-general in Constantinople, approved the stratagem of fictitious manifests, a tactic to evade Ottoman impediments by devising ship declarations that did not accurately identify the merchandise in transit, its place of origin, or its destination. Even with fabricated manifests, British exports and imports dropped in value, in marked contrast to the upsurge in Levant Company exchange before 1821, particularly with Smyrna.¹⁵

The heart of the Eastern crisis in 1821, notwithstanding the seriousness of sectarian frenzy and commercial dislocation, remained the threat of war involving the great powers, in particular Russia, which had to balance its national interests in the Near East with its adherence to the Concert of Europe. Strategic, trade, and religious pursuits in the turbulent Levant did not mesh well with the preservation of the political status quo in Europe, and friction between these competing considerations underscored the complexity of the Eastern Question for Russia. Already before the Greek uprising, disputes over Russian claims in the Caucasus and the Danubian Principalities strained Russian-Ottoman ties, and the insurrection only magnified the discord.¹⁶

In taking measures to crush the Greek mutiny, the Porte infringed upon specific articles in Russian-Ottoman treaties and thus antagonized official relations between the two empires. Reprisals against the Greeks breached the Porte's promise in the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji (1774) to shelter the faith and churches of Ottoman Christians.¹⁷ Trade obstacles seemingly contravened Russia's right of unimpeded merchant navigation in the Straits, guaranteed by Kutchuk-Kainardji and the Treaty of Commerce (1783). The Porte's dismissal of the *hospodars* (governors) of Moldavia and Wallachia, accusing them of abetting the revolt, undermined the sultan's imperial decree of 1802, and subsequent stipulations in the Treaty of Bucharest (1812), sanctioning Russian consent in the appointment and deposition of *hospodars*. Facing strong public clamor for intervention on behalf of persecuted Greeks, and despite urgent calls by high-ranking officials for military action to rectify broken treaties, Alexander I upheld the order of legitimacy. The tsar denounced the rebellion as a menace to Europe's peace and security and to the principles of monarchical solidarity and political stability; he also advocated the Porte's swift suppression of the disorders before they engulfed other regions. At the same time, the tsarist regime demanded the strict observance of Russian-Ottoman treaties, intent on using them as instruments for exerting pressure on Turkey.

The Foreign Ministry's dual approach of censuring the revolt but insisting on complete compliance with treaty accords became the basis for Russian policy in 1821. Russia's ambassador in Constantinople, Grigorii A. Stroganov, rebuked the insurrection but remonstrated for Orthodox brethren, protested violations of trade clauses, and counseled moderation and restraint in Ottoman treatment of non-insurgent Greek *reaya*.¹⁸ The Porte, however, suspected Russian complicity in the upheaval for a host of reasons: Russia's past wars against Turkey; its self-proclaimed guardianship of Orthodox Christians under Ottoman rule; its generous support of Greek migration to southern Russia, in particular the distribution of land grants and tax exemptions to Greek settlements in recently annexed Ottoman territories; and its extensive network of Greek protégés in Black Sea and Aegean commerce. Furthermore, Greek merchants in Odessa participated in the national ferment that produced the *Philiki Etaireia* (Society of Friends), the secret society that launched the insurgence of 1821. Founded in Odessa (1814) and headquartered in Kishinev, this conspiratorial organization recruited members and monies from Greek centers in Russia and came under the leadership of Alexander Ypsilanti, a Greek general in the Russian army and an aide-de-camp of the tsar.¹⁹ Russian-Ottoman treaty provisos crumbled not just because of

the Porte's plausible, but mistaken, accusations of the Russian government's entanglement in the sedition but because of the outbreak of denominational violence in Constantinople, Smyrna, and elsewhere. Ironically, treaties that sought to maintain cordial ties between Russia and Turkey and to safeguard Russian activities in the Near East did neither.

In an ultimatum delivered to the Porte on 6/18 July 1821, Russia demanded the evacuation of Ottoman troops from the Danubian Principalities, the restoration of damaged churches and religious properties, the protection of Orthodox Christians, and the guarantee of commercial rights. If the sultan did not accept these terms, Russia would have to offer asylum and assistance to all Christians subjected to "blind fanaticism."²⁰ The Porte's failure to comply within the prescribed eight-day deadline, followed by Ambassador Stroganov's departure from the Ottoman capital, severed official relations between Russia and Turkey, the two realms most profoundly affected by the uproar of 1821. Thus began a strange twilight period of no war yet no peace. Alexander I proved reluctant to act unilaterally without the sanction of the Concert of Europe and dreaded the prospect of a Russian-Turkish clash that would disrupt the status quo, incite revolts elsewhere, and jeopardize the balance of power in Europe. Firmly committed to the Concert of Europe, the tsar suspected that a Jacobin directing committee in Paris had instigated trouble in the Balkans. Yet the Eastern quagmire thickened, Ottoman-Greek fighting intensified, Russian-Ottoman affairs festered, and treaty vows shattered amid war and revolution in the Levant.

Britain faced its own dilemma over the Eastern Question quandary, an "unsolved problem, pregnant with vital and incalculable consequences."²¹ Foreign Secretary Castlereagh sympathized with the Greek cause on moral and humanitarian grounds but regarded the Greeks as rebels against the established political order, a status quo that he associated with the Concert of Europe and its defense of geopolitical security in Europe. His mixed reaction reflected the competing currents of philhellenic enthusiasm and non-interventionist sentiment that prevailed in numerous sectors of British government and society. Britain remained neutral in the Greek-Ottoman feud yet pursued its own strategic, political, and commercial ends. Castlereagh resolved to avert a wider war between Russia and Turkey, maintain the Ottoman Empire as a bulwark against the perceived peril of Russian expansion, protect and increase British trade in the Levant, and secure the land and sea routes to India.²² After Stroganov's departure from Constantinople, Castlereagh instructed Lord Strangford to defuse Ottoman-Russian tensions and to resolve the Greek dispute in his dealings with the Porte. In cooperation with other European diplomats, Britain's ambassador pressed the Porte to comply with the major points in Russia's ultimatum, in particular to halt persecutions of Greek Christians, repair damaged churches, honor treaty pacts, and guard the life and property of "innocent" non-combatants, in contrast to "guilty" rebels who deserved punishment.

Despite his considerable skill and finesse in trying to offset the exigency of 1821, Strangford remains a controversial figure. As the chief representative of British policy in the Near East, he magnified tsarist ambitions in the region, fueled Ottoman suspicion of Russian aims, and chided Stroganov for his harsh

tone in dealing with the Porte. Yet he worked tirelessly with European and Ottoman counterparts to neutralize a dangerous situation and protect Orthodox Christians, convinced that the Porte's restoration of order, safekeeping of sacred shrines, and evacuation of troops from the Danubian Principalities would forestall Russian-Turkish hostilities.²³ Through patient and persistent negotiation, Britain's ambassador and his colleagues prevented war, sought to pacify the Greek insurgency, and eventually restored direct talks between Russia and Turkey. Strangford's view of the Eastern crisis—only one view to be sure—reminds us of the wealth of primary sources that await scrutiny by historians of the Eastern Questions. His prolific letters from the Ottoman capital, addressed to Foreign Secretary Castlereagh, related indelible images of sectarian strife, scenes that evoked the religious wrath and nationalistic ferocity which prolonged, as well as epitomized, the Greek-Ottoman fight.

From the onset of the Ypsilanti-led uprising in the Danubian Principalities, and amid growing evidence of Russian complicity in the disturbance, Strangford immediately anticipated friction between Russia and Turkey. Even though "[t]he endeavours of the Russian minister [Stroganov] to acquit his government in the opinion of the Porte of any participation in the revolt of Wallachia and Moldavia are indefatigable and do the highest credit to his zeal and address," the sedition tended "in the strongest manner to confirm the suspicions imbibed by the Porte of the sincerity of his assurances." For instance, at a general meeting of Russian subjects and Greeks under Russian protection, Stroganov urged

the persons present to sign an act expressive of their adherence to the [tsarist] emperor under all circumstances, and in every event. This proceeding at such a moment is considered by the Porte as little short of an insult. The other circumstance . . . is the discovery that a Russian ship bound for Galatz in Moldavia, and furnished with the Russian minister's pass, had concealed in her hold a large quantity of cannon and military stores.²⁴

Even tsarist Russia's formal denunciation of the Ypsilanti revolt did not assuage the Porte's inkling of Russian involvement, especially since "the Russian government admits too unreservedly the right of the Greeks to pretend to an amendment of their political state." Besides,

the disavowal by Russia of [the Greeks'] present proceedings appears to originate rather in a sense of the inconvenience of the season which they have chosen for them, than in a decided disapprobation of the object to which they are directed.²⁵

Together with his foreboding of a Russian-Turkish confrontation, Strangford registered concern over the impending threat of anti-Greek reprisals. Already in late March 1821, he wrote,

It seems that there prevails at Constantinople (in consequence of the late rebellious proceedings in the provinces, and of the proclamations of the insurgent chiefs), a general belief that the Greek *reaya*, throughout the whole extent of the

Ottoman Empire, are on the point of rising against the authority of the sultan. This notion is said to pervade a large part of the population [of the Ottoman capital].

In retaliation against this allegedly widespread insurgency, according to information Strangford gleaned from the Porte, a design took shape, “formed by some persons who have influence over the populace, to attack the houses of the wealthy Greek inhabitants of the Phanar, to plunder them, and to massacre their owners.” Besides posting extra guards, the Porte restored arms to those janissary units previously “in confinement for offences against discipline” and ordered them “to join their respective divisions.” Partly because of “the vigorous and prudent precautions of the government,” the night of the rumored outburst “passed without alarm.”²⁶

Yet the religious dimension of the Greek-Ottoman struggle, above all Ottoman attacks against Greek Christian property and churches, became all too palpable to Strangford. On 10 April 1821, he reported that the Ottoman government

perseveres in its endeavours to strike terror into the minds of its Greek subjects; and it seems that these efforts have been very successful. The commerce of the Greeks has been altogether suspended—their houses have been shut up—and an armed and licentious population, wandering through the streets of this capital and its suburbs, daily commit such excesses as destroy all confidence on the part of the *reaya* in the security of their lives and property.

