

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337304814>

"Reconsidering the Past: Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V and the Greek Revolution of 1821" in Synthesis, scientific ejournal of the Faculty of Theology of Aristotle University of Th...

Article · November 2019

CITATIONS

0

READS

1,029

1 author:



[Emmanouil Chalkiadakis](#)

University of Crete

26 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Ο Αμερικανικός και Ευρωπαϊκός Φιλελληνισμός και η απελευθέρωση του Ναυπλίου: ιδέες, τόπος και άνθρωποι την εποχή της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης [View project](#)



Γεώργιος Ξενουδάκης (1816/1818[?] - 1888). Ο δυναμικός εκφραστής του κρητικού ενωτικού κινήματος και ευεργέτης της παιδείας [George Xenoudakis: a strong supporter of the Cretan Union Movement and a significant Education benefactor] [View project](#)

*Dr Emmanouil G. Chalkiadakis**
University of Crete (School of Education,
Department of Primary Education)
The Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge

Reconsidering the Past: Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V and the Greek Revolution of 1821¹

Abstract

Gregory V (or Gregorios²) was archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch from 1797 to 1898, from 1806 to 1808 and from 1818 to 1821. During the Greek Revolution of 1821 (known as the Greek War of Independence), he was blamed by the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II for his unsuccessful tries to suppress the Greek rebels, even though he officially condemned them, and subsequently he was hanged. This paper is reconsidering the past and draw a firm line between ‘appearance’ and ‘being’ as far as the actual role of patriarch Gregory V during the Greek Uprising is concerned, and its importance for this Uprising through the re-reading of well-known sources, the use of unknown sources and the press of the 19th century and the examination of controversial views of the scholars who have occupied themselves with this issue.

Introduction

There are historians who accused³ Patriarch Gregory for acts against the Greek Revolution and others who underlined his

¹ This paper is based on a lecture, which took place at the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, in 5 April 2014.

² His initial name was Georgios [George] Angelopoulos.

³ Giannis Kordatos, *Η κοινωνική σημασία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης του 1821* [*The social meaning of the Greek Revolution of 1821*], Athens: Vasileiou publications, 1924; Giannis Kordatos, *Ο Ρήγας Φεραίος και η Εποχή του* [*Rigas Feraios and its Epoch*], Konstantinoupoli [Istanbul], 1932, 268-269: “Gregory V has no right to obtain any title of national action”; See also Giannis Skarimpas, *Το 1821 και οι αλήθειες* [*1821 and the Truth*], vol. 1-2, Athens: Kaktos publications, 1990.

eminent role for the Greek War for Independence⁴. The whole issue should be examined considering the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in the Ottoman Empire and the political circumstances in South East Europe during the early 19th century.

Patriarch Gregory V and the Rum Millet

Firstly, Gregory, as the Patriarch of Constantinople, was the Ethnarch⁵ of the Orthodox Millet, known as “Rum Millet”. The word Ethnarch is derived from the Greek word “ἔθνος” (ethnos), which means nation⁶. In the Ottoman Empire “Millet” is a term not for the different nations but for the confessional communities. In those times, the concept of the nation or ethnic origin was not clear yet and the religious affiliations bound people to different millets. “After [the] Ottoman Conquest of a Territory, the Turks organised local affairs through the millet, in which they identified a people not by geography but by religion. There was a Muslim millet, a Roman Catholic millet, an Armenian millet and the Orthodox [Rum] millet”, especially in the European lands occupied

⁴ There are also two main controversial books in the Modern Greek bibliography about Patriarch Gregory’s role during the Greek Uprising. The first one is the book (in Greek) of Revd Prof. Theodoros Zisis, with the title *Ο Πατριάρχης Γρηγόριος Ε΄ στη συνείδηση του γένους* [*Patriarch Gregory V in the genus’ consciousness*], Thessaloniki: Kyriakides bros publication, 1986, where Revd Theodoros argues about the eminent role of Patriarch Gregory during the Greek Revolution and his sacrifice for the Greek War for Independence. The other book is the book of Prof. Nikolaos Zacharopoulos, titled (in Greek) *Γρηγόριος Ε΄. Σαφής έκφρασις της εκκλησιαστικής πολιτικής επί Τουρκοκρατίας* [*Gregory V: clear expression of the ecclesiastical policy during the Turkish Domination*], Thessaloniki 1974, where Prof. Zacharopoulos argues that Patriarch Gregory was opposed to the Greek Revolution, in order to secure the privileges and the life of the Orthodox Greeks, because he believed that a peaceful coexistence could help the Christians to predominate over the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire (Ibidem, 130-131, 138-139).

⁵ The word Ethnarch is derived from the Greek word ἔθνος (ethnos), which means nation

⁶ Henry George Liddell. Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon. revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940, word: “ethnos”.

by the Ottoman Turks⁷. There were also the Jew and Syrian Orthodox millets⁸. The Patriarch of Constantinople was the ethnarch, which means the supreme religious and political leader, the head of the Rum Millet (millet-bashi in Turkish). According to the millet system, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was Greek – Orthodox (he spoke Greek and he was an Orthodox Christian) was elected by the Holy Synod, but appointed by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire and reported directly to him. According to the historian George Finlay, “the patriarch was in some degree a minister of the sultan for the civil as well as the ecclesiastical affairs of the orthodox”⁹. The patriarch powers were wide, including ecclesiastical, judicial¹⁰, economic¹¹ matters, and family affairs concerning the Orthodox millet. However, he had to serve the Ottoman government by all means¹².

Sir Steven Runciman wondered if the Orthodox Church could accept Turkish rule in perpetuity: “At the back of the mind of every Greek, however faithfully he might collaborate with his [...] Turkish masters, there lurked the belief that one day [...] the united Greek people would rise again and recreate their holy Empire”. Runciman puts the question if the patriarch could ever be whole-heartedly loyal to the ‘infidel’ Sultan, who also would never be certain of the Patriarch’s loyalty. The Orthodox millet, organized by the new constitution of Ottomans, was essentially Greek millet. The Greeks saw it as a way to preserve Hellenism. “But could Hellenism be combined with oecumenicity? Could the Patriarch be Patriarch of the Orthodox Slavs and the Orthodox Arabs as well as of the Greeks? [...]”¹³. Taking into consideration

⁷ Richard C. Frucht, *Eastern Europe: An Introduction to the People, Lands, and Culture*, Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2005, 803.

⁸ Stanford J. Shaw, “Dynamics of Ottoman Society and administration”, in *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*

⁹ George Finlay, *A History of Greece: the Greek Revolution*, London: Clarendon Press, 1877, 126.

¹⁰ Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, 171.

¹¹ Ibidem, 29.

¹² See also Richard C. Frucht, op.cit., 803.

¹³ Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, op. cit., 182.

the above problems, one can realize the difficult position of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

Patriarch Gregory V and the Sultan Selim III

In 1807, when the British Fleet arrived on the verge of Constantinople, threatening to destroy the whole city, unless the Ottoman government did not aside the alliance with French, the Ottoman authorities repaired and strengthened the fortification works, which were done at the area. Patriarch Gregory, as the leader of Rum Millet, helped with his own hands in the defense works of the city. The Sultan himself saw the Patriarch, expressed his satisfaction and called him to eat together in the palace¹⁴. This action could be seen through the Patriarch's aim "for the conservation and rescue of the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Orthodox Church of Romiosini"^{15,16}.

The start of the Greek revolutionary actions

The Greek Revolution began in 1821 and led to the recognition of the Greek newly founded State with the London Protocol of 3rd February 1830. The Revolution was prepared by the Philikí Etaireía (which in Greek means "Society of Friends"), a patriotic secret organization founded in Odessa, in 1814. The desire for independence was common among Greeks. The

¹⁴ Georgios Angelopoulos, *Συλλογή εκ των γραφέντων και παραδοθέντων περι του Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχου Γρηγορίου Ε΄* [Collection from what has been written and delivered on the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V], Athens: Merimna Press, 1863, 24-25.

