

ITALIAN SUPPORT FOR THE GREEK REVOLUTION



1821-1832

A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR THE RISORGIMENTO

ETPbooks

ITALIAN SUPPORT FOR THE GREEK REVOLUTION



1821-1832

A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR THE RISORGIMENTO



ETPbooks

On the cover:

Gerolamo Induno, *The departure of the conscripts*, 1866. Milan, Museum of the Risorgimento.

Collection
Saggi & Critici

Director:
Cristiano Luciani

Scientific Committee:
Carolina Cupane (Vienna)
Francesco d'Aiuto (Rome)
Konstandinos Dimadis (Berlin)
David Holton (Cambridge)
Cristiana Lardo (Rome)
Stefanos Kaklamanis (Rethymno)
Gheorgios Kekaghioglu (Thessaloniki)
Cristina Pace (Rome)
Walter Puchner (Athens)
Alfred Vincent (Sidney)
Gerasimos Zoras (Athens)

15E
Italian Support for the Greek Revolution
1821-1832 A Dress Rehearsal for the Risorgimento

ISBN: 978-618-5329-73-0

Translation - Susan Branfield - Alessandro Michel
Graphics, cover and layout: Enzo Terzi
Editor: Francesca Minutoli

© ETPbooks 2021

Volume produced with the patronage and contribution of the Italian Embassy in Athens
and the Italian Cultural Institute in Athens



Ambasciata d'Italia
Atene



The conditions in Italy were no different from those in Greece: Greece was used by the Turks as Italy was by the Austrians; an immense force from Constantinople weighed down onto Greece, just as Italian soil was dominated by Vienna; the same treaty written with a bloody sword by victorious kings placed shackles on the feet and chains around the necks of the two most intelligent, free and strongest lineages in the world; so in writing about the Greeks, I wanted the Italians to recognise themselves, writing about the Turks I trusted that the words haunted the Austrians, and given that the chicanery of European diplomacy is the same in both Italy as in Greece, I was convinced that the victories of the Greeks usurped by the Russian, Franco and British intervention would warn the Italians that to win they had to fight with their own arms and not accept foreign aid.

Angelo Brofferio

But, while travelling, I meditated in the monuments of antiquity on the virtues and the faults, the prosperous and adverse fortunes of the people, and learned of the mighty capacity of the ruins to talk. And with particular affection and religious study scrutinised the memories of Italy and Greece, those magnanimous sisters, in every part, and from the low fortunes in which they lay, they are destined today to rise again and regain their deserved seat among the great civilised nations.

Giuseppe Regaldi

Summary

Partisans for Greece	7
<i>Send us your sons: to be good Italians they should be a little bit Greek</i>	9
Note from the editor	13
The greek rebirth and Philellenism in the world of the <i>Antologia</i>	17
The Epidaurus Charter	38
<i>Un homme d'ordre pouvait-il être philhellène?</i> On the Greek question in the Congress System (1821-22)	57
The philhellenism of Ugo Foscolo: the question of Parga	76
Giuseppe Pecchio and his mission in Greece in 1825	92
The contribution of Alerino Palma di Cesnola to the Independence and consolidation of the Greek Nation	104
The Greek Morandi and his philhellene forerunners, Lord Byron and Count Pietro Gamba	127
Italian philhellenes in Hydra	139
Philhellenes Italian volunteers in the middle of the Greek War of Independence (1825–1826)	147
A literary even before than political 'seconda patria'. Santorre di Santa Rosa, the Piedmontese 'concordi' and Greece	174
The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Greek Revolution	187
The community of Greek merchants in Leghorn between philhellenism and trading strategies	204
Diplomatic documents from the Vatican Apostolic Archive on the Greek Revolution	222

From literature to <i>state-building</i> . Notes on the Lombard commitment of the 1820s and 1830s	240
Greeks in Venice: details of a long history	253
Philhellenism from militancy to history. The works of Luigi Ciampolini	289
The Greek revolution in Italian historical journalism from 1820 to 1830	314
Capodistria and Greek independence in Giuseppe Rovani's <i>Storia della Grecia</i>	330
Little-known Italian texts on the Greek war of independence (1821-1832)	341
Sicilian Philhellenic literature. An Italian case	357
The "inventions" of the sicilian philhellenes and the mythography of the Risorgimento in the early 1830s of the 19th century	374
After the revolution: Renzo and Lucia in Athens, the young capital of the Kingdom of Greece	402
The cross and the banner: the theatre and opera of italian philhellenism	416
The Greek revolution for national independence in the work of Ippolito Nievo	433
Between Romanticism and Realism: the greek revolution and philhellenism in Italian Art	446
BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC ANNEXES the Italians who went to Greece 1821 - 1830	480
Bibliography texts in Italian	500
Bibliography texts in other languages	521

The contributors of this volume

(in alphabetical order)

Arianna Arisi Rota - University of Pavia
Francesco Barra - University of Salerno
Paolo Bernardelli - Independent
Daniela Bombara - University of Messina
Stathis Birtachas - Aristotle University, Thessaloniki
Luciano Canfora - University of Bari
Caterina Carpinato - University Ca' Foscari, Venice
Cosimo Ceccuti - President of the Foundation "Spadolini - Nuova Antologia"
Antonio D'Alessandri - University Roma Tre, Rome
Marco Galdi - University of Salerno
Giacomo Girardi - Università della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano
Miguel Gotor - University Tor Vergata, Rome
George Koukoudakis - Hellenic National Defence College, Athens
Cristiano Luciani - University Tor Vergata, Rome
Giorgio Montecchi - University Statale, Milan
Andrea Giovanni Noto - University La Sapienza, Rome
Marco Novarino - University of Turin
Gabriele Paolini - University of Florence
Donatella Rasi - University of Padua
Giampaolo Salice - University di Cagliari
Fabiana Savorgnan Cergneu di Brazzà - University of Udine
Francesco Scalora - University of Padova
Francesca Irene Sensini - University Sophia Antipolis, Nice
Ilias Spyridonidis - Aristotle University, Thessaloniki
Chiara Tavella - University of Turin
Ioannis Dim. Tsolkas - National and Kapodistrian University, Athens
Cinzia Virmo - Art historian, independent
Charalampos Vlachopoulos - National and Kapodistrian University, Athens
Alessandro Volpi - University of Pisa
Zosi Zografidou - Aristotle University, Thessaloniki
Gerasimos Zoras - National and Kapodistrian University, Athens

The contribution of Alerino Palma di Cesnola to the Independence and consolidation of the Greek Nation

Marco Novarino

While Greece is extremely grateful to all those who take an interest in its success and rejoice in the progress of the Greek nation, it is even more grateful to those who employ their means and exert their efforts, like true philhellenes, for the purpose of restoring it to its former glory and raising it to rank among the civilized nations of Europe. Count, you are one of the illustrious members of this class.¹

With these words, in April 1825, Ioánnis Vaptistís Theotókis, Minister of Justice of the provisional Greek Government, addressed Count Alerino Palma di Cesnola, a central figure of that pro-Hellenist movement, which was not solely an Italian movement. His commitment went far beyond merely recognising the importance of Greek antiquity in the birth of European culture and providing a general solidarity with a people oppressed by a foreign denomination.²

From 1822 onwards, pro-Greece committees were established in Geneva, Madrid, Munich, London and Paris, supported by those transnational networks that Maurizio Isabella effectively defined as “the liberal international”³

In the history of the nineteenth century, the Italian Risorgimento and the movement that led to the independence of Greece were connected by innumerable relationships, not only as a result of their geographical

¹ Letter of Ioánnis Vaptistís Theotókis, Minister for Justice, dated April 1825 from Nafplion, included in A. PALMA, *Greece Vindicated; in two letters by count A. P.; to which are added by the same author, critical remarks on the works recently published on the same subject by Messrs' Bulwer, Emerson, Pecchio, Humphreys, Stanhope, Parry & Blaquiére*, London, Printed for the Author, and Sold by James Ridgway, 169, Piccadilly. 1826, p. 288. The translation of this text into Greek and Italian is on-going, with a historical introduction and a critical edition edited by Marco Novarino.

