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“BRITISH EMBASSY REPORTS ON THE GREEK UPRISING IN 1821-1822: WAR OF INDEPENDENCE OR WAR OF RELIGION?”

THEOPHILUS C. PROUSIS*

In a dispatch of 10 April 1821 to Foreign Secretary Castlereagh, Britain’s ambassador to the Sublime Porte (Lord Strangford) evoked the prevalence of religious mentalities and religiously induced reprisals in the initial phase of the Greek War of Independence. The sultan’s “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.”¹ This state of affairs “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.”

In his copious reports to the London Foreign Office during his ambassadorship from 1821 to 1824, Lord Strangford chronicled the turmoil in the sultan’s realm at a tense but pivotal moment in the Eastern Question, that precarious web of European penetration, intrigue, and rivalry in the remarkably resilient Ottoman Empire, still possessing strategic lands and vital waterways in the Levant, or eastern Mediterranean.² Rebellion in Greece erupted. War between Russia and Turkey

* University of North Florida, Jacksonville, FL. I gratefully acknowledge funding support from a University of North Florida Summer Scholarship Grant in 2011.

1 The National Archives, Foreign Office (TNA, FO) 78/98, ff. 57-58a, 10 April 1821 (No. 16). The term *reaya* refers to tax-paying non-Muslim, in particular Greek Christian, subjects of the Porte.

2 The Eastern Question, or the Western Question from the viewpoint of the Ottoman government, denotes the complex of feuds and crises in the Near East precipitated by the interplay of three circumstances: first, the Ottoman Empire’s military, financial, and institutional weakening; second, the contending claims, objectives, and interests of Britain, Russia, and other European great powers; and third, the stirrings of Ottoman Christians, encompassing Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians,

loomed. Ottoman restrictions disrupted European trade. Sectarian abuse and mutual retribution deepened the clash. Ottoman court factions contested the sultan's rule. And border disputes sparked hostility between Turkey and Persia. As the Ottoman Empire confronted an increasingly volatile situation, Strangford detailed the messy realities at the core of the Eastern crisis, such as the spread of Greek-Ottoman combat, the discord among Greek rebels, the debates among Ottoman officials about an effective counter-insurgency strategy, and the dogged intercession of European envoys like himself to pacify the Greek uprising and to avert a wider Russian-Turkish war in the Balkans.³ He probed all of these ramifications, along with the

Albanians, Arabs, and Armenians, for autonomy and independence. The Eastern Question extended from the late eighteenth century, with Russia's emergence as a Black Sea power and the onset of French revolutionary influence in the Balkans, to the demise of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. The nineteenth century, when the interaction of the three circumstances cited above produced a tangled series of crises and wars, marks the classic phase of this geopolitical problem in European and Near Eastern affairs. The standard account of the Eastern Question remains Matthew S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923* (London: Macmillan, 1966). Useful collections 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); Alexander Macfie, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923* (New York: Longman, 1996). For a Russian perspective, 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'no-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); idem, *Voina i biznes: vlast', den'gi, i oruzhie. Evropa i Blizhnii Vostok v novoe vremia* (Moscow: Tekhnologicheskaiia shkola biznesa, 1996). Also see the studies by Ottoman specialists: Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007), especially 10-15; Nazan Çiçek, *The Young Ottomans: Turkish Critics of the Eastern Question in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York: Tauris, 2011).

- 3 I am working on a four-volume compilation of Strangford's dispatches during his four-year ambassadorship at the Porte (1821-24). The first volume presents all his reports from 1821. See Theophilus C. Prousis, *Lord Strangford at the Sublime Porte (1821): The Eastern Crisis*, volume I (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010); idem, "Eastern Orthodoxy under Siege in the Ottoman Levant: A View from Constantinople in 1821," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 24/25 (1008/2009): 39-72. On the internal and external challenges that destabilized and thus restructured the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 180-342; Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 289-446; Suraiya Faroqhi, ed., *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, volume 3, *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), in particular the essays by Virginia Aksan (81-117), Dina Rizk Khoury (135-56), and Fikret Adanir (157-85); Frederick F. Anscombe, ed., *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830* (Princeton, N. J.: Markus Wiener Publications, 2006), 1-9. European consuls often

pursuit of British commercial and strategic aims in the troubled Levant. He also conveyed Britain's exaggerated fears of tsarist Russian infiltration of the region.

Equally crucial, and the focus of the documents excerpted below, British embassy records reveal the religious dimension of the Greek-Ottoman contest. The selected passages highlight in particular the execution of the ecumenical patriarch and the selection of his successor; the atrocities committed against Muslim and Eastern Orthodox subjects; the escalating cycle of sectarian violence and counter-violence; and the sultan's concerted effort to distinguish between guilty rebels who deserved punishment and innocent non-combatants who merited clemency. For each side in the war, religious zeal transfigured the conflict into an ostensible battle between Islam and Christianity. Often described as a modern revolution, stemming from the dynamics of Western thought and practice – especially the march of liberalism and nationalism – the fight for Greek independence disrupted the established order of power and hastened the diffusion of secular ideas in the Ottoman Balkans.⁴ Yet as a central event in modern Greek and Balkan history, with European-wide resonance, the Greek struggle represented a strange mix of traditional and modern elements: religious ardor and confessional identity interacted with secular notions of liberty and nationality.⁵

Strangford arrived in the Ottoman capital in February 1821, with instructions from Foreign Secretary Castlereagh to oversee various matters in British-Ottoman relations. The newly appointed British ambassador had to maintain Britain's

described the state of the Ottoman Empire during this turbulent era. See Theophilus C. Prousis, *British Consular Reports from the Ottoman Levant in An Age of Upheaval, 1815-1830* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2008); Arsh *Eteristiskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 29-76; Eleutherios Prevelakis and Kallia Kalliataki Mertikopoulou, eds., *Epirus, Ali Pasha, and the Greek Revolution: Consular Reports of William Meyer from Preveza*, 2 vols., *Monuments of Greek History*, no. 12 (Athens: Academy of Athens, 1996).

4 Most of the essays in Petros Pizaniyas, ed., *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2011), take this secular approach in addressing the origins, nature, and impact of the Greek War of Independence.

5 On the significant impact of Eastern Orthodoxy on the concept and expression of both Greek national consciousness and early Greek nationalism, see the essays by Marios Hatzopoulos, "From resurrection to insurrection: 'sacred' myths, motifs, and symbols in the Greek War of Independence," and Effi Gazi, "Revisiting religion and nationalism in nineteenth-century Greece," in *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)*, eds. Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2009), 81-106. Also see Dimitris Livanios, "The Quest for Hellenism: Religion, Nationalism, and Collective Identities in Greece, 1453-1913," in *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Katerina Zacharia (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008), especially 246-64. On the larger issue of how Western secular thought, in particular the Enlightenment and Romantic nationalism, encountered and interacted with Eastern Orthodox culture and tradition in the Ottoman Balkans, see Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-eastern Europe* (Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1994); idem, *An Orthodox Commonwealth: Symbolic Legacies and Cultural Encounters in Southeastern Europe* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate 2007).

friendship and commerce with the Ottoman Empire, safeguard the rights of the British-protected Ionian Islands, and amicably adjust any quarrels that might provoke hostilities between Ottoman Turkey and Persia. He also had the task of “cultivating the best possible understanding with your [European] colleagues at Constantinople” and endeavoring, “when you shall think it necessary to do so, to promote...harmony and good understanding between their governments and the Sublime Porte.”⁶

Within two weeks of his arrival, the Eastern Question – the vexing problem facing Europe’s statesmen – detonated, and Strangford had to deal with all the fallout from the unfolding Greek agitation against Ottoman authority.

Alexander Ypsilanti, a Greek general in the Russian army, and a Constantinople native from a wealthy and influential aristocratic family, crossed the Pruth River from Russian Bessarabia and launched his ill-fated uprising in Moldavia on 22 February/6 March 1821. Intending to raise an army of volunteers, Ypsilanti hoped to liberate Balkan Orthodox Christians and to deliver Greece from Ottoman rule. His supporters not only plundered resources but perpetrated excesses against local Turks at various places in Moldavia, including the port of Galatz and Jassy. Tudor Vladimirescu, a peasant-born revolutionary and military captain from Wallachia, who had served with the tsarist army in the Russian-Turkish War of 1806-12, facilitated the Ypsilanti undertaking by instigating his own abortive rebellion. Beginning in February in his native Wallachia, Vladimirescu led an armed insurrection, with the aims of advancing the political interests of the lesser nobility, easing the economic hardship and social oppression of the peasantry, and liberating Wallachia from Greek Phanariote and Ottoman control.⁷ Although both rebels appealed to Tsar Alexander I for help, their exploits failed miserably. The tsar immediately condemned these adventures and unequivocally rejected calls for assistance; he dismissed Ypsilanti from Russian service, banned the latter’s re-entry into Russia, and revoked Vladimirescu’s Russian protection. The tsar also condoned the Porte’s military expedition to crush their treason and to restore tranquility (and Ottoman suzerainty) in the strategically situated Danubian Principalities.

6 TNA, FO 78/97, ff. 3-13a, 14 October 1820 (No. 2). 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* 51 (2004): 466-67; 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. On the structure, organization, and personnel of the British embassy in Constantinople, see Geoff R. Berridge, *British Diplomacy in Turkey, 1583 to the Present: A Study in the Evolution of the Resident Embassy* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2009), 24-58, 75-81, 98-109.

7 Phanariotes, Greek notables from the Phanar district of Constantinople, often descended from Byzantine nobility and had close ties to the ecumenical patriarchate. They served the sultan as bankers, merchants, diplomats, and interpreters; also as governors or *hospodars* of Moldavia and Wallachia in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. See Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), xx-xxix, 5-37, for a concise introduction to this Ottoman elite group.

Moreover, Vladimirescu's Wallachia-focused social and national agenda collided with Ypsilanti's more ambitious Greece-centered designs, resulting in reciprocal tension and suspicion. Vladimirescu demanded that Ypsilanti's followers leave Wallachia and refused to join them in fighting Ottoman troops; he even tried to convince the Porte that he had nothing to do with the Ypsilanti upheaval and that he simply wanted to end Greek Phanariote misrule in Wallachia. Apprehensive of Vladimirescu's loyalty and conviction, Ypsilanti ordered the arrest and execution of his Romanian counterpart. Defeated decisively by Ottoman troops in June 1821, Ypsilanti fled to Transylvania, where he endured arrest and incarceration by Habsburg authorities, not to mention the ignominy of subsequent historians who have disparaged his leadership and practical abilities.⁸ Yet his ill-conceived venture kindled successful revolts in Ottoman-ruled Greek lands, outbreaks collectively known as the Greek War of Independence.

The Greek revolution, erupting in the Danubian Principalities and extending to the Morea, Attica, Thessaly, Macedonia, and the Aegean Archipelago, spawned an Eastern cataclysm with European-wide repercussions. The established order of legitimacy confronted the principles of liberty and nationality, and the unrest morphed into the prolonged Greek conflict.⁹ This struggle drained Ottoman

8 Alexander Ypsilanti (1792-1828) and Tudor Vladimirescu (c. 1780-1821), for their romantic dreams and political agendas, also for their Danubian debacles, hold a prominent place in the history of the Ottoman Balkans. On the Ypsilanti upheaval in Moldavia, and the Vladimirescu rising in Wallachia, see Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774-1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 141-55; Radu R. Florescu, *The Struggle against Russia in the Romanian Principalities: A Problem in Anglo-Turkish Diplomacy, 1821-1854* (Iași: The Center for Romanian Studies, 1997), 97-122; Eric Ditmar Tappe, "The 1821 Revolution in the Rumanian Principalities," in *The Struggle for Greek Independence*, ed. Richard Clogg (London: Macmillan, 1973), 135-55. Also see the good accounts written by two British participants in the Greek struggle: Thomas Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: Cadell, 1832; reprint, Elibron Classics, 2005), 1: 86-124; George Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1861; reprint, Elibron Classics, 2005), 1: 134-70. For more on Alexander Ypsilanti, see Grigorii L. Arsh, "Ipsilanti v Rossii," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 3 (1985): 88-101 (an English translation appears in *Balkan Studies*, no. 1 (1985): 73-90); idem, *Eteristskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 154-56, 208-10, 238-319, 322-37, 344-50; Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 206-13; Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 40-42, 88-89.

9 On the Greek revolution, see Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 285-305; 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* (London: Faber and Faber, 5th ed., 1998), 135-56; idem, *The Greek War of Independence: Its Historical Setting* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1952); Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821-1833* (London: Batsford, 1973); Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece* (London: Hodder Education, 2001), 9-28. For an introduction to Greek historiography on the subject, see the essays in

resources and revenues; stoked dissension among factionalized Greeks; provoked outside intervention that resulted in an independent Greek kingdom; and inspired incendiary outbursts in Europe, Russia, and the Balkans. In addition, the Greek insurgency eventually led the Porte to accelerate its program of centralizing reforms for the purpose of modernizing the Empire.¹⁰ Already in the opening months of the disturbance, European envoys and consuls had to cope with the seemingly intractable realities of the Eastern emergency: the flare-up of sectarian strife, the dislocation of trade, the upsurge in piracy, 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 committed cruelties that escalated the feud into a war of retribution, a sequence of butchery and slaughter. In the turbulent early weeks and months of the Greek revolt, arbitrary Ottoman attacks targeted Greek churches, shops, and clergy, in Constantinople, Adrianople, Smyrna, Salonica, Crete, and Cyprus, usually in retaliation for Greek aggression against Turks in the Morea and Moldavia and for Greek confiscations of Turkish properties.¹¹ What most Greek

Pizanias, ed., *The Greek Revolution of 1821*. The Greek revolt exerted an immediate and profound impact on great power politics and diplomacy in the Near East. For this European, including Russian, perspective on the Eastern quagmire of the 1820s, 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; Anatolii V. Fadeev, *Rossiiia i vostochnyi krizis 20-kh godov XIX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1958).

10 With the benefit of Ottoman archival documents, several scholars have examined the effect of the Greek rising on Ottoman reforms of administrative and military institutions and on the ruling hierarchy's exposure to such secular concepts as nation, citizen, liberty, and national independence. See Hakan Erdem, "'Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers': Ottoman responses to the Greek War of Independence," in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, eds. Faruk Birtek and Thalia Dragonas (New York: Routledge, 2005), 67-84; idem (Yusuf Hakan Erdem), "The Greek Revolt and the End of the Old Ottoman Order," in *The Greek Revolution of 1821*, ed. Pizanias, 257-64; Nikos Theotokas and Nikos Kotaridis, "Ottoman Perceptions of the Greek Revolution," in *The Greek Revolution of 1821*, ed. Pizanias, 265-73. Also see Vitalii Sheremet, "The Greek Revolution of 1821: A New Look at Old Problems," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 8 (1992): 45-55.