¹⁵ Romiosini is the Greek Orthodox definition of the nation. See Ahmet Ersoy, Marceij Górný and Vangelis Kechriotis (edit.), *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945), Text and Commentaries, vol. 3, Modernism - Representations of National Culture*, Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010, 253; Ioannou Romanidou, *Ρωμιοσύνη, Ρωμανία, Ρούμελι* [Romiosini, Romania, Roumeli], Thessaloniki: Pournaras Publications, 2002.

¹⁶ Andreas Nanakis, Metropolitan of Arkalochori, Kastelli and Viannos, *Το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο στην Ύστερη Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία. Από το Γένος και την Εθναρχία στο Έθνος* [The Ecumenical Patriarchate in the late Ottoman Empire: from Genos and Ethnarcy to Nation], Thessaloniki: Barbounakis Publications, 2013, 171.

Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church contributed to the survival of the Greek language and the Orthodox faith, which have been key elements of the Greek identity. The administrative arrangements of the Ottoman Empire, the economic progress of the Greek communities and the impact of the ideas of the European Enlightenment prepared the Greek Revolution¹⁷. The Revolt began in February 1821, when prince Alexandros Ypsilantis entered Moldavia with a small force of troops. Moldavia or Moldo - Wallachia was part of the Ottoman Empire. It was also known as Danubian Principalities, semi autonomous areas, which were ruled by Greek (Phanariote) princes, appointed by the Sultan. Alexandros Ypsilantis, a prince of the Danubian Principalities and a senior officer of the Imperial Russian cavalry during the Napoleonic wars, was the leader of the Philikí Etaireía¹⁸.

Ypsilantis, without the support of Russian tsar Alexander I¹⁹, was soon defeated by the Turks. In the meantime, in March 1821, before the Feast of Holy Mother's Annunciation, which became later the Greek Independence Day, so as to underline the role of the Church during the Greek Revolution, sporadic revolts against Turkish authorities had already broken out in the Peloponnese (Modern Greek: Pelopónnisos), in southern Greece, and on several islands²⁰. A few years later, Greece was recognized as an independent state under the protection of the 'Great Powers', with the London Protocol. The London Conference

¹⁷ See also Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and revolution: the making of modern Greece*, U.S.A., 2013.

¹⁸ Apostolos Vakalopoulos, *Νέα Ελληνική Ιστορία (1204-1985)* [*Modern Greek History (1204-1985)*], Thessaloniki: Vantias publications, 2002, 159.

¹⁹ Ibidem, 160.

²⁰ Within a year, the rebels had gained control of the Peloponnese, and in January 1822 they declared the independence of Greece. With the support of the Egyptian fleet, the Ottoman forces successfully invaded Peloponnese. The Greeks, however, were saved by the intervention of the European powers, who offered to mediate between the Turks and the Greeks. When the Turks refused, Great Britain, France and Russia sent their naval fleets to Navarino, where, on October 1827, they destroyed the Egyptian fleet.

of 1832 established the final borders of the newly founded Kingdom of Greece²¹.

The role of Patriarch Gregory during the start of the Greek Uprising

During the Greek Uprising, Patriarch Gregory V was the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Constantinople. Patriarch Gregory was born in Demetsana of the Peloponnese. He went to Mount Athos and Patmos, where he completed his studies. Before being declared as the Ecumenical Patriarch, he ordained deacon, then a priest and then bishop of Smyrna. According to the memoirs of Nicholaos Spiliadis, published in 1851, the Patriarch was informed of the preparation of the Greek Revolution and the organization of the Philiki Etaireia. Thomas Gordon writes in 1832 “[...] we dare not affirm that the Patriarch and the members of the Synod were entirely innocent of plotting against the [Ottoman] state: we have, on the contrary, reason to believe that Gregory knew the Heteria’s [Philiki Etaireia] existence, and that some of the other prelates were deeply engaged in its machinations [...]”²². It is no coincidence that Georgios Afthonidis, the ‘Great Secretary’ of the Patriarchate of the Constantinople, was one of the eminent members of the Philiki Etaireia²³.

One of the Patriarch’s friends advised him to resign, in order to avoid the revenge of the Ottomans, but Gregory replied: "I cannot avoid risk in favor of my nation". The bishop of Derkon advised him to leave Constantinople with other priests and go to Peloponnese to lead the Greek rebels against the Sultan. On the other hand, the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate, which was attended by the great dragoman (great interpreter, translator) of the Sultan, decided that the Revolution in Peloponnese could not

²¹ Nikos Svoronos, *Επισκόπηση της Νεοελληνικής Ιστορίας* [Review of Modern Greek History], Athens: Themelio publications, 1994, 70-73.

²² Thomas Gordon F.R.S., *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol. I., Edinburgh: William Blackwood, MDCCCXXXII [1832], 186.

²³ Valerios Mexas, *Οι Φιλικοί. Κατάλογος των Μελών της Φιλικής Εταιρείας εκ του Αρχείου Σέκερη* [Philikoi. List of the members of Philiki Etaireia from the Sekeris Archive], Athens, 1937, 32, no 201.

be suppressed and only the presence of the patriarch and of the great dragoman in Peloponnese could subject them to the Sultan. The patriarch did not consent to this aspect and he seems to have said to the bishop of Derkon: “[...] I, as the head of the nation, and you, the Holy Synod, must die for the common salvation. Our death will give the right to Christianity to defend our nation against the Sultan. But if we are going to encourage the Revolution, then this will justify the Sultan who decided to destroy [our] whole nation”²⁴. Moreover, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople Count Stroganoff warned the Patriarch for the crucial situation and offered him the way to leave the city safely, but the Patriarch kindly refused his proposal, even though he knew that this decision would put his life in danger²⁵.

Patriarch’s Excommunications against the rebels

Following the outbreak of the revolution of Ypsilantis in Wallachia, in February 1821, massive persecution against Christians in Constantinople began, with massacres and imprisonment of many Christians in retaliation to the above Uprising. Many bishops were imprisoned or executed, such as the Bishop of Ephesus Dionysius who was hanged first²⁶. Under these circumstances, the Patriarch, as the leader of Rum millet, was forced by the Ottoman authorities²⁷ to issue excommunications (anathemas), in order to discourage the rebels. On the other hand, these excommunications could sooth the anger of the Sultan, in an attempt to mollify his overseers²⁸. They were signed by 21 bishops

²⁴ Nikolaos Spiliades, *Απομνημονεύματα συνταχθέντα δια να χρησιμεύσωσιν εις την νέαν ιστορίαν της Ελλάδος* [*Memoires drafted to be used for the modern history of Greece*], vol. I, Athens: H. N. Philadelphos press, 1851, 100, footnote 1.

²⁵ Takis Kondiloros, *Γρηγόριος ο Ε΄* [Gregory V], Athens, 1921, 191-192.

²⁶ Ioannou Philimonos, *Δοκίμιον περί της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως* [*Essay on the Greek Revolution*], Athens: G. Kariofilis press, 1859, 114.

²⁷ Georgios Angelopoulos, *Συλλογή εκ των γραφέντων και παραδοθέντων περί του Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχου Γρηγορίου Ε΄*, [*Collection from what has been written and delivered on the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V*], vol. I, op. cit., 186.

²⁸ See also Ted Theodore in collaboration with Georgia Theodore Kyriazis, *Farewell don’t Forget me. A Hellenic – Romanian Legacy*, USA, 2011, 28.

of the Patriarchate and notables of Constantinople, such as the former ruler of Wallachia Skarlatos Callimachus, the great interpreter of the Sublime Porte Konstantinos Mourouzis, leaders of the guilds and others, altogether 72 people²⁹. The patriarchal synod tried to write a text having a local character, limited to the Christians of Ougrovlachia.