² Regarding the European philhellenic movement cfr., W. ST. CLAIR, *That Greece Might Still Be Free: The Philhellenes in the War of Independence*, London, Oxford University Press, 1972; D. DAKIN, *Greek Struggle for Independence 1821-1833*, London, Batsford, 1973.

³ M. ISABELLA, *Risorgimento in esilio. L'internazionale liberale e l'età delle rivoluzioni*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2009.

location and the cultural and economic exchanges that had taken place in previous centuries, but on account of a clear affinity between the political and national models of both their processes for independence.

The Greek cause represented for the Italian patriots - defeated and exiled after the constitutional uprisings in Piedmont and Naples - the natural consequence of a coherent political commitment. For around one hundred of these patriots, Greece was the first choice, others headed to Spain and, after another defeat, from their exile in England some embarked on the journey to the Greek coasts.⁴

Among these was Alerino Palma and if for many exiles their stay in Greece was a somewhat lengthy period of transition, or became their final resting place as in the case of Santorre di Santarosa, for the Piedmontese Count it became his adoptive second home for over twenty years.

THE FIRST POLITICAL AND CONSPIRATORIAL EXPERIENCES OF ALERINO PALMA DI CESNOLA

Count Alerino Palma di Cesnola was born in Rivarolo Canavese in 1776⁵ and was one of the most representative characters of the generation of Piedmontese aristocrats who experienced in their youth the Napoleonic episode by supporting the republican-democratic ideals from neighbouring France.

During this period, he held important roles working in 1798 with the provisional government of the Piedmontese nation and when an area of the Kingdom of Sardinia became an integral part of the French Empire, he took office as the president of the court of Ivrea.

He was initiated into a Masonic lodge in 1810, and in the early years of the Restoration he was a member of the Carbonari and later of the Federated Society.

He became famous during the uprisings of 1821 when he assumed the role of leader, especially in that part of Piedmont where he had been born and raised.

The defeat of the constitutional liberals in Novara put an end to the revolution of 1821 and Palma was sentenced to death, yet he managed to

⁴ Cfr. C. FRANCOVICH, *Il movimento filoellenico in Italia e in Europa*, in Id., *Indipendenza e unità in Italia e in Grecia*, Florence, Olschki, 1987, pp. 1-23.

⁵ There is currently no complete biography of Alerino Palma di Cesnola. For more information cfr., R. DAMILANO, *Palma di Cesnola, Alerino*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* - Volume 80 (2014), in [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/palma-di-cesnola-alerino_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/palma-di-cesnola-alerino_(Dizionario-Biografico)/); *Alerino Palma*, in *Panteon dei martiri della libertà italiana. Opera compilata da varii letterati*, Turin, Gabriele D'Amato, 1851, pp. 489-515; L. D., *Famiglia Palma di Cesnola di Ivrea*, Florence, Stab. Tir. Aldino, 1905.

escape arrest by embarking from Genoa for Spain hidden inside a barrel of wine.⁶

Initially he settled in Madrid participating in Spanish political and cultural life, together with his inseparable friend Carlo Pompeo who convinced him to collaborate with the constitutional magazine *Universal*. The participation of the two Piedmontese exiles in the magazine led to the Madrid press becoming more aware of Italian events which was also publishing news of the Greek uprisings with increasing frequency.

The support of liberal Spain for revolutionary Greece was broad and transversal.

El Censor, one of the more conservative newspapers published during the Trienio Liberal stated:

If ever there was an insurrection and a cause in the world that can be called holy, it is certainly that of the Greeks. [...] They rise up, they arm themselves to conquer the most precious goods, and to leave the miserable state in which their fierce oppressors have placed them. Slaves with the name of vassals, and living under the most despotic and arbitrary government known, subject to the omnipotent whims of the Lows who rule them, without any guarantee for their people and properties, dominated by barbarian enemies of all enlightenment, poor, inhabiting the most fertile territories, and obliged to contribute to maintain the luxury of a voluptuous seraglio without the indolent Council taking care to promote any of the branches of public prosperity: was there ever a people that with more justice has armed itself to resist oppression?⁷

Palma was, among the Italian exiles in Spain, the most interested and enthusiastic supporter of the Greek cause, and among the founders of one of the first pro-Greek committees set up in Madrid with the Englishman John Bowring,⁸ who in the words of the Count

May and should be looked upon as the principal author of the loan obtained for Greece [in London], having paid attention to that object, when I recommended to him, by letter in September 1822 from Madrid, Mr. Luriottis (sic), who had been the bearer of other letters from the Greek Government to the Philhellenic Committee, established at the end of 1821, or at the commencement of 1822, at Madrid, by Mr. Bowring himself. I was member and secretary of that Committee. Mr. Luriottis, having lost all hope of obtaining pecuniary aid from the Spanish Committee, went, as I had advised him, from Madrid to London. The

⁶ G. MARENGO - G. PARLATO, *Dizionario dei Piemontesi compromessi nei moti del 1821*, Turin, Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento, 1982, vol. I, p. 141.

⁷ *Insurrección de la Grecia*, "El Censor" of 30/06/1821, pp. 459-460.

⁸ W. ST. CLAIR, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, cit., pp. 142 and 254.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, San Miguel, had treated him with the same courtesy as he had treated the Holy Alliance⁹

In this account published in 1826 he does not mention, perhaps for security reasons, that on 18 December 1821, together with a Spanish Member of Parliament and Bowring,¹⁰ he addressed the Greek provisional government expressing his deep admiration for their struggle, but primarily to communicate the desire of some 300 Italian exiles in Spain to fight for the Greek cause, asking in exchange that they be granted citizenship.

To the Greek parliament, liberators of a great people
Some very noble and courageous liberals, who unfortunately have lost their homeland, have chosen your country, and will shed their blood, if necessary, to prove themselves worthy of obtaining citizenship. Naples and Piedmont are a demonstration of their firm decision on all matters concerning the freedom of men, but they have been persecuted by adverse fate; they had to leave their homeland and now they are pleading with you to adopt them, to consider them worthy of the rights of citizenship and of all that is due to the people; they have pursued military careers with honour and courage, have acquired diverse and important skills and request that you employ them in a way that will be useful to Greece, their new homeland.¹¹

We have no information as to whether or not the proposal materialised, but we do know that already by the end of 1821 the name of Count Alerino Palma was well known among Greek senior officials and the first contact that Bowring - a crucial figure in terms of granting British loans - had with the Greeks was on account of the Piemontese Count.