11 William St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free: The Philhellenes in the War of Independence* (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2nd rev. ed., 2008), 1-12, 35-39, 41-49, 78, 328-29, balances the oft-told story of Ottoman atrocities against Greek Christians with examples of equally brutal excesses by Greeks against Turks. Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 19-20, writes: "The combination of irregular bands of former brigands thirsting for booty and oppressed Christian peasants hungry for revenge against their overlords was a lethal one. When the Turkish-held fortresses [in the Peloponnese] capitulated, bloodbaths ensued: as much as one-third to one-half of the Moslem population fell to the insurgents' bullets and blades. To be sure, each side could tell its tales of butchery and slaughter." Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-1999* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2000), 28-29, speaks of "a reciprocal orgy of violence" that broke out in the Morea and Rumelia. On the

rebels regarded as a surge for liberty often turned into indiscriminate assaults against Turkish and Albanian Muslim communities, often perpetrated by brigands in quest of booty or oppressed peasants eager for revenge. In the words of acclaimed Balkan historian Leften Stavrianos: “The Greek successes were stained by large-scale massacres of defenseless Turks – 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.”¹²

Excesses of this sort also marked the internecine confrontations among Greek rebel factions, and their distrust and division only exacerbated the revolutionary situation. Social, political, and regional fractures hampered any notion of a unified military campaign against the Porte and contributed to a multiplicity of interests, intentions, and aims among the insurgents. Balkan historian Dennis Hupchick elaborates on this convoluted nature of the Greek revolt: “The Greek uprising [in the Morea] initially was more a widespread bandit movement than an authentic revolution. Its leaders fought only when it suited them, and their forces were uncoordinated and often mutually antagonistic. Most had no concept of nationalist ideals and acted simply in the time-honored fashion of brigands, seeking freedom from local Ottoman authority and booty from Muslim civilians, thousands of whom they slaughtered or drove out. The Aegean island rebel leaders operated as a freewheeling pirate fraternity, wreaking havoc on the Ottomans’ sea communications. Old regional and class rivalries pitted Peloponnesians against continentals, islanders against mainlanders, Phanariotes against bandit leaders, upper against lower clergy, landowning prelates against peasants, and shipowners against sailors. Despite the intense differences, the chaotic activity initially amounted to a successful guerilla war against weak Ottoman regional forces.”¹³

It should be pointed out, however, that Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorios V, a formal representative of the Ottoman ruling hierarchy as head of the Greek Orthodox *millet* – the religious community of Orthodox faithful that owed its relative autonomy to Ottoman and Islamic rule – staunchly rejected the revolutionary implications of Western secular thought and thus excommunicated all agitators and their supporters. The patriarch swiftly denounced the “evil spirit” of an upheaval that transgressed God’s will, namely, the sultan’s divinely ordained and imperishable sovereignty. Greek insurrectionists, by their apostasy and sin, only displayed ingratitude to their Ottoman benefactors, increased the sultan’s wrath, and

rage, frenzy, and killing in Constantinople and elsewhere during the first year of the insurgency, see Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1: 184-94, 230-31, 233-47, 315-16; Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1: 146-49, 172, 180-88, 197-99, 214-15, 225-57, 262-71.

12 Leften Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1958), 284.

13 Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 221-22. For more on the splits and divisions among Greek rebels, see Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence*, 124-28, 181-93; Glenny, *The Balkans*, 29-34; Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 17-18.

endangered fellow Orthodox Christians. As wrongdoers, these malcontents indeed threatened to bring harm and ruin to loyal and thus innocent subjects.¹⁴

For its part, the government of Sultan Mahmud II interpreted the mutiny as a battle between Islam and Christianity and called for holy war. The Porte condemned Ypsilanti's rebelliousness as "the Greek sedition," a Russian-instigated plot to arouse the Greeks "in order to trample upon the Muslims." As traitors who sought to subvert Ottoman political authority, mutineers vented their religious hatred and "had evil designs against Islam." Accordingly, imperial decrees from the sultan to provincial pashas, requesting their help in this time of danger, declared that "the aim of the infidels was to inflame the peaceful [*reaya*] and, God forbid, to annihilate all Muslims."¹⁵ Governors responded with statements of solidarity, pledging to defend both Islam and the Ottoman state. As the fighting spread, the sultan ordered the punishment of prominent and influential Greeks in the Orthodox *millet*, identifying them as responsible for the Greeks' insubordination and resorting to severe measures to frighten the insurgents into obedience. The uprising obliged the sultan not just to punish culpable rebel-traitors who defied Ottoman authority but also to promise clemency for innocent law-abiding *reaya*.

The most notorious of these abuses, the Ottoman regime's public execution of Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorios V, on Easter Sunday in April 1821, prompted outrage and reproach from European envoys and ignited Russian Orthodox sympathy for Greek coreligionists. Despite the fact that he had already excommunicated Ypsilanti and other Greek seditionists for rebelling against their lawful ruler, Grigorios stood guilty of treason in the eyes of the Porte for failing to

14 The ecumenical patriarch and other prominent church hierarchs anathematized the Greek revolt and excommunicated Ypsilanti along with his followers and supporters. See Richard Clogg, ed. *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 203-06; Charles A. Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821-1852* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 28-29. The official Ottoman designation for Orthodox Christian subjects, *Millet-i Rum* or Greek Orthodox *millet* (religious nation or community), encompassed all Orthodox believers, regardless of ethnicity, in the sultan's realm. By the early nineteenth century, Greeks and Hellenized Orthodox clerics controlled the ecclesiastical sees, coffers, and administrative offices of the *millet* hierarchy. See Richard Clogg, "The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 2 vols. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), 1: 185-202.

15 For coverage of Ottoman official reactions to the Greek uprising, see Erdem, "Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers': Ottoman responses to the Greek War of Independence," in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, eds. Birtek and Dragonas, 67-73. Also see these essays in Pizaniyas, ed., *The Greek Revolution of 1821*: H. Şükrü Ilicak, "The Revolt of Alexandros Ipsilantis and the Fate of the Fanariots in Ottoman Documents," 225-39; Sophia Laiou, "The Greek Revolution in the Morea According to the Description of an Ottoman Official," 241-55; Erdem, "The Greek Revolt and the End of the Old Ottoman Order," 260-63; Theotokas and Kotaridis, "Ottoman Perceptions of the Greek Revolution," 268-70. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 65-81, emphasizes the importance of religion and religious symbols in Mahmud II's response to the 1821 upheaval.

maintain the Eastern Orthodox community's allegiance to the sultan. 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.¹⁶ The fate of the patriarch, together with the persecution of numerous bishops and clergy, not only deepened denominational animosity but turned the Greek rising into a sanctified crusade characterized by mutual cruelty and atrocity, “a series of opportunistic massacres.”¹⁷ Arrests, executions, and confiscated properties incited excess by each side in a widening war, with prisoners and hostages, most of them non-participants, paying the highest price.

The heart of the Eastern crisis in 1821, notwithstanding the seriousness of sectarian frenzy, remained the threat of war embroiling the great powers, in particular Russia, which had to balance her national interests in the Near East with her adherence to the Concert of Europe. Strategic, trade, and religious pursuits in the unsettled 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 1821, disputes over Russian claims in the Caucasus and the Danubian Principalities strained ties with the Porte, and the rebellion only magnified the discord.¹⁸

16 On the fate of the ecumenical patriarch, see Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece*, 22-35; Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 72-73, 210, 213; Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence*, 103-11; Theophilus C. Prousis, *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), 28, 55-56; Robert Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople*, 2 vols. (London: F. Westley and A. H. Davis, 1836), 1: 311-20. On reprisal attacks and sectarian strife in Salonica, see Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430-1950* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 125-30. 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.

17 St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, 92, states that by the early summer of 1822, the Greek revolution “had cost the lives of upwards of 50,000 Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Jews, and others. Many more had been reduced to slavery or misery. Only a tiny minority had been killed in direct combat with the enemy. The Greek War of Independence hitherto was hardly a war at all in the conventional sense, but largely a series of opportunistic massacres. The dead Turks were not for the most part the soldiers of the Sultan nor the dead Greeks the revolutionaries; the victims had simply paid the price of belonging in their respective circumstances to the weaker community and the wrong religion.”

18 On Russian-Ottoman disagreements from the Congress of Vienna to the Ypsilanti fiasco, see Dostian, *Rossiia i balkanskii vopros*, 129-95; Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, 24-41; Sheremet, *Voina i biznes*, 207-18.

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 Orthodox Christians.¹⁹ 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 agitation, 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 deplored 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 requested the strict observance of 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 Christians.²⁰ For a host of reasons, however, the Porte strongly suspected Russian complicity in the commotion: Russia's past wars against Turkey; her self-proclaimed

19 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; Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 157-60; Jacob C. Hurewitz, ed., *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record*, volume 1, *European Expansion, 1535-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2nd ed., 1975), 92-101; Roderic H. Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 29-59.

20 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; Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government, and Society, 1815-1833* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 104-21, 161-67.

guardianship of Orthodox Christians under Ottoman rule; her 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 her 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. Plus, Russia refused to extradite rebels who fled to Bessarabia, in particular the *hospodar* of Moldavia, Michael Soutso, who joined the *Philiki Etaireia* and took part in the Ypsilanti rising.²¹ Treaty provisos crumbled not just because of the Porte's plausible, but mistaken, accusations of the Russian government's entanglement in the subversion but because of the outbreak of sectarian rage 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."²² The expiration of the Russian note's prescribed eight-day deadline without the Porte's full compliance, 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

21 On these various connections between Russia and the Greeks, see Prousis, *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution*, 3-24; Arsh, *Eteristskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 129-76, 200-22, 245-96. Precisely because of these deep-seated Russian-Greek ties, the Ottoman government suspected Russia's direct involvement in the Greek agitation. On the Porte's Russophobia in 1821, see Ilicak, "The Revolt of Alexandros Ipsilantis and the Fate of the Fanariots in Ottoman Documents," in *The Greek Revolution of 1821*, ed. Pizanias, 225-39. Prince Michael Soutso, *hospodar* of Moldavia in 1821, greatly assisted the Ypsilanti rebellion with his own personal fortune, along with money and supplies from his Danubian province. When tsarist troops failed to intervene on behalf of Ypsilanti, Soutso abdicated his *hospodarship* and fled with his family to Russian-controlled Bessarabia. See Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence*, 52, 54, 56-57; Arsh, *Eteristskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 289-90, 331, 342; Hitchins, *The Romanians*, 143, 147-48.

22 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.

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, Greek-Ottoman fighting intensified, Russian-Ottoman affairs festered, and treaty vows shattered amid war and revolution in the Levant.

Britain encountered her own dilemma over the Eastern Question quandary, an “unsolved problem, pregnant with vital and incalculable consequences.”²³ Foreign Secretary Castlereagh sympathized with the Greek cause on moral and humanitarian grounds but regarded the Greeks as insurrectionists against the established hierarchy, a political order 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 thinking that prevailed in numerous sectors of British government and society.²⁴ He also considered Russian claims to protect Greek Christians a cover for expansionist designs, thus confronting Britain and the other powers with the twin dangers of a Russian-Ottoman war and an extension of tsarist sway in the Near East. While the interests of humanity and religion called for European intervention to rescue Greek Orthodox Christians from reprisals, tsarist interference would accelerate the demise of the Ottoman Empire, upset the balance of power in Europe, and challenge British maritime strength in the eastern Mediterranean. Britain remained neutral in the Greek-Ottoman feud of 1821 yet pursued her own strategic, political, and commercial ends. Above all, Castlereagh resolved to avert war between Russia and Turkey, to maintain the Ottoman Empire as a bulwark against the perceived peril of Russian expansion, to extend British trade in the Levant, and to secure the land and sea routes to India.²⁵

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

24 Philhellenism as a European movement expressed admiration of classical antiquity, sympathy for fellow Christians, and support of Greek freedom. See Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence*, 135-53; St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*; David Roessel, *In Byron's Shadow: Modern Greece in the English and American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 13-97; Douglas Dakin, *British and American Philhellenes during the War of Greek Independence, 1821-1833* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1955); Christopher M. Woodhouse, *The Philhellenes* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969); Denys Barau, *La cause des Grecs: une histoire du mouvement philhellène (1821-1829)* (Paris: Honoré Champion Editions, 2009). On the literary philhellenism of Shelley and Byron, see Jennifer Wallace, *Shelley and Greece: Rethinking Romantic Hellenism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Timothy Webb, “Romantic Hellenism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 148-76; Terence Spencer, *Fair Greece, Sad Relic: Literary Philhellenism from Shakespeare to Byron* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954).

25 On British policy under Foreign Secretary Castlereagh toward the Greek insurrection and the larger Eastern crisis in 1821-22, see Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 349-86; 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,

All of these ramifications of the Greek unrest, including British neutrality, framed Strangford's responses to the Eastern predicament. Despite his considerable skill, finesse, and energy in striving to calm Russian-Ottoman antagonism and to pacify the Greek dispute, he remains a controversial figure. As the chief representative of British policy in the Near East, he chided Stroganov for his harsh tone toward the Porte and falsely implicated several tsarist officials, including Russia's ambassador, in the subversive *Philiki Etaireia*. Yet Strangford worked tirelessly with European and Ottoman counterparts to neutralize a dangerous situation, to shield Orthodox Christians, and to re-establish tranquility in Moldavia and Wallachia. He became convinced that the Porte's timely restoration of order, most notably the safekeeping of sacred shrines and the evacuation of troops from the Danubian Principalities, would forestall Russian-Turkish hostilities. Through steadfast negotiation, Strangford and his colleagues sought to prevent a great power war and to defuse the Greek insurgency.²⁶ Strangford's stance and attitude, expressed in his many letters to Castlereagh, remind us of the wealth of primary sources that await scrutiny by historians of the Eastern Question.

From the onset of the Ypsilanti-led uprising, and amid indirect evidence of Russian complicity in the disturbance, Strangford anticipated friction between Russia and Turkey. He recounted their swelling acrimony, especially over the plight of Eastern Orthodoxy in the sultan's domain and the severity of Ottoman military actions in Moldavia and Wallachia. After the Ottoman army drove out remnants of the *Philiki Etaireia*, a military administration reinforced Ottoman suzerainty in the Danubian Principalities, but at a heavy economic cost to the local population.²⁷ With Russian-Ottoman dialogue at an impasse over these issues, and with growing fear of a war with Russia, Strangford tried to mollify the disagreement by urging the *reis efendi*, or Ottoman foreign minister, to demonstrate moderation and conciliation.

1973), 17-42; John Lowe, *Britain and Foreign Affairs, 1815-1885: Europe and Overseas* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 26-27; John Derry, *Castlereagh* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 212-15; Christopher J. Bartlett, *Castlereagh* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 225-28; Charles R. Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy, 1782-1846* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1977), 25-27, 106-09; Steven Schwartzberg, "The Lion and the Phoenix—British Policy towards the 'Greek Question' 1831-32," *Middle Eastern Studies* 24, no. 2 (1988): 143-50.