This state of affairs, Strangford asserted,

has been principally excited by the official declarations emanating from the government, in which the insurrections in Wallachia and Moldavia, and the rebellious movements in other places, are attributed to a design formed by the Greeks, for the total overthrow of the Mahometan religion. These declarations speak at once to the passions and prejudices of the people, and it is not surprising that they should have produced in the minds of Turks the highest degree of fury and exasperation.

Understandably, Strangford and Britain’s consul-general in Constantinople, John Cartwright, described cases of “insults and robberies having been lately committed on the persons of some of His Majesty’s subjects,” including members of the British Levant Company, who “communicated to me, through the consul-general, the anxiety and alarm which they felt in consequence of the disturbed state of this capital.”²⁷

Violent incidents heightened the mood of disquiet and apprehension in Constantinople, especially at European embassies. The unexpected “disgrace and execution of Prince Constantine Mourousi, *dragoman* [interpreter or translator] of the Porte,” suspected of supporting or at least sympathizing with Ypsilanti’s uprising, temporarily interrupted the relations of European legations with the Ottoman government. When the Porte sent nearly five thousand troops up the Black Sea, to disembark at Varna, their departure

was, as usual, the signal for every sort of disorder and violence, and the banks of the Bosphorus were for some days the scene of the most disgraceful atrocities. Some of the troops landed in various places, and pillaged several houses, among which were some belonging to or under the protection of foreign missions.

During their passage through the channel, they “fired into several ships” and killed two Austrian sailors. Although the Porte expressed regret over such abuses,

In truth, the little attention which is paid to the complaints of the foreign ministers here, when they are compelled to represent the violence and insults which are offered to themselves, their families, and the subjects of their respective courts, renders, at the present moment, the discharge of their public duties a matter of no ordinary difficulty and, to a certain degree, of personal danger to those who are in their employment.²⁸

The fate of Mourousi had an immediate and significant repercussion on Ottoman diplomacy with Europe, as Strangford readily surmised in his communiqué of 25 April 1821.

A person named Yanco Stavrak Oglu has been appointed to succeed the late *dragoman* of the Porte. Formerly the selection for this office was made among the Greeks of the Phanar. The present *dragoman* has no connection with them, and is little known at the capital. The cause of Prince Mourousi’s disgrace and execution is now ascertained. He received a letter from Prince Ypsilanti, inviting him to participate in his projects.

Although Mourousi instantly delivered a translation of this epistle to the Porte, the sultan demanded to see the original missive and requested another translation, “to be made by another person.” This second translation “differed from the first, inasmuch as Prince Mourousi had omitted or softened a paragraph in the original” that tended to compromise tsarist Russia. “The indignation of the sultan was immediately and violently excited, and the results were fatal to Prince Mourousi.” Russia’s envoy, Stroganov, attempted to convince Strangford that the paragraph in question actually dealt with another matter and that “it implied the existence of a *previous* correspondence between Prince Ypsilanti and the *dragoman* of the Porte” (emphasis original). But the British ambassador had “reason to believe that the other interpretation . . . attributed to this paragraph is much nearer the truth.”²⁹

The Ottoman government later announced to European envoys “its intention of recalling all its public agents, being Greeks, now residing at foreign courts, and of hereafter employing in that character none but Mussulman subjects of the Porte.” The decision to replace Ottoman Greek diplomatic representatives with Muslim officials partly stemmed from the conduct of Theodore Negri, a Phanariote recently appointed Ottoman chargé d’affaires at Paris.

He proceeded some weeks ago, ostensibly on his mission, as far as Tinos, and on his arrival at that island, left his ship, and hastened to join the insurgents in the Morea, declaring that he had never meant to go to Paris, and that he had accepted the appointment only to have an excuse for getting away in safety from Constantinople.³⁰

No other event did more to underscore and amplify the widely perceived sacred character of the Greek-Ottoman fray than the 1821 execution of Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorios V, the official head of the Eastern Orthodox Church. For Strangford, the outrage “too clearly proves the determination of the Porte to keep no measures with its unfortunate Greek subjects.” In straightforward language, the British ambassador explained what happened:

At five o'clock on the evening of Easter Sunday [April 1821], the good and venerable patriarch, after performing the service of that solemn festival, was seized on his departure from the church, and hanged at the gate, in the presence of an immense multitude. Three more Greek bishops (those of Ephesus, Derkon, and Aghialos) were executed at the same time, and in the same ignominious manner, but in different quarters of Constantinople. They had been some time in confinement. . . . The patriarch was in the eighty-second year of his age, and of the most exemplary character and conduct. It is said that his offence was his having aided the family of Prince Demetrius Mourousi (brother to the lately executed *dragoman* of the Porte) to escape from this country.

Strangford elaborated on the rise of denominational extremism in the aftermath of this tragic event.

These atrocious and sanguinary proceedings, and the peculiarly shocking circumstances under which they have taken place, have excited the utmost consternation among all classes not professing the Mahometan faith. They plainly indicate that the councils of this Empire are now directed by a spirit of relentless fanaticism from which the most dreadful results *may be* expected [emphasis original].³¹

Troubling news from Francis Werry, Britain's consul in the maritime center of Smyrna, only increased the fear and fright in Constantinople. Werry informed Strangford “of the alarming and successful progress of the revolted Greeks in the Morea” and of the Greek rebel navy's “system of piratical depredation, from which our commerce will have to apprehend the worst consequences.”³² Werry also anticipated the terrible fallout from the patriarch's fate:

The certainty of the execution of the Greek patriarch has impressed the Greeks of all descriptions with the greatest horror, and will lead I fear to the most unhappy consequences. A patriarch I trust has been immediately named, who will have great influence over the minds of the fanatics, who are capable of the most desperate attempts.³³

Strangford's subsequent dispatches of May 1821 portrayed an escalating Eastern flashpoint, fueled largely by the danger of partisan slaughter. Re-

cent Ottoman imperial edicts evinced “views . . . of a very alarming nature,” clearly proving “the disposition of the Porte to give to the present unhappy state of things in this country the character of a conflict between the Christian and Mahometan religions” and directly appealing “to the fanaticism of the people.” Threat morphed into reality, as

Public executions among the Greeks are still of daily occurrence. Five of their churches have been plundered and destroyed by the janissaries, and there is but too much reason to apprehend that these excesses were not committed without the permission of the government.

In nearby Adrianople, “the ex-patriarch of the Greek Church shared the fate of the Patriarch Gregory, and was hanged at the window of his metropolitan residence,” while

twenty-three rich and respectable Greek merchants were beheaded; not in virtue of orders from Constantinople, but because such was the pleasure of the janissaries. The *mullah* [chief Islamic judge] vainly attempted to stop the barbarous proceeding, and his own life was exposed to the utmost danger in the course of his humane exertions to save the unfortunate victims.³⁴

In the Morea, based on the accounts Strangford read,

A small body of troops under the command of Yussuf Pasha (and not exceeding eight hundred men) has completely routed a corps of six thousand Greeks. . . . The latter took to flight, with all the alacrity of modern patriots. . . . The slaughter of the Greeks both before and after the battle (if it may be so termed) was prodigious, and several baskets of ears and tongues have been exhibited at the Porte.³⁵

Impediments to shipping and navigation further destabilized Eastern affairs. The Porte took steps to prevent the maritime escape of Greek subjects, requiring the inspection of all foreign vessels departing from Constantinople and the placement of an Ottoman officer on ships destined for the Black Sea. But these precautions, as Strangford discovered from his *dragoman*'s discussion with the *reis efendi*, or Ottoman foreign minister, targeted Russian-flagged carriers in particular.

[T]hese measures were to be a mere form, as far as English vessels were concerned, . . . they had been made applicable to ships of all nations, solely that they might not appear to be (as was really the case) exclusively directed against those of Russia.

Traitorous subjects of the Porte “being almost daily permitted to escape, under the Russian flag, . . . were openly received at Odessa and in other parts of the Russian dominions,” while “Baron Stroganoff, by his *hauteur* and violence, seemed determined to brave the Porte.” The Ottomans simply sought to end “this state of things, so offensive to the rights and dignity of a great and powerful sovereign.” Yet the sultan’s government, “desirous to avoid everything that

might have an unfriendly appearance towards Russia, had prudently resolved to make the present measures *general* for all nations, and not *particular* towards the Russian navigation” (emphasis original). While these safeguards “were to be nothing more than a matter of form with respect to others, they would be exerted with the utmost rigour towards the vessels of a power which had so constantly and so openly abused the privilege of its flag.” The proposed restraints

had been communicated to the Russian *dragoman*, with an intimation that if any inconvenience should arise from them, it would be chargeable to M. de Stroganoff, whose conduct, alone, had rendered them necessary. . . . [T]he Porte would never endure the humiliation of suffering a foreign minister to lay down the law within her dominions, and . . . Baron Stroganoff must be taught that the Sultan Mahmood [Mahmud II] was as much the independent sovereign of a powerful Empire as the Emperor Alexander [I].³⁶

The increasingly religious dimension of the conflict, in conjunction with Ottoman restrictions on Russian shipping in the Straits and Ottoman military actions in the Danubian Principalities, prompted harsh tsarist complaints. Strangford’s dispatches chronicled the mounting acrimony between Russia and Turkey, in particular over the plight of Eastern Orthodoxy in the Ottoman realm. In early May 1821, Stroganov staunchly pressed the Porte about its seemingly systematic oppression of the Greek faith, lodging a strongly worded protest against

[t]he alarming character of the proceedings adopted by the Porte towards its *reaya*, in their quality of members of the Greek religion—the destruction of several Greek churches—and the public execution of the ministers of that faith, both at Constantinople and elsewhere.