Their names appear in a letter sent by the Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs Theodoros Negris to the third signatory of the letter, the deputy Francisco Díaz de Morales y Bernuy - representative of Córdoba to the Spanish Court between July 1820 and February 1822¹² - in

⁹ A. PALMA, *Greece Vindicated*, p. 7.

¹⁰ On the role played by the English politician, diplomat, writer and linguist John Bowring in the Greek cause, cfr., G.F. BARTLES, *Bowring and the Greek Loans of 1824 and 1825*, "Balkan studies", 1 (1962), pp. 61-74 in <https://ojs.lib.uom.gr/index.php/BalkanStudies/article/viewFile/77/86> (consulted on 22/12/2020).

¹¹ Originally drafted in French and published in T. VAGENÁS, *O Ispanikós Filellinismós katá tîn Ellinikîn Epanástasin*, "Filelliniká" 1 (1955), pp. 6-8.

¹² L. BLANCO DOMINGO, *Francisco Díaz de Morales y Bernuy*, *El Diccionario Biográfico electrónico (DB-e) de la Real Academia de la Historia*, in <http://dbe.rah.es/biografias/22321/francisco-diaz-morales-y-bernuy>. (consulted on 22/12/2020).

which he asked him¹³ “to communicate the gratitude of the Greek Government to Count Palma, and to Mr. John Bowrins (sic) and assure you that Greece will always be honoured to count you among its Defenders.”

On reading the document, it is clear that the pro-Greek Committee of which Palma was secretary sent other letters after December 1821 addressed to the Greek Senate and to Prince Ipsilandi,¹⁴ since Negri declared the “Government accepts these offers with gratitude, and will see with pleasure the brave Italians whom you propose, and who have already made such generous efforts for the cause of freedom, and fighting in our ranks. Assure these Patriots, that Greece will be proud to place them among her children, that their military ranks will be retained and that for the rest of their careers they must count on the rewards that their services will have deserved.”¹⁵

We also learn from this letter that since Díaz de Morales was the only Spanish signatory, he was asked to take on the role of supporter of the Greek cause in Spain, Portugal and Latin America and to seek the candidacy of Andreas Louriotis as Greek ambassador to the Iberian country.¹⁶

That request never materialised and in this case Palma had also played an important role.

When Louriotis arrived in Madrid in September 1822,¹⁷ one of his first meetings was with the Piedmontese Count, who provided him with a letter of recommendation for Bowring and advised him to go to London in search of new and more fruitful contacts.

The letter and the advice were all the more precious, given that the meeting with Bowring was so successful that on 3 March 1823 the London Greek Committee was founded, with Bowring as secretary, which also enjoyed the support of Jeremy Bentham and the Whigs and the Radicals. The following day, Louriotis and the Irish Edward Blaquieres¹⁸ set

¹³ *Gouvernement Provisoire de la Grèce Le Secrétaire d'État et Ministre des Affaires Etrangères* *Corynthe* le 10 / 22 avril 1822 (dated according to the Greek custom of indicating in international documents the date of both the Julian and the Gregorian calendar). In the margin it bears the inscription «*Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. N° 65 du Protocole* ». Now reported in Eva Latorre Broto, *Los amigos de la libertad: evidencias documentales sobre el filohelenismo español* (1821-23), “*Erytheia*” 33 (2012), pp. 231-232.

¹⁴ “The Government, after reading your letters addressed to the Senate and to Prince Ipsilanti dated January 18, 1822”, *Ibid.*, p. 231.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ Regarding the event cfr., E. LATORRE BROTO, *Las relaciones diplomáticas entre la España liberal y la Grecia insurrecta: la misión de Andreas Louriotis en Madrid* (1822), “*Byzantion nea hellás*”, 34 (2015), pp. 219-257, in https://scielo.conicyt.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0718-84712015000100010#bookmark0 (consulted on 23/12/2020).

¹⁷ “*El Zurriago*”, 74 (1822), pp. 11-14.

¹⁸ W. ST. CLAIR, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*. cit., p. 142.

off for Corinth to report to Aléxandros Mavrokordátos the terms of the English loan in support of the cause. Stopping in Genoa on 5 April, they asked Lord Byron to receive them, thus sowing in the English poet's mind the idea of undertaking a trip to Greece a few months later.¹⁹

Meanwhile Palma joined the constitutional army earning two decorations on the field during the battle of Trocadero which took place in Cadiz on 31 August 1823.

After the defeat of the Spanish constitutional liberals, Palma took refuge first in London and later in Paris, Antwerp, Marseille and, finally, in Greece.

HIS FIRST EXPERIENCE IN GREECE

Palma made his first trip to Greece on 16 August 1824. He left London accompanied by the Greeks Ioánnis Orlando, Ioánnis Zaimis and Andrea Louriotis who, as already mentioned, he had met two years earlier in Madrid.

During the journey, he stopped over in Zakynthos where he met Cavaliere De Laguidara, an Italian exile in the service of the English government, who provided him with the first information he was to receive on the difficult situation in Greece at that time.

Finally he landed in Nafplion on 28 September, where he encountered a dramatic situation, due to the fact that the city was in the midst of a typhus epidemic, thus causing difficulties with regard to meeting the authorities as initially planned in his program. This prevented him from returning to England in November of the same year.

The situation in which he found himself was rather delicate, not only from the sanitary point of view (the ship captain and two German students who had travelled with him to go to fight in Greece perished due to the epidemic) but also because he was bringing the third installment of a loan sent by the London Greek Committee.²⁰

For security reasons, a few days passed before the installment was delivered to the emissaries of the Greek government and Palma was able to continue his journey, describing it in two letters sent to his friend Carlo Trompeo.²¹

¹⁹ For a contemporary testimony on Byron's trip to Greece cfr. John Bowring, Edward Blaquiére, William Fletcher, *Lord Byron in Greece*, "Westminster Review", 2 (July 1824), pp. 225-62.

²⁰ In, *Greece Vindicated*, cit., p. 3, Palma writes of a «contratto per un prestito ai Greci, concluso alla fine di febbraio 1824 per la somma di 800.000 £», while M. ISABELLA, *Risorgimento in esilio*, cit., p. 89, states that the third installment was £50.000.

²¹ Contained in A. PALMA, *Greece Vindicated*, cit., pp. 1-66.

From reading these letters, it is possible to detect that it was during this first visit that he was to become passionate about the Greek cause, with an entire series of details and comments – including some highly critical passages on the internal struggles and civil wars that were weakening the Greek front – which once they were published gave the reader a better picture of what was actually going on.

Although Palma acted on behalf of the London Committee, relations between the heads of the English body and the Italian exiles were tense.

A first bone of contention concerned the funds raised by the Committee and the role played by the representatives of the Greek government in the United Kingdom.

The most passionate of the pro-Greeks and supporter of the position of the Italians was Edward Blaquiere,²² who had shared the experience of the Trienio Liberal with them. Together with Palma, he argued that the excessive controls on funds and the lack of trust in the Greek representation in London constituted an obstacle to the independence process and blamed Bowring, and primarily Lieutenant Colonel Leicester Stanhope, for the defeat and the subsequent massacre which took place in Psara in July 1824, due to the prudence and thriftiness with which he had distributed the first installment of the loan.

But the disagreements went much further and had deeper and more political motivations than the simple management of funds.

