

Yianni Cartlege and Andrekos Varnava, (eds.) *New Perspectives on the Greek War of Independence: Myths, Realities, Legacies and Reflections*, Palgrave Macmillan, Switzerland, 2022.

Reviewed by Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou

Recently, many new and noteworthy studies have been published in connection with the commemoration of the bicentennial of the Greek Revolution. The collection of studies in this *New Perspectives on the Greek War of Independence* volume however, stand out for their treatment of subjects not often dealt with, and for presenting interesting insights that challenge and add to the traditional historiography on this fundamental period of modern Greek history. Although its contents were contributed by an international team of authors, the book was initiated and supported by Greek institutions in Australia and edited by two scholars from Flinders University, and so, it also represents the scholarship of that increasingly vibrant and influential center of Hellenism.

It would require a lengthy and detailed review article to do any justice to the many new and original perspectives based on a wide variety of primary and secondary sources that are presented in this collection. The purpose of this brief review is more modest, it seeks only to present an overview of its contents and call attention to some of the book's important themes. It is hoped that readers will be stimulated to delve further into the contents on their own.

In the opening chapter, "The Greek Revolution 200 Years On: New Perspectives and Legacies," Cartledge and Varnava, the editors, seek to place the volume within the historiography of the Revolution, and explain its new perspectives purpose. They state that it: "delves into the myths that surround it, the realities that have been often ignored or suppressed, and its lasting legacies on national identities and histories." (p.6) They go on to explore the literature on the war and to identify two schools of thought, bound by their time periods. The first, from the nineteenth century to WWII, they feel focused on surveying the events largely from a western perspective; while the second, from WWII to

the early twenty-first century, was more diverse and went deeper, having a nuanced and critical view of nationalism and nation-building. A very useful bibliographic survey of older and recent studies mostly in English is given in the notes and selected bibliography. A notable omission, however, is the Modern Greek Studies Association volume published for the 150th anniversary, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, Institute of Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki, 1976.

The book is organized along four subtitled themes: myths, realities, legacies and reflections—all within the overarching idea of new perspectives. Each of these themes is explained and discussed and a useful summary of each chapter is then given in the introduction. A list of the articles beginning with Chapter two will illustrate the range and depth of the contents:

Part I: New Perspectives

1. "The Transnational Foundations of the Greek Revolution of 1821" by Michalis Sotiropoulos
2. "New Perspectives in Local Societies During the Greek War of Independence: The Consular Experience in the Aegean," by Maria Spiliotopoulou and Eleftheria Zei
3. "Greece of the North? Philhellenism, Hellenism, and Contemporary Perspectives of the Greek War of Independence in Iceland," by Arnor Gunnar Gunnarsson

Part II: Myths and Realities

4. "A Local Uprising in an Ottoman Province? Mora/Morea, March 1821," by Anna Vlachopoulou
5. "Migrations, Exodus, and Resettlement during the Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) by Dilek Ozkan Pantazis
6. "Privateering during the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829): Issues of Legitimacy, Organization, and Economics of a War-Induced Practice," by Katerina Galani and Gelina Harlaftis
7. "The United States as a Haven for Greek Revolutionary War Orphans? Myth and Reality," by Gonda Van Steen

Part III: Legacies and Reflections

8. "Cyprus and 1821: Myths, Realities and Legacies," by Andrekos Varnava
9. "The Chios Massacre (1822) and Chiot Emigration: A Coerced Diaspora," by Yianni Cartledge
10. "Devoted to the Cause of Freedom: Johnathan Peckham Miller, Philhellenism, and the Transatlantic Struggle for Liberation," by Christopher Helali

11. "Russian Historiography and the Greek Revolution: Trends and Interpretations (1821-2021) by Lucian Frary
12. "The Shot Heard Round the World: The Greek Revolution's Legacy in Poetry," by David Ricks
13. "Greek Independence and Its Significance to the Development of International Law," by Chris Kourakis and Yianni Cartledge

Two of these studies drew my particular attention because they relate to areas of my ongoing research. Gonda Van Steen's discussion of the Greek revolutionary war orphans presents a fresh and important new perspective on the often repeated "rags to riches" tropes concerning the children brought to the United States. Her study of the patterns of their experiences shows that many were neither children nor orphans, and that American missionaries, especially those connected to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), brought them to America as part of a deliberate plan. The purpose was to educate them and then have them return home as missionaries and educators. She also discusses the importance of Malta as a base of operations which played a key role in the implementation of the plan as well as the role of educational institutions such as Amherst College. Van Steen also publishes two interesting, previously unknown documents related to one of the best known of these orphans, Christophorus Plato Castanis, whose biographical account of his escape, rescue and emigration was widely known and used as a source for understanding the experiences of many others. Additionally, her analysis of a letter by the father of another famous so-called orphan, Photius Fisk, reveals how negotiations took place concerning the motivations of their patrons and the expected benefits of an American education.

Similarly, the study by Christopher Helali, on the important philhellene and abolitionist, Johnathan Peckham Miller, presents and discusses many previously unknown or little noticed local sources drawn from Vermont and elsewhere. For example, his discussion of the known photographs of Miller is the first of its kind. In general, despite their importance, especially in connection with the distribution of philanthropic aid, the subject of the American philhellenes who fought in Greece has not been the subject of any detailed study. Samuel Gridley Howe, George Jarvis and W. P. Miller, in particular, are only dealt with in passing in most books on the Greek Revolution, or in the case of Howe, in studies on American reform and philanthropy. This is why Helali's well documented article on Miller and his actions in Greece during the war and his involvement in abolitionist efforts upon his return to America is so noteworthy. It offers insights into the life and

contributions of this brave and devoted philhellene based a careful reading of his published writings and what Howe and others had to say about him. Helali also contributes many details concerning his political career in the Vermont legislature, his involvement in supporting escaped slaves to flee to Canada and his activities at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in England in 1840. He also notes the rarely mentioned fact that the successful Haitian revolution against slavery pre-dated that of the Greeks, and that Haiti was the first country we know of to recognize Greece's independence. The study provides basic information that significantly improves our knowledge of this important Philhellene.

In conclusion I must emphasize that my focus on these two articles does not in any way imply that any of the others in this fine volume are less important. In fact, each one contributes new sources and interpretations that increase our knowledge of the Greek war, both locally and internationally. In short, the book is indispensable for anyone who is interested in Modern Greek history and the history of the region during the first half of the nineteenth century.

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