It is worth mentioning that, in this period the Patriarchal Synod, and especially the old prelates, had enhanced powers and took decisions together with the patriarch. Until 1860, the System of Elders, the so called ‘Gerontismos’, governed the Patriarchate. According to this system, the senior prelates (Elders) participated in the administration of the Patriarchate in cooperation with the Patriarch³⁰. That means that the Patriarch acted not only by himself, but also consulting the senior prelates.

However, the Ottoman authorities, who –according to one opinion- pressured the Patriarch to issue these excommunications, placed Turkish-Cretans (Muslims) who knew the Greek language to attend the work of the sessions and to read texts. The first excommunication addressed in the province of Ougrovlachia did not satisfy the Sultan and the ‘Sheikh ul-Islam’ (who governed religious affairs in the Ottoman State), who imposed the Patriarch to issue a second excommunication that included all the Christians of the Ottoman Empire.

Taking into consideration the text of the second excommunication, it is obvious that an attempt was made to write a more diplomatic text and one which would also raise questions regarding the theological interpretation. For example, it did not repeat the curses of the first text, and it was milder regarding the phrases used³¹. The excommunication of the Patriarch resulted to

²⁹ Ibidem, 112.

³⁰ Andreas Nanakis, Metropolitan of Arkalochori, Kastelli and Viannos, *To Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο στην Ύστερη Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία. Από το Γένος και την Εθναρχία στο Έθνος* [*The Ecumenical Patriarchate in the late Ottoman Empire: from Genos and Ethnarcy to Nation*], op. cit., 285-288.

³¹ Alexandros Despotopoulos, “Η Ελληνική Επανάσταση και η δημιουργία του Ελληνικού κράτους (1821-1832)” [The Greek Revolution and the establishment of the Greek State (1821-1832)], in *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* [*History of the Greek Nation*], vol 12, Athens: Ekdotiki Athinon publications, 1975, 36; Petros Georgantzis, *Ο αφορισμός του Αλέξανδρου Υψηλάντη (Ιστορική και*

the end of Alexandros Ypsilantis' Uprising in Danubian Principalities. However, Ypsilantis, in his letter of 29 January 1821 to the Greek general Theodoros Kolokotronis, reassured him that "the Patriarch, pressured by the Sublime Porte, sends dismissively exarches urging to join the Porte [means the Ottoman Sovereignty], but you can consider [however] them as empty, because they have been made by force and dynasty and without the Patriarch's will"³². Gregory in his letter to Isaiah, Bishop of Salona, wrote the following which are indicative about his way of thinking: "soothe the vizier with words and promises, but do not surrender to the 'mouth of the lion'", meaning the Ottoman Sultan³³. In this letter he asked from the bishop Isaiah to protect an Orthodox priest, called Papandreas, who had killed a Turk. The Patriarch characterised the priest's action as patriotic and closed his letter writing the following: "[...] Kiss with my blessings the brave brothers advising them to be hidden 'for the fear of the Jews'. They became brave like lions and the bless of the Lord gives them strength, the Easter of the Savior is near [...]"³⁴.

Germanos bishop of old Patras (Palaion Patron Germanos) sent a letter to Patriarch Gregory via the Greek Diplomatic of Russia Ioannis Papparigopoulos, requesting instructions on what to do. The Patriarch, again in a diplomatical way, replied to the bishop that it was unnecessary to ask for advice about things he already knew³⁵. In another letter of Gregory to the Greek merchant John Zosimas, he wrote the words "help, help, help", while to

Θεολογική διερεύνηση του θέματος) [*Alexandros Ipsilantis' excommunication (Historical and Theological research on this issue)*, Kavala: Parousia publications, 1988.

³² Ioannis Koliopoulos, *Ιστορία της Ελλάδος από το 1800. Τεύχος Α': Το έθνος, η πολιτεία και η κοινωνία των Ελλήνων* [*History of Greece since 1800. Vol. A: Nation, State and the Society of the Greeks*], Thessaloniki: Vaniass publications, 2000, 214, 63-64, 53-57.

³³ G. G. Angelopoulos (edit.)- G. P. Papadopoulos, *Τὰ κατὰ τὸν Πατριάρχην Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Γρηγόριον τὸν Ε΄*, [*According to the Patriarch of Constantinople Gregorios V*], vol. I, Athens: National Printing House, 1865, 221; Takis Kondiloros, op. cit., 197.

³⁴ Takis Kondiloros, op. cit., 197; On the other hand, Prof. Zacharopoulos denies its authenticity. See Gregorios Zacharopoulos, op. cit., 126-127.

³⁵ Takis Kondiloros, op. cit., 180.

Alexandros Ypsilantis he thrice wrote the word "prudence". Ypsilantis and Zosimas replied to the Patriarch's letters via Paparigopoulos, mentioning that they would send a ship and money for his runaway. Gregory replied that, with those words, he wanted to draw their attention to the crucial situation and to the need of help for the rebels. As far as the money was concerned, it should be spent for the Revolution, and himself only dead would leave, as it actually happened in the end³⁶. The Patriarch established a fund, known as "box of Mercy" (Kivotio Eleous), for charitable activities and there is a serious possibility that it was also established by Gregory V for the needs of the Greek Revolution³⁷, although this aspect is rejected by Prof. Zacharopoulos³⁸, due to the lack of enough evidence and the small amount of money, which eventually was raised.

Although Gregory was accused for condemning the Greek Revolution and for the excommunications (anathemas) he gave to the rebels, which were the ultimate ecclesiastical punishment for a Christian, there is another widespread rumor that the Patriarch, together with 12 prelates, went to the patriarchal church of St. George and, in a secret ceremony, he annulled the excommunication and blessed the struggle "for Faith and Fatherland"³⁹. It is obvious that the Patriarch had been in a dilemma: either to condemn the Greek Revolution and to silence the anger of the sultan, or refuse to obey to the Sultan's will, causing the massacre of thousands of Christians in the Ottoman Empire. According to John Binns, the dilemma was whether to encourage the Greek nationalism and the establishment of a Greek state or whether to support the Ottoman authorities, and especially the sultan, the 'source of patriarchal authority'. "Whatever he did he would be the loser"⁴⁰.

³⁶ Ibidem, 188.

³⁷ Ibidem, 175.

³⁸ Gregorios Zacharopoulos, op. cit., 108-110.

³⁹ Pericles Vizoukides, "Η Εκκλησία και ο ιερός άγων" [The Church and the holy struggle], *Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς* [*Gregorios Palamas*], 21 (1937), 141-143.

⁴⁰ John Binns, *An Introduction to the Christian Orthodox Churches*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 12.

The following article⁴¹ of the Phanariot⁴² Georgios Mavrokordatos, in 1852, in the newspaper *Aion* [Century], referred to the events of those days and argued that the Patriarch himself proposed the excommunications, in order to protect the life of his flock:

“[...] In 1821 [...] the sultan Mahmud was furious and wanted to take revenge of the Christians, because they conspired against his throne and the Ottoman nation and asked, as usual, [to issue] a fatwa⁴³ by the Sheikh ul-Islam (Shaykh al-Islām) [who governed religious affairs of the Ottoman State] Hadji Halil Efendi, in order to slaughter all the youngsters and capture all the Orthodox Christians in the Turkish territory, by his approval [...].

As soon as the glorious Patriarch Gregory learned all these, he was deeply troubled and visited Sheikh ul-Islam [...]; and [...] as ethnarch [of the Rum millet] he fended the category against the genus [of the Greeks] with the usual profundity, modesty and dignity.[...]”.