The ideals and revolutionary language coming out of France and the concept of nationality had arrived in Greece primarily through the Italian patriots and this had led to the creation of exceptional and strong ties, generating interesting similarities regarding the political process underway in the two countries.

Both the Greek patriots and the Italian exiles, for example, thought that due to the ancient past and, having acquired in the future concrete unity and political independence, the two nations could aspire to play a leading role within the European continent.

A second factor that had generated fruitful and reciprocal exchanges was the presence in Italy of a number of thriving Greek communities, such as in Trieste and Livorno – which provided substantial aid to young compatriots thus enabling them to study in European universities – and of the Greek political diaspora, in addition to the figure of Ugo Foscolo who in 1812 claimed to be “Italo-Greek”, indicating not only a double

²² F. ROSEN, *Blaquiere, Edward* (1779–1832), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, in <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-57497> (consulted on 7/1/2021).

cultural affiliation but loyalty to both homelands.²³ The same concept was taken up by Palma in the mid-1820s, stating that the Italians had to consider Greece as a second motherland.

It can therefore be argued that the Italian political, military and cultural contribution to the pro-Greek movement had distant roots, and had matured well before the Greek war of independence; it was based on a political and cultural commonality, which led to the expression of a common and shared language.

The control exercised by the Austrians over the Italian states was similar to the despotic one established by the Ottomans in Greece, and the same fate rendered the desires, motivations and objectives for achieving the sought-after national liberation similar if not the same. It was not difficult to see that the Risorgimento and the independence movement followed parallel paths with many “bridges” connecting them.

This background was not present, for obvious reasons, within the world of the Anglo-Saxon philhellenes.

The difference, however, was not only an historical difference, but also concerned the role that the Italian and Greek nations might have on the future scenarios of the Mediterranean, where the “Latin-Greek sisters” (Italy, Spain and Greece) could create new balances and alliances.

If in the early 1820s, pro-Hellenism was considered by many to be a commitment against Ottoman despotism and the triumph of European civilisation, in English cultural and political circles the emphasis was on the strong difference between political stability, development and the industriousness of Northern Europe, as opposed to the situation of underdevelopment and backwardness existing in the Mediterranean area.

As Isabella pointed out, the Greek events “were themselves part of a wider debate in which authoritarian or ‘imperial’ liberalism was opposed to nationalist liberalism. The positions of the exiles on the future of the Mediterranean thus provide an interesting example of how the European imperial ideology that was asserting itself could conflict, or, on the contrary, be made compatible with the aspirations for self-government present on the periphery of Europe.”²⁴

Palma, by virtue of his experience in Spain, was intent on emphasising this “Mediterranean” position, so much so that he was considered one of the precursors of that movement that led in 1880 to the birth of the Hellenistic-Latin Union, sought by Carlo Michele Buscalioni - a leading figure in the rebirth of Italian Freemasonry starting from the unification and active in the events that led to Amedeo d'Aosta becoming King of Spain

²³ M. A. TERZOLI, *Foscolo*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, pp. 172-173.

²⁴ M. ISABELLA, *Risorgimento in esilio*, cit., p. 93.

in 1870 - and supported by the philologist Marco Antonio Canini.²⁵ Palma infact maintained that

La Grecia è una Spagna in miniatura. Non ho mai assistito a una simile somiglianza come quella che esiste tra questi due paesi. Lei sa, che, come soldato, ho attraversato la Spagna e ho conosciuto i suoi luoghi e la natura dei suoi abitanti. In primo luogo, il clima e la posizione peninsulare sono i medesimi; fertilità e condizioni eccellenti contraddistinguono entrambi i paesi; in entrambi vi sono svariate cause per rimpiangere l'incolto, lo spopolamento e la devastazione; poiché la schiavitù, da qualunque origine provenga, produce necessariamente lo stesso effetto. [...] I greci sopportano le stesse privazioni, o anche maggiori, degli spagnoli. [...] Un governo, costituito su basi libere, costituzionali o indipendenti, sarebbe ugualmente ricco in entrambi i paesi. I turchi sono in Grecia quello che il clero cristiano, cattolico e apostolico è in Spagna, contrariamente alla dottrina di Gesù Cristo e San Paolo.

Gli spagnoli, una volta ridotti i loro preti e monaci a quella mediocrità di fortuna che, secondo San Matteo, può garantire da sola il loro ingresso in Paradiso (e questo compito può essere assolto solo dagli americani, come legittima ritorsione a quel clero furioso), possiederanno il governo più ricco d'Europa. I greci, se scacciano i loro signori e pari maomettani, che li hanno ridotti allo stato degli antichi Iloti, acquisiranno possedimenti così immensi, così fertili e così favorevoli sotto ogni punto di vista, che non saranno in grado solo di ripagare i prestiti già contratti, ma anche quelli che devono ancora contrarre, se loro e i loro amici desiderano vedere la Grecia raggiungere l'indipendenza, che garantirà il rimborso dei precedenti anticipi.²⁶

The Italian exiles were worried that there was a risk that a power vacuum might arise and shared a sincere belief that Greece should become a truly free, independent nation not subject to any kind of "protectorate" by any of the European nations.

²⁵ M. A. CANINI, *Storia di un libro*, Turin 1882, pp. 12-14, 19; L. M. Billia, *La lega filellenica e l'ideale politico di Carlo Michele Buscalioni*, Turin, Tip. Eredi Botta, 1885.

²⁶ A. PALMA, *Greece Vindicated*, cit., pp. pp. 38-40. In these pages Palma included some memories and interesting reflections in anthropological terms: «In Spagna, come in Grecia, si trovano ovunque montagne, inevitabili gole e strade dissestate. C'è la stessa presunzione, mancanza di pulizia nell'abbigliamento, e nelle necessità della vita. Più di una volta, mentre ero in Grecia, sognai di essere al Trocadero, o nel mio vecchio distaccamento sull'isola di Leon, e a Cadice, perché sebbene non conducessi più una vita militare, il nudo terreno spesso era il mio divano. [...] Entrambi (spagnoli e greci NdA) trovano nutrimento nel fumo: entrambi hanno la stessa indolenza nello sbrigare gli affari e nell'adottare misure precauzionali. L' "Avrion" dei greci è il "Mañana" degli spagnoli. Le donne di entrambi i paesi si distinguono per i loro bellissimi occhi intensi e possiedono lo stesso calore amorevole e cordiale, sebbene in Grecia sia più moderato dall'influenza orientale di tenerle recluso piuttosto che dar loro libertà».

The first steps to take were to create a stable and strong government and a well-trained army. Without these requirements, it was difficult to imagine a successful insurrectionary war.²⁷

The most convinced supporter was undoubtedly Palma whose convictions were reinforced following his first trip to Greece. Despite being a convinced liberal, his considerations led him to state that, in the case of extreme necessity and seriousness, power could be entrusted to only one individual, even if temporarily.²⁸

On the need for a strong central authority he stated:

Tutto servi a convincermi che, nei paesi recentemente turbati da rivoluzioni e soggetti a invasioni nemiche e dissensi interni, non ci fosse così bisogno di organi esecutivi e legislativi: era più necessario un potere accentrato, composto da una o più persone investite di autorità e dotate di conoscenza, requisito per far avanzare il progresso del loro Paese, fondando quelle istituzioni che, come afferma madame De Stael, “devono formare gli uomini”²⁹

At the same time, he stated that «richiesta una disciplina militare, sia nell'esercito che nella marina. Il governo deve possedere una sua flotta e soldati regolari, per non indebolire lo spirito nazionale, perché ora c'è bisogno che tutti siano soldati»³⁰.