The Russian envoy, Strangford alleged,

made the strongest and most energetic representations, grounding them principally on the VII and XIV Articles of the Treaty of 1774 . . . , which treaty certainly does give the Russian minister a distinct right to interfere in questions affecting the security of the Greek ecclesiastical establishment in this country.

But Stroganov “was so little satisfied with the explanations which he received on this matter that on the following day, he renewed his complaints in the form of an official note to the Porte.”³⁷

In early June 1821, Stroganov presented another spirited grievance to the Porte, “conceived in language of no ordinary vehemence.” This objection boldly affirmed the intention of the tsar “to grant an asylum to every Christian, flying from Turkish oppression, who shall seek it within his dominions.” Stroganov then proceeded “to assume as a fact that the present contest is one of religion, and that this government is resolved *‘de frapper de mort et d’extermination tout ce qui porte le nom de Chrétien en Turquie’*” [to strike dead and exterminate anyone who bears a Christian name in Turkey]. The

Russian envoy concluded by announcing that the tsar had commanded him to leave Constantinople, “accompanied by his legation, and by all the Russian subjects remaining here, as soon as he should judge that the state of matters imposed that necessity upon him.” Strangford swiftly perceived the gravity of the tone and language of his Russian counterpart’s declarations, “above all, the unqualified manner in which the Porte is accused of being actuated by a spirit of sanguinary persecution, joined to the unexpected resolution proclaimed by the emperor, of permitting the rebels to take refuge in his states.” These developments, Strangford predicted, “will have an effect very opposite to that of re-establishing [the Porte’s] relations with M. de Stroganoff on a footing of amity and confidence.”³⁸

In an extended encounter with the *reis efendi*, Strangford attempted to mollify the widening dispute between Russia and Turkey. First and foremost, regarding the fate of the patriarch, Britain’s envoy conveyed his apprehension that the circumstances of the church leader’s death sentence “might occasion the Porte to be accused, in foreign courts, of a disposition unfriendly to the Christian religion.” The *reis efendi*

repelled this idea with considerable energy, and said that the fact of the execution having taken place on Easter Sunday was an accident, and not by any means a designed insult to that solemn festival—that the question of the patriarch’s guilt had only been determined on the preceding day—but that the nature of his punishment had not then been decided on.

In the interval, noted the Ottoman foreign minister, “a fresh mass of the most convincing evidence against him had been submitted to the sultan, who, in a fit of violent anger and indignation, had ordered his instant execution.” While the Greeks

who had massacred the Turks at Galatz had indeed chosen *Friday* for the commission of that atrocious act, . . . it would have been utterly beneath the dignity of the Sublime Porte to have imitated them in such an unworthy mode of insulting religion [emphasis original].

Additionally, the *reis efendi* continued,

the present contest was not of a religious character, [since] the Porte had never been biassed by any consideration of the faith of the individuals whom she was occasionally called upon either to condemn or to spare—citing, in proof of the first of these assertions, the recent execution of several Mussulmans, and amongst them, one of a very distinguished rank among the teachers of that religion—and in support of the second, the prompt and ready attention shewn by the Porte to my demands in behalf of the Christians at Smyrna and elsewhere, and, more recently, in favor of the inhabitants of Milos.³⁹

When the subject turned to other sources of Russian-Ottoman tension, the *reis efendi* enumerated “the causes of complaint against” Stroganov and “the multiplied proofs of forbearance and moderation, which (he insisted) had

been shewn by the Porte.” Significantly, he assured Strangford “that [the Ottoman government’s] quarrel with the Russian envoy was purely *personal*, and that they drew a distinction between his conduct, and the views and dispositions of his court” (emphasis original). The Ottoman foreign minister then depicted a sorry state of affairs in the sultan’s realm, a predicament that necessitated a purely defensive posture vis-à-vis Russia: “Is it to be supposed,” asked the *reis efendi*,

“that we should be so utterly destitute of common sense as to seek a rupture with Russia, at a moment when the latter has a vast disposable army on our very frontier—when we are harrassed with rebellions and insurrections in every part of our dominions—when our means of equipping the fleet are so limited and so precarious that we had the utmost difficulty in preparing a small squadron to defend our navigation in the Archipelago—and when, in addition to these circumstances, we have the conviction that there is not a power in Europe (fatigued and exhausted as they all are by a long war), even among those who are the most friendly to us, who would fire a single shot on our behalf?”⁴⁰

These “frank admissions” gave Strangford “an opportunity of urging (without fear of offending the Ottoman pride) the absolute necessity of moderation and temper, and the expediency of even making some slight sacrifices, in order to conciliate the Russian minister.” The upshot of the *reis efendi*’s reply convinced Strangford

that the Porte will do everything to avoid a rupture with Russia, that she will leave no effort untried to rid herself of the presence of the Russian envoy—whose activity she terms importunity, and whose firmness is construed into insolent and offensive obstinacy—[and] that a direct appeal to the Emperor Alexander [I] will sooner or later be resorted to by the Porte, and will probably be accompanied by a representation to some other courts.

The British ambassador also concluded

that matters are still capable of being arranged in an amicable manner, provided, on the one hand, that the sultan does not yield to the natural violence and impatience of his temper and on the other, that the next instructions from the emperor to his minister . . . be not such as to render future negotiation hopeless or impracticable.⁴¹

In his report of 23 July 1821, with Russian-Ottoman official relations still at an impasse over an array of issues, Strangford extensively covered the tsarist ultimatum recently delivered to the Porte, a diplomatic note that threatened to trigger an imminent clash between Russia and Turkey. Ottoman officials not only expressed shock and surprise at the ultimatum’s “tone of arrogance” but did not believe their government could meet Russia’s request of an eight-day deadline. The *reis efendi* stated that

however disposed the government might be to reply in an amicable manner, it would be physically impossible not only to have the answer ready within the term so peremptorily prescribed, but to go through the various forms which are indispensable to the progress of public business.⁴²

Even without official delays, and even if the cumbersome process of Ottoman decision-making quickened, Strangford did not think Ottoman measures would satisfy Stroganov, especially since the Russian envoy declared “that he must have *facts*, not *protestations*” (emphasis original).

Religious matters comprised the essence of the Russian ultimatum. Strangford contended that the Porte would be “disposed to reject with haughtiness and indignation the assertion put forward by Russia,” namely, that

the co-existence of Turkey with the other states of Europe has hitherto been *endured* solely under the tacit convention that she should treat her Christian subjects with indulgence—that Russia was to be the judge of the degree and quality of that indulgence [emphasis original].

If Turkey’s mistreatment of the Greeks dissatisfied the tsarist government, then Russia falsely assumed the right, “on proclaiming her dissatisfaction, to array against the Turkish Empire the united force of all Christendom, and to declare its existence to be incompatible with the stability and security of the Christian faith.” The British ambassador sharply avowed his “unfeigned concern at the exaggerated statements which have gone abroad, and which have been copied into all the public journals in Europe respecting the conduct of the Porte towards its insurgent subjects.” The scope of these declarations, Strangford maintained, “is to shew that Turkey is resolved, not to subjugate the Greeks as rebels, but to exterminate them as Christians—and thus to give to the present contest, the character of a war of religion.”

Strangford vigorously disputed these religious accusations, widespread in Russia and the rest of Europe.

The Greek subjects of the Porte are everywhere in rebellion against their sovereign. These rebels are Christians—and the punishment . . . inflicted upon them is imposed in the former, and not in the latter of these characters. There have, elsewhere, been instances of revolts conducted by subjects of a different faith from that generally established in the country; but it was never thought that in endeavouring to suppress rebellion, it was the intention of the lawful government to wage a war of proscription against the religion of the rebels.

As for outrages committed against Greek shrines in Constantinople, Strangford modified his previous indictment of the Ottoman government. He now ascribed blame to “a furious and fanatic multitude. They were publicly disavowed by the government, who has, since, taken every measure likely to prevent the recurrence of such disgraceful excesses.” Moreover,

It is a fact that since the first moment of general popular indignation, occasioned by the discovery of the Greek conspiracy, not one of the churches belonging to

that religion has been destroyed or injured—that the Greeks do upon all occasions resort to them as freely as heretofore—that the new patriarch has received a *firman* [an Ottoman imperial decree], permitting him to rebuild or repair those which had suffered from the fury of the janissaries; and that out of a number of seventy-six churches and chapels, in the city and neighbourhood of Constantinople, [only one was utterly destroyed and thirteen plundered] or otherwise injured by the mob.

To emphasize this last point, Strangford attached a statement “communicated to me by a Greek priest of high respectability—who certainly will not be suspected of being inclined to palliate the conduct of the Turks.”⁴³

The central theme of Russia’s religious narrative, the death of the ecumenical patriarch, justifiably drew Strangford’s attention in his rejoinder to the tsarist ultimatum. He deplored in the strongest terms the severity and conditions of the patriarch’s execution but attempted to explain the punishment.

I feel myself bound in conscience and in honour to declare my positive conviction, founded on grounds of evidence which cannot be suspected, that not only that unfortunate prelate, but many, if not all the bishops who shared his fate, were deeply involved in a conspiracy, of which the Greek clergy were the principal agents and promoters.

In sentencing these individuals to death, the Porte did not act out of enmity to their religion, as evinced “in the fact that every one of the sees thus rendered vacant was instantly filled up, and with a scrupulous regard to the rites and usages of the Greek Church.”