26 On Strangford's efforts at the Porte, see the essay by Allan Cunningham ("Lord Strangford and the Greek Revolt") in Allan Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman Encounters in the Age of Revolution: Collected Essays*, ed. Edward Ingram (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 188-232; Florescu, *The Struggle against Russia in the Romanian Principalities*, 109-12, 123-47; idem, "Lord Strangford and the Problem of the Danubian Principalities, 1821-24," *Slavonic and East European Review* 39, no. 93 (1963): 472-88; 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; Prousis, *Russian-Ottoman Relations in the Levant*, 22, 25, 27, 41-42, 73, 77; idem, *British Consular Reports from the Ottoman Levant*, 29-40 *passim*, 57, 66, 109, 114, 164; idem, *Lord Strangford at the Sublime Porte (1821)*, 39-364 *passim*.

27 Hitchins, *The Romanians*, 152-53. Roughly eleven thousand Ottoman troops occupied Moldavia, and nine thousand remained in Wallachia, until the fall of 1822.

Along with his foreboding of a Russian-Ottoman confrontation, Strangford registered concern over the impending danger of anti-Greek reprisals – what he termed “atrocious and sanguinary proceedings” and “a spirit of relentless fanaticism.” Attacks against Greek Christian property and churches became all too palpable to the British envoy, who bemoaned “the prolongation of that system of sanguinary persecution.”²⁸ Violent incidents heightened the mood of disquiet and trepidation in Constantinople, especially at European embassies, obviously caught off guard when the sultan ordered the execution of Constantine Mourousi, an Ottoman Greek who served as grand *dragoman* (interpreter or translator) of the Porte. The death of the ecumenical patriarch and other church hierarchs, faithfully reported by Strangford, amplified the perceived sectarian character of the Greek-Ottoman collision. His dispatches portrayed an escalating Eastern flashpoint, fueled largely by the danger of partisan slaughter in Constantinople and other embattled areas. With indelible images and scenes, his writing evoked the religious wrath and nationalistic ferocity that prolonged, as well as exemplified, the Greek-Ottoman fight. Random and deliberate violence, retribution and excess, by both Greeks and Turks, took place in Moldavia, Constantinople, Smyrna, Aivali, and Tripolitsa. A progression of retaliation and vengeance exacerbated the Eastern emergency, magnified the human cost of the conflict, and made diplomatic mediation all the more difficult and imperative.

Perhaps the most infamous of these outrages occurred on the island of Chios. The Chios catastrophe epitomized both the folly and the fury of the Greek revolution, eliciting horrific reminders of fire and sword memorialized in Eugène Delacroix’s edgy “Massacre at Chios” (1824), the expressive painting that inspired European sympathy and support for the Greek cause. Located only five miles from the Turkish mainland, Ottoman Chios enjoyed relative autonomy, prospered economically, and blossomed into a commercial hub, perhaps the richest island in the Aegean, perfectly situated along the main shipping routes in the Levant. Renowned for its physical beauty, mild climate, fertile soil, and resourceful population, and supposedly the birthplace of Homer, Chios featured merchant-funded schools, hospitals, and a printing press that produced new editions of the ancient Greek classics. When a band of misguided adventurers from nearby Samos landed in March 1822 and raised the flag of liberation, most Chiotes remained skeptical; they understandably feared that Samiote foolhardiness and bravado might jeopardize their coveted autonomy and prosperity. Cautious Chiotes questioned the prospect of successful rebellion, given their island’s proximity to Turkey and its distance from the main Greek naval base at Hydra. Fears became reality when the Ottoman navy approached in April 1822. The Samiote “liberators” fled to the mountains or to their awaiting boats, leaving Chios to a bitter fate of plunder, savagery, and slavery. Ottoman regular and irregular forces exacted a terribly high price in retribution – looting and burning the island, slaughtering unarmed residents,

28 TNA, FO 78/98: ff. 114-17, 25 April 1821 (No. 25); ff. 154-57, 10 May 1821 (No. 30).

and enslaving thousands. Massacre, captivity, and flight diminished the island's Greek population from nearly 120,000 to some 20,000.²⁹

Throughout these mounting pressures during the opening two years of the crisis, Strangford counseled restraint and caution. He rebuffed Ottoman complaints that the tsarist regime stood behind the Ypsilanti expedition. He advised the Porte to put its trust in the tsar's revulsion of revolution. He protested the execution of the patriarch. And he repeatedly tried to assuage the anger and resentment that incited further atrocities by the belligerents. Far from disloyal to Stroganov, he echoed his Russian colleague on several crucial issues, yet criticized his provocative demeanor and language, such as Stroganov's sweeping assertion that "the co-existence of Turkey with the other states of Europe has hitherto been **endured** [emphasis original] 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, and that upon her feeling herself dissatisfied with the conduct of Turkey towards the Greeks, she had a 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."³⁰ Although Strangford did not succeed in thwarting a rupture in Russian-Ottoman relations, he endeavored to reduce tensions and to renew diplomatic ties between the two states. He exhorted the Porte to observe the strict letter of existing treaties – by withdrawing Ottoman troops from the Danubian Principalities, by repairing damaged churches, and by protecting Greek Orthodox subjects. He also urged the Ottomans to pursue the war rigorously, but only against "guilty" fighters who deserved punishment, and to spare "innocent" non-combatants in Constantinople and elsewhere.

Strangford's narratives reflect some of the flaws and limitations of primary sources written by Europeans in the Ottoman Islamic world during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His comments conveyed conventional Western perceptions of the Ottoman Empire and stigmatized the Ottoman other with occasional 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

29 On the Chios disaster, see Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence*, 154-67, largely based on the collection of contemporary diplomatic accounts, including some of Strangford's dispatches, in Philip P. Argenti, ed., *The Massacres of Chios Described in Contemporary Diplomatic Reports* (London: John Lane, 1932). Also see St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, 78-81, 227; Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1: 350-66; Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1: 306-21; Prousis, *British Consular Reports from the Ottoman Levant*, 29-32, 144-47, 155-58, 245-46, 248.

30 TNA, FO 78/99, ff. 220a-21, 23 July 1821 (No. 71).

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.³¹

Yet Strangford’s dispatches elucidate some of the salient but neglected aspects of the Eastern Question. He relied on a circle of sources, gathering intelligence from merchants, travelers, protégés, consuls, and *dragomans*; from local and regional Ottoman officials, including pashas and customs officers and their interpreters; and from other European envoys. Sifting through these different accounts, he amended his initial censure of the Ottoman government. He diligently chronicled what he deemed the most critical realities in Constantinople, covering a range of topics beyond the purely political and diplomatic facets of the accelerating Eastern crisis. Moreover, with his access to high-ranking Ottoman authorities and their deliberations, his correspondence contributes to our grasp of how Ottoman officialdom perceived and reacted to the Greek sedition. The very specificity and urgency of his reports sharpen our focus on the multiple issues, such as sectarian friction and religiously tinged Russian-Ottoman tension, which marked an age of upheaval in the Ottoman Levant.

In addition, British embassy observations and communiqués shed light on the nature of Balkan society under Ottoman control. Despite growing exposure to Western secular modernity, via trade and other avenues, religious zealotry and communal carnage – instead of enlightened concepts – characterized much of the initial struggle for Greek self-determination, constitutional rule, and national independence. Even the first charter of insurgent Greece, the Constitution of Epidaurus (1822), made religious affiliation a defining mark of political nationality, identifying Greek citizens as all those Eastern Orthodox Christians who resided in the areas of Greece and had taken up arms against Ottoman rule.³² Clearly, the vast

31 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; Edhem Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 172, 203-04, 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); Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Ottomans: Dissolving Images* (New York: Penguin, 1995). On British literary and travelogue descriptions of the Ottoman Empire, see Gerald Maclean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); idem, *Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire before 1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Filiz Turhan, *The Other Empire: British Romantic Writings about the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Christine Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant: Trade and Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Tauris, 2010). Tsar Nicholas I coined the term “sick man” when referring to the Ottoman Empire’s imminent demise. Orlando Figes, *The Crimean War: A History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2011), 105; Trevor Royle, *The Great Crimean War, 1854-1856* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 10, 26.

32 On the constitution of 1822, see John Koliopoulos, “‘Modern Greece’: An Old Debate,” in

majority of Ottoman Orthodox inhabitants clung to traditional, primarily religious, mentalities in an Islamic theocratic setting; they remained fragmented or segmented by region, class, education, and culture. Lastly, the Strangford papers illustrate the value of untapped resources for probing some of the most significant events at the epicenter of the Eastern Question. In this light, the passages presented here constitute but a small part of the gleanings gathered by an international group of scholars who, drawing upon Greek, Ottoman, and European archives, have clarified our picture of the complexity and dynamics of the Greek revolution, including the Ottoman response to this landmark happening in Balkan and Eastern Question history.³³

I have selected excerpts from Strangford's dispatches in 1821 and 1822. All the documents are located in the Foreign Office holdings of The National Archives, Kew (TNA, FO). When the manuscript has a word or phrase underlined for emphasis, I have placed this item in bold print.

FO 78/98, ff. 57-58a, 10 April 1821 (No. 16)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the Porte's reprisals against Greek subjects.]

...This 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 things 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...

Networks of Power in Modern Greece: Essays in Honor of John Campbell, ed. Mark Mazower (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 132; Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence*, 125, 128-34; Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1: 298-99; Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1:323-27.

³³ Along with the relevant scholarship cited above, especially in notes 10 and 15, see Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolvos, eds., *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation* (Rethymno: University of Crete, Department of History and Archaeology, 2007), in particular the essays by Rossitsa Gradeva (73-94), Panagiotis Stathis (167-79), Christine Phylliou (181-94), Christos Loukos (195-203), Vassilis Dimitriadis (205-11), Hakan Erdem (213-40).

FO 78/98, ff. 86-89, 21 April 1821 (No. 19)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the execution of Constantine Mourousi; the departure of Ottoman troops for the Black Sea and the abuses they imposed; and the disturbed state of affairs in the capital and its environs.]

...The departure of an Austrian courier enables me to acquaint Your Lordship with the disgrace and execution of Prince Constantine Mourousi, *dragoman* of the Porte. This unexpected event took place on the morning of the 16th instant. I have the honour to enclose a translation of the paper which was attached to the dead body of the prince, and which declares the cause of his punishment.

The Porte has not yet named a *dragoman* in place of Prince Mourousi, and the relations of foreign missions with the Ottoman government are at present exposed to considerable and inconvenient interruption.

The new grand vizier is arrived, and he enters this day on the business of his office. The known severity of his character excites the utmost apprehensions among the unfortunate Greeks of the capital.

About five thousand troops have been sent up the Black Sea. They are to disembark at Varna [a Black Sea port in northern Bulgaria]. 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 up the canal, they fired into several ships. Two Austrian sailors were killed. The only satisfaction which we have been able to obtain for these insults, is the continually renewed expression of the concern and regret which they have occasioned at the Porte. 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...

Translation of the notice, placed on the head of Prince Constantine Mourousi, decapitated on 16 April 1821

This is the head of the traitor Costaki, the current *dragoman* of the Divan, who dared to join and to become allies with the accursed who have had the temerity of starting the sedition and the treason in Wallachia and in Moldavia; and having been confirmed that he took part in this affair, and his treason having been brought to light, it is for this reason that he has suffered capital punishment.

FO 78/98, ff. 114-17, 25 April 1821 (No. 25)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the execution of the ecumenical patriarch and three Greek bishops on Easter Sunday and the cause of Prince Mourousi's execution.]

...I am concerned to have to report a circumstance which too clearly proves the determination of the Porte to keep no measures with its unfortunate Greek subjects.

At five o'clock on the evening of Easter Sunday, 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 Anchialos) 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. I enclose a translation of the label which has been fixed to the dead body of the bishop of Ephesus.³⁴ 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.³⁵

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...

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. He instantly communicated a translation of this letter to the Porte. The sultan demanded to see the original letter; of which he caused a translation to be made by another person. The second translation differed from the first, inasmuch as Prince Mourousi had omitted or softened a paragraph in the original, which tended to compromise a foreign power [Russia]. The indignation of the sultan was immediately and violently excited, and the results were fatal to Prince Mourousi.³⁶

34 The ecumenical patriarchate in Constantinople, the ecclesiastical center of the Eastern Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire, oversaw regional and district administrative offices. These metropolitanates and bishoprics included Ephesus (in Asia Minor), Derkon (near the Bosphorus), and Anchialos (in southeastern Bulgaria, along the Black Sea coast; Pomorie today). On the fate of these and other church hierarchs, including the ecumenical patriarch, see Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1: 187-88; Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1: 229-34.

35 Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople*, 1: 319, commented that "[n]o shadow of proof, or just ground of suspicion, [was] ever stated against the patriarch, though two causes were assigned by the Greeks for his death: the one was that the family of Mourousi, the *dragoman* of the Porte, who were, after his death, placed under the care of the patriarch, were suffered to escape; and the other, which was the real cause, was that he was a Moreote. The Turks carry their idea of the liability of hostages to such an extent that they make every man responsible for the actions of every other man of his nation. The insurrection had at this time spread to the Morea; and news had just arrived that the Greeks had taken Kalavrita [a town in the northern Peloponnese]. The patriarch was born in that district, and he was executed for the offences of his countrymen. The effects of this wanton and causeless outrage upon all the Greeks held sacred excited the profoundest horror and hatred among every member of their church."

36 According to Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople*, 1: 308-09, when the sultan "discovered the omitted passage, [he] instantly ordered the execution of the *dragoman*." Constantine

(The minister of the power in question [Stroganov], has told me that the suppressed paragraph was of another nature, and that it implied the existence of a **previous** correspondence between Prince Ypsilanti and the *dragoman* of the Porte. But I have reason to believe that the other interpretation which is attributed to this paragraph, is much nearer the truth.)...

FO 78/98, ff. 154-57, 10 May 1821 (No. 30)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the Turks' fanatical spirit; the public execution of Greek subjects, including the beheading of the ex-patriarch and twenty-three Greek merchants in Adrianople; the destruction of Greek churches; and intelligence from Odessa.]

...I have the honour to enclose a translation of the *hatti-sherif* [imperial edict of the sultan] read at the Porte on the occasion of the deposition of Benderli Ali Pasha, and the instalment of his successor in the office of grand vizier.

The views developed in this document are of a very alarming nature, and they clearly prove 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.

A more direct appeal to the fanaticism of the people, is contained in the accompanying translation of an imperial order just addressed to the janissary aga. The ostensible object of this order is the restoration of public tranquillity – but its real results will be found in the prolongation of that system of sanguinary persecution which now disgraces the councils of this Empire.

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.