Despite the evident sympathy shown towards the Greeks, both Palma and the other Italian exiles were aware of the backwardness and the pressure exercised for centuries by Ottoman rule which was reflected, on the one hand, in the lack of any political culture of the future ruling class and, on the other, in the fact that Turkish customs and traditions were deeply embedded in that society. However, it was Palma himself who had to admit, sadly, that «i greci sembrano considerarsi abitanti dell'Asia, sebbene occupino una buona posizione in Europa. Spesso mi dicevano “voi europei”. Seguono il modo di vestire turco, tanto che talvolta è difficile distinguere un turco da un greco»³¹.

Despite these reflections, together with the correspondence and writings of convinced philhellenes such as Giuseppe Pecchio³² and

²⁷ Letter from Gamba to Orlando dated London, 11 September (no year), housed at the Centro per la ricerca neellenica di Atene, Carte Orlando and Louriotis, and also cited M. ISABELLA, *Risorgimento in esilio*, cit., p. 102.

²⁸ «Se le circostanze lo richiedevano, si sarebbe dovuto scegliere un dittatore e poi il denaro avrebbe potuto essere distribuito con parsimonia». Ibid., pp. p. 180.

²⁹ A. Palma, *Greece Vindicated*, cit., p. 28.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

³¹ Ibid., p. 65

³² G. PECCHIO, *A Picture of Greece in 1825. As exhibited in the personal narratives of James Emerson, Esq., Count Pecchio, and W. H. Humphreys, Esq., comprising a detailed account of the*

Giacinto Collegno³³ - friend and comrade in arms of Palma and Santorre di Santarosa during the 1821 uprisings and later exiled to Spain and England - regarding the difficulties that the Greeks would have encountered in acquiring stable State institutions and establishing an efficient army, which in some passages coincided with the position of the British, his enthusiasm and determination towards the Greek cause never wavered.

For the British, the superiority of their own culture was indisputable and, consequently, also their role as the leading world power. Therefore every international question was filtered through this interpretative prism. The Greeks had the right to free themselves from the Ottoman yoke and therefore deserved English support, but they still remained an inferior people, outside the *landmarks* with which the term “civilization” was declined.³⁴

Accepting this vision meant questioning the entire Italian Risorgimento paradigm.³⁵ Excluding Greece from the list of European “civilized” nations threw into doubt the fact that the Greek and Latin civilisations had been the cradle of Europe.

Despite the internal issues, civil strife, deficit and “Western civilisation” recognised by the Italians, the myth of Greek nationalism had to be nurtured, the penalty being that in the case of defeat Italian nationalism would also have to be renounced. Therefore they had to work alongside the more Westernised Greek leaders such as Mavrokordátos and Demetrios Ypsilantis, defined by Collegno, with exaggerated emphasis, as “the only civilised Greek”.³⁶

Those who were named the “Carbonari Counts”,³⁷ offered to assist the Greek government: Palma would deal with justice, Pecchio (bearer

events of the late campaign, and sketches of the principal military, naval, and political chiefs, II, *Journal of Count Pecchio*, H. Colburn, London, 1826, p. 159. In the same year, the Italian version of this book was published by the Lugano Vanelli printing house with the title, *Relazione degli avvenimenti della Grecia nella primavera del 1825*. The first testimonies of Pecchio appeared in 1825 published by the French newspaper *Le Globe* with the title, *La Grèce au printemps de 1825. Par le comte Giuseppe Pecchio* (n. 174, 22 October 1825, pp. 901-903; n. 176, 27 October 1825, pp. 913-914; n. 177, 29 October 1825, pp. 917-919; n. 188, 24 November, p. 977; n. 190, 29 November 1825, pp. 989-990; n. 192, 3 December 1825, pp. 998-999; n. 197, 15 December 1825, pp. 1025-1026).

³³ G. COLLEGNO, *Diario dell'assedio di Navarino*, Turin, Pelazza, tip. Economica, 1857.

³⁴ P. MANDLER, *The English National Character. The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair*, London 2006, pp. 29-38. On the specific case of Greece cfr., K. Fleming, *Orientalism, the Balkans and Balkan Historiography*, *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), pp. 1218-1233.

³⁵ The question was widely debated among the Italian exiles and in this regard cfr., G. B. MAROCHETTI, *Le congrès bienfaisant* (Paris, 1826; re-published in 1830 with the title *Indépendance de l'Italie, moyen de l'établir dans l'intérêt général de l'Europe, considéré spécialement sous le point de vue de l'équilibre politique, ou Partage de la Turquie*, Paris).

³⁶ G. COLLEGNO, *Diario dell'assedio di Navarino*, cit., p. 39.

in 1825 of a second loan from the Committee) and Collegno with military matters, Santorre di Santarosa with foreign affairs and Luigi Porro Lambertenghi with finances, engaging at the same time to work towards the creation of an efficient administration of the State. In this sense he also envisaged starting “with a true or apparent mission to serve as a private Council of State within the Executive Body and to establish the Legislative Body on solid foundations”.³⁸

Although the group of exiles was, for the most part, republican in terms of institutional positions (in particular Pecchio),³⁹ Palma had a more pragmatic and realistic attitude:

Mai nessun paese sembrò, per natura, più appropriato ad una repubblica federale, quanto la Grecia, e anche qui somiglia alla Spagna. Ma i greci non sembrano essere idonei a ottenere quella forma di governo, poichè ereditano i dissensi dei loro antenati, sono un popolo debole, circondati dal dispotismo da un lato e dalla Santa Alleanza dall'altro, e situati in Europa sotto l'influenza di entrambi e soggetti alle loro manovre. E non sarebbe saggio da parte loro correre il rischio di perdere la propria indipendenza per il desiderio di raggiungere il vertice di quella prosperità, attualmente incompatibile con le loro capacità. Indubbiamente, il governo federale è il migliore ed è in base a questo che si gode della massima libertà. I nordamericani hanno dimostrato che un tale governo può esistere e che possiede una grande solidità. [...] Ma i greci sono in Europa, situati tra la Turchia, la Russia, l'Austria, e, aggiungo anche, le Isole Ioniche; e così come in America una forma di governo diversa apparirebbe come una meteora, allo stesso modo una repubblica in Europa risulterebbe davvero straordinaria.⁴⁰

Decidedly different was the position of the majority of the members of the London Greek Committee who, influenced by the radical philosopher and jurist Jeremy Bentham, were able to express themselves in the prestigious magazine *Westminster Review*, founded by the latter together with John Stuart Mill in 1823, in whose pages Bowring's article, “Greek Committee”, strongly polemical towards Palma, also appeared.⁴¹

The fiercest opponent of the Italians was the aforementioned Stanhope, apparently a proponent of Bentham's theories⁴² who, however, had

³⁷ W. ST. CLAIR, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, cit. p. 255.

³⁸ A. MORANDI, *Il mio giornale dal 1848 al 1850*, Modena, Tipografia e litografia di Andrea Ferrari, 1867, p. 76.