Based on “these impressions, and with the knowledge of these facts,” Strangford adamantly refuted the validity of those points in the Russian note that “represent the Porte to be actuated by a spirit of sanguinary persecution.” These allegations confounded “the past excesses of the populace with the present sentiments and intentions of the government” and gave “no credit to the latter for that better order of things which its exertions have at length produced.” Furthermore, Strangford rejected the Russian proclamation that just

because the rebel Greeks profess the same faith as Russia, the punishment of their treason is to be considered as a signal of hostility against Christendom in general, and as giving to all the powers of Europe the right to make common cause for the annihilation of the Turkish Empire.

The British ambassador, however, did not think “that the Porte could or would refuse to accede to the greater part” of Russia’s requests.

The rebuilding of the demolished chapels has already been permitted to the patriarch, and the principle once recognized, it does not seem very difficult for the government to carry it a little further, and to consent to reconstruct or repair those edifices at its own expence.

As for the security of the Greek faith, “its rites are regularly performed, and numerously attended by the Greek population of this capital and its environs.” A satisfactory Ottoman response to tsarist censure of the patriarch’s death “might be given, by a full and fair disclosure of the evidence on which he was condemned.” Lastly, the Russian demand that the Porte should differentiate between guilty Greek rebels and innocent Greek non-combatants did not pose an obstacle. The assurance that the sultan’s government

will take every precaution, to distinguish the innocent from the guilty, is an act of such positive justice, and is moreover so strictly in conformity to the various *fir-mans* and *hatti-sherifs* [Ottoman imperial edicts] lately issued by the Porte, that I cannot imagine that a mere feeling of resentment, for the imperious manner in which this requisition is made, ought to prevent the Turkish ministers from admitting it.

Strangford unequivocally accepted Russia’s claim to interfere in the affairs of the Danubian Principalities. Despite “an actual and humiliating sacrifice of the rights of sovereignty on the part of the sultan,” the stipulations of treaties “are so powerfully in favour of Russia that the Porte can have no just plea for resisting her demands for their fulfillment.” In concluding his lengthy commentary on the ultimatum, Strangford hypothesized that “in making these representations in a manner so little calculated to conciliate the haughty spirit of the Ottoman government,” Russia probably intended not to defuse the current crisis but to precipitate a war, the results of which “cannot be doubtful.” Ostensibly caused by Russia’s imperative of safeguarding the Greek Church, this anticipated fight would seek to uphold “that influence which she has so long been labouring to create in Greece.” In pronouncing itself the protector of Orthodoxy, Russia

confidently hopes to place herself, by the events of the war, in such a position as will enable her to extend over the whole Greek nation that authority and that protection which treaties (the result of similar wars) have given her a right to exercise in Wallachia and Moldavia.⁴⁴

Two days later (25 July 1821), convinced of the probability of war, Strangford solicited Foreign Secretary Castlereagh on behalf of unprotected British subjects and their property in Constantinople. The Porte, the envoy feared, would prove unable to cope

with the overwhelming means which Russia is able to direct against her. To remedy this deficiency, it can hardly be doubted that the Ottoman government will make a direct and most powerful appeal to the fanaticism, and to all the evil passions of the Turkish population.

The military struggle would then assume

on the side of Turkey the character which Russia has already proclaimed as belonging to it—namely, that of a war of religion. The undistinguishing operation

of this principle, on the inflamed and excited minds of the whole Turkish nation, will undoubtedly lead to the most dangerous results, and the Christian inhabitants of this capital will [most] probably be exposed to a common and indiscriminate persecution.

Dreading the consequences of this aggression, “when they shall have been publickly called forth by the government itself, and when the dictates of fury and fanaticism shall be quickened by a sentiment of national despair,” Strangford requested ships of war in the Dardanelles, “for the protection of His Majesty’s subjects and their property in this city.” While affirming his intent to stay at his post, “under all circumstances, however alarming,” he graciously pleaded for “means to be provided for the security of my family.”⁴⁵

The standoff appeared all the more intractable when official relations between Russia and Turkey ended on 30 July 1821. When the Porte did not give Stroganov a written reply to the Russian claims within the prescribed eight-day period, the tsarist legation left Constantinople, thus severing diplomatic negotiations between the two countries most affected by the Eastern mess. Although the Ottoman government professed its readiness to meet the terms of the ultimatum, the Russian ambassador had not received a formal response by the expiration of the deadline. In an extended account to Castlereagh, Strangford summarized the *reis efendi*’s statement of alleged assent. The Porte, according to the British envoy, “solemnly and explicitly disavowed the intention of persecuting the Greeks on account of their religion or of waging a war of extermination against them as Christians.” The patriarch “had been punished for his treasons only, and not as chief of a religion different from that of the state,” and “the indignities offered to his corpse were the consequence of the wild and ungovernable fanaticism of the multitude, and not that of the orders of government.” With the restoration of order and quiet, “permission would be given to repair the churches and chapels which had suffered from the fury of the mob.” In addition, the Porte had always endeavored, even in the current predicament,

to distinguish the innocent from the guilty, lamenting that any case should ever have occurred, without its knowledge or consent, in which they had been confounded—a circumstance which was not the result of a system, but was one of the unhappy and too common accidents of civil war.

Lastly, after the rebellion in the Principalities had ended, and after “the fate of Ypsilanti and his adherents had been determined,” Ottoman troops “should be withdrawn—the *hospodars* re-established—and everything placed on a footing conformable to treaties.”⁴⁶ By the time of these assertions of compliance with the Russian terms, however, Stroganov had already ordered the departure of the Russian embassy staff from the Ottoman capital.

Along with Russian-Ottoman antagonism, Strangford’s communiqués dealt with other facets of the Eastern crisis of 1821, including cases of the Porte’s forbearance and moderation. Indeed, the British envoy successfully interceded on behalf of the inhabitants of Milos, after they had requested “my good offices at the Porte to obtain for them some degree of protection against

the oppressions of the Turkish ships of war cruising in the Archipelago.” Because this island “is the place from which His Majesty’s ships, as well as the British merchant vessels, are constantly supplied with pilots for the navigation of the Archipelago, I thought it had a fair claim to my protection.” At Strangford’s urging, the *kapudan pasha* (grand admiral and commander of the Ottoman navy) instructed the Turkish admiral commanding those waters “to secure the Milotes against the rapacity of the Turkish cruizers.”⁴⁷ Ottoman authorities also agreed to curtail “the fanatic and ungovernable conduct of the Turks” in Smyrna, where “apprehensions of a general massacre of the Christian inhabitants” caused distress and disquiet. The sultan acceded to Strangford’s request for an Ottoman decree, “addressed to the people of Smyrna, commanding, in the most positive terms, the restoration of tranquillity and good order, and the cessation of all further violence and persecution whether against the Franks or the Greeks.”⁴⁸

Yet Strangford routinely made reference to the all too many cases of retribution and excess, incidences of random and deliberate violence, often, but not always, driven by religious wrath. This cycle of retaliation and reprisal not only intensified the Eastern emergency but magnified the human cost of the burgeoning conflict. For instance, Strangford’s message of 26 June 1821 informed Castlereagh that “twelve Greeks of distinction, and among them Mr. Argiropulo (formerly *dragoman* of the Porte), were seized, and after a short confinement, sent into exile in Asia Minor.” A frightful tragedy also occurred: “Five Greek bishops (those of Derkon, Salonica, Adrianople, Turnovo, and Silivria) and three prelates of an inferior rank, together with several laymen, were publicly hanged at Constantinople.”⁴⁹

Strangford’s subsequent missives described additional abuses.

I learn from Enos that in the Gulf of Saros, the Turks had taken four of the Greek vessels, the crews of which were instantly hanged. Some dreadful scenes have taken place at the town of the Dardanelles. The Turkish squadron, on perceiving a large force of the insurgents cruising off the entrance of the Straits, had returned to the Dardanelles, and to indemnify themselves for this mortification, the crews had landed and had committed the most violent outrages on the peaceable Greek inhabitants of the town, many of whom had been shot, and their houses plundered and burned. Previously to this transaction, a body of Greeks had landed on the Troad, and had carried off a quantity of cattle for the use of their fleet.⁵⁰

Strangford also recounted killings committed by the Greeks, such as the fate of the Turkish garrison at Navarino.

The intelligence from the Morea is of a very mixed description with respect to the events of the war in that quarter. The fortress of Navarino (a strong place near Modon [Methoni]) had surrendered to the Greeks, who violated the capitulation by inhumanly butchering the garrison (which had been transported to Samos), notwithstanding the exertions and remonstrances of M. Bornfort, the French consul at that island.⁵¹

With the spread of revolution to the Morea and the Aegean, and with the growing fear of hostilities between Russia and Turkey, residents of the Ottoman capital fretfully witnessed outbursts of rage. Strangford's letter of 10 July 1821 reported that "[t]he conclusion of the Bairam was marked by the most disgraceful and sanguinary excesses, principally committed in Pera, the place where the Franks, in general, reside." These abuses prompted the Porte to issue a series of *firman*s, "published at the mosques and other places of public resort." One such decree prohibited all Muslims from attacking *reaya* and declared "that any Turk who should maltreat them without provocation should be punished with death." Another Ottoman order, "not less beneficial, has been that of disarming the Turkish children. Little miscreants, under seven years of age, and armed with daggers and pistols, had, till now, the privilege of robbing, stabbing, and shooting with impunity." This havoc, "which had continued but too long," ended as a result of the government's actions; "the shops and markets are again opened," and "Constantinople enjoys, at present, a greater degree of tranquillity and security than has been known there during many weeks."⁵²

Images of another type of excess, the execution of prisoners in Constantinople, found expression in Strangford's correspondence of 1821. On 9 October,

Some Greeks, mostly soldiers and sailors, were executed. . . . Among them was a priest, of respectable character and connexions; in whose house letters are said to have been found, which he was upon the point of despatching to some of his friends in the islands, cautioning them not to put any trust in the amnesty lately proclaimed by the Porte, but to continue their efforts in the cause of liberty.⁵³

On 7 November 1821, "twenty of the leaders of the insurrection in Moldavia, lately taken prisoners in that province, arrived at Constantinople," and two days later "[t]he greater number of these unhappy wretches were executed." Strangford registered his surprise and unease to the *reis efendi*, wondering why the Porte "had acted with such extraordinary severity towards the unfortunate men who were executed," but had spared the lives of forty-seven persons captured some time ago from the island of Samothrace. The *reis efendi* clarified the essential difference between the two episodes. The executed rebel leaders

deserved a thousand deaths—[and] they had been selected for punishment on account of the infamy of their character, and of the atrocious cruelties which they had exercised against some Turks who had fallen into their hands not many weeks ago.