And Sheikh ul-Islam seems to have said:

“[...] “Do not doubt about my charity and my righteous character; Bring me only an official proof that this Revolution is not as general in nature as claiming. Prove me that you had no knowledge of the whole matter; make clear that all your ‘genus’ [nation] had nothing to do with this matter and I will do the rest; neither the high position that I possess nor the risk of my own life can prevent me to defend with all my strength the whole nation threatened to suffer from complete calamity”.

His All-Holliness [the Patriarch Gregory] [...] promised to bring the proofs⁴⁴. [Patriarch Gregory] convened the Holy Synod

⁴¹ *Αιών* [*Aion, newspaper*], Athens, 24 May 1852.

⁴² Phanariots were prominent Greeks residing in Phanar, where the Patriarchate of Constantinople is situated. They were well-educated officials of the Ottoman Empire, some of them rulers of Danubian Principalities and diplomats. It is worth mentioned that Alexandros Ypsilantis, Prince of Danubian Principalities, and leader of Greek Revolution in Wallachya, was a member of a Greek Phanariot family.

⁴³ fatwā is a legal judgment, a special order that a mufti can give on issues pertaining to the Islamic law.

⁴⁴ “[...] He returned to the Patriarchate agitated and ineluctable. [...] Then he called his near friends [and bishops] Dionysius metropolitan of Ephesus,

and proposed to them the excommunication. Everybody signed silently.

According to this newspaper of 1852, “[...] Gregory armed with this proof [...] was presented to Sheikh ul-Islam. [Hadji Halil Efendi] was fully persuaded and consequently he refused the fatwa to the Sultan”. He told him that “[...] from the proofs that he collected there is no guilt of the whole nation and its notables [...]”. As it was written in the Quran, Shaykh al-Islām asked from the Sultan to separate the innocent from the guilty and disapproved the fatwa. The Sultan was enraged, he deposed and exiled Sheikh ul-Islam and ordered his assassination. He also ordered the assassination of Greek officials and of the patriarch Gregory⁴⁵.

It is more possible that Sheikh ul-Islam refused the fatwa, after Patriarch Gregory’s warm request⁴⁶. As far as the person who was initiative for the excommunication, either one or the other happened, it is almost sure that the Patriarch had no choice for alternative solution, and he tried by any means to save the life of his Orthodox flock.

There is evidence that Patriarch Gregory, although he formally⁴⁷ condemned the Greek Revolution, lifted the

Athanasius metropolitan of Nicomedia, Gregory metropolitan of Derkon, Dorotheus metropolitan of Andrianoupolis; He stated to them the facts and the great risk for the [nation]; he notified the plan he had thought about the excommunication saying: “This [the excommunication] will be done only typically, without my intimate and sincere will in this, and will not cause any harm to the salvation of the nation, which we endorse; [...] many unarmed and unprepared peoples will be saved by these simple words”. The four prelates agreed with these, because they found them reasonable.

⁴⁵ *Αιών* [Aion, newspaper], Athens, 24 May 1852; Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History, Selected Articles and Essays*, Leiden: Brill, 2002, 415: “[...] The Patriarch had persuaded the Şeyhülislam to believe that only a few rebels had rebelled against Porte. The Şeyhülislam consequently, in a rare act of courage, refused to issue the Fetwa [...]. Sultan Mahmud II, in anger, exiled and then executed the Şeyhülislam, and later hanged the Patriarch despite the latter’s innocence [...]”.

⁴⁶ Theodoros Zisis, op. cit., 45-46.

⁴⁷ Willston Walker et al., *A History of the Christian Church*, New York, 1985, 678.

excommunications against the rebels⁴⁸ in a special ceremony which took place in the Church of St George, in the Patriarchate, a few days before his death. According to this option, Patriarch Gregory with the prelates of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate lifted the excommunication with the following words: “God Almighty, you who sent your Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, into the world, in order to be incarnated through the Holy Spirit by the Ever-Virgin Mary and to die on the Cross for us, firstly, forgive us who have sinned, contravening the order of Your Only-begotten Son, who ordered us “Do wish and do not curse”. Then, as you have ordered us to bind and lift, we lift this excommunication, which we addressed to the Christian flock without our will. Yes, [our] Lord, [our] King, listen to us and strengthen and save it [the flock] by your stretched arm, because you are glorious with your Only-begotten Son and your All-Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.”⁴⁹.

According to G. Papadopoulos, “[...] Patriarch Gregorios [Gregory], three days before his conviction [...] calls Mr. Rigas Palamides and other notables of the Peloponnese and he says: ‘we issued excommunication against armed genus [nation] because we feared the massacre of the unarmed genus [nation]. Head towards the Peloponnese and announce to the bishop of Old Patras Germanos and to the other prelates that I bless the works of the hands of the Greek people. Fight against the Agarinous

⁴⁸ Pericles A. Vizoukidis, “Η Εκκλησία και ο ιερός άγων” [The Church and the holy struggle]”, op. cit., 141-143.

⁴⁹ Margarita Raftopoulou (edit.), *Η Βιογραφία και το Μαρτύριον του Πατριάρχου Γρηγορίου Ε΄. Άγνωστοι Λεπτομέρειαι προκαλούσαι ρίγη ιεράς συγκινήσεως και λατρείας προς το σεπτόν σκήνωμα και την μνήμη του αιδίου Πατριάρχου* [The Biography and the Martyrdom of Patriarch Gregory V. Unknown details causing chills of sacred emotion and worshipping to the venerable relic and the memory of the glorious Patriarch], n.p.[Athens], n.d., 28; Special Committee of the Common Guardian of Greeks in Bondage, *Βιογραφία και το μαρτύριον του πατριάρχου Γρηγορίου Ε΄. Άγνωστοι λεπτομέρειαι*, [The Biography and the Martyrdom of Patriarch Gregory V. Unknown details] Athens [n.d.], 32; Theodoros Zisis, *Ο Πατριάρχης Γρηγόριος στη συνείδηση του Γένους* [Patriarch Gregory V in the genus’ consciousness], op. cit., 49-51; Georgios Pilavios, *Τα κατά τον Πατριάρχη Γρηγόριον Ε΄*, [According to the patriarch Gregory V], Athens, 1872, 13.

[Ottomans]”⁵⁰. Even though this could be considered as an exaggeration and an effort to improve patriarch Gregory’s profile in favour of the Greek rebels this is another proof that, in the end, patriarch Gregory supported the Greek War for Independence.

Patriarch Gregory and Philiki Etaireia

Ioannis Pharmakis, who was a Greek revolutionary leader during the Greek Revolution of 1821, he visited Patriarch Gregory in Mount Athos, in 1818, where the Patriarch was exiled by the Ottoman authorities. Pharmakis mentions that the Patriarch “showed great enthusiasm about the spirit of the Revolution and wished wholeheartedly for the achievement of its object”⁵¹. The Patriarch refused to take an oath to become a member of Philiki Etaireia, as a clergy, and he said that if his name was revealed, this would endanger the whole nation. He specifically stressed that he should be very careful not to harm the nation. Despite the concerns of the Patriarch, many members of Philiki Etaireia believed that patriarch Gregory was a member of it⁵². On the other hand, Paschalis Kitromilides argues that patriarch Gregory refused to join the Revolution, because he was bound by oath to the authority of the sultan⁵³.

Emmanuel Xanthos, one of the Founders of Philiki Etaireia, writes that the Patriarch Gregory sent a recommendation letter to the metropolitans, the archbishops, the bishops, the priests of the Greek islands and to the prokritoi, the Greek leading class in the occupied Greece, to help Dimitrios Themelis to

⁵⁰ G. G. Angelopoulos (edit.) - G. P. Papadopoulos, *Τα κατά τον Πατριάρχη Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Γρηγόριον Ε΄*, [According to the Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory V], op.cit., 359.