³⁹ G. PECCHIO, *Relazione degli avvenimenti della Grecia*, cit., pp. 199-200.

⁴⁰ A. PALMA, *Greece Vindicated*, cit., pp. 48-49.

⁴¹ “*Westminster Review*”, 6 (1826), pp. 113-133.

⁴² F. ROSEN, *Bentham, Byron and Greece: constitutionalism, nationalism and early liberal political thought*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, pp. 157-161.

a typically “paternalistic” and colonial approach. Although he was a proponent of a republican institutional form, a supporter of freedom of the press and in favour of the creation of a state school system, he considered the Greeks to be politically immature, more Asian than European and to be treated in the same way as the peoples colonised by the British Empire. His considerations were primarily based not only on local customs and traditions, but also on the fact that during the war of independence the Greeks had carried out brutal massacres against the Turks.

Palma, the most aggressive in facing the Committee, accused Stanhope of a “hypocritical” attitude inviting him to reflect on the colonial policies of the so-called “civilised countries”:

i greci sono accusati ingiustamente di crudeltà e barbarie. Hanno fatto, durante la loro giusta ma spietata guerra, contro nemici così atroci, più di quanto hanno fatto persone dotate dei vantaggi dell'istruzione e dei mezzi di difesa, cioè italiani, francesi e inglesi? Le nazioni in rivoluzione sono tutte simili. Quelli che accusano i greci di barbarie non hanno mai consultato la storia del paese, né le circostanze che in qualche modo giustificano quella brutalità⁴³.

Furthermore, the pragmatic realism demonstrated by Palma with regard to institutional issues, was completely in line with Mavrokordátos, who was to become the leader of Greek nationalism among the most esteemed by the Italians, while the British, within the existing rivalries between the various Greek independence currents, supported the military commander Odisseas who operated in eastern Greece.⁴⁴

Palma and Mavrokordátos were convinced that some fundamental freedoms, such as the freedom of the press, as well as the political ones in certain particularly difficult historical moments, could not be defended regardless. First, a strong government had to be created, even an authoritarian one, but one capable of defeating the invader by means of a prepared and motivated army. Only later could political and civil liberties be achieved.

In this disagreement, both sides tried to employ the myth of Byron. For the Italians, it was easy for them to recall the manifest aversion shown by the poet towards Stanhope and his support for the patriotic struggles fought in Italy. To this was added, similar to that of the Italian exiles and Mavrokordátos, his desire to put national independence before education of a Benthamian matrix and freedom of the press.⁴⁵ In reality, Byron's

⁴³ A. PALMA, *Greece Vindicated*, cit., pp. 47-48.

⁴⁴ F. ROSEN, *Bentham, Byron and Greece*, cit., pp. 152-153.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-204.

opinion on the future of a free Greece was not so clear, but Palma and the others made the most of the aura surrounding him.

The mutual rapport with the English poet had blossomed after the translation of the poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and pro-Hellenism was a logical consequence of that common commitment.

The exiles were among the first and the most tenacious in creating, through the tragic death of Byron, the myth of the modern hero, dearly loved by the romantics, who gives his life for the freedom of the people. The subsequent death of Santorre di Santarosa provided another and equally romantic example.

The latter was also at the centre of a dispute between the Committee and the Italians, as Bowring tried to persuade the Greek deputies Orlando and Louriotis to obstruct the journey of the Count of Savigliano and his friend Giacinto Collegno. These attempts were partially successful - highlighting the subjection of the Greek representatives in London who first recommended the two exiles and later apologised to the Committee - as the two were greeted quite coolly by the Greek authorities upon their arrival in Nafplion in November 1824.⁴⁶

Considering this analysis, it is not surprising that the sympathies of Palma and the Italian pro-Hellenists lay with Mavrokordátos⁴⁷ - secretary of the Council - as well as with Geörgios Kountouriōtīs - who during the Piedmontese Count's first visit to Greece had held the position of president of the Revolutionary Executive Council, Ioánnis Vaptistīs Theotókis⁴⁸ - Minister for Justice - Baron Friedrich Eduard von Rhenneck - Undersecretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs - and the parliamentarian Speridion Trikoupis (known for the funeral oration he gave in honour of Byron which was translated into several languages),⁴⁹ both brothers-in-law of Mavrokordátos.

⁴⁶ E. DALLEGGIO, *Les Philhellènes et la guerre de l'Indépendance*, Athènes, Institut français d'Athènes, 1949, pp. 119 and 121.

⁴⁷ «Conte, È con immensa soddisfazione che eseguo gli ordini del mio governo esprimendo la sua riconoscenza per il modo distinto con cui ha adempiuto lo scopo della Sua missione, alla quale ha anche dato un'importanza più estesa con i prudenti consigli che ci ha elargito in molti dei suoi piani, di cui il governo si avvarrà a beneficio della nazione. Sebbene, per ora, le Sue vicende familiari non Le permettano di prolungare il soggiorno in Grecia, ci lusinga sapere che ripeterà la Sua visita e accelererà, con le Sue doti, il successo di una causa che Le è così cara, perché è quella della giustizia stessa. Mentre interpreto i sentimenti del mio governo, mi permetta, Conte, di esprimere la mia stima personale e l'eminente considerazione con cui ho l'onore di essere, Conte, Suo obbediente e grato Servitore. A. Mavrocordato, Segretario del Governo, Nauplia, marzo 1825». A. PALMA, *Greece vindicated*, cit., p. 287.

⁴⁸ *Infra*, footnote 1.

⁴⁹ R. EDGCUMBE, *Byron: the Last Phase*, New York, Haskell House Publishers, 1972, pp. 185-190.

The Italians placed their trust in Mavrokordátos not only because, like him, they had shared the experience of being exiles (he had studied at the University of Padua, in 1821 when the war of independence broke out he was living in Pisa with the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and his wife Wollstonecraft Godwin), but also because he was a polyglot, an expert on European culture and, more importantly, his political vision was similar to that of the Italian pro-Greek exiles.

It is no coincidence that Palma, before returning to England, wrote «un catechismo politico (un po' diverso da quello che l'Austria aveva donato all'Italia), che ho indirizzato a Mavrocordato»⁵⁰, which was published in Greek with the title, *Κατήχησις πολιτική εἰς χρῆσιν των Ελλήνων* (*Political Catechism for the benefit of the Greeks*), and deserves to be read carefully.

The “Catechisms” with their educational function had had some success at the end of the eighteenth century in popularising revolutionary ideas. They were primarily aimed at the younger generations to involve them in the on-going political processes and create a sense of trust in the new institutions that were being established, together with a feeling of patriotic belonging.

In this specific case, the common thread was the connection between the national spirit and the Constitution of 1822, a point of reference that permitted a united nation to be born through the sharing of values and identity.

It was paramount that the Greek cause was successful after the many failures which, in the short span of a decade, the author had witnessed and experienced: the Napoleonic campaigns of 1812-1815, the uprisings of 1820 and 1821 in Italy and the Trienio Liberal in Spain.

According to the testimony of the editor of the Catechism, Giuseppe Chiappe – a Genoese exile who had settled on the island of Hydra in 1820, typographer and publisher, who published the newspaper *Ο Φίλος του Νόμου* (*Friend of the Law*) – Palma was among the first of the philhellenes who came to Greece to immediately understand the complexity of the existing political situation and, more importantly, the habits and customs of Greek society.