Meanwhile, the Samothracians "had never broken out into open rebellion, nor committed any act of insubordination except refusing to pay the capitation tax." In fact, as Strangford learned from his embassy's first *dragoman*, "the true reason" for the death sentence against the imprisoned mutineers from Moldavia "was the fury and indignation excited at the Porte by the capture of Tripolitsa, and by the barbarous conduct of the Greeks at that place and at Navarino."⁵⁴

Strangford gathered evidence of these Greek atrocities, including a “deposition on oath, made at the British chancery by a most respectable gentleman, who was an eyewitness to the horrors committed by those calling themselves Christians, at Navarino and Tripolitsa.” The details of this bloodshed, while they could not justify the anger of the Turks in the capital, “amply account for it. The popular fury is now very strong; and it was with a view to content it that fifteen or sixteen miserable prisoners were, last week, taken out of the Bagno [prison], and publicly executed.”⁵⁵

Strangford continued to evoke the perceived collapse of public order in Constantinople, writing on 26 November 1821 that “[r]obberies and murders have been frequent, and several individuals belonging to, or under the protection of foreign [envoys] have been insulted, or threatened in the streets.” This harassment, “originating mainly in the exasperation occasioned by the cruelties of the Greeks in the Morea, . . . [and] excited by the numerous executions which have lately taken place at Constantinople, threatened daily to grow worse.”⁵⁶ When Strangford implored the Porte on this issue, he got a promise that measures would be taken to restore calm in the capital.

In addition to the volatile situation in Constantinople, Strangford portrayed the turmoil and turbulence afflicting Smyrna, the most prominent commercial hub in the Ottoman Levant and the scene of urban disarray and sectarian cruelty after the outbreak of the Greek revolt. Based largely on regular intelligence from Britain’s consul, Francis Werry, Strangford depicted an unstable maritime center fast becoming a danger zone for Greek Christian residents and European trade interests. The ambassador’s detailed memorandum of late June 1821, chronicling nearly a month of mayhem, began by asserting that on 3 June,

a general massacre of the Greek population was intended, and only prevented by the determined conduct of the local authorities, who were anxious to fulfill the sultan’s orders by protecting the innocent inhabitants from the fury of the Turks. On that night, fifteen Greeks were killed in the town, and twenty in the neighbourhood.⁵⁷

By the next day, “all the shops were closed,” and several days later,

the Greeks’ bishop was arrested. Immediately a great alarm was excited; and when the magazines and houses of some fugitives were sealed up, the confusion was considerably increased among the Greeks, who were hurrying on board the ships in the harbour, dreading a general massacre.

Yet nothing “very serious occurred—the pasha’s authority was established in the city—some of the Greeks returned to their houses on shore—the shops were opened and confidence seemed to revive.”

But when information circulated on 14 June that insurgents had destroyed a Turkish warship, “it was soon evident that the Turks would not permit this disgrace to pass unrevenged.” By the next day, much of the seashore “was occupied by Turks armed with rifles, and firing at every Greek they met, and not less than 160 were murdered within and without the town.” The

British consul, worried about the safety of his house and property, sought the assistance of the pasha “to check the progress of the mob,” only to discover that the pasha and several of his officers had to confront a storm of popular protest over a large Russian vessel set to leave port that very evening.

The Turkish population wished to detain her, suspecting that her passengers were recruits, and her cargo ammunition and stores for the insurgents. . . . [T]he populace surrounded the houses of the chief Turkish officers, and after abusing them in the most insolent manner, compelled the *mullah*, the *bash ayan* [chief provincial notable], and the customhouse officer to meet for the purpose of again agitating the subject of the Russian vessel.

Although the ship had already sailed, it “ran aground near the castle—upon which, boats were sent out to force her back.” But before the ship’s return to port, violence broke out.

[T]he mob, irritated by the suspicion that the permission to depart had been obtained by bribery, and also excited by the janissaries, shot the *mullah* and the *bash ayan*, and some others. In consequence of this act of rebellion on the part of the Turks, there was no longer any restraint on the fury of the people. Men and women were indiscriminately murdered—and this dreadful scene only ceased when no more victims were to be found.

The French and British consuls instructed their nationals to find haven on French- and British-flagged ships in the harbor and petitioned the pasha “for some additional guards to ensure their personal safety.” The janissaries

swore in their [the consuls’] presence that they would act in conformity with the orders of the government, and only punish the guilty—but in return, demanded of them to send on shore all the Greeks who had sought refuge on board their ships.

Werry did not consider this vow “sufficient to inspire much confidence” and requested Strangford, in view of “the peculiar and perilous state of affairs at Smyrna,” to intervene with the Ottoman government for the security of British nationals and their property. *Firmans*, Werry insisted,

will be of no avail. The pasha has only a nominal authority, and the janissaries are not likely to obey him when the opportunity for plunder is so inviting. The approaching feast of Bairam, after the Ramazan, is at all times a period of licence, and is now much to be dreaded. The late catastrophe at Aivali will act as a violent inducement to similar atrocities.

Strangford elaborated on the massacre of Aivali’s Greek inhabitants in his message of 26 June 1821 to Castlereagh.⁵⁸ “Some time ago,” the envoy acknowledged, “an insurrection broke out at Aivali, a large and flourishing city of Asia Minor, principally inhabited by Greeks, whose numbers are stated to amount to twenty thousand.” The Ottoman governor Osman Pasha had orders

“to put the whole of this population to the sword,” but he “contented himself with the submission of the inhabitants, and deferred the execution of his orders, untill he should receive fresh instructions from Constantinople, for which purpose he dispatched one of his principal officers.” In the meantime, when Strangford mediated on behalf of Aivali’s residents, the *reis efendi*

strongly denied the existence of the sanguinary orders said to have been transmitted to Osman Pasha, declaring that such instructions would have been equally repugnant to the principles of humanity inculcated by the Koran, and to the personal feelings of the Ottoman government.

It was thus “with as much surprize as concern that I learned from the *reis efendi* on Saturday last that the whole of the male population of Aivali had been massacred, and that the women and children had been sent into slavery.” The Ottoman foreign minister

justified this proceeding by stating that Osman Pasha, having accepted the submission of the Aivaliotes, carried his indulgence so far as to permit them to retain their arms—that matters remained perfectly tranquil in the town, till the sudden appearance in the offing, of a large squadron of the Greek insurgents, induced the inhabitants to hope that it had come to their succour, and that they might make another attempt at revolt with better success. They accordingly rose *en masse*, and butchered about fifteen hundred Turks.

When the squadron, whose appearance in the bay had been simply accidental, sailed away, “the Turks recovered their courage, and an indiscriminate massacre of the Greeks was the just though dreadful reward of their perfidy.”

To prevent killings in Smyrna, and to allay fears among the port’s European residents and Greek Christians, Strangford earnestly appealed to the Porte both before and after the Aivali massacre. Ottoman officials agreed to restore order and to halt all further violence and persecution against the Franks and the Greeks.⁵⁹ As of early July 1821, the situation stabilized: “[T]he measures which I had prevailed upon this government to take for the re-establishment of public tranquillity at Smyrna” had succeeded. The authority of the pasha had returned, and

the Bairam had passed over without any alarming occurrence. But this consoling intelligence is compensated by the melancholy information of the plague having broken out at Smyrna. It appears to have been (as usual) introduced there by a vessel from Alexandria.⁶⁰

Smyrna seesawed between stability and strife, as we learn from subsequent letters. “The Frank population,” Strangford wrote on 26 July 1821, “continued in perfect safety, but public executions and private assassinations were but too common among the Greeks.”⁶¹ Yet a few weeks later (18 August), in contrast to the news of carnage in the Morea and the Aegean, “[f]rom Smyrna the accounts [by Francis Werry] are much more consoling.” Trade revived, confidence resurfaced, and “perfect tranquillity” reigned. “All

the foreign ships of war had withdrawn from Smyrna—a satisfactory proof of the security which prevailed there.”⁶² By autumn, however, fright and trepidation again pervaded the streets. “A Greek had been assassinated by a Candiot Turk on the morning of the 17th [of October]. The palace guard of the pasha, being sent in pursuit of the offender, executed justice upon him in a very summary manner.” In retaliation, the Candiot Turks of Smyrna, joined by two regiments of janissaries, “immediately assembled before the palace, and proceeded to attack it. The conflict lasted some hours, with the loss of many lives on both sides.”⁶³ The unruliness of these Candiot Turks only increased, according to Strangford’s communiqué of 10 November.