I have accounts from Adrianople as late as the 3rd instant. On that day (in consequence of a *firman* [imperial decree or order] from the Porte), the ex-patriarch of the Greek Church shared the fate of the Patriarch Gregory, and was hanged at the window of his metropolitan residence. On the 29th of April, 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 this barbarous proceeding, and his

Mourousi's "wife and children were placed under the surveillance of the patriarch, who was held responsible for their safe custody: they escaped, however, to Odessa; and this was one of the alleged causes of the melancholy catastrophe which followed. The irritation of the Turks was now raised to the highest pitch of exasperation. The public and brutal execution of ten of the principal Greeks of the Phanar, with various others of inferior note, seemed to whet the appetite for blood among the Turkish populace, as similar scenes did that of the populace of Paris." Also see Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 71-72, 85-86, 91, 212-13, on the execution of grand *dragoman* Constantine Mourousi (Kostaki Muruzi).

own life was exposed to the utmost danger, in the course of his humane exertions to save the unfortunate victims...

I take this opportunity of sending a copy of the last report which I have received from Consul [James] Yeames [in Odessa]. It contains the surprizing, and (but for the general accuracy of Mr. Yeames's official statements) almost incredible intelligence that the emperor of Russia has directed the governor of Odessa to give his protection to the Greek refugees from Constantinople...³⁷

FO 78/98, ff. 168-71a, 10 May 1821 (No. 31)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: details of the Russian ambassador's conference with the *reis efendi* (foreign minister) on several matters, including the Porte's systematic oppression of the Greek faith.]

...Baron de Stroganoff [Stroganov, Russian envoy] had a conference with the *reis efendi* on Monday last, the 7th instant. He informs me that there were [several] points under discussion.

1. The 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.

2. The state of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia...

On the first of these subjects, Baron de Stroganoff made the strongest and most energetic representations, grounding them principally on the VII and XIV Articles of the [Kutchuk-Kainardji] Treaty of 1774³⁸ (of which I have the honour to enclose an

³⁷ Strangford received reports from James Yeames, British consul-general in Odessa, about the situation in this strategically placed port, in particular the reactions of local authorities and Greeks to the uprising and the impact of the upheaval on Russian-Ottoman relations. The Yeames files, while not always reliable or accurate on tsarist policy in the Near East, kindled British concern about the degree of official Russian involvement in the Greek sedition. Some of Yeames's dispatches to Foreign Secretary Castlereagh, from May to August 1821, are located in TNA, FO 65/130. Also see George Jewsbury, "The Greek Question: The View from Odessa, 1815-1822," *Cahiers du monde russe* 40, no. 4 (1999): 751-62. After the Ypsilanti debacle, many Orthodox Christians fled Constantinople and the Danubian Principalities to escape punishment. Seeking haven in Russia, these refugees included not just defeated insurgents but uprooted non-combatants, such as Phanariotes, clergymen, merchants, craftsmen, shopkeepers, sailors, and manual workers. Their numbers reached more than forty thousand in Bessarabia alone by September 1821, after which Ottoman patrols sealed the border to prevent migration to Russia and Austria; by the middle of 1822, nearly sixty thousand had flocked to both Odessa and Bessarabia. Religious and humanitarian concerns prompted the tsarist government to organize a vast relief drive to provide assistance, shelter, and employment. On these relief efforts, see Prousis, *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution*, 55-83, 192-201.

³⁸ Articles 7 and 14 of the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji called for the Sublime Porte to protect the Christian faith and its churches in the Ottoman Empire and allowed Russia's ambassador "to make, upon all occasions, representations" on behalf of a Greek Orthodox church to be built in the Galata quarter of Constantinople and the clergy at this new house of worship. See Hurewitz, ed., *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics*, 95-96.

extract), 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.

I find that Baron de Stroganoff 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...

FO 78/98, ff. 226-31a, 25 May 1821 (No. 40)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: accounts from the Morea, Epirus, and the Cyclades.]

...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 in the Morea. The latter took to flight, with all the alacrity of modern patriots. They had at their head the archbishop of Kalamata [a port in the southern Morea], and, I am sorry to say, Messrs. Vlassopulo and Strani, the Russian and Prussian consuls. These gentlemen have prudently retired to Zante [or Zakynthos, one of the Ionian Islands]. Prevesa [a town in the Epirus region of northwestern Greece] has been retaken. These events took place on the 6th instant. 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...

Two English gentlemen [who] just arrived here, were witnesses to a barbarous massacre of the Turks in the island of Zea [one of the Cyclades], on Wednesday the 2nd instant.

The insurgents have taken possession of Tinos [in the Cyclades], and have attempted to consecrate their revolution by religious processions and ceremonies without end, and by the murder of many defenceless Turks.³⁹ The Turkish authorities in that island had taken refuge in the house of Mr. [Antonio] Vitali, the English vice-consul; whose letters to me are of the 8th of May...

FO 78/98, ff. 239-43a, 25 May 1821 (No. 41)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the discussions of a recent council of state; the Porte's request for unity among all Muslim subjects; and the plea from the new ecumenical patriarch, Eugenius II, for Ottoman clemency toward Greek Christian subjects.⁴⁰]

...On the 19th, a grand council was held at the Porte, and I have received from an authentic source some account of its deliberations.

39 For information on Tinos during the War of Independence, in particular the island's clan rivalries and local factions, see Mark Mazower, "Villagers, Notables, and Imperial Collapse: The Virgin Mary on Tinos in the 1820s," in *Networks of Power in Modern Greece: Essays in Honor of John Campbell*, ed. Mazower, 69-87. Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1: 350, on sectarian tension between Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox islanders.

40 On Patriarch Eugenius II, see Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece*, 33-35, 38-39, 41, 44, 52-53.

[One of the] subjects...discussed...was the necessity of inculcating the principle of a strict and general union, during the present crisis, among all classes and departments of Mahometan believers. This was agreed upon, and letters of admonition and exhortation were ordered to be written to the different pashas, regencies, and other Ottoman authorities throughout the Empire...

Previously to the transaction of other business at the council of the 19th instant, the patriarch was sent for by the *kiahya bey* [minister of the interior], who, in presence of the *reis efendi*, put several questions to him; to which, it is said, that the new prelate answered in so proper a manner, as to have made the greatest impression on those ministers.

The patriarch presented yesterday to the Porte, a solemn memorial, drawn up in the Turkish language; craving the sultan's clemency towards his religion and countrymen – making a tender of their repentance for the past, and of their unbounded fidelity and allegiance for the future, and ending with these remarkable expressions – “All that has happened is not to be attributed **solely** to the miserable and prostrate Greek nation. **It is the work of those who have contrived and set them upon plans which have ended in their ruin.**”...

FO 78/99, ff. 1-4a, 12 June 1821 (No. 44)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the state of relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.]

...On the 3rd instant, the Russian envoy presented two notes to the Porte, conceived in language of no ordinary vehemence.

As these notes were confidentially shewn to my first interpreter, by the *dragoman* of the Porte, the former had an opportunity of making the extracts which I have the honour to enclose.

In the first of them, M. de Stroganoff protests against the military proceedings of the Turkish troops in the revolted Principalities, and prescribes the conduct which (in the opinion of Russia) the Porte is bound to follow with respect to those provinces. The baron then takes occasion to animadvert on the cruelties and oppression (said to be) exercised by the Turkish pasha of Braila [a Danubian port in eastern Wallachia], and recommends that the insurgents, who are suffering under them, may be permitted to retire, either into Transylvania, or beyond the Pruth – in other words, into the Austrian or Russian territory – a proposal, certainly much at variance with the assurances given by the two emperors, that their dominions should not serve as an asylum to the rebels.

(With respect to the complaints made by M. de Stroganoff, of the cruelties practised by the pasha, I must, in fairness to the Porte, beg leave to mention that some days ago, the *reis efendi* informed me that the Turkish troops were everywhere hailed as deliverers – that so far from any unlawful violence having been permitted or encouraged, a Turkish officer of high rank had been put to death, for having plundered the house of a Wallachian farmer – and that the only acts of severity which had occurred, had been at Galatz, in retaliation of the barbarous and

indiscriminate massacre of the Turkish inhabitants, which took place there at the beginning of the insurrection.)

M. de Stroganoff's second note was meant to convey the answer of the emperor to a demand of the Porte, made directly to the imperial cabinet, in March last, touching the delivering up to the Turkish authorities of the fugitive rebels.

To this demand, M. de Stroganoff was not only instructed to reply in the negative – but also to proclaim the intention of the emperor to grant an asylum to every Christian, flying from Turkish oppression, who shall seek it within his dominions.

M. de Stroganoff, after proceeding 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”], concludes by stating that he has received the emperor's commands to withdraw on board either of a Russian public vessel, or of a merchant ship, 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.

I fear that the tone and language of these notes, and 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, will have an effect very opposite to that of re-establishing its relations with M. de Stroganoff, on a footing of amity and confidence...

FO 78/99, ff. 20-25a, 12 June 1821 (No. 46)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the tense relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Russia.]

...[Austria's internuncio Rudolf von Lützow] shewed me a dispatch from Prince Metternich, which ordered him to demand an audience of the *reis efendi*, for the purpose of representing to him that the true interests of the Porte required a different mode of proceeding with respect to the *reaya* – that it was unwise and impolitic to exercise an indiscriminate and sanguinary system of proscription, “*envers l’innocente population grecque*” [“towards the innocent Greek population”] – that the execution of the patriarch, or more properly the circumstances attending it, had excited the utmost horror and alarm throughout Christendom – and that it was considered as a declaration of hostility against Christianity in general, combined as it was, with the emanation from the Porte, of various proclamations, bearing a decidedly anti-Christian character. The dispatch concluded with a recommendation to the internuncio, to obtain the support of his colleagues to the representations which he was thus instructed to make.

I told the internuncio that I looked upon the unhappy dispute between the Porte and the Russian envoy, as involving in its possible consequences the peace of all Europe – that, under that impression, I should consider it to be my duty to leave no

effort untried to bring the Porte to reason, and to engage her to assume a moderate and conciliatory tone – but that my **direct** interference could go no further, unless specifically authorized by my court – that while I deplored the severities to which the Ottoman government had been obliged to have recourse, I could not but recollect that they had been the consequence and the punishment of an extensive and systematic rebellion – that, under that conviction, I could not admit the propriety of advocating the “**innocence of the Greeks**” – nor could I believe that I was entitled to dictate to an independent government, the mode and the degree of the chastisement which it chose to inflict upon the authors of an insurrection, that menaced the very existence of that government – that while I lamented the rigorous course pursued by the Porte, I could hardly be surprized at it, since every day brought fresh accounts of the horrid and atrocious cruelties perpetrated by the rebels – and lastly, that with regard to the patriarch, he (the internuncio) knew as well as myself that the Porte had offered to put into our hands incontestable proofs of that prelate’s guilt (consisting of his original letters to the clergy in the Morea) – and that we had abstained from availing ourselves of that offer, because we did not wish to associate ourselves, in any way, with a matter solely and exclusively concerning the Porte – that, in my opinion, nothing had since occurred which ought to induce us to change that view of the case – and therefore that I should still consider myself as bound to refrain from all allusion to it – unless the Turkish minister should, in the proposed conference, invite me to do so...

FO 78/99, ff. 30-42, 12 June 1821 (No. 47)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: his recent conference with the *reis efendi* on a variety of issues, in particular the execution of the patriarch.]

...The affair of the patriarch then naturally came to be mentioned, and on my expressing an apprehension that the circumstances of that transaction 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 – that in the interval, 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 – that the Greeks who had massacred the Turks at Galatz, had indeed chosen **Friday** for the commission of that atrocious act, but that it would have been utterly beneath the dignity of the Sublime Porte, to have imitated them in such an unworthy mode of insulting religion – that the present contest was not of a religious character, for that 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 [an island in the Cyclades]...

FO 78/99, ff. 100-04a, 26 June 1821 (No. 57)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the massacre of Aivali's Greek inhabitants, occasioned by their own perfidy and cruelty.]

...Some time ago, an insurrection broke out at Aivali [Kydonies; modern-day Ayvalik], a large and flourishing city of Asia Minor, principally inhabited by Greeks, whose numbers are stated to amount to twenty thousand.⁴¹

Osman Pasha had received orders (as I was informed by Mr. Consul Werry) to put the whole of this population to the sword.⁴² But the pasha contented himself with the submission of the inhabitants, and deferred the execution of his orders, until he should receive fresh instructions from Constantinople, for which purpose he dispatched one of his principal officers.

On receiving this information, I thought that it would be highly proper to make some efforts in behalf of these unfortunate people – and I gave instructions accordingly to my interpreter to introduce the subject at his next conference with the *reis efendi*.

I have the honour to enclose a copy of M. Chabert's report, from which Your Lordship will perceive that 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.⁴³

41 On the massacre at Aivali (Kydonies), see Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 1: 221-23; St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, 5.

42 Francis Werry, Britain's consul in Smyrna from 1793 to 1829, became one of Strangford's regular sources of information. On the life and diplomatic career of Werry, see Prousis, *British Consular Reports from the Ottoman Levant*, 143-80; Richard Clogg, "Smyrna in 1821: Documents from the Levant Company Archives in the Public Record Office," *Mikrasiatika Chronika* 15 (1972): 313-71; Tom Rees, *Merchant Adventurers in the Levant: Two British Families of Privateers, Consuls, and Traders, 1700-1956* (Stawell, Somerset, UK: Talbot, 2003), 1-57.

43 François (Francis) Chabert, *dragoman* at the British embassy for over three decades, belonged to one of the Levantine *dragoman* dynasties that served the Porte and various European states over the centuries, including the French, British, and Sardinian embassies. Strangford's letters to the London Foreign Office made frequent reference to Chabert as well as to *dragomans* from the Pisani, Fonton, and Franchini families. See Alexander H. de Groot, "Dragomans' Careers: The Change of Status in Some Families Connected with the British and Dutch Embassies at Istanbul, 1785-1829," in *Friends and Rivals in the East: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Levant from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, eds. Alastair Hamilton, Alexander H. de Groot, and Maurits H. van den Boogert (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 225-26, 235-46, on the Chabert, Pisani, Fonton, and Franchini families. They formed part of a well-connected cosmopolitan network of Levantine middlemen interrelated by marriage, service experience, and residence in Pera and Galata, the areas in Constantinople that housed most of the capital's

It was therefore 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 *reis efendi* (who undoubtedly thought that after his former assurances, some explanation was due to me) 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. But the squadron (the appearance of which in the bay had been merely accidental) having in the meantime sailed away, the Turks recovered their courage, and an indiscriminate massacre of the Greeks was the just though dreadful reward of their perfidy.

Mr. Consul Werry confirms the *reis efendi*'s account of this transaction...

FO 78/99, ff. 218-28, 23 July 1821 (No. 71)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the British envoy's observations on the Russian official note, with an eight-day deadline, submitted to the Porte by Stroganov.]