Since the beginning of the independence cause, Chiappe had been intending to publish an essay of this type, but no one had been considered up to the task both for cultural reasons and because of the prevailing chaotic and uncertain situation that prevented the Greek leaders from doing so.

Palma, however, possessed the right legal knowledge and political experience, as well as the necessary time, having been forced for various

⁵⁰ A. Palma, *Greece Vindicated*, cit., pp. 47-48.

reasons to postpone his return to England by some months. The publisher considered him suitable for writing useful texts both for the nascent ruling class of the Greek nation and for the population, naturally for those capable of reading, which would clearly set out their rights and duties.

In the introduction, the author directly addressed the Greek provisional government specifying that it was not his intention to give advice on the leadership of a nation, but rather to limit himself to proposing an examination of political culture in the light of the great changes produced by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, taking into account the fact that Greece was behind in this field. At the same time, however, he recognised the significance of its political and cultural past and, not surprisingly, within the essay there are numerous examples of just how much modern Europe was indebted to the Greek tradition.⁵¹ In the first chapter, the author declared that the Greek struggle was to be considered just and sacrosanct principally for three reasons: the defence of the religious tradition existing in the population, the right to regain independence and create a united and strong nation, and the re-establishment of the rule of law after centuries of the despotic Ottoman presence.⁵²

Starting from these premises, the war was not only just, but necessary, because by subjecting the Greeks to great and unbearable suffering and depriving them of their culture and interfering with the Christian faith, the Ottomans had not allowed them to follow alternative less bloody ways.⁵³ Furthermore, at that historical moment, the Greeks had to link their destiny to that of Europe. Therefore, there could be no doubt that this was a fully European revolution, once again underlining its remoteness from the English vision.⁵⁴

However, if revolution was a right form of action, injustices, abuses and excesses in the use of power were not to be tolerated as it proceeded. It was not enough to pronounce the word “revolution” to assign a positive value to the political-military process in progress. An authoritative

⁵¹ A. PALMA, Κατήχησις πολιτική εις χρήσιν των Ελλήνων (*Catechismo politico a beneficio dei Greci*), Ὑδρα (Hydra), Ἐκ τῆς ἐν Ὑδρᾷ Τυπογραφίας (dalla Tipografia Hydra), 1826, pp. 1-6. It was written in Italian and translated by Nikolaou G. Pagkalaki, in: <http://digital.lib.auth.gr/record/115413>. (consulted on 16/1/2021)

The book is divided into six parts: I. *La rivoluzione greca è giusta*; II. *Sulla religione dei Greci e dei suoi ministri*; III. *Sull'indipendenza dei Greci e sulla Grecia*; IV. *Sull'amministrazione e sui suoi ministri*; V. *Su cittadini comuni, i loro diritti e debiti*; VI. *A proposito dei militari*.

⁵² Ibid., p. 7.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

government was needed to manage the entire independence process, to ensure that justice was not subordinated to political power and that fundamental freedoms were respected. If all this were not to be applied, the citizens had the right and the duty to challenge it and those who had not moved in this direction would be considered complicit in a crime against the nation.⁵⁵

We have seen how Palma subsequently proved favourable, in cases of serious emergency or when the revolution itself ran the risk of being definitively defeated, to restricting these freedoms, entrusting power to a dictator: a measure which, however, would have been taken only for the time strictly necessary to prevent failure and one that never abused its power. These considerations, however, could not be made explicit in what must have been a sort of “compendium” of liberal thought.

Within the group of fundamental freedoms, Palma considered religious freedom one of primary importance. He recognised the religious, cultural and social role of the Orthodox Church, but considered it was necessary to safeguard the principle of religious pluralism as it could develop and stimulate competition in the moral field and improve the exercise of virtue.⁵⁶ At the same time, a clear separation needed to be drawn between the State and the dominant Church, understood as being the faith most people practiced. The Orthodox clergy, aside from some exceptions such as exemption from military service, would not enjoy particular privileges and would, during their magisterium, teach obedience to the laws of the State.⁵⁷ On the delicate and heartfelt question of religion, Palma once again demonstrated a strong component of pragmatism because, even with such theoretical premises, he approved the norms of the Constitution that limited “Turkish-Asian customs and traditions”. A passage that he considered fundamental in that historical moment to demonstrate to the world that Greece was an integral part of Europe.⁵⁸

The concept of independence had to be applied in relations between States, but “independent” individuals or groups with particular privileges could not exist within a nation. All people were equal before the laws of the State.

Even the State, whatever the institutional form that governed it, had obligations, not only towards its subjects or citizens, but also towards other States.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9, 17.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-20.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

According to Palma when States do not respect «una legge naturale: non fare agli altri ciò che non vuoi che facciano a te, fai agli altri ciò che vuoi che facciano a te», wars can start which for all involved, according to their own point of view, were considered “just”. An age-old problem, and in this part of the text he referred to the attempts made in ancient Greece, citing the courts that the ancient Greek city-states tried to create to prevent conflicts turning into wars. Another example cited concerned the desire of Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great, for a permanent body to be created to oversee the maintenance of peace. Recalling these ancient precedents, he called for an international mobilisation for the creation of supranational movements and institutions, with the aim of peacefully resolving disputes between nations.⁵⁹

In the two chapters on the functioning of the powers of the State and the rights and duties of the citizens, Palma carried out his role as “catechist” extremely effectively, describing clearly and simply the roles, functions and insurmountable limits of the organs of power that the Constitution of Epidaurus of 1822⁶⁰ provided, that is the executive and the legislative, often employing in his explanation examples concerning not only recent centuries but also events occurring during the Greek and Roman civilisations.⁶¹

The independence between the two bodies was inviolable, but it is important to emphasise that he paid particular attention to the fact that this concept had to be contemplated in the Constitution with regard to the third fundamental power in a liberal system, the judiciary.⁶²

With the same clarity, he listed the rights and duties that Greek citizens were to enjoy and fulfil once Greece became a completely independent nation.

The rights and obligations derived not only from respect for the Constitution and compliance with the laws issued by the legislative power, but also from those imposed by natural law, reaffirming the concept of the right-duty to rebel in the event any power attacked fundamental rights such as, for example, the right to life and property and to not be subjected to arbitrary arrest and torture and to have the right to a fair trial.⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 28-31.

⁶⁰ Cfr. The text at <https://web.archive.org/web/20190206184603/https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/syn06.pdf> (consulted on 20/1/2021).

⁶¹ A. PALMA, Κατήχησις πολιτική εις χρήσιν των Ελλήνων, cit., pp. 36-40.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 47-48. On pp. 72-86, he returned to the subject by describing in detail the English, French and US legal and judicial systems.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 69-70.

The last chapter was dedicated to the army and the military,⁶⁴ a choice that highlights the particular attention that the Italian exiles placed on ensuring that the Greek nation not only had a stable government, but also a well-organised armed force, for exclusively defensive purposes.

Although the defence of the homeland was the task of the army, Palma stressed on several occasions that one of the fundamental duties of Greek citizens was to preserve independence and national unity, understood as the supreme good, superior to any political, religious and social division, thus putting aside resentments, hatred and envy. However, patriotic sentiment was not to be exalted only when the nation was threatened by other States, but expressed itself through respect for the laws and common morals.⁶⁵

Returning to the question of the army, the pages of this *Catechism* represent an interesting compendium of the Piedmontese Count's thoughts on what would constitute a military code to be respected both in times of peace and of war.