The conduct of the Candiot Turks at Smyrna, and the atrocities which they committed against the unfortunate Greeks, became at last so intolerable that the pasha was compelled to do what he ought to have done long ago, and to expel these infamous miscreants from the city. They were seized and sent to Candia . . . on board of some French vessels hired by the pasha for the purpose. Tranquillity was immediately restored.⁶⁴

But exactly one month later (10 December), Strangford vividly recounted the “serious disturbances” that flared up again in Smyrna. “Confidence had begun to gain ground, and trade had revived, when suddenly, on the morning of that day [20 November], a general alarm was spread that it was the intention of the Turks to massacre the entire Greek population.” No one knew for sure how or when this unsettling rumor originated, but “it was most probably spread by a number of Turks from the adjacent country, who had been observed, for the two or three preceding days, to flock into Smyrna, and to wander through the streets with arms in their hands.” They evidently sought to provoke disorder, availing themselves “of the confusion for the purpose of plundering the inhabitants.” These agitators,

emboldened by the consternation excited by the report which they had circulated, proceeded to murder three or four Greeks—and the signal, thus given, was promptly followed by the massacre of nearly sixty unfortunate persons belonging to that nation.

Although Werry notified Strangford that the number of victims “has been represented as four or five hundred,” the ambassador could “depend upon the accuracy of the statement which fixes the killed and wounded at sixty.”

Upon hearing of these and other excesses in Smyrna, Britain’s envoy submitted a strong note to the *reis efendi*, protesting “the disgraceful state in which the second city of the Empire was placed by the weakness or timidity of its local government” and demanding renewed measures for restoring public order. The Ottoman foreign minister countered with the complaint that the Porte

was justly offended with the foreign consuls at Smyrna, who had made large sums of money by aiding the escape of the Grand Seignior’s [sultan’s] Greek subjects,

and whose audacity in so doing had justly excited the indignation of the Turks, and had been a principal cause of the late disturbances.

The Ottoman government indeed took steps to re-establish stability, including the dismissal of the Smyrna pasha's Albanian guards, who had been employed "from a motive of avarice—they served without pay, and lived by plunder. Their removal has produced the best effects," with Smyrna now "more peaceable" than at any time since the start of the insurgency.⁶⁵

As the Greek uprising overwhelmed more regions, an expanding arc of crisis loomed in the Levant. In Salonica, based on Strangford's summaries of the intelligence he garnered from the office of Britain's consul (Francis Charnaud) in that commercial center, "great alarm continued to prevail" by late July 1821. "A general revolt against the Turks had taken place throughout all Thessaly—not one of the Turkish villages had been spared." Although "[n]o Greeks had been massacred at Salonica, [t]he clergy, and most of the lower classes of the people, had been placed in confinement." British merchants of the Levant Company, perceiving themselves "in imminent danger," requested the protection of a ship of war, an appeal "renewed to me continually from every place in the Levant where British interests are at stake."⁶⁶ By late August, security in Macedonia had deteriorated, as

a large body of Asiatic Turks under the command of Bairam Pasha, in its passage to the Morea, had committed dreadful devastations throughout the country. This conduct, it is feared, may exasperate the Greeks to such a degree as to induce the provinces, that have hitherto taken no part in the present rebellion, to revolt and join the insurgents.⁶⁷

A tenuous calm, however, appeared to hold by early October 1821. "The newly nominated Greek bishops had arrived at Salonica, escorted by officers of the Porte, and provided with *firmans*," producing the effect of "consoling and tranquillizing the Greeks. The shopkeepers and tradesmen belonging to that nation, who were previously placed in confinement as hostages, had been released, and perfect confidence was restored." Yet the duration of this renewed order largely depended on the fate of nearby Cassandra, the site of Greek-Ottoman fighting.⁶⁸ By year's end, "all was tranquil" at Salonica. Those Greeks who "had consented to lay down their arms were received with kindness and even with hospitality by the Turkish authorities." But the Turks

had marched against Sikia, the opposite headland to Cassandra. I learn that the slaughter at the capture of the last mentioned place was dreadful. The Greeks had obstinately refused to surrender on any terms. But previously to the assault, thirty-one families of the besieged had claimed the protection of the amnesty, and had been safely conducted to Salonica.⁶⁹

From Crete, as of late July 1821, the Greeks had rebelled at Chania and "dreadful scenes have occurred at that place. A *fetwa* [religious ruling] was issued on the 30th [of June] to destroy all the *reaya*; and on the same day, twenty-five were put to death." Several days later, "the Sphakiotes came down

from the mountains to avenge the slaughter of their brethren,” and in the ensuing skirmish with Ottoman troops, “the Turks lost a standard, a principal officer, and a considerable number of men.”⁷⁰ By mid-August, the commotion had spread to other parts of Crete, with “many Greeks having been slaughtered. A considerable body of them had, however, placed themselves in a strong and defensible post, and had prepared for a vigorous resistance.”⁷¹ By year’s end, aggravating the trouble on Crete, “the Candiotes, who had been expelled from Smyrna and sent back to their own country, had begun to exercise the same system of violence and robbery which had at last forced the pasha of Smyrna to drive them away.”⁷²

The insurgency engulfed Cyprus by early August 1821, but the island’s Ottoman governor, “having received secret intelligence of the plot, has succeeded in frustrating it. Eight Greeks were decapitated upon this occasion.”⁷³ About a week later, Strangford again referred to Cyprus: “I apprehend that the discovery of the plot formed by the Greeks at Cyprus has led to most sanguinary excesses on the part of the government of that island.”⁷⁴ Strife persisted into September, based on accounts “of the most distressing nature” that Strangford obtained from Cyprus. “The severities exercised by the barbarous *mütesellim* [deputy governor] of that unfortunate island, against its Greek population, and his misbehaviour towards the foreign consuls,” compelled the British envoy to deliver a strong note of protest to the Porte, requesting that official’s “immediate removal” from his post.⁷⁵

Lastly, controversy invariably stirred on the British-protected Ionian Islands. Already in mid-June 1821, the *reis efendi* alerted Strangford of Ottoman distress over Ionian Greek volunteers, supplies, and ships that contributed to the insurrection. The Porte demanded

that the vessels of the insurgents should not be allowed to arm, refresh, or recruit, within the ports of the Ionian States; that they should not be permitted to carry their prizes into those ports; that the insurgent flag should not be recognized in the Ionian Sea; [and] that the rebels should not receive an asylum within the Ionian territories.

Strangford confirmed British compliance with the first three imperatives, adding that “the Ionian cruizers would have orders to protect and assist the Turkish navigation in those seas.” As for the final stipulation,

while every effort would be made by the Ionian government to discourage the admission of fugitive rebels into its dependencies, it was not to be expected that they would be given up, should they continue to elude our vigilance, and to effect their escape into our territory.

The Porte thus had to “remain content with the assurance that the Ionian authorities would do all they could to prevent the case from occurring, but that if ever it did, their complaisance could not be carried any further.”⁷⁶

Britain’s Ionian connection continued to encumber British-Ottoman cooperation, and the Porte vented dissatisfaction with the so-called neutrality

of the British protectorate. Already by mid-August 1821, according to the *reis efendi's* objection to Strangford,

three thousand Ionians are fighting against the Turks in the Morea, [and] the Septinsular government takes no steps to recall them—because it is afraid of doing anything that may be contrary to the general feelings of the islanders, which are decidedly favourable to the insurgents.

Additionally, armed Ionian vessels attacked or threatened Ottoman shipping; and many Ionians, after joining the rebels, returned to their own country without facing inquiry into their conduct, benefiting from “the protection said to be given to the property and families of the insurgents.” All these disconcerting developments “have produced a degree of irritation and suspicion on the part of the Ottoman government, seriously menacing that credit and confidence which it is, at this moment, of such incalculable importance for us to maintain unimpaired.”⁷⁷

Lord Strangford's narratives from Constantinople reflect some of the flaws and limitations of primary sources written by Europeans in the Ottoman world. His observations echoed conventional Western perceptions of the Ottoman Empire and stigmatized the Ottoman other with distortion and exaggeration. Envoys and consuls—and not just British representatives—depicted Ottoman officialdom in a mostly negative light, accenting episodes of oppression, extortion, and related abuses of power by pashas, janissaries, and customs officers. Many of these authorities, portrayed as rapacious, corrupt, and arbitrary, interfered in the administration of European diplomatic and commercial concessions—the capitulations—and thus complicated European-Ottoman affairs. Through their anecdotes, remarks, and choice of words, Western records alluded to commonly accepted European images of the Ottoman Empire, fast becoming “the sick man of Europe” in Western political discourse and popular opinion.⁷⁸

Yet Strangford's dispatches clarify some of the salient but neglected aspects of the Eastern Question, such as commerce, piracy, and janissary unrest. He relied on a circle of sources, gleaning intelligence from merchants, travelers, protégés, consuls, and *dragomans*; from local and regional Ottoman authorities, including pashas and customs officers and their interpreters; and from other European envoys. Sifting through these different accounts, while carrying out the British objective of retaining cordial ties with the Porte, Strangford amended his sweeping condemnation of the Ottoman government. He diligently chronicled what he deemed the most critical realities in Constantinople and covered a range of topics beyond the purely political and diplomatic facets of the Eastern crisis. The very specificity and urgency of his reports sharpen our focus on the multiple issues, such as sectarian violence, that marked an age of upheaval in the Ottoman Levant. Lastly, his writings exemplify the value of primary source materials for investigating the most pivotal events at the core of the Eastern Question, including the precarious status of Eastern Orthodoxy.