⁵¹ Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, “Η Εκκλησία της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως και η μεγάλη Επανάσταση του 1821 [The Church of Constantinople and the Greek Revolution of 1821]”, *Theologia* 21 (1950), 314.

⁵² Ibidem, 314, footnote 1.

⁵³ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution. The making of Modern Greece*, USA: Harvard College, 2013, 311.

arrange his affairs and to solve important matters. Themelis was born in Patmos, continued his studies in Constantinople (Istanbul) and became a member of the Philiki Etaireia. He visited almost all the Greek islands, in order to prepare the Greeks for the Greek Revolution in Peloponnese, in Northern Greece. He died in 1826 during the siege of Messolongi. This letter of the Patriarch referring to one of the leading members of the Philiki Etaireia reveals his awareness of the Greek Revolution and his secret support through a pain staking way of writing⁵⁴. This aspect is rejected by Prof. Zacharopoulos, who believed that this was a common recommendation letter of those times⁵⁵, but it is almost impossible that the patriarch, the leader of the Rum Millet, ignored the preparation of the Greek Uprising.

Moreover, in 1819, patriarch Gregory sent a letter to Petrobey Mavromichalis, the leader of Maniates, inhabitants of the Mani Peninsula, in Southern Peloponnese, and one of the leaders of the Greek Revolution. In this letter, Gregory writes to Petrobey that he had to help for the establishment of a Great School in Peloponnese, but with the name “Great School” the members of Philiki Etairia meant the upcoming Greek Revolution⁵⁶, but this – in one aspect- doesn’t mean necessary that he knew that he was writing about the Greek Revolution⁵⁷. Moreover, Prof. Zacharopoulos has doubt about the role of the Patriarch in favor of the Greek Uprising⁵⁸.

Photakos, an eminent personality of the Greek War for Independence, known for his memoirs, writes about Patriarch Gregory that he did not initially decide to join the Greek Uprising, because he thought it was not the appropriate time for it, and this could damage the whole Greek nation. On the other hand, the

⁵⁴ Emmanouil Xanthos, *Apomnimoneumata* [Memoirs], 127.

⁵⁵ Nikolaos Zacharopoulos, *Γρηγόριος V. Σαφής έκφρασις της εκκλησιαστικής πολιτικής επί Τουρκοκρατίας*, [*Gregory V: clear expression of the ecclesiastical policy during the Turkish Domination*], op. cit., 125.

⁵⁶ Ioannou Philimonos, *Δοκίμιον περί της Ελληνικής Επαναστάσεως* [*Essay on the Greek Revolution*], op. cit., 157-158.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 242-244.

⁵⁸ Nikolaos Zacharopoulos, op. cit., 125-127; There is another letter of the Patriarch to the Great Dragoman (interpreter) Leventis, in order to support the ‘School’ in Peloponnese.

bishop of Derkon persuaded Gregory to accept the Philiki Etairia and the Greek Uprising; his following words are characteristic: “We will drink from the holy Grail in the sanctuary of St. Sophia; and if we do not catch up, we will become martyrs of Liberty and Christianity”⁵⁹.

Finally, The Bulgarian historian and Academic Nicholai Todorov argues that patriarch Gregory had close relations and was in contact with Bulgarian members of Philiki Etairia, such as the Bulgarian merchant Hadji, Christo Ratskov (Khristo Rachkov), who contributed financially to the Greek Revolution⁶⁰, kept hidden ammunitions for the Greek Uprising⁶¹ and lent money to the Greek Patriarchate⁶².

According to the Archbishop of Athens Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, taking into consideration the careful and distant behaviour of the patriarch, Gregory probably was not a member of Philiki Etaireia⁶³, the secret organization which prepared the Greek Revolution of 1821, although he collaborated with members of it⁶⁴. This is a very serious aspect which takes into consideration the role of patriarch Gregory as the leader of the Rum Millet and the ‘Phanariot diplomacy’ which is a common characteristic of the prelates of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul.

⁵⁹ Photakos, *Βίος του Παπα Φλέσσα* [*The life of Papaflessas*], Athens: Kalkandi publications, 1868, 28.

⁶⁰ Evguenia Davidova, *Balkan Transitions to Modernity and Nation-States. Through the Eyes of Three Generations of Merchants (1780s - 1890s)*, Brill: Leiden, 1913, 159; Nikolai Todorov, *Filiki eteria i Bŭlgarite*, Sofia: Izdalestvo na Bŭlgarskata academia na naukite, 1963, 85.

⁶¹ P. Papatheodorou, *Ο Γρηγόριος Ε΄ και η Επανάσταση του '21* [*Gregory V and the Revolution of 1821*], Athens- Tinos, 1986, 49.

⁶² N. Todorov, “The commercial practices and protoindustrial activities of Hacı Hristo Rachkov, A Bulgarian Trader at the end of the eighteenth to the beginning of the Nineteenth century” *Oriente moderno* 25 (2006), 77.

⁶³ His name is not among the members of Philiki Etaireia, according to the Catalogue of the members from Panagiotis Sekeris’ Archive. See Valerios Mexas, *Οι Φιλικοί. Κατάλογος των Μελών της Φιλικής Εταιρείας εκ του Αρχείου Σέκερη* [*Philikoi. List of the members of Philiki Etaireia from the Sekeris Archive*], op. cit.; See also Nikolaos Zacharopoulos, op. cit., 128.

⁶⁴ Tassos Gritsopoulos, “Gregorios V [Gregory V]”, *Θρησκευτική και Ηθική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια* [*Religious and Ethical Encyclopedia*], vol. 4, Athens, 1964, 739.

Patriarch Gregory's execution and its impact all over the world

Gregory was forced out of the Patriarchal Cathedral of St George in the Patriarchate by the Ottoman authorities, on Easter 1821, after celebrating the solemn Easter Liturgy. The Ottomans deposed him from Patriarch and forced the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate to elect a new one. They threw him into prison and afterwards he was hanged in front of the main gate of the Patriarchate, where his body was left hanging for three days. The news of the murder of the patriarch spread even to the United States of America⁶⁵.

The Religious Intelligencer published the following text about Patriarch Gregory and the Greek Revolution: "Letters from Constantinople of the 25th April, give a deplorable picture of the state of things there. On Easter Sunday, April 23rd, when Gregory, the patriarch of Constantinople, 74 years of age, was just going to read High Mass in the Patriarchal Chapel, he was seized by order of the Sultan, and hanged at the door of the temple; a mode of death which in the eyes of all the Greeks is the most infamous, and must therefore excite boundless hatred. All the Archbishops and Bishops who were in the Church on account of the celebration of Easter, were either executed or thrown into prison. [...].

Nothing particular was proved respecting the motives for the execution of the Patriarch. But [...] it is supposed that the [Sublime] Port[e] was thus induced to suspect the venerable old man. But it is certain that this execution will excite the utmost desperation among the Christians throughout Greece. It is worthy of remark, that all the Greek bishops who concurred in singing the

⁶⁵ According to *Connecticut Gazzete* of 1821 "Constantinople is a scene of disturbance and massacre. The grand Seignior [means the Ottoman Sultan] to revenge the insurrection in his northern provinces has had recourse to the most dreadful reprisals. The Greek Patriarch has been strangled, and four Archbishops have been massacred." *Connecticut Gazzete*, Connecticut, U.S.A., 11/7/1821; See also *City Directories for New York*, New York, 1831, page no 28: "Intelligence arrived at New - York that Gregory, the Patriarch of Constantinople, had been hung, on the 23rd of April, on the mandate of the sultan".

anathema, now languish in prisons, and will probably share the fate of their Patriarch.”⁶⁶.