The entire discussion was based on two main concepts: recourse to war was always harmful and, as far as possible, should not be employed; the enemy, whether civilians or prisoners, had to be respected and protected and, above all, considered human beings with their inviolable fundamental rights.

As with the issue of the possibility of a temporary dictatorial government, even with regard to respect for the "enemy", in subsequent writings, Palma did not renounce what was set out in the *Catechism*. Although he did not justify it, he adopted an ambiguous position regarding the massacres perpetrated by the Greeks against the Turks, arguing that violent retaliation had always existed, especially as a result of previous acts carried out by the enemy itself. In these cases, judgments and decisions had to be left to the discretion of the government, while he felt obliged to specify that it was not his idea or the result of a "new law" to be enacted, but, rather, one of customs applied since antiquity.⁶⁶

Palma concluded his text by dedicating it «ai valorosi soldati della rinascita greca», urging them to become descendants of the morality, courage and obedience of the ancient Spartan army and bring Greece back into the ranks of the European nations.⁶⁷

We believe that the drafting of the *Catechism*, the study of the Greek reality and the contribution it could make to the birth of the nation,

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 86-101.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 61-68.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 91-93.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 99-101.

played a significant part in Palma determining to settle permanently in Greece and take up Greek citizenship.

Back in London, his disputes with the Committee, in particular with Bowring (their mutual esteem however never ceased),⁶⁸ continued and became embittered when in 1826 he published the pamphlet, *A Summary Account of the Steam-Boats for Lord Cochrane's Expedition*, followed the next year by *The Greek Steam-Boats and Mehemet Ali's Firma. Being a following Statement of the pamphlet a Summary, Account of the Steam-Boats for Lord Cochrane's Expedition*.

As with *Greece Vindicated*, these pamphlets were also authentic accusations against the management of the funds raised by the Committee, partly squandered on the creation of a fleet of steamships to be entrusted to Admiral Lord Thomas Cochrane.

The allegations put forward had more than one basis, given that with the £300,000 loan, the Greeks hoped to have, by the end of 1825, a fleet of two frigates, six steamers and two yachts. Vain hopes because during the naval battles that took place between 1826 and 1827, they found themselves with only one frigate, a defective steamship, two yachts and an old brigantine supplied by the French pro-Greek committee.⁶⁹

HIS DEFINITIVE RETURN TO GREECE

In 1827 - after the battle of Navarino which can be considered the last significant act of war in the struggle for independence - Palma decided to return to Greece but, as seen previously, he stopped in Antwerp where he wrote the *Mémoire pour le piémontaise compromis dans les événements de mars et avril 1821*.⁷⁰ However, the authorities prevented him from travelling to the Netherlands for fear that he might meet other exiles including his fellow countryman Fontana-Rava, a close associate of Filippo Buonarroti, and so therefore he went to France.

These continuous intimidations and restrictions further convinced him to reside in a country where he could still feel useful, but above all be a free man and, in November 1828, he left Paris and in March 1829, after a long and difficult journey he arrived in Hydra.

⁶⁸ As can be seen in the correspondence between the two housed in the Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, Ms Eng 1247.1.

⁶⁹ For a detailed description of the event cfr., W. ST. CLAIR, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, cit., pp. 294-313.

⁷⁰ Brussels, s.e., 1828. In 1829 it was published in Italian with the title, *Difesa dei piemontesi inquisiti a causa degli avvenimenti del 1821 con un'invocazione ai ministri costituzionali del conte Alerino Palma*, in Brussels, s.e..

Upon hearing of his arrival, the Greek government, in honour of his pro-Greek past and for the work he had done in previous years, invited him to Aegina and immediately granted him Greek citizenship and appointed him president of the Messolonghi court.

Two years later, he was offered the post of Minister of Justice, but although flattered he refused the offer on the grounds that he would better serve the Greek people in a courtroom and continued to exercise the role of judge.

In 1840 he was invited, by Prime Minister Kapodistrias himself, to found and preside over the commercial court of Syros and he later moved to Athens to take up the position of judge of the Court of Appeal, then of member of the Supreme Court (*Άρειος Πάγος*) and, finally, the committee responsible for resolving Greco-Ottoman economic issues.

These prestigious assignments earned him, on several occasions, the praise of the Savoy consul general in Athens, Paolo Francesco Peloso, who in dispatches sent to Turin described him as “endowed with superior knowledge in legal doctrines and the oracle of his colleagues, and guided by his natural incorruptibility, he has inspired and informed souls”. Qualities that the Greek and Ottoman governments also recognised, particularly in his role as mediator, for, according to Peloso, his “integrity, justice, and infinite insight, and even the Governments were extremely pleased with themselves for having chosen him.”⁷¹

During the reign of Otto, he took part in the drafting of the Code of Civil and Criminal Procedure and for this reason was awarded the Cross of the Order of the Savior, the highest honour of the Kingdom of Greece, and the Medal of Excellence of the Struggle for Independence 1821-1829, conferred on those who had distinguished themselves during the liberation struggle.

Ironically, he was also awarded the Cross of the Savoy Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus for the role he played in the stipulation of a commercial treaty between Greece and the Kingdom of Sardinia,⁷² despite having been sentenced *in absentia* to death for the events of 1821.

In this context, Palma demonstrated an uncommonly proud spirit. His daughter Vincenza begged him to ask King Carlo Alberto for a pardon but, even though he knew he was causing enormous pain to his family, he never requested it, citing that it was immoral to ask for forgiveness, as he did not consider that the sentence imposed on him was right

⁷¹ These testimonies of the consul are reported in *Panteon dei martiri della libertà italiana*, cit., p. 501.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 504.

I have been studying this matter for a long time, and were it not for the fact of self-love alone, I could convince myself to overcome it for your and your mother's sake. But there are also other powerful reasons that do not allow me to procure this pleasure for me and the fulfillment of your preferences for you.

In Piedmont I would be a useless man, while in these times I could not aspire and even less obtain a position: becoming a lawyer after so many years of absence and with all the changes in the laws, it would be close to impossible. Furthermore, at the slightest doubt of conspiracy or signs of war I would be placed under strict surveillance, and in the case of greater concerns even in the castle for security reasons [...] So as I cannot be of any use to you and only perhaps a cause of expense, disquiet and pain, how can I ask for a pardon, make a submission in a shameful way, and go and lead, without real advantage, a life that is not peaceful? Therefore I must persist in the adopted system of Loke, who said: since there was no just reason to condemn me, so there will be no reason to forgive me; and with Dante: If you do not follow the path of honour, there will be no return. If times were to change before dying, I could change the system too. For now, your every step is useless; since I would not profit from any grace or safe conduct.⁷³

Despite his stoicism, his daughter continued to petition and on 7 March 1840 a royal decree was issued which commuted the death sentence into exile but, more importantly, sanctioned the return of his assets confiscated in 1821. Given the difficult economic situation of the family, Palma welcomed this last decision with great relief and, writing to his daughter, commented "Certain things only being done acquire consideration: it is better when they succeed." Subsequently, addressing Giuseppe Barbaroux, Minister of Grace and