...It will not escape Your Lordship's observation that the Russian note may properly be divided into three subjects of discussion...

With respect to the first, I cannot conceal the deep and serious apprehensions which I entertain, that the Porte may be disposed to reject with haughtiness and indignation the assertion put forward by Russia – 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, and that upon her feeling herself dissatisfied with the conduct of Turkey towards the Greeks, she had a 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.

I cannot enter into any consideration of the second branch into which the Russian note may be divided, without expressing my unfeigned concern at the exaggerated

European consulates, embassies, and merchant firms. For more on the careers and activities of *dragomans* in the Ottoman world, see Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul*, 215-18; Maurits H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls, and Beratlis in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 64-70; Cunningham, *Eastern Questions*, 1-22; Bernard Lewis, "From Babel to *Dragomans*," in *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis (New York: Oxford University Press), 18-32. On the *dragoman* section of the British embassy, see in particular Geoff R. Berridge, "English *Dragomans* and Oriental Secretaries: The Early Nineteenth Century Origins of the Anglicization of the British Embassy *Drogmanat* in Constantinople," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 14, no. 4 (2003): 137-52; idem, *British Diplomacy in Turkey*, 49-64.

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 statements 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.⁴⁴

I owe it to truth to record my entire dissent from these accusations.

The Greek subjects of the Porte are everywhere in rebellion against their sovereign. These rebels are Christians – and the punishment which is 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. It happened, forty years ago, in the first and finest country in the world, that a frantic and lawless mob pillaged or destroyed the chapels of a religion different from that of the state, and that those disorders continued during several days, until at length repressed by the energy of the government.⁴⁵ In the same manner, the outrages committed by the populace against some Greek chapels in Constantinople, were the work of 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. 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*, 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

44 Press coverage in Europe resonated with a decidedly pro-Greek slant, fully reflecting admiration of classical antiquity and sympathy for fellow Christians. See St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, 51-65; Jean Dimakis, *La guerre de l'indépendance grecque vue par la presse française (période de 1821 à 1824)* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1968); idem, *La presse française face à la chute de Missolonghi et à la bataille navale de Navarin* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976); Aristide Dimopoulos, *L'opinion publique française et la révolution grecque* (Nancy: V. Idoux, 1962).

45 Strangford expressed a distinct sense of British nationalism when he praised England as “the first and finest country in the world.” He also alluded to the Gordon Riots of 1780 in London. Lord George Gordon (1751-93) galvanized an anti-Catholic uprising against the parliamentary act of 1778 that sought to eliminate some of the penalties and restrictions against Roman Catholics in England. Gordon incited Protestant zealots with fears of papism and royal absolutism, and the subsequent Gordon Riots featured not just marches and petitions but attacks against Catholic churches and chapels. When violence spread to the Bank of England, the army suppressed the unrest and restored order. For Strangford, this episode of public lawlessness and mob mayhem appeared relevant in grasping the sectarian-induced aggression in Constantinople. On the Gordon Riots, see Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 152-75; Christopher Hibbert, *King Mob: The Story of Lord George Gordon and the Riots of 1780* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1958).

the city and neighbourhood of Constantinople, but one was utterly destroyed, and only thirteen were plundered or otherwise injured by the mob.

(The enclosed paper, confirming this statement, was 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.)

The execution of the patriarch was an act, the severity and the circumstances of which it is impossible sufficiently to deplore. But 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.

But a positive demonstration that in punishing these personages with death, the Porte was actuated by no feeling hostile to their religion, is found 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.

Under these impressions, and with the knowledge of these facts, I cannot admit the justice of those parts of the Russian note, which represent the Porte to be actuated by a spirit of sanguinary persecution – which confound the past excesses of the populace with the present sentiments and intentions of the government – which give no credit to the latter for that better order of things which its exertions have at length produced – (exertions of which the enclosed document, containing the substance of the *firmans* lately promulgated, is a satisfactory proof) – and which proclaim that 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 third division of the Russian note contains the demands on which M. de Stroganoff has orders to insist.

If the terms in which these demands are conveyed, do not produce an unfavourable impression, I hardly think that the Porte could or would refuse to accede to the greater part of them. 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. The demand for the security of the Greek religion is answered by the fact that its rites are regularly performed, and numerously attended by the Greek population of this capital and its environs. The satisfaction required for the death of the patriarch, might be given, by a full and fair disclosure of the evidence on which he was condemned. And the assurance that the 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 *firmans* and *hatti-sherifs* 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...

I feel that I should be guilty of the greatest impropriety if I were to obtrude upon Your Lordship any opinion of my own, respecting the probable intentions of Russia in making these representations in a manner so little calculated to conciliate the haughty spirit of the Ottoman government. But it is my duty to advert to the belief which is gone forth in these countries, that, in fact, conciliation is **not** the present policy of Russia – that in precipitating a war, of which the results cannot be doubtful, and of which the ostensible cause is the maintenance of the Greek Church, she averts the destruction of that influence which she has so long been labouring to create in Greece – that in proclaiming herself the defender of their religion, she indemnifies the Greeks for the disapprobation and discouragement which, regard for public faith and respect for public opinion, obliged her to manifest at the beginning of their rebellion – and that she 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...

[Strangford enclosed this document (FO 78/99, ff. 250-51), a translation of a brief summary of damages to Greek churches in 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 Serbian deputies.⁴⁶ The total loss may be estimated at one hundred thousand piastres.

⁴⁶ After the outbreak of the Greek rebellion, the Porte broke off talks with Serbian delegates and ordered their transfer from the patriarchal residence to the sultan's palace for safekeeping. Serbian deputies, representing the semi-autonomous tributary *pashalik* of Serbia, arrived in Constantinople in 1820 to negotiate several contested points with the Porte, such as Serbia's tribute payment, territorial boundaries, and administrative jurisdiction. The delegation hoped to win piecemeal concessions that would elevate Serbia to full autonomy. Russia's embassy participated in these discussions, with Stroganov pressing the Porte to comply with its promise in Article 8 of the Treaty of Bucharest and advising the deputies how to proceed with their deliberations. With Greek and Danubian matters now taking precedence in Russian-Ottoman exchanges, and with Stroganov's departure from the capital in August 1821, the Porte ceased negotiations with the Serbian delegates and demanded their confinement. See Michael Boro Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia, 1804-1918*, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976), 1: 103-08, 120-22.

Permission has been given, by a *firman*, 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.

FO 78/99, ff. 276-86a, 26 July 1821 (No. 76)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: details of the British envoy's discussion with the *reis efendi* on the strained relationship between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.]

...Having long been desirous to confer with the *reis efendi* on various matters which are under discussion between this embassy and the Porte, I was summoned yesterday to attend His Excellency at his countryseat on the Bosphorus.

After terminating most of these matters in a satisfactory way, the *reis efendi* proceeded to a full and fair consideration of the present question with Russia.

He began by thanking me for the friendly part which I had taken during the progress of these transactions; with the expression, however, of much concern that the moderation and forbearance which I had so earnestly and so constantly recommended to the Porte, had been completely misunderstood by the Russian government, and had drawn down upon that of Turkey, insults and affronts to which no independent nation could submit: That it would be better for the sultan to perish in the ruins of the Seraglio [the imperial palace of the sultans], than to be told that he held his existence among the sovereigns of Europe, solely at the will and pleasure of the emperor of Russia, and that all Christendom was to engage in a common armament against him, because an unprovoked rebellion had placed him under the necessity of punishing some individuals, who happened to be of the same faith as the Emperor Alexander [I]. And here, said the *reis efendi*, I ask of you, English ambassador, does your government proclaim these principles? And is credit to be given to the assertion of Russia, that she acts with the consent and approbation of all other powers (including, of course, Great Britain), when she declares that the Porte, by punishing her rebel subjects, renders it impossible for Christian states to hold further intercourse with her? If so, and if your government has really associated itself to this league against us, we can only say that it is not a very just reward for the attention with which we have listened to the advice of its ambassador, and for the multiplied proofs of patience, which in consequence of that advice, we have not ceased to give, since the day when the Russian minister virtually declared war against us, by stopping at once, and without provocation, his official relations with the Porte.

We are almost weary of repeating that we have been obliged, in consequence of a most extensive conspiracy (**the origin and the abettors of which we well know**), to punish with severity some traitors of distinguished rank in the Greek Church, and that we did so, in their quality of **rebels**, and not in that of **Christians** – that we defy the Russian minister to cite an example of Catholics, Protestants, or Armenians, having been exposed to persecution – that even the Greeks themselves, exercise freely and fully, all the duties of their religion, to which the Porte has never opposed the slightest impediment. We are told, continued the *reis efendi*, that the *hatti-sherifs*

issued by the Porte, bore a decidedly anti-Christian character – We are sorry that they should be so misunderstood. At a moment of the most imminent peril, we had recourse to the measures which had saved the Empire on similar occasions. A rebellion was proclaimed, the result of which, if successful, would have been the destruction of the Moslem faith. This object was avowed in all the proclamations of the rebels. As Mussulmans, we could not, in our counter-proclamations, pass over in utter silence, the fact that our religion was in danger. We did not hesitate to avow it. With us, the religion and the state are identified, and the experience of ages has taught us, that to save the one, we must appeal to the other. But, in making this appeal, we do most solemnly declare that we had never the intention, falsely imputed to us, of exciting a general persecution against those who differed from us in religious opinions. Such a proceeding would have been contrary to the letter and the spirit of our holy law.

The pretence therefore of religion, is merely an excuse, which the ingenuity of ambition has invented, to mask the injustice of the most unprovoked aggression (should Russia really seek for war) that has ever occurred. I remember, said the *reis efendi*, when all Europe complained of Napoleon Bonaparte, but I do protest that no war was ever undertaken by him, less justifiable than that with which we are now menaced. He, too, knew how to proclaim grand and specious principles – and the liberty of the seas, and the tyranny of the English, were to **him**, what the liberty of religion and the tyranny of the Turks, are now, to the Emperor Alexander [I].

What would Europe think of us, if we were to say to Russia [?] “The Greeks, who profess the same faith as you do, have destroyed (as is the fact) many of our mosques – have murdered our clergy, with the most dreadful tortures – have violated their wives, and abused their children – and unless you rebuild these mosques and make reparations for these insults in eight days, we will declare that your existence is incompatible with the safety of our religion – we will make war upon you – and we will call upon all the Mussulman states in the world, to make common cause with us against you.”

Having thus, added the Turkish minister, shewn the justice of our position, it only remains for me to assure you that nothing shall induce us to relinquish it. Our answer to the Russian envoy cannot possibly be prepared within the time which he has prescribed – we shall therefore, tomorrow, request a delay of two or three days – we shall give to his *dragoman* a summary notion of what the answer will contain – and you may rely upon it, that we shall follow your advice, and carry moderation, forbearance, and conciliation to the utmost extent, consistent with our dignity and with the safety of the Empire...

FO 78/99, ff. 306-12a, 30 July 1821 (No. 79)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the state of negotiations between the Ottoman Empire and Russia.]

...On Thursday morning, the two Russian *dragomans* (Franchini) proceeded to the Porte to demand an answer to Baron de Stroganoff's note; the term allowed by that minister having expired.

The *reis efendi* told them that it had been found impossible to prepare the answer, alledging the shortness of the time – the importance of the considerations which were involved in the answer – the indispensable necessity of consulting every individual in the Divan – and the time occupied by the translation of the baron's note, which had consumed nearly four, out of the allotted eight days.

The Russian *dragomans* said that they would report this request to the baron, but demanded, in the meantime, a previous explanation of the nature of the answer, which, when ready, the Russian minister was to receive.

To this, the *reis efendi* replied by stating (according to the report of the conversation which he gave to my *dragoman*, and which the latter delivered to me in writing): 1. that the Porte 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; 2. that the patriarch had been punished for his treasons only, and not as chief of a religion different from that of the state – and that 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; 3. that as soon as quiet was re-established, permission would be given to repair the churches and chapels which had suffered from the fury of the mob; 4. that the Porte ever had, and ever would endeavour 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; and 5. that as soon as the Principalities were completely disengaged from the rebels, and that the fate of Ypsilanti and his adherents had been determined, the Turkish troops (whose presence had been invited by the Russian envoy himself) should be withdrawn – the *hospodars* re-established – and everything placed on a footing conformable to treaties...

FO 78/100, ff. 119-21, 18 August 1821 (No. 93)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the *firmands* issued by the Porte, proclaiming a more mild and merciful conduct toward the insurgents, and an imperial letter to the ecumenical patriarch.]

...The *reis efendi's* letter contained a copy of the imperial *firmands* which have just been sent to all the provinces of European and Asiatic Turkey...

Although these *firmands* do not go so far as absolutely to proclaim an amnesty to such Greeks as shall surrender within a given time (which was the main object of my note), the principle of humanity which they avow, and the disposition to recur to a more mild and merciful system, which they express, have been received with the liveliest satisfaction by my colleagues and by me.

My success has certainly not been so complete as I wished. But enough has been done to prove the inclination of this government to listen to good advice – and to adopt, in consequence of it, such moderate measures towards its insurgent subjects, as cannot fail of being acceptable to the allied courts. The consoling change of system encourages me in the hope that it may still be found possible to lead the Porte a little further, and to procure a greater extension to the principles which it has at last, been brought to acknowledge.

At the time when I presented my note, I instructed my *dragoman* to submit to the *reis efendi* in a confidential manner, the expediency of issuing an imperial rescript to the patriarch, inviting that prelate to give his assistance in recalling the Greeks to their duty – and announcing such dispositions towards them and their religion, as might have the effect of dissipating the universal alarm felt on that subject, by all the Christian powers.

This overture was not, at first, very favourably received. Upon its being renewed, the *reis efendi* proposed that a verbal communication should be made to the patriarch; and to this idea he adhered, during several days; until at length, the influence of the *kiahya bey* (which I had succeeded in securing) produced an imperial letter to the patriarch, of which I have the pleasure to enclose a translation...

FO 78/101, ff. 89-96, 17 September 1821 (No. 114)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the deliberations of European envoys at the Porte on the matter of their proposed communication with insurgent Greeks, urging their submission to the sultan's authority.]