NOTES

1. The Eastern Question, or the Western Question from the viewpoint of the Ottoman government, refers to that complex of feuds and crises in the Near East, precipitated by the interlocking web of three circumstances: first, the Ottoman Empire's military, financial, and institutional weakening; second, the contending claims and objectives of Britain, Russia, and other European great powers; and third, the stirrings of Ottoman Christians, encompassing Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians, Albanians, Arabs, and Armenians, for autonomy and independence. The standard account of the Eastern Question, including the Anglo-Russian rivalry, remains Matthew S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923* (London: Macmillan, 1966). Useful compilations of relevant primary sources include Matthew S. Anderson, ed., *The Great Powers and the Near East, 1774–1923* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971); and Alexander Macfie, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923* (New York: Longman, 1996). For a Russian perspective on the Eastern Question, see Vladimir A. Georgiev, Nina S. Kiniapina, Marina T. Panchenkova, and Vitalii I. Sheremet, *Vostochnyi vopros vo vneshnei politike Rossii, konets XVIII-nachalo XX v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978). See Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), for an excellent general account of Imperial Russia's involvement in the Balkans and the Near East. Several Russian historians, drawing on the wealth of documents in Russian archives, have addressed specific aspects of Russian policy in the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire. See, for instance, Grigorii L. Arsh, *Eteristskoe dvizhenie v Rossii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970); idem, *Kapodistriia i grecheskoe natsional'noe-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie, 1809–1822 gg.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976); Irina S. Dostian, *Rossii i balkanskii vopros* (Moscow: Nauka, 1972); Vitalii I. Sheremet, *Turtsiia i Adrianopol'skii mir 1829 goda* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975); and idem, *Voina i biznes: Vlast', den'gi, i oruzhie: Evropa i Blizhnii Vostok v novoe vremia* (Moscow: Tekhnologicheskaiia shkola biznesa, 1996).

2. The term "Levant" refers to the islands and coastal areas of the Ottoman-ruled eastern Mediterranean, encompassing the Aegean Archipelago and such centers as Constantinople, Smyrna, Beirut, Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo, Alexandria, Cairo, Athens, and Salonica. This geographical concept, however, can be broadened to embrace mainland Greece, above all Epirus and the Peloponnese, during the Greek War of Independence.

3. Theophilus C. Prousis, *British Consular Reports from the Ottoman Levant in An Age of Upheaval, 1815–30* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2008).

4. The Sublime Porte, or simply the Porte, refers to the Ottoman central government in Constantinople, encompassing not just the grand vizier and other important ministers but also the sultan and the Divan, or Supreme Council of the Empire, which assisted the sultan in an administrative and advisory capacity. For information on the life and diplomatic career of Lord Strangford (1780–1855), see G. Le G. Norgate, rev. H. C. G. Matthew, "Smythe, Percy Clinton Sydney, sixth Viscount Strangford," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), 51:466-67; and Edward Barrington De Fonblanque, *Lives of the Lords Strangford, with Their Ancestors and Contemporaries through Ten Generations* (London: Cassell Petter and Galpin, 1877), 107-203.

5. Lord Strangford's profuse diplomatic correspondence to the London Foreign Office during the years 1821–24 can be found in The National Archives, Kew, United

Kingdom, Foreign Office 78/96-124 (hereafter TNA, FO), with documents ranging in length from two or three folios to twenty or more folios.

6. For the European, including Russian, perspective on the Near Eastern crisis of 1821, see Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 1-77; Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 614-21, 637-64; idem, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820–1823* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), 164-94, 223-25; and Anatolii V. Fadeev, *Rossia i vostochnyi krizis 20-kh godov XIX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1958).

7. Leften Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1958), 284. Good introductions to the Greek Revolution include David Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence: The Struggle for Freedom from Ottoman Oppression and the Birth of the Modern Greek Nation* (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook Press, 2003); Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 33-46; Christopher M. Woodhouse, *Modern Greece: A Short History*, 5th ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 135-56; idem, *The Greek War of Independence: Its Historical Setting* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1952); and Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821–1833* (London: Batsford, 1973).

8. The word *reaya* (sometimes cited as *rayahs*) literally means “flock” or “herd” of Ottoman Muslims and non-Muslims who owed the sultan taxes and fees in return for justice and security. The term, however, increasingly came to signify the sultan's tax-paying non-Muslims, in particular Ottoman Orthodox Christians. See Suraiya Faroqhi, “*Ra'iyā*,” *Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition* (1994), 8:403-6; Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1, *Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280–1808* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 150-63; and Peter Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354–1804* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 43-55.

9. Justin McCarthy (*Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* [Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1995], 10-13) argues that the Greek revolt established a pattern of excesses and atrocities against Ottoman Muslims, a tendency that lasted until the end of the Ottoman Empire. Greek forces massacred thousands of Muslim men, women, and children in the Morea as well as in Missolonghi, Galatz, and Jassy, not so much out of hatred but out of a calculated political strategy to foster national unity by removing Turkish ethnic and religious communities. Ethnic cleansing of this sort, according to McCarthy, accompanied subsequent struggles for national independence by Balkan Christians.

10. See Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 44-65, on the various cultural, social, and religious interactions between Ottoman Muslims and Ottoman Christians. On the reprisals of 1821 against Greek Christians in Salonica, see idem, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430–1950* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 125-30.

11. Robert Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople*, 2 vols. (London: F. Westley and A. H. Davis, 1836), 1:305-27.

12. On the fate of the ecumenical patriarch, see Charles Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821–1852* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 22-35; and Theophilus C. Prousis, *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), 28, 55-56.

13. An English translation of the Smyrna diary of Spyridon Destunis appears in Theophilus C. Prousis, "Smyrna 1821: A Russian View," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 7 (1991): 145-68. For the Smyrna dispatches of Francis Werry, see Richard Clogg, "Smyrna in 1821: Documents from the Levant Company Archives in the Public Record Office," *Mikrasiatika Chronika* 15 (1972): 313-71. On the commercial prominence of Smyrna in the early nineteenth century, see Elena Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth Century (1700–1820)* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992).

14. Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*, 72. See Prousis, *British Consular Reports from the Ottoman Levant*, 34-37, for information and citations on the maritime ramifications of the 1821 Eastern crisis, in particular piracy and restrictions on trade. On commerce as a factor in Russo-Ottoman discord, see Theophilus C. Prousis, "Disputes in the Dardanelles: A Report on Russo-Ottoman Relations," *East European Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2002): 155-70; idem, "Risky Business: Russian Trade in the Ottoman Empire in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 20, no. 2 (2005): 201-26; and idem, "Storm Warnings in the Straits: Russian-Ottoman Trade Issues," *Balkanistica* 21 (1908): 109-24.

15. British consular records from Smyrna and other ports in the Levant reported frequent disruptions of British merchant shipping in the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean in the early 1820s (TNA, FO 78/136, parts 1-3, ff. 1-313). On the use of fictitious manifests, see the memorandum of John Cartwright, British consul-general in Constantinople, to the officers of the Levant Company (TNA, FO 78/136, 25 May 1822, ff. 56-59), published in Prousis, *British Consular Reports from the Ottoman Levant*, 112-14. See also Vernon John Puryear, *France and the Levant: From the Bourbon Restoration to the Peace of Kutiah* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 4, 17-19, 25-34; Edhem Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 108-11; and Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 2^d ed. (London: Frank Cass, 1964), 194-96.

16. On Russian-Ottoman sources of friction from the Congress of Vienna to the outbreak of the Greek insurgency in 1821, see Dostian, *Rossia i balkanskii vopros*, 129-95; Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, 24-41; and Sheremet, *Voina i biznes*, 207-18.

17. The landmark Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji (1774) ended Ottoman hegemony over the Black Sea region and marked Imperial Russia's emergence as a Near Eastern power. In addition to the commercial, consular, and territorial concessions granted to Russia, the treaty stipulated that the sultan would protect Orthodox Christians in the Aegean Archipelago, the Danubian Principalities, and western Georgia. The tsarist government subsequently, and speciously, declared that this pledge gave Russia leverage to interfere in Ottoman affairs on behalf of all Orthodox Christians. On this significant but controversial treaty, see Theophilus C. Prousis, *Russian-Ottoman Relations in the Levant: The Dashkov Archive*, Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs, no. 10 (Minneapolis: Modern Greek Studies Program, University of Minnesota, 2002), 5-7, 142; Jacob C. Hurewitz, ed., *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record*, vol. 1, *European Expansion, 1535–1914*, 2^d ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975), 92-101; and Roderic H. Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774–1923: The Impact of the West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 29-59.

18. On Russia's official policy toward the Greek uprising of 1821, in particular the tsar's delicate balancing act between upholding legitimacy and intervening on behalf of Greek coreligionists, see Prousis, *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution*, 26-30, 185-87; idem, *Russian-Ottoman Relations in the Levant*, 25-27; Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, 49-75; Dostian, *Rossii i balkanskii vopros*, 196-238; Fadeev, *Rossii i vostochnyi vopros*, 36-91; Sheremet, *Voina i biznes*, 218-86; and Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government, and Society, 1815-1833* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 104-21, 161-67.

19. On these various connections between Russia and the Greeks, see Prousis, *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution*, 3-24; and Arsh, *Eteristskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 129-76, 200-222, 245-96.

20. The tsarist ultimatum of 6/18 July 1821 appears in print in Ministerstvo inostrannykh del SSSR, *Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX v.: Dokumenty Rossiiskogo ministerstva inostrannykh del*, 17 vols. (Moscow: Nauka, 1960-2005), 12:203-10. The Old Style Julian calendar, used in Russia until 1918, lagged twelve days behind the New Style Gregorian calendar in the nineteenth century.

21. Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance*, 2^d ed. (London: G. Bell, 1934), 349.

22. On British policy toward the Greek War of Independence under Lord Castlereagh in 1821-22, see Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 349-66, 372-400; Charles W. Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence: A Study of British Policy in the Near East, 1821-1833* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1930; reprint, New York: H. Fertig, 1973), 17-42; Charles R. Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy, 1782-1846* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1977), 25-27, 106-09; and Steven Schwartzberg, "The Lion and the Phoenix—British Policy towards the 'Greek Question' 1831-32," *Middle Eastern Studies* 24, no. 2 (1988): 143-50.