The British ambassador in Constantinople Stratford Canning (cousin of the British prime minister George Canning) writes about Gregory’s execution: “[...] At five o’ clock of the evening of Easter Sunday [April 1821], the good and venerable patriarch, after performing the service of that solemn festival, was seized on his departure from the church, and hanged at the gate, in the presence of an immense multitude. Three more Greek bishops (those of Ephesus, Derkon and Aghialos) were executed at the same time and in the same ignominious manner, but in different quarters of Constantinople [...]”⁶⁷.

The Dutch diplomat Gaspard Testa, who was later appointed “Minister - resident of the king of Netherlands in Istanbul”⁶⁸, writes, in April 1821, to his government about Patriarch Gregory’s execution and patriarch’s role in the Greek War for Independence: “This Head of the Church, named Gregory [Gregorios] was verified as accomplice and main instigator of the Conspiracy of the Greeks. Born in Peloponnese and wishing to hide in the best way his “game” from the eyes of the [Ottoman] government had become –as it is said- guarantor in favor of the Metropolitan of Old Patras, instigator of the Revolution in the Peloponnese. The Sultan, after confirming Gregory’s participation with clear proofs and documents, imposed the penalty, according to his felony. The attached notice posted on his dead body will inform your Excellency about the accusations that led him to the gallows.”⁶⁹. The text with the accusation to the Patriarch Gregory,

⁶⁶ *The Religious Intelligencer*, 8/4/1821.

⁶⁷ Theophilus C. Prousis, “Eastern Orthodoxy Under Siege in the Ottoman Levant: A View from Constantinople in 1821”, University of North Florida, *History Faculty Publications*, Paper 13 (2008), 48.

⁶⁸ Alexander H. De Groot, “The Dragomans of the Embassies in Istanbul 1785-1834”, in *Eastward Bound. Dutch Ventures and Adventures in the Middle East*, edit. By Geert Jan van Gelder and Ed de Moor, Amsterdam - Atlanta: Editions Rodopi B.V., 1994, 153-155.

⁶⁹ Georgios Zoras, *Ο απαγχονισμός του Πατριάρχου Γρηγορίου του Ε΄ εις την έχθειν του Ολλανδού Επιτετραμμένου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* [*The hanging of the patriarch Gregory V in the report of the Dutch Delegate of Constantinople*], Athens, 1976, 13-14: “[...] This leader of the Church, named Gregory, had proved

which was posted on his dead body is, among others, the following: “the dishonest Patriarch of the Rum [milliet], although previously had given the fake impression of devotion, but in this case to ignore the conspiracy of the revolution of his nation [...] due to the inherent corruption of his heart, not only did he not notify, nor reprehended the naive [rebels] [...], but, apparently, he himself, behind the scenes, secretly acted as the leader of the revolution.”⁷⁰. It is obvious that Gaspard Testa was based to the formal accusations of the Ottomans, in order to write his report.

to be an accomplice and prime mover of the conspiracy of the Greeks. He was born in Peloponnese and he desired by best way to hide his ‘game’ from the eyes of the [Ottoman] Government and he became, as it is said, guarantor for the Metropolitan of Patras, promoter of the Revolution in Peloponnese. When his participation [in the Revolution] was certified by clear evidence and documents, the Sultan imposed the punishment which drew his felony. The attached notice, which posted on the dead, will inform your Excellency about the accusations which led him to the gallows”. The Greek text is as follows: “[...] Ο αρχηγός ούτος της Εκκλησίας, ονόματι Γρηγόριος, είχε εξελεγχθή ως συνένοχος και κύριος υποκινητής της συνωμοσίας των Ελλήνων. Γεννηθείς εις Πελοπόννησον και επιθυμών κατά καλύτερον τρόπον να αποκρούσει το «παιγνίδι» του από τους οφθαλμούς της Κυβερνήσεως, είχε καταστεί, λέγουν, εγγυητής υπέρ του μητροπολίτου Πατρών, υποκινητού της επαναστάσεως της Πελοποννήσου. Πιστοποιηθείσης της συμμετοχής του δια σαφών αποδείξεων και εγγράφων, ο σουλτάνος του επέβαλε την ποινήν την οποίαν επέσυρε το κακούργημά του. Η συνημμένη προκήρυξις, αναρτηθείσα επί του νεκρού, θα πληροφορήση την Υμετέρα Εξοχότητα περί των κατηγοριών αίτινες τον οδήγησαν εις την αγχόνη [...]”.

⁷⁰ Georgios Zoras, *Ο απαγχονισμός του Πατριάρχου Γρηγορίου του Ε΄ εις την έκθεσιν του Ολλανδού Επιτετραμμένου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* [*The hanging of the patriarch Gregory V in the report of the Dutch Delegate of Constantinople*], op. cit., 9: “[...] the dishonest Romios Patriarch [patriarch of the Rum Millet], although in the past had given false samples of dedication, however in this case it is not liable to ignore the conspiracy of revolution of his nation [...] due to the inherent corruption of his heart, not only he do not notice, nor rebuked the simpletons [...] but, apparently, he himself, behind the scenes, was acting secretly, as the leader of the revolution.”. The Greek text is as follows: “ο δόλιος Ρωμής Πατριάρχης, καίτοι κατά το παρελθόν είχε δώσει πλαστά δείγματα αφοσιώσεως, όμως κατά την περίπτωσιν ταύτην, μη δυνάμενος να αγνοή την συνωμοσίαν της επαναστάσεως του έθνους του [...] ένεκα της εμφύτου διαφθοράς της καρδιάς του, ου μόνον δεν ειδοποίησε, ουδέ επετίμησε τους αφελείς [...], αλλά, κατά τα φαινόμενα, αυτός ο ίδιος, όπισθεν των παρασκηνίων, έδρα κρυφίως, ως αρχηγός της επαναστάσεως.”.

Gregory's body was then taken down, dragged through the streets by the Jews⁷¹ and finally thrown into the Bosphorus. The body was recovered by Greek sailors and a captain named Nicholaos Sclavos. His funeral took place in Odessa and his body was identified by a commission of Greek refugees and buried with great honour by the Russian authorities⁷².

The execution of the patriarch Gregory V led Tsar Alexander I to withdraw the Russian ambassador in Constantinople Count Strogannoff.⁷³ This execution shocked the Greeks, and all Christians, not only the Orthodox people. Moreover, it caused protests in Europe and reinforced the movement of Philhellenism⁷⁴ and the Greek Struggle for Independence.

Dionysios Solomos, in his Hymn to Liberty⁷⁵, which later became the Greek national anthem, also mentions the hanging of the Patriarch in some stanzas (verses):

“Όλοι κλαῦστε· ἀποθαμένος
ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τῆς Ἐκκλησιᾶς
κλαῦστε, κλαῦστε κροεμασμένος
ὡσὰν νᾶτανε φονιάς.”

“everyone weep
the leader of the Church passed away

⁷¹ William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and its successors, 1801-1927*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1936, 75; Richard Clogg, *A Short History of Modern Greece*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 54.

⁷² See Adrian Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, Edition, 2001, 341-342.

⁷³ Richard Clogg, *A short history of modern Greece*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 54-55.

⁷⁴ Philhellenism was a movement of 19th century. It was found especially among the classicists, because of their admire for the Classic Letters and Ancient Greek. It derives from the Greek word *Philos* (friend, lover) and the word Hellenism (Greek). Philhellenism led Europeans, such as Lord Byron, to support the Greek War for Independence. See M. Byron Raizis, *American poets and the Greek revolution, 1821-1828: A study in Byronic philhellenism*, Institute of Balkan Studies, 1971.