...It is clear that as long as the insurrection of the Greeks shall continue, the severities which the Turks will think themselves warranted in exercising towards them, will always give to Russia such grounds for complaint, as must continually endanger the peaceable relations of the two countries – a state of things, to avert which, the influence of the allied courts is now directed. Something must therefore be done towards ending this insurrection. We have already engaged the Porte to proclaim a pardon to her misguided subjects. We cannot hope that she will persevere in holding out this offer, if the Greeks continue to reject it. A recurrence to the dreadful system of sanguinary persecution which distinguished the first measures of the Turkish government, would be the deplorable consequence; and with it, renewed representations on the part of Russia. It is therefore requisite to induce the Greeks to accept the offered clemency of the Porte, and the only plan which we could devise for the purpose, is that to which we are about to have recourse. We believe that sufficient care has been taken in our mode of proceeding, to guard on the one hand, against everything like an engagement or promise, on the part of our courts, in case the Greeks should submit and return to their obedience, and on the other, against the slightest indication of menace in case they should not. We have confined ourselves to giving them fair and friendly counsels – to shewing the advantages which would arise from submission – and the danger to which a perseverance in rebellion

(unsupported and unaided) would inevitably expose them. If, therefore, the intended representation should fail of success, we venture to think that our courts are not in any way committed by it, the point of dignity, involved by our holding communication with rebels, being sufficiently saved by the circumstance of the government to which we are accredited, having solicited that communication to be made. If, however, a happier result should attend our proceedings, we shall have acquired from the Porte by our accession to its request, a distinct and indisputable right to exert ourselves openly in the cause of humanity – to prevent all recurrence to sanguinary measures – and to watch with effectual vigilance over the scrupulous fulfillment of these engagements, on the faith of which, the Greeks may have been induced to submit...

FO 78/101, ff. 146-49a, 25 September 1821 (No. 121)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: assorted intelligence from Constantinople.]

...Many circumstances take place here, which can only be accounted for by the apprehensions which the government entertains of the janissaries, and by the timid policy which leads it to flatter the passions of that turbulent and powerful body.

In this class of occurrences may be placed the publication of another *firman*, again calling upon the people to wear arms, and threatening punishment to those who disobey the order.

The *firman* (which was issued at the close of a council held at the house of the *mufti* [*sheikh al-Islam*]⁴⁷ on the 18th instant) declares that though the Ottoman Empire be surrounded with enemies on every side, there are no immediate apprehensions of a foreign war – but that still, it is necessary for every person to be prepared to meet that event, should it unfortunately happen; and that in the meantime, it was the sultan's positive orders that no person should presume to talk about peace or war, or about the chances of either the one or the other, which are matters of state, and only to be discussed by the supreme authorities.

The *firman* then proceeds to direct the *imams* [prayer leaders] to make lists of the **true** Turkish population of Constantinople, it being ascertained that many individuals appear in the Mussulman habit, without being entitled to wear it. This operation has been commenced, and has also extended to the Greeks and Armenians, who are now compelled to enroll their names, occupations, and places of abode, in registers kept for that purpose...

An alarming fire broke out some nights ago, either at the Imperial Mint or in its immediate neighbourhood. Many unfortunate (and I believe, innocent) Greeks who were employed about the establishment, have been arrested on suspicion, and are now in close confinement. I hope to be able to do something in their behalf.

⁴⁷ The grand *mufti* or *sheikh al-Islam*, appointed by the sultan, served as the Empire's foremost legal authority on Islamic jurisprudence and headed the *ulema*, the hierarchy of Islamic religious and legal scholars.

On the 19th, fourteen heads were exhibited at the Seraglio, said to be those of Persians taken by Dawood Pasha of Baghdad, in an incursion made by them...⁴⁸

On Sunday last, a proclamation was read in the Armenian churches by order of the patriarch of that religion, purporting to be issued under the authority of the government. It requires all Armenians to separate themselves as much as possible from the Greeks – to hire no servants belonging to that nation – to let no houses to Greeks – and to refrain from improperly wearing the Frank dress, which had given rise to great abuses. This proclamation, as far as the Greeks are concerned, appears to be so needlessly severe, and so contrary to the moderate system which this government has declared its intention of trying, that I shall certainly feel myself warranted in making a friendly expostulation to the *reis efendi* upon the subject...

FO 78/102, ff. 143-54, 10 December 1821 (No. 166)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the conference between the British ambassador and Ottoman government ministers on the subject of Russian-Ottoman negotiations.]

...At my interview with the *reis efendi* on Thursday last, there were present, besides that minister, the grand judge of Rumelia, and Gianib Efendi, who was at the head of the foreign department on my arrival in this country.

The conference, being private, was held at the *reis efendi*'s house in Constantinople, where I arrived at eleven o'clock, and remained in conversation with His Excellency and his colleagues until three o'clock...

We then discussed the question of religious persecution, and of the repair of the churches which had been damaged by the mob in April last. All the arguments which the Porte had adduced on other occasions to prove the non-existence of the former were again employed, and I must own to Your Lordship that I could not avoid admitting that they were founded in fact. As to the second point, the Turkish ministers asserted that they were ready to give permission to rebuild the three or four churches that had been injured, whenever the Greek patriarch should request it, and whenever the state of public feeling here should permit that indulgence to be openly granted to the Greek nation. But that for the moment, the government could not, without the risk of fresh disturbances, venture upon such a step.

I then suggested that an authentic document, explaining this point, would go far towards relieving the Turkish character from the imputation of harbouring an unfriendly disposition towards the Christian religion – and I proposed that a *bouyourouldi* [official note or announcement] should be addressed by the Porte to the Greek patriarch – disavowing the excesses of the mob in April last – admitting

⁴⁸ Dawood Pasha, similar to Ali Pasha of Ioannina and Muhammad Ali of Egypt, exemplified the devolution of Ottoman political power in the early nineteenth century. As pasha of Baghdad from 1817 to 1831, he balanced opportunism with violence and generosity to maintain order in his region. Dawood Pasha controlled various tribal groups, raised his own loyal forces, built public works, and stopped the Persian attack of 1823. See Stephen H. Longrigg, "Dāwūd Pasha," *Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition* 2: 184.

the right of the Greeks to the repair and re-establishment of their churches – declaring that for the moment, it could not be effected – but that when a proper time came, no impediment should be opposed to their reconstruction.

This, being an ecclesiastical or religious matter, was referred to the chief judge – who told me that he saw no objection to my proposal, and that he would take upon himself to recommend it to the favourable consideration of the Divan...

FO 78/106, ff. 141-52, 11 February 1822 (No. 21)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the request of Ecumenical Patriarch Eugenius II that the British ambassador assist him in circulating, throughout the Archipelago and Morea, a pastoral letter advising Greek insurgents to return to their allegiance to the sultan.]

...The patriarch has sent a letter to my first interpreter, of which I have the honour to enclose a translation. It was accompanied with eighteen manuscript copies of a pastoral exhortation which the patriarch has addressed to his revolted countrymen, signed by that prelate and by fourteen Greek bishops. A translation of this document is also enclosed herewith.

The object of the patriarch's application to M. Chabert was, to engage my assistance in transmitting his letters to the various places in the Morea and Archipelago to which they were addressed, by English vessels proceeding there from Constantinople or Smyrna, as no Turkish ships would proceed to the ports occupied by the insurgents.

I venture to hope that Your Lordship will not disapprove of my having acceded to the patriarch's wishes, by availing myself of every opportunity which has hitherto occurred, for forwarding these letters to their several destinations. I persuade myself that Your Lordship will be of [the] opinion that this measure is calculated to serve the cause of peace and humanity, and that at the moment when the Turkish government is collecting all its means to act decisively against the Morea, it would be a deed of kindness towards its deluded inhabitants, to give them this last chance of escaping the perils which menace them, by embracing the counsels and listening to the remonstrances of their spiritual chief.

The patriarch informed M. Chabert (whom I sent to wait on him two or three days ago) that this measure had taken place with the consent of the Porte, but that the latter did not wish to appear in it, and was desirous that it should seem to originate exclusively with the head of the Greek Church...

[Strangford attached this translation of a letter addressed to Mr. Chabert by the ecumenical patriarch, dated January 19/31 1822 (FO 78/106, ff. 144-45).]

...After giving you our benediction and asking the state of your health, we have to inform you that, pursuant to our paternal and ecclesiastical duty, we have prepared circular letters for the Morea, and all the islands of the Archipelago, directed to such of the inhabitants of the said places as profess the Greek religion. We therein represent to them, on the part of God as well as on that of the human race, that by their mad perseverance in revolt, they are losing their rights and

sacrificing their happiness; and we exhort them to repentance. We paternally advise and invite them to cast away without fear, the arms which are employed to their ruin, to re-enter into their former and ancient condition of subjects, and to accept the mercy and pardon His Imperial Majesty, our august sovereign, offers them.

It is important that our packets, containing those paternal exhortations which our zeal suggested us to give them, and the assurances of the generosity and magnanimity of His Imperial Majesty towards his subjects, should reach them safely. But the only means we can employ to that purpose, is to beg His Excellency the ambassador of His Britannic Majesty to be pleased to forward our letters to their destination; he having the means of doing it with safety.

We wish therefore to know whether His Excellency will have the goodness to comply with our request, and beg you will give us an answer for our satisfaction...

[Strangford enclosed this translation of a pastoral exhortation addressed by the patriarch to Greek insurgents in the Morea and the islands (FO 78/106, ff. 146-52.)

...[Y]ou, inhabitants of the Morea and all the inhabitants of the islands of the Archipelago, subjects of the sultan, ought to be more quiet and obedient, in a spirit of submission and due subjection, and evince every proof of humility (as the divine law directs), both as Christians and men, under the authority of political administration and controul. But alas! Alas! By treading under foot, and destroying every law, both divine and human; by casting off all evangelical and apostolical duties, and exhibiting an ingratitude equal to that of the traitor Judas, you have presumed to take up arms in your hands and to raise the standard of rebellion – and even more, contrary to all the ordinances and injunctions of our Saviour, the celestial king; roused by a lust and ambition quite diabolical, you have launched into revolt and disobedience, such as the Devil inspired into the minds of our first parents in Paradise – and in short, with the same insatiate fury and the same devilish desires – whilst the Church of God was at peace and all was quiet – sorrow and grief have come on the human race – and particularly on you yourselves, thus labouring to attain misery on misery, present and future, and to clothe your innocent wives and children in garments of mourning and lamentation...

Secure therefore, if you are true Christians, and if, indeed, you possess a drop of Christianity in you, secure, I say, the pity, the kind philanthropy and generosity of our most compassionate, just, and humane sovereign. Although His Highness, from the first day that the accursed flame of rebellion burst forth, might have adopted every act of violence and done deeds of the utmost cruelty, but, whereas his usual habits are those of mercy and humanity, he has merely chastised, as he was bound to do, those who were the heads of the revolution; and for those who remained tranquil and neuter in their character of *reaya*, he has done everything to ensure safety and repose; and doubly merciful and gracious is he to those who implore forgiveness for the past – them he receives with all attention, promising them the certainty of their lives in peace and security – the same as to us inhabitants of Constantinople and other parts, where we enjoy the same religion and fruits of obedience, favoured by his philanthropic protection, covered by the shade of his tree...

But as a long time has elapsed, without our having seen or heard of, any step towards amendment, such as we had hoped, we have determined to testify our paternal solicitude; and influenced by our heartfelt grief and love to notify to you all our ecclesiastical and paternal advice and evangelical admonitions, so that we may not, through our silence, be guilty of any spiritual sin, by disregarding your spiritual liberty and salvation.

Therefore, brother-Christians, and my sons, of our Church, you who live in the Morea and the islands of the Archipelago, as well those who sail on the sea, as those who dwell on land, and, in brief, you all who are thus in error and have embraced the accursed plague of rebellion, throw away those arms from your hands – listen to my fatherly voice which proceeds from my paternal affection – return to yourselves – cast away from your thoughts the diabolical attempt of revolt – cast away, I repeat, those arms, the cause of your destruction – return to obedience and submission – ask forgiveness of the Lord God, our Saviour, in order to regain the love and protection of the sultan, by such celestial intercession. Behold, this is the favorable moment and time to acquire it; behold the moment and time of forgiveness! Change your opinions, desire not the annihilation and destruction of your country, and the cruel slavery of your innocent wives and children. Feel for yourselves, your country, your children, your property; and what is more, think of your souls, and that Jesus Christ himself shed his own blood on the cross for our salvation...

For the love of our Lord God, then, make all haste – send us petitions for pardon, signed, and accompanied also by two or three persons from every town – and, for the second time, we assure you, petitioners, collectively and individually, that not the least harm will happen to you – and should any ensue, let it all fall on our spiritual responsibility. We will be answerable to the divine tribunal for the least blood that shall be spilt after this exhortation sent to you all with our hands and signatures, so very confident and secure are we in the clemency, His Highness cherishes towards his subjects...

FO 78/107, ff. 227-30, 25 April 1822 (No. 55)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the Ottoman attack on Chios and the recapture of that island by the *kapudan pasha*'s fleet.⁴⁹]

...The Turkish expedition against Chios has been successful.

We are yet without complete details of this transaction, but from all that can be collected, it seems to have been productive of dreadful scenes of carnage on both sides.

On the first appearance of the *kapudan pasha*'s formidable fleet, the Greeks who were stationed between Chesme, on the mainland, and Chios (to prevent the troops assembled at the former place from crossing over), cut their cables, and effected their escape, leaving Chios to its fate.

⁴⁹ The *kapudan pasha*, or grand admiral and commander of the Ottoman fleet, led the naval assault against Chios.

This circumstance enabled six thousand of the Chesme troops to join the *kapudan pasha*, who, on the 11th instant proceeded to summon the insurgents to surrender, offering pardon to all who should lay down their arms, and giving them eight hours to consider...his proposals.

The insurgents rejected this offer – and instantly attempted to carry the castle by escalade, thinking that they could effect that object, and secure themselves in the fortress before the *kapudan pasha* could have time to disembark his troops. In this they were mistaken – they were vigorously repulsed by the garrison, and in the meanwhile, the *kapudan pasha* landing about nine thousand men, and the former making a sortie, they were enclosed between two fires; lost all their artillery, amounting to twenty pieces, which was speedily turned against them, and after a short and most bloody resistance, took to flight, and were pursued in all directions. It is said that the loss on both sides amounts to fifteen thousand men. No quarter was given after the action. Every person taken with arms in his hands was instantly put to death. The women and children have been thrown into slavery. Previously to the action, and on the first appearance of the fleet, the Catholic inhabitants had shut themselves up in their convent. They have been protected by the *kapudan pasha*, who has stationed a guard for their security, and who has received numbers of them on board of his fleet, where they are treated with the utmost kindness. The Catholic Greeks have, as Your Lordship is aware, never taken any part in the insurrection, and, as well at Chios, as in all the other islands, have constantly maintained their allegiance to the sultan.

The *kapudan pasha* has left a considerable body of troops on the island, who will, I fear, pursue the work of destruction to the very utmost. The Samiote Greeks, whose unfortunate expedition to Chios has been the cause of the calamity which has overwhelmed that once happy and flourishing island, took no part in the combat, and basely fled to Psara, hastily embarking on the side opposite to that where the Turkish troops landed.

The *kapudan pasha* is said to have proceeded to the Morea, with the intention of attacking some of the insurgent islands in his way.

I have the honour to enclose a translation of the placard which accompanied the exhibition of heads, standards, and other trophies, sent to the Porte by Vahid Pasha, the governor of Chios...