23. See Allan Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman Encounters in the Age of Revolution: Collected Essays*, ed. Edward Ingram (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 188-232; Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence*, 17-22; W. David Wrigley, *The Diplomatic Significance of Ionian Neutrality, 1821-1831* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 156-62, 166-69, 177-86; and Prousis, *Russian-Ottoman Relations in the Levant*, 22, 25, 27, 41-42, 73, 77.

24. TNA, FO 78/98, 24 March 1821, ff. 29-30a. In all direct quotations from Strangford, I have modernized place names, such as "Wallachia" instead of "Walachia," "Straits" instead of "Straights," "Tripolitsa" instead of "Tripolizza," and "Phanar" instead of "Fanar" or "Fanal." I have used commonly accepted spellings for Ottoman terms, such as "*reis efendi*," "*kapudan pasha*," "*bash ayan*," "*mullah*," "*dragoman*," and "*reaya*." I have retained Strangford's spelling of personal names, such as "Stroganoff" instead of "Stroganov," and his use of "Mussulman" and "Mahometan," conventional forms of the time. I have preserved his British spellings and archaisms, such as "shewn," "tranquillity," "surprize," "untill," "biassed," and "connexions." Lastly, with only a few exceptions for clarity, I have adhered to Strangford's wording, syntax, and punctuation.

25. TNA, FO 78/98, 21 April 1821, ff. 91-91a.

26. TNA, FO 78/98, 24 March 1821, ff. 32-33a. The Phanariotes, an Ottoman elite comprised of Greek and Hellenized families of noble and princely descent, lived in the Phanar, or Lighthouse, district of Constantinople, the official seat of the ecumenical patriarch. Their wealth and influence allowed the Phanariotes to occupy strategic positions in

the Ottoman ruling hierarchy, including the prestigious office of grand *dragoman*, the Porte's chief interpreter and diplomat who negotiated directly with European states. From the early eighteenth century to 1821, Phanariotes held the lucrative but tenuous *hospodarships* of Moldavia and Wallachia, governorships that usually went to the highest bidders. Sultans deposed and reappointed *hospodars* on a regular basis for financial profit, with the result that *hospodarships* changed hands among key Phanariote families. Their affluence and connections exposed them to intrigue and conspiracy from political foes, including jealous rivals within their own ranks; they also faced threats of Ottoman reprisal, as evinced in the fate of the grand *dragoman*, Constantine Mourouzi, executed in 1821 for suspected complicity with Greek rebels. On the Phanariotes, see Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 53-57, 102-11, 208; and Traian Stoianovich, "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant," *Journal of Economic History* 20, no. 2 (1960): 269-73.

27. TNA, FO 78/98, 10 April 1821, ff. 57-58.
28. TNA, FO 78/98, 21 April 1821, ff. 86-87a.
29. TNA, FO 78/98, 25 April 1821, ff. 115-16a.
30. TNA, FO 78/99, 12 June 1821, ff. 47-47a. Theodore Negri became the first secretary of state of insurgent Greece.
31. TNA, FO 78/98, 25 April 1821, ff. 114-15.
32. TNA, FO 78/98, 25 April 1821, ff. 116a-17; FO 78/98, 18 April 1821, ff. 120-22.
33. TNA, FO 78/98, 3 May 1821, f. 164.
34. TNA, FO 78/98, 10 May 1821, ff. 154-55a.
35. TNA, FO 78/98, 25 May 1821, ff. 227-28.
36. TNA, FO 78/98, 25 May 1821, ff. 201a-03a.
37. TNA, FO 78/98, 10 May 1821, ff. 168-69. Articles 7 and 14 of the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji stipulated the sultan's protection of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire.
38. TNA, FO 78/99, 12 June 1821, ff. 1-3a.
39. TNA, FO 78/99, 12 June 1821, ff. 34-36. On Lord Strangford's intercession for Ottoman Christians in Smyrna and on the island of Milos, see notes 47 and 48 below.
40. TNA, FO 78/99, 12 June 1821, ff. 37a-39. On the internal and external challenges confronting the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century, see Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 372-446; Halil Inalcik, with Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 639-45, 761-70; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2, *Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1-54; and Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 3^d ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 40-106.
41. TNA, FO 78/99, 12 June 1821, ff. 39-42.
42. TNA, FO 78/99, 23 July 1821, ff. 219-23a. The ensuing excerpts come from this source.
43. TNA, FO 78/99, ff. 250-51. Strangford enclosed the following document, a translation of a brief summary of damages to Greek churches in the environs of Constantinople

as of May 1821: "In the city of Constantinople, there are twenty-four Greek churches or chapels, seven of which were forcibly entered by the mob and received considerable damage. The images were cut to pieces, and some silver lamps carried away. In the towns and villages forming the suburbs of the city, there are nearly forty churches, sanctioned by the government, and eleven more in the Princes' Islands. Of this number, only one church has been entirely destroyed. Six more were injured, in the same manner as those in the city. The buildings are, however, left entire. The janissaries attempted to force their way into the patriarchal church, but were prevented, and it remains uninjured. The residence of the patriarch near the church was pillaged of goods and of money deposited there by the Turkish government for the Servian [Serbian] deputies. The total loss may be estimated at one hundred thousand piastres. Permission has been given, by a *firman* [Ottoman imperial decree], to the new patriarch, to rebuild and repair the churches that have been injured. But he thinks it prudent to suspend, for the present, taking advantage of it."

44. TNA, FO 78/99, 23 July 1821, ff. 223a-28.

45. TNA, FO 78/99, 25 July 1821, ff. 258-60.

46. TNA, FO 78/99, 30 July 1821, ff. 307-08.

47. TNA, FO 78/99, 12 June 1821, ff. 43-43a. "Kapudan pasha" refers to the grand admiral and commander of the Ottoman navy; it can also refer to the Porte's chief administrative officer of the Aegean.

48. TNA, FO 78/99, 12 June 1821, f. 49; FO 78/99, 26 June 1821, f. 126; FO 78/99, 10 July 1821, ff. 189-89a.

49. TNA, FO 78/99, 26 June 1821, f. 75.

50. TNA, FO 78/99, 26 June 1821, ff. 104-04a. The Troad, or Troas, the historical name of the Biga Peninsula in the northwestern part of Turkey, encompasses the region bounded by the Dardanelles to the northwest and by the Aegean Sea to the west and includes the ruins of Troy.

51. TNA, FO 78/101, 25 September 1821, ff. 154a-55.

52. TNA, FO 78/99, 10 July 1821, ff. 196-97.

53. TNA, FO 78/101, 10 October 1821, ff. 201-201a.

54. TNA, FO 78/102, 10 November 1821, ff. 26-27a. Non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman sultan paid the capitation or head tax (*haraç*) in lieu of military service. On the massacre at Tripolitsa, see Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence*, 111-23. Sacked and captured by Greek rebels in October 1821, this citadel town in the central Peloponnese became a contested site in the early months of the war. Flight, disease, starvation, and death in battle reduced the town's population by almost one-half (from 30,000 to 15,000 residents). Nearly 8,000 Turks and Albanians died in combat during the siege, while an additional 2,000 non-combatants, mostly women and children, were massacred by Greek forces in a nearby gorge.

55. TNA, FO 78/102, 21 November 1821, ff. 62a-63.

56. TNA, FO 78/102, 26 November 1821, ff. 88-89a.

57. TNA, FO 78/99, 25 June 1821, ff. 79-84a. The ensuing quotations in the next few paragraphs come from this document.

58. TNA, FO 78/99, 26 June 1821, ff. 100-02. The following passages about the Aivali massacre come from this source.

59. TNA, FO 78/99, 12 June 1821, ff. 49-49a; FO 78/99, 26 June 1821, ff. 126-26a.

60. TNA, FO 78/99, 10 July 1821, ff. 189-89a.

61. TNA, FO 78/99, 26 July 1821, f. 291a.
62. TNA, FO 78/100, 18 August 1821, ff. 144a-45.
63. TNA, FO 78/101, 25 October 1821, ff. 241-41a.
64. TNA, FO 78/102, 10 November 1821, ff. 16-16a.
65. TNA, FO 78/102, 10 December 1821, ff. 158-62a.
66. TNA, FO 78/99, 26 July 1821, ff. 292-92a.
67. TNA, FO 78/101, 10 September 1821, ff. 62-62a.
68. TNA, FO 78/101, 10 October 1821, ff. 212-13.
69. TNA, FO 78/102, 10 December 1821, f. 185a.
70. TNA, FO 78/99, 26 July 1821, ff. 293-93a.
71. TNA, FO 78/100, 18 August 1821, f. 149a.
72. TNA, FO 78/102, 10 December 1821, f. 185.
73. TNA, FO 78/100, 10 August 1821, f. 96a.
74. TNA, FO 78/100, 18 August 1821, ff. 144a-45.
75. TNA, FO 78/101, 25 September 1821, f. 153.
76. TNA, FO 78/99, 12 June 1821, ff. 31-33.
77. TNA, FO 78/100, 18 August 1821, ff. 159-61. For more on the Ionian issue during the Greek revolution, see Wrigley, *The Diplomatic Significance of Ionian Neutrality*; and Gerassimos Pagratis, "The Ionian Islands under British 'Protection' (1815-1864)," in *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean: Commerce, Politics and Ideas (XVII-XX Centuries)*, ed. Carmel Vassallo and Michela D'Angelo (Malta: Malta University Press, 2007), 137-39.
78. On the perceptions of European travelers, consuls, and other visitors who recorded their observations of the Ottoman Levant in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Allan Cunningham, *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century: Collected Essays*, ed. Edward Ingram (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 72-107; and Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul*, 172, 203-4, 218-26. For European attitudes toward Islam in general and Ottoman Turkey in particular, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979); Norman Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966); and Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Ottomans: Dissolving Images* (New York: Penguin, 1995).