⁷⁵ The Greek anthem is adapted from a poem by Dionýsios Solomós which is 158 verses (stanzas) long. As such, the Greek anthem is the longest in the world, though it is almost always performed as an abridged work, using the first two verses of the poem.

weep weep hanged he is
as if he was a murderer”

“A Modern Martyr”

In 1871, 50 years after his death⁷⁶, he was eventually enshrined in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Greek Revolution. The reburial of Patriarch Gregory V was part of a political ceremony about the celebration of the 50 years from the outbreak from the Greek War of Independence. This ceremony is related to the efforts of the political authorities to rebuild their prestige and to legitimize their position. Under these circumstances, “the body of Patriarch Gregory was appeared as a symbol of an orthodox nation which had not forgotten its mission”. On the other hand, king George I of Greece (king of the Hellenes) initially intended to combine this political ceremony with his Name Day Celebration⁷⁷, and when this didn’t happened, he actively participated in the ceremony and he tried to connect symbolically the two

⁷⁶ Denis Vladimirovich Vovchenko, *Containing Balkan Nationalism: Imperial Russia and Ottoman Christians (1856-1912), A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota*, Minnesota, 2008, 176: “The timing if the transfer in the spring 1871 helped to somewhat dampen the passions fanned during the critical point in the Bulgarian Question [...] That was the occasion to placate the Greek national sensibilities and to remind the readers of the traditional Russian protecting role on ‘the East’. [...]”; The jubilee year (1871) of the Greek Revolution (1821) was an opportunity to show the connection between Greek national identity and Orthodoxy. The transportation in Athens of the body of patriarch Gregory V confirmed “the merging of religion and secular nationalism to which the German royal administration [king Othon] had been an involuntary accomplice with the 1838 proclamation of Annunciation Day as the national holiday [...]”; See Victor Roudometof, “Toward an Archaeology of National Commemorations in the Balkans”, in *National Symbols, Fractured Identities*, Michael E. Geister, edit., U.S.A.: Middlebury College Press, 2005, 47.

⁷⁷ See also *Εθνοφύλαξ* [*National Guard*] (newspaper), Athens, 9 April 1871.

celebrations, in order to appear himself as the one who embodies the historical continuity of the Greek nation⁷⁸.

According to an article in *London Times* of 1871, titled ‘A Modern Martyr’, “[...] A little unpleasantness has arisen at Constantinople respecting the alleged remains of the Patriarch Gregory, who was hanged in Stambul [sic] during the War of Independence. *The Levant Herald* states that the Porte, having refused to allow a Greek frigate to pass up to Odessa to receive on board these alleged remains, the merchant steamer Byzantium, belonging to the Greek Steam Navigation Company, was despatched instead, and reached the Bosphorus on the morning of the 11th inst. [April] on her way to the Black sea. She has on board a commission deputed by the Greek Government to receive the body, consisting of the Archbishop of Phthiotis and some other members of the Greek Clergy. It has also been stipulated by the [Sublime] Porte that the Byzantium shall on her return on Odessa pass through the Bosphorus during the night, so as to prevent any possible demonstration on the part of the local Greek population. The body of the “martyred” prelate has been asked for by the Greek from the Russian Government and is to receive the honour of a national funeral at Athens in pursuance of a recent vote of the Greek Chamber. [...]”⁷⁹

Patriarch Gregory is commemorated by the Orthodox Church as an Ethnomartyr. In his memory, the Saint Peter Gate, once the main gate of the Patriarchate, has remained shut ever since.

Sultan Mahmud’s II policy towards Patriarch Gregory

The Sultan obviously chose to kill Gregory in order to intimidate the Greek rebels. He did not just wish to kill the Patriarch of Constantinople and leader of Rum Millet; on the

⁷⁸ Haris Exertzoglou, “Πολιτικές τελετουργίες στη νεότερη Ελλάδα. Η μετακομιδή των οστών του Γρηγορίου Ε΄ και η Πεντακονταετηρίδα της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης [Political rituals in Modern Greece. The reburial of Gregory V and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Greek Revolution]” in *Mnemon* (December 2002), 153-182

⁷⁹ *The Times*, London, 25 April 1871.

contrary, he was also expecting with this act to discourage the Greek rebels⁸⁰ and to establish public order through terror and fear⁸¹. In the meantime he had already replaced Gregory with another prelate, the deaf Metropolitan of Pisidia Eugene, who became the new Patriarch⁸². Patriarch Gregory's successor "on the way to the sultan's palace to seek confirmation of his election, he had to pass through the gate from which the body of his predecessor still hung"⁸³. With this decision the Sublime Porte probably showed to the European Powers that the problem was about the Patriarch Gregory and not about the Ecumenical Patriarchate in general.

In Ottoman eyes, patriarch Gregory had failed to fulfil his duty⁸⁴ to the Sultan as the leader of the Rum Millet, as responsible for the behaviour of his Christian subjects, even though he anathematized Ypsilantis' Uprising in February 1821, and in 1819 he wrote the Paternal Instruction (Patriki Parainesi) in which he stated that God sent the Sultan to salvage Christians from their sufferings⁸⁵. These actions could be considered as a diplomatic solution, a way to solve a deadlock by deceiving the Ottoman Sultan, in order to prevent him from becoming aware of what really the patriarch wanted, so as to avoid the Sultan's retaliation; But the excommunication of Ypsilantis did not exonerate Gregory

⁸⁰ Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, "H Ecclesia Constantinoupoleos kai i Megali epanastasis tou 1821", op. cit., 491.

⁸¹ Edward Blaquières, *Histoire de la révolution actuelle de la Grèce, son origine, ses progrès, et détails sur la religion, les mœurs et la caractère national*, traduit de l'anglais par de Dr Blaquières, vol. I, Paris et Leipzig, 1825.

⁸² Zacharias Mathas, *Κατάλογος Ιστορικός των πρώτων Επισκόπων και των εφεξής Πατριαρχών της Αγίας και Μεγάλης του Χριστού Εκκλησίας* [*Historical Catalogue of the first Bishops and the hereafter Patriarchs of the Holy and Great Church of Christ in Constantinople*], Athens: Andreas Koromilas publications, 1884, 170-171.

⁸³ John T.S. Madeley and Zsolt Enyedi, *Church and State in Contemporary Europe: the Chimera of Neutrality*, London (Frank Cass Publishers) 2003, 126.

⁸⁴ Richard Clogg, *A Short history of modern Greece*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 55.

⁸⁵ Richard Clogg, "The Dhidhaskalia Patriki (1798): an Orthodox Reaction to the French Revolutionary Propaganda", *Middle Eastern Studies* 5 (1969), 87-115; Brian Griffith, *Different Visions of Love: Partnership and Dominator Values in Christian History*, USA, 2008, 281-282.

V. The position of the leader of the Rum Millet was really dangerous⁸⁶.

The execution of the patriarch was a warning to the rebels and a punishment for the Orthodox Church's failure to prevent the Greek Uprising⁸⁷. It was also a kind of retaliation for the death of Muslims during the War⁸⁸.

Patriarch Gregory as a "Saint" and as a "Rebel"

Although the Orthodox Church, in April 1921, decided to declare him a Saint, there were many people who disagreed with this decision. Manuel Gedeon, a scholar from Fener, Istanbul, and Chronographer of the Ecumenical Patriarchate⁸⁹, wrote that the Metropolitan of Zakynthos had told him that Patriarch Gregory should not be a Saint of the Church⁹⁰, only because of his execution by the Turks⁹¹. On the other hand, his statue, along with that of Rigas Feraios, the Greek revolutionary and eminent representative of the Modern Greek Enlightenment, who was anathematized for his liberated ideas⁹² against the Ottoman State,

⁸⁶ Arnold Toynbee, *The Greeks and their heritages*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, 143.

⁸⁷ K. E. Fleming, *Greece. A Jewish History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, 16.

⁸⁸ Dale T. Irvin, "Faith at the Margins: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew as Bridge Builder", in *The Witness of Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch*, edit. William G. Rusch, Michigan, 2013, 71.

⁸⁹ Alexandros Papazoglou, "A scholar from Fener and his contribution to Hellenism during the Ottoman period - The "Great Hartophylax" Manuel Gedeon, the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the education of the Nation", *Mare Ponticum* 3 (2013), 1.

⁹⁰ Manouil Gedeon, *Εφημερίδες [Newspapers]*, Athens, 1936-1938, 446; About the Canonization of Patriarch Gregory V see also I. M. Panagiotopoulos, "Προσπάθεια Αγιοποίησης Γρηγορίου Ε' [An effort of Canonization of Gregory V]", *Elliniki Demiourgia* 13 (1954), 353-360.

⁹¹ In 1823, some people tried to declare Gregory V as a Saint with no success. See also "Προσπάθεια αγιοποίησης Γρηγορίου Ε' [An effort of Canonization of Gregory V]", *op. cit.*, 356-360.

⁹² In 1798 Patriarch Gregory condemned the revolutionary pamphlet issued by Rigas and instructed the prelates to collect all copies that might appear in their dioceses, in order to be burnt. He also characterized the ideas of the French Revolution as a 'recently emergent disease'. See Paschalis Kitromilides,

stands outside the University of Athens together with the statues of other great martyrs of the Greek War for Independence. Gregory conflicted with Rigas' ideas and in 1797 urged Anthimos, metropolitan of Smyrna, to prevent the copies of the constitution of Rigas from falling into the hands of Christians because they were "damaging to the faith"⁹³.

The execution of patriarch Gregory defused the wrath of the Sultan and made the Patriarch one of the first victims and martyr of the Greek War for Independence, "in search of emotionally appealing symbols necessary to mobilize support"⁹⁴. The fact is that Gregory had to maintain the balance between the Sultan and the aspirations of the Greek Orthodox people.

According to Arnold Toynbee, "[...] the Greeks were under the spell of two incompatible aspirations. They had not given up the Phanariot ambition of entering into the whole heritage of the Osmanlis and keeping the Ottoman Empire intact as a 'going concern' under Greek management"⁹⁵, and at the same time they had conceived the ambition of establishing a sovereign independent national state of their own [...]"⁹⁶.

Of course, there were Greeks at that time who thought that Patriarch Gregory acted always under the Sultan rule and they criticized him for a servile behavior, as Adamantios Korais⁹⁷, one

"Orthodoxy and the west: Reformation to Enlightenment", *The Cambridge History of Christianity. Vol. 5, Eastern Christianity*, edited by Michael Angold, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 207; See also Nikolaos Zacharopoulos, *Σαφής έκφρασις της εκκλησιαστικής πολιτικής επί Τουρκοκρατίας [Gregory V: clear expression of the ecclesiastical policy during the Turkish Domination]*, op. cit.

⁹³ Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History, Selected Articles and Essays*, Leiden: Brill, 2002, 415.

⁹⁴ Ibidem, 416.

⁹⁵ This was Patriarch Gregory's aim, according to Zacharopoulos. See N. Zacharopoulos, op. cit., 139.

⁹⁶ Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History, Abridgment of volumes I-IV by D. C. Somervell*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974, 132.

⁹⁷ See also *Αριστοτέλους Πολιτικών. Τα Σωζόμενα, εκδίδοντος και διορθούντος Α. Κ. [Αδαμαντίου Κοραή], φιλοτίμω δαπάνη των ομογενών, επ' αγαθώ της Ελλάδος, Προλεγόμενα Αδ. Κοραή, ρκ'. [Aristotle, Politics, The saved, published and corrected by Adamantios Korais, kindly paid by the Greek expatriates for the benefit of Greece]*, Paris, 1821.

of the most important representatives of the Greek Enlightenment. But this was also an ideological battle among the representatives of the Greek Enlightenment and the conservative prelates of the Greek Orthodox Church, as patriarch Gregory, who were constantly warning against “the innovation of naming children at baptism with pagan Greek names⁹⁸” and against “the abandonment of traditional grammatical learning in favor of modern science and mathematics” in contrast to “the true faith and the salvation of the soul”⁹⁹.

The impact of Patriarch Gregory’s execution to the Greek rebels

The vast majority of Greeks during the Greek War for Independence and the years that followed did not consider Patriarch Gregory as a traitor of the Revolution. On the contrary, for them he was the ‘martyr’ of their struggle for Freedom¹⁰⁰ and the “first fighter of the Holly struggle of the Greeks”¹⁰¹. The rebels wanted in some way to get revenge for the Patriarch Gregory’s execution¹⁰². Characteristically, the Bishop of Lidoriki Ioannikios in his proclamation to the rebels, in May 1821, says: “[...] I exorcise you [beg you], my children, in the gallows of the Patriarch of my

⁹⁸ Vasilios N. Makrides, *Hellenic Temples and Christian Churches. A Concise History of the religious cultures of Greece from Antiquity to the present*, New York: New York University Press, 2009, 141.

⁹⁹ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and revolution: the making of modern Greece*, U.S.A., 2013, 305; Paschalis Kitromilides, “Imagined Communities and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans” in *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, eds. Martin Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis, Athens: ELIAMEP, 1990, 23-66.

¹⁰⁰ George G. Arnakis, “The role of religion in the development of Balkan Nationalism, in the *Balkans in transition. Essays on the development of Balkan life and politics since the eighteenth century*, California: University of California Press, 1963, 134.

¹⁰¹ G. G. Angelopoulos (edit.)- G. P. Papadopoulos, *Τα κατά τον Πατριάρχη Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Γρηγόριον τον Ε΄* [*According to the Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory V*], vol. I, Athens: National Printing House, 1865,

¹⁰² Spyridon Trikoupis, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως* [*History of the Greek Revolution*], vol I, London, 1860, 128.

Genus [Nation] to get the weapons, because our homeland is in danger [...]”¹⁰³. His martyrdom became “a central element on the national mythology of modern Greece”¹⁰⁴. According to the proceedings of the Third National Assembly of Troizina, in 1827 “... a few years ago, the Patriarch Gregory sacrificed himself for our holy faith and for our homeland”¹⁰⁵. That was a clear statement of the Greek prelates in the National Assembly, in order to underline the strong relation between the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the bishoprics in the Greek areas through the Patriarch Gregory’s sacrifice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Patriarch Gregory V was a controversial personality and is a subject of study for those concerned with the History of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Modern Greek History. Undoubtedly, his position as a patriarch of Constantinople and leader of the Rum Millet was particularly difficult. If one wants to study the role of patriarch Gregory at length, they should draw a line between ‘appearance’ and ‘being’. Gregory, as the leader of Rum millet, had to keep balance and to demonstrate particular actions to the Sultan through his official letters and deeds. Informally, he knew about the Greek Uprising and in fact helped some members of Philiki Etaireia and also tried to protect the Orthodox flock from the sultan’s wrath. Finally, his execution by the Sultan made him to the rebels’ eyes a martyr of

¹⁰³ G. Papadopoulos, *Ιστορία Γρηγορίου Ε΄ πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, πρωταθλητού της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης* [*The History of Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory V, pioneer of the Greek Revolution*], Athens, n.d., 274.

¹⁰⁴ Denis Vladimirovich Vovchenko, *Containing Balkan Nationalism: Imperial Russia and Ottoman Christians (1856-1912)*, *op. cit.*, 176

¹⁰⁵ Mamouka (publ.) [with the assistance of the expatriates], *Τα κατά την Αναγέννησιν της Ελλάδος, ήτοι Συλλογή των περί την Αναγεννημένην Ελλάδα ενταχθέντων πολιτευμάτων, νόμων και άλλων επισήμων πράξεων από του 1821 μέχρι του τέλους του 1832* [*About the Rebirth of Greece, namely Collection of the constitutions, laws and other official acts from 1821 until the end of 1832 about the regenerated Greece*], vol. 8, *op.cit.*, 150, article 24.

the Greek War of Independence and also a saint of the Orthodox Church, despite objections to the contrary.