FO 78/108, ff. 29-34a, 10 May 1822 (No. 66)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the cruelties committed by the Turks at Chios.]

...The horrors of civil war were never more fearfully displayed than at Chios. The fury of the Turkish troops was not to be restrained, and the greater part of that delightful island, and all its flourishing and interesting establishments, have been converted into a scene of the most appalling desolation. The villages producing the mastic gum (a great source of the imperial revenue) have alone been spared. The *kapudan pasha* appears to have done all that he could to check the cruelty of the Turkish troops, and to save the inhabitants from its effects, by sending the British,

Austrian, and French vice-consuls into the interior of the island, with exhortations to the insurgents to lay down their arms, and to accept the proffered amnesty. These missions were unsuccessful – the fury of the troops not permitting the consuls in question to proceed on their way. The *kapudan pasha* has redeemed with his own money a vast number of the wretched women and children whom the Turkish troops had sold as slaves. This act of generous humanity is perfectly characteristic of this most excellent man.

I am willing to spare myself the pain of recording in this dispatch, the various horrors which were committed at Chios. I take the liberty of referring Your Lordship to the two annexed gazettes, published at Smyrna, in which these dreadful details are to be found.

Consul Werry's letters to me, of the 3rd instant, are filled with similar accounts. But he adds that "previously to the arrival of the Turkish fleet at Chios, the Greeks had insulted and polluted the mosques, by every filthy contrivance which they could devise, and had committed the most dreadful enormities on prisoners, women, and children, in view of the garrison in the castle."

Smyrna was perfectly tranquil at the date of my last letters from Mr. Werry...

Logotheti, who had assumed the title of prince, and who was the projector and leader of the late unfortunate expedition of the Greeks against Chios, has been sent in irons to Hydra, where he will be tried, and probably put to death, for having defrauded the Greek treasury of fifty thousand sequins, which were found concealed in an oven at his house in Samos.⁵⁰ These Greek chieftains are, in truth, a set of most unprincipled wretches...

FO 78/108, ff. 70-75, 25 May 1822 (No. 73)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the recent events on Chios and the observations of Gianib Efendi in defense of Ottoman enslavement of the families of Chiote rebels.]

...The transactions at Chios appear to have been of a most horrible description, and the ferocity of the Turks to have been carried to a pitch which makes humanity shudder.

The whole of the island with the exception of the twenty-four mastic villages, presents one mass of ruin.⁵¹

50 Lycurgus Logotheti (Logothetis), the reckless and inept adventurer who instigated the ill-fated Samiote assault that declared Chios's "deliverance" from Ottoman rule in March 1822, proclaimed himself "savior" of Chios. But he failed to prepare the island's defenses, bickered with fellow "liberators," fled when the Ottoman navy approached, and was incarcerated by rebel leaders until December 1822. See Argenti, *The Massacres of Chios*, xii, xx-xxii; Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence*, 156-58.

51 These mastic-producing areas did not escape for long. In a subsequent report, Strangford wrote that "I am sorry to say that the mastic villages, which I mentioned in a former dispatch to have been spared, have now shared the fate which has overwhelmed the rest of the island." TNA, FO 78/108, ff. 153-59a, 10 June 1822 (No. 82).

The unfortunate inhabitants have paid with their lives, the price of their ill-advised rebellion. The only persons who have been spared are the women and children, who have been sold as slaves. Hundreds of them were daily arriving at Smyrna, at the date of my last letters from that place, and some ship-loads of these unhappy victims reached this place during the last week.

All the hostages (with the exception of five Catholics) who were confined in the castle of Chios have been put to death. It appears that four of these men were sent by the Turkish commandant to their countrymen with an offer of pardon to such of them as should lay down their arms. Instead of executing this commission, they joined the insurgents, and availing themselves of the local knowledge acquired during their residence in the castle, were the leaders of the attack against it. The fury of the garrison was not to be restrained, and the remainder of the hostages were instantly hanged.

The merchants of Smyrna sent an express to me and to the French ambassador, with a request that we would exert our efforts to save the five Catholic prisoners who remained in the castle, and whom the pasha promised to respite for twenty-five days until orders could be received from Constantinople. We were so fortunate as to succeed in our application, and a *chiaus* [state messenger or emissary] was dispatched with a *firman* on Sunday last, authorizing the pasha to pardon the individuals in question.

I wish I could say that I had been equally successful with respect to the unfortunate captives who have been sent here from Chios. I sent M. Chabert with a friendly message to Gianib Efendi on the subject, begging him to consider the unfavourable effect which would be produced on the public mind in Europe by the severities which the Porte was exercising against innocent and helpless persons, who had taken no part in the rebellion, and who seemed to be rather entitled to the pity, than to be considered as objects of the vengeance of the government.

Gianib Efendi received my application without any sign of impatience, but in reply, he made some observations which he appeared to think quite unanswerable and on which he dwelt with the utmost complacency. He said that the captives taken at Chios, were condemned to slavery by the Mussulman laws and religion – which not only permitted, but enjoined such a disposal of the wives and children of their enemies – that without having the plea of law or religion, the Christian powers of Europe had for ages tolerated slavery – not because their Messiah commanded it, but because it was a source of gain – that it was true, England had abolished it, but that it was only of late years that we had found out that it was wrong – and that half of Europe still differed from our opinion on the subject – that if those powers had so long endured the constant practice of the Turkish nation, and had not uttered a word in reprobation of it for nearly four hundred years, it would indeed be singular if they were now to call in question the right of the Mussulman government and nation to do that which they had done from time immemorial, and which was, at present, more than ever justified by the cruel and atrocious conduct of the Greek rebels, who, far from making captives, spared neither women nor children. He added, that though he

gave me full credit for the friendly spirit which had dictated my advice, he requested me to remember that the Porte was an independent government – that she had a right to act as she pleased towards her own subjects, except where treaties interfered, and that the Mussulman nation **would** pursue and maintain its own laws and usages without caring for the opinions of other states, which had no right to meddle with them – that even Russia had never attempted to force Turkey to abolish slavery – and that some time ago, when there was a long and vehement discussion between the two courts respecting some Circassian slaves, the utmost to which Russia pretended was, that those slaves should be free from the moment they landed in the Russian territory – without seeking to impose upon Turkey the general principle that she was not entitled to make slaves of her own subjects whenever she chose to do so. “Slavery,” continued Gianib Efendi, “is a mode of **punishment** – and it might just as well be said that we had not the right to inflict the punishment of death, or that of the bastinado, upon offenders, as that the powers of Europe are to find fault with us because we make captives of the families of those who are trying every means to destroy our Empire. Why do not the Christian sovereigns interfere to prevent the emperor of Russia from sending his subjects into Siberia? Because they know very well what answer they would receive! Thus there is one law of humanity for Turkey and another for Russia!”⁵²

The same arguments were employed by Gianib Efendi to the Prussian *dragoman*, whom Baron Miltitz [Prussia’s chargé d’affaires] had sent to him with a message similar to mine, on the subject of the unfortunate captives from Chios...

FO 78/108, ff. 76-80a, 25 May 1822 (No. 74)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: divers intelligence from Constantinople, including the execution of twenty-nine Greeks, the public beheading of ten Chiote hostages, the conduct of the janissaries, and the enmity between Halet Efendi and Khurshid Pasha.⁵³]

52 For context and perspective on this interesting discussion of slavery, see Y. Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800-1909* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), especially 1-93; Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); idem, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression: 1840-1890* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

53 Strangford’s correspondence of 1821-22 made frequent reference to these two prominent but rival Ottoman leaders. As a close adviser to Mahmud II, Halet Efendi (Mehmed Said) supported the sultan’s political drive to restore centralized absolute rule and to curb the powers of *ayans* or provincial notables in Anatolia and the Balkans. In organizing some of the military expeditions against regional chieftains, Halet sought to strengthen his own anti-reform base among the janissaries and their allies and to eliminate contenders for power in the provinces. While he ardently backed the suppression of Ali Pasha’s revolt, he worked against the sultan’s proposed military reforms. A target of growing criticism because of Ottoman military setbacks in the Peloponnese in 1821, Halet Efendi eventually fell from favor in the sultan’s inner circle. Exiled from the capital, Halet Efendi was executed on the sultan’s orders in late 1822. Khurshid Ahmed Pasha served as governor of the Morea, also as *seraskier* or commander in chief of

...After so many months had passed in comparative quiet, we have again witnessed in this capital some of those sanguinary scenes which disgraced it at the beginning of the insurrection. On the 12th instant, sixteen Greeks of the lower class, all natives of the Morea, were taken from the prison of the *bostangi bashi* [chief of police]; and executed in various parts of Constantinople, and on the banks of the canal. On the following day, thirteen more were put to death.

But the most tragical occurrence took place on the 18th, when, in spite of the assurances so often given to me by the Porte, that she considered those unhappy men as perfectly innocent, and that no offence could be alledged against them, the ten Chiote hostages residing here, were publicly beheaded. They were all persons of good repute, great connections in trade, particularly with the English merchants, and of large and honourably acquired fortunes. Their fate is deeply regretted even by the Turks; the better class of whom do not scruple to inveigh against this transaction, as an act of unnecessary cruelty, and to attribute it entirely to the barbarous system of terrorism which Halet Efendi pursues, for the sake of diverting public attention from his own misdeeds.

The government alledges that it was necessary to sacrifice these unfortunate men, to pacify the janissaries, who were made desperate by the account of the cruelties perpetrated by the Greeks in sight of the besieged garrison of Chios, by the intelligence of the second landing which was effected there by the insurgents – and above all, by their wanton butchery of the crew of a Turkish boat which had been sent in by the *kapudan pasha* with a flag of truce.

These proceedings on the part of the Greeks may certainly go far to account for, but cannot justify an act, which fertile as this place has been in horrors, is beyond all comparison, the one which I have witnessed with the greatest disgust and indignation. I cannot express to Your Lordship the pain and concern which it has occasioned to me. I had been in constant private communication with these poor Chioters. I had been so happy as to have rendered them some services during their captivity, and I had flattered myself with the hope that my recommendations in their favour could have been attended to – the more so as I am quite convinced that both the *reis efendi* and Gianib [Efendi] were strongly and sincerely inclined to have shewn mercy to them, and were making every effort to oppose the sanguinary counsels of Halet...

Ottoman armies in Albania and Greece. He led the prolonged but ultimately victorious campaign against Ali Pasha of Ioannina, sent the rebel's severed head to the sultan, and gathered an army to crush the Greek rising. But his political foes in Constantinople, especially Halet Efendi, conspired against the successful commander and accused him of financial abuse and malfeasance. After falling from grace, Khurshid Pasha committed suicide in late 1822. See Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 430-31; Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 285-89, 314; Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 43-44, 54-59, 75-77, 96-99, 103; Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence*, 47, 64-65, 88, 103, 109, 111-12, 166, 168, 179; Prousis, *Lord Strangford at the Sublime Porte (1821)*, 166, 171, 215, 229-32, 235-36, 238, 240-41, 263, 279, 336-38, 353.

By a Tartar which arrived on the 22nd from Khurshid Pasha (who, it appears has returned to Ioannina), accounts were received that he had succeeded in ransoming his wife and children, who had been taken prisoners at Tripolitsa. To the great surprise of everybody, an order has been sent by the sultan, for Khurshid's family to come immediately to Constantinople. This is a device of his enemy, Halet Efendi, who hopes that Khurshid will resist this order, and thus incur the displeasure of the sultan. Khurshid has lately forwarded to His Highness, a strong memorial against Halet, which, however, has not been able to shake the favourite's credit. But the sultan has so high an opinion of Khurshid Pasha, and feels so grateful to him for the successful termination of the war against Ali [Pasha], that Halet will probably find that he is not an enemy to be despised. The animosity between these powerful individuals is now carried so far, that the downfall of one of them must ensue...

FO 78/108, ff. 225-26, 25 June 1822 (No. 94)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: a recently discovered conspiracy to massacre the Greeks of Constantinople.]

...The Christian inhabitants of this place have just had a most providential escape from perhaps the most serious danger with which they have hitherto been menaced.

A plan was laid by some of the more desperate of the *yamaks* [auxiliary troops or irregulars], in conjunction with the lower order of janissaries, which if it had not been discovered by the janissary aga, would probably have ended in an indiscriminate massacre of all the Greeks. A party of these wretches had provided a quantity of Greek dresses, in which disguise they meant to have sallied forth on the last evening of the Ramazan [Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting], killing and wounding such Turks as they might meet. Their design was thus to impress the public and the government with the belief that there had been a general rising of the Greeks, in hopes that orders would be immediately issued for the slaughter of that population, which would have given them unbounded licence to pillage and plunder.

The secret meetings of these miscreants were (very appropriately) held at a butcher's shop in the quarter called Kumkapi.⁵⁴ The janissary aga proceeded there on the night of Wednesday last, caused the house to be surrounded by the second regiment, and on entering it with a strong party of armed men, found several of the *yamaks* in full deliberation on their infernal project. Twenty-one suits of Greek cloathes were discovered in a chest. The criminals were conducted to the janissary aga's office, whence, after all of them had received the bastinado, four of the ringleaders were sent to be strangled at the European castle on the Bosphorus...

⁵⁴ Kumkapi (Kum Kapi or "Sand Gate"), located in the Fatih district, along the Sea of Marmara, was inhabited mostly by Armenians and housed the seat of the Armenian patriarchate of Constantinople.

FO 78/108, ff. 267-77, 25 June 1822 (No. 98)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: Metternich's latest instructions to Austria's internuncio on the state of Russian-Ottoman relations, in particular the question of an amnesty for Greek rebels.]

...Supposing the Porte to have once fairly fulfilled the terms of the ultimatum (an epoch which I am willing to consider as close at hand), I think that **then**, an attempt might be made, with a reasonable prospect of success, to obtain the second point to which Prince Metternich's "Memorandum" refers, namely, the renewal of the amnesty, with the prescription of a certain time for its duration. This amnesty might be drawn up in such a way, as to comprehend in general terms, all the benefits in point of security to religion, life and property, and the impartial administration of justice, which Russia is desirous of obtaining for the Greeks. But we must at first expect to be told that the Porte has already vainly tried the effect of an amnesty – that whenever she has been permitted, she has fairly acted upon it, and that it was offered over and over again at Chios, and obstinately rejected there as well as elsewhere. The proposal that the allies shall on their part, endeavour to induce the Greeks to accept it, however generous in itself, and valuable to the Porte, will not, I fear, be received without a certain degree of suspicion, by this jealous and apprehensive government. In the first instance at least, the idea of making Christian Europe a party to the pacification of her rebel subjects, will probably not be acceptable to Turkish pride and fanaticism. Reasoning and friendly counsel may subsequently cause it to be adopted. But, as the allies, by thus entering directly into the question between the Porte and her subjects, may seem to render themselves virtually answerable, towards the Porte, for the success of the measure which they have proposed to it, and towards the Greeks for its being completely and honestly fulfilled, I will own to Your Lordship that before the offer is made, I should be most anxious to have such precise instructions as would enable me to say to the Porte how far it was meant that the interference of the allies should extend, and whether in the event of that interference being insufficient to induce the Greeks to submit, the Porte would be allowed to reduce her rebel subjects in her own way. For, if the amnesty fails, we may, by having proposed and offered to support it, appear to forfeit our right of further intervention in behalf of mercy and humanity...

FO 78/109, ff. 136-37a, 10 August 1822 (No. 123)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the death of Ecumenical Patriarch Eugenius II and the steps taken by the British ambassador to ensure the election of a successor.]

...On the morning of the 8th instant, the patriarch expired at his metropolitan residence in Constantinople, after a long and painful illness, occasioned by dropsy on the chest.

The ceremony of his funeral was attended by thousands of Greeks, and was conducted with the greatest order, and with singular honours on the part of the Turkish government. Before the interment, the corpse was placed, as is customary, on the patriarchal throne in the cathedral; and I am assured that upwards of eight

thousand Greeks attended in the course of the day, for the purpose of kissing the hands and feet of their deceased chief.

Immediately upon learning this event (which was within half an hour after it had taken place), I sent my fourth *dragoman* to the Porte, with a confidential message to the *reis efendi*, earnestly conjuring the Porte to observe with the most scrupulous exactness all the formalities which had usually been practised on the election of a patriarch, [so] that the enemies of this government might not have to alledge anything against its conduct upon this occasion. The *reis efendi* appeared to take this friendly communication as it was meant, and he directed Mr. Frederick Pisani to assure me, that the Porte knew its own interests too well, and valued the good opinion of the Christian powers too highly, not to have resolved to act in this affair with every degree of attention and deference to the usages of the Greek Church.

A synod of Greek bishops was convened on the evening of the patriarch's death – at which the *congé d'elire* [the licence or permission to elect a successor] of the Porte was produced. The choice of the new patriarch was then privately made, but it is not yet generally announced...

FO 78/109, ff. 187-90, 10 August 1822 (No. 129)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the selection of a new patriarch (Anthimos III) and the Porte's commendable conduct on this occasion.]

...I was mistaken in supposing that the synod held immediately after the late patriarch's death, had then proceeded to elect his successor.

The election did not take place until this morning, when a second synod was convened, under the auspices of the archbishop of Jerusalem. Twelve Greek bishops were present, and on this occasion, the six prelates who have been so long detained as hostages at the Seraglio, were set at liberty. The choice of the assembly fell upon one of these, namely, **Anthimos**, Bishop of Chalcedon.⁵⁵

The Porte had previously declared by a letter to the synod, that there would be no objection to the nomination of one of the detained prelates, provided he should appear to the synod to possess the five qualities of experience – prudence – ability – learning – and loyalty to the sultan.

Sixty-three names were read over in the synod. Of these, only three were considered as fit candidates.

The election appears to have been effected by the Greek natives at Constantinople, as represented by the *esnaffs* or corporations [artisan and merchant guilds]. Six hundred of these persons voted on the occasion; and their choice was afterwards ratified by the synod of prelates. No one attended on the part of the new princes; but as it is an ancient custom for the **agents** of these personages, residents at

⁵⁵ On Patriarch Anthimos III, see Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece*, 53, 63. Chalcedon (Kadiköy today), an episcopal see near Constantinople and the site of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451), is located on the Asian side of the Sea of Marmara and close to the mouth of the Bosphorus.

Constantinople, to sanction the election of a new patriarch, Yahya Efendi, the *dragoman* of the Porte, who sits pro tempore in that capacity, for the lately appointed *hospodars*, read a letter from them to the synod, announcing their acquiescence in any choice that the assembly might think proper to make.⁵⁶

The patriarch will be invested with the kaftan tomorrow, at the Porte.⁵⁷

It is satisfactory to observe that in the whole of this transaction, the Ottoman government has acted with so much prudence and propriety, and with such scrupulous attention to the rights and privileges of the Greek National Church...

FO 78/109, ff. 233-35a, 19 August 1822 (No. 135)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the installment ceremony for the new patriarch.]

...I am happy to inform Your Lordship that the Turkish ministers have concluded the affair of the patriarch's election, in the same spirit of liberality and good taste (if the expression be permitted) with which they had begun it.

On the evening of the 10th, the Porte having been informed by a petition from the Greek community in this capital that Anthimos, Bishop of Chalcedon, had been elected patriarch, orders were sent to remove that prelate from the apartments of the *bostangi bashi*, where he had been in confinement, to his own house in the Phanar, or Greek quarter of Constantinople.

On the morning of the 11th, he was conducted with great pomp to the Porte, where he received from the grand vizier's hands, the kaftan, and the act confirming his election. He was accompanied by twelve bishops and five deans. During this ceremony, it was noticed that many unusual attentions were practised towards him and the prelates who accompanied him. He was allowed to be seated in the vizier's presence – and the usual Turkish refreshments were offered to him – distinctions which though apparently trifling, excited much notice, as they had never been shewn to any former patriarch.

After he had received the kaftan, similar robes of honour were (to the great surprise of the spectators) presented to the attending prelates. A procession was then formed from the Porte to the patriarchal residence, through the most populous parts of Constantinople. It was conducted with perfect order, under the direction and with the personal attendance of five of the chief officers in the Seraglio...who had never assisted on previous occasions of this nature. The patriarch and all the bishops were mounted on horses from the grand vizier's stables. Formerly it was the custom to

56 Bulgarazde Yahya Efendi, a Muslim convert of Bulgarian Christian descent and a professor of military engineering, became grand *dragoman* of the Porte in 1822. The outbreak of the Greek revolt prompted the sultan to replace Greek Phanariotes with non-Greeks for such positions as *hospodars* and *dragomans*, and Yahya Efendi's knowledge of languages equipped him well for his new appointment. See Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 84, 91-95, 220-21.

57 The patriarch, like other newly appointed high-ranking Ottoman dignitaries, received a kaftan or robe of honor from the sultan during the official ceremony that invested him with his new office and title. See Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 23-24, 195.

permit only the patriarch and the two bishops who are styled his **godfathers**, to appear on horseback during this procession.

On reaching the metropolitan church, the ceremony of the patriarch's instalment took place in the presence and amidst the acclamations of at least eight thousand persons belonging to the Greek nation...

I ought to mention that the sultan and all his ministers have dispensed with the usual homage fees on the election of the patriarch. They amount to two hundred thousand piastres. I am also informed that the sultan, apprehensive that the loss of their share of these profits, would indispose the inferior officers of the Seraglio towards the new patriarch, caused them to be reimbursed from the Imperial Treasury. I hope this anecdote is true...

FO 78/109, ff. 237-38, 19 August 1822 (No. 136)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the pastoral letter read in all the Greek churches by order of the newly selected patriarch.]

...I had finished my preceding dispatches when I received a copy of a pastoral letter which was read yesterday in all the Greek churches by command of the patriarch. I have not time to prepare a translation of it.

This pastoral letter begins with announcing that the Porte has consented to the renewal of the *panegyrs*, or religious feasts [feast days or festivals of saints] of the Greeks, which were formerly held alternately, in the various churches and chapels in the vicinity of Constantinople. The vast multitudes which were in the practice of attending these assemblies, caused them to be considered with suspicion by the government and they have been accordingly suspended since the beginning of the insurrection. They are now to be revived, and the patriarch declares that they are under the special protection of the government.

The letter then proceeds to adjure the Greeks in the most forcible terms, not to expose themselves to certain danger by imprudent attempts to emigrate, which are always found out, and only serve to involve the individuals concerned in them, in greater perils than any they would be exposed to by remaining peaceably at Constantinople.

The patriarch concludes with recommending modesty and economy in dress to the females of his communion...

FO 78/109, ff. 254-57, 26 August 1822 (No. 140)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the envoy's discussions with *reis efendi* on the Chios disaster.]

...The *reis efendi*, who in common with many of his colleagues, deploras the conduct of the Turkish troops at Chios, and who I can conscientiously assert, feels ashamed of the disgrace which it has brought upon his country, appeared to be greatly affected by the unreserved expression of His Majesty's sentiments upon the subject. But he endeavoured to justify his government by urging the unremitting cruelties which the Greeks had perpetrated in the Morea – the massacre of the

Turkish garrisons at Corinth – Tripolitsa – Navarino – and Athens – the unprovoked murder of the officers sent to Chios by the *kapudan pasha* with the proposed amnesty – the insults offered to the mosques in that island, and all the various circumstances of atrocity in which I lament to say, that the Greek war has been but too abundant.

Almost all the arguments employed by the *reis efendi* when I mentioned the affair of Chios at my last conference, were again produced upon this occasion, and, as Your Lordship will have perceived from my report of that conference, they consisted in little more than a series of attempts to justify one system of barbarity by the existence of another, and to prove that the right of making slaves was founded on the Mussulman law, and was certainly not in opposition at this day, to the avowed or secret practice of some of the Christian states.

My *dragoman* was perfectly able, and what is more, perfectly willing to meet the *reis efendi* upon this ground, and from his report of what passed, it appears that the *reis efendi* was obliged at last to rest his justification of the enormities committed at Chios, on the treason of the inhabitants, and on the fact of the descent upon that island not having been a spontaneous and sudden movement on the part of the Samiotes, but the result of a concerted plan, and of an urgent invitation to the insurgents at Samos from their brethren at Chios. The *reis efendi* said that he could prove from documents in his possession, that this correspondence had been carried on for several months. Unfortunately, it did not occur to M. Chabert to ask why, if that was the case, the Turkish government did not take measures to prevent the descent, of which by their own confession, they were forewarned, instead of leaving the island absolutely without defence, and at the mercy of the first invader.

On the subject of the Chiote hostages, the same accusations were urged against them, which the *reis efendi* introduced on the occasion of my conference.

I feel assured that the manner in which this affair has been taken up, and the unequivocal and downright manner in which I have expressed His Majesty's sentiments respecting it, cannot have failed to produce the strongest effects upon the minds of the Turkish ministers, and that these effects will be perceptible in the future conduct of the Porte towards her revolted subjects. They are now no strangers to the detestation with which their cruelty has been viewed throughout that country which they look upon to be their most sincere and disinterested friend, and whose good opinion, I cannot help flattering myself, that they will now make an effort to recover...

FO 78/110, ff. 85-92, 5 October 1822 (No. 150)

[Strangford to Castlereagh re: the British ambassador's communication with the Porte on the subject of Russian-Ottoman disputes, in particular the question of an amnesty for Greek insurgents.]

...However discouraging the official language of the Ottoman ministers may have been, I have been greatly consoled by the private and confidential communications which I received from some of them... I will beg to refer you to the

enclosed copy of a letter from Mr. Wood, the chancellor of His Majesty's embassy, in which he reports to me the details of a conference which Ismail Efendi held, at my request with Gianib Efendi. I will own to you, Sir, that my opinion of these individuals, as men of probity and honour, is so high, that I attach as much value to this communication as if it had been made in a more formal and authentic shape. In point of fact, the substance of it was reduced to writing, and delivered to Mr. Wood by Ismail Efendi, who was formerly the Turkish ambassador in England, and who is the steady and sincere friend of our country and government.⁵⁸

You will perceive, Sir, from this communication, that Gianib Efendi (the most efficient member of the Ottoman ministry) has confidentially explained the reasons which have deterred the Porte from proclaiming by a **new** act, the amnesty which she is willing to offer to her revolted subjects – at the same time that he has positively assured me that the line which the sultan has resolved to follow with respect to them, is precisely that which the allies have required – an assurance, which I am formally requested to give, in His Highness's name, and under the sanction of his word, in any communications which I may have at Vienna, with the chiefs of the allied cabinets. To this declaration is added a promise, that out of personal consideration for His Majesty's ambassador, the Porte is inclined to listen favourably to his intercession in behalf of such of the insurgents as the fortune of war may place at her disposal.

Prince Metternich expressed very great satisfaction on the perusal of this document, which is certainly calculated to inspire a confident hope that though the Porte refrains from publishing a new proclamation of amnesty, its future conduct towards the revolted Greeks will be conformable to the wishes of the allies, and to the interests of humanity...

[Strangford attached this letter (FO 78/110, ff. 100-03, 5 September 1822) from embassy chancellor or secretary George Wood, who described the recent conference between Ismail Efendi and Gianib Efendi on the Porte's future policy towards the Greek insurrectionists.]

...On the subject of the amnesty, Gianib Efendi requested Your Lordship not to impute to obstinacy, or want of confidence, the unwillingness of the Porte to issue anew such a proclamation, at Your Lordship's request. By so doing, they think that they would in some degree make Your Lordship a party to it, and that disputes might hereafter arise between Your Excellency and the Porte, on any apparent infraction of

⁵⁸ George Wood, a British-born *dragoman* at the embassy, became Strangford's able and confidential assistant. He entrusted Wood not just with secret talks with Ismail Ferruh Efendi but with private correspondence regarding the ambassador's diplomatic efforts to mediate the Ottoman-Greek conflict. Ismail Efendi served as ambassador to England (1797-1802) before becoming a confidant of Halet Efendi and an influential adviser of Mahmud II. See Berridge, *British Diplomacy in Turkey*, 53, 58; Prousis, *Lord Strangford at the Sublime Porte (1821)*, 229-36, 240, 274-75; Mehmet Alaaddin Yalçinkaya, *The First Permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe: The Embassy of Yusuf Agah Efendi to London (1793-1797)* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010), 27, 101, 120-21, 154, 156-57, 181, 184, 210.

the amnesty, such as the execution of the chiefs of the rebellion, of whom the Porte is determined to make a severe example, if ever she succeeds in catching them. These chiefs are **known** to have had criminal relations with the agents of a certain foreign power. The proofs of the fact are **now** in the hands of the sultan. If these chiefs should be taken, the minister of that power will certainly interpose in their behalf, and as certainly, his intervention will be rejected. He will then make a quarrel between the English ambassador and the Porte, by pretending that these chiefs were included in the amnesty, to which the former was a sort of guaranteeing party.

But, Gianib added that while the sultan is determined to punish the wretches who have led the *reaya* into error, and who have occasioned so much desolation and misery, he is equally determined not to treat the poor deluded people with severity. They shall be forgiven, and they shall receive every degree of favour and indulgence hitherto accorded to them by the Mussulman law. **Your Lordship is not only authorized, but requested to make this assurance in the most positive form to the allied ministers at Vienna – and to give to it the sanction of the solemn word of the sultan and of the Porte.** Your Lordship is strongly urged to make a faithful report of the favour and kindness shewn by the Porte to its *reaya* at Constantinople, of the protection accorded to their religious rites – and of the execution within the last months of five hundred Turks, for oppressing or insulting them – to say nothing of the thousands which have been banished for no other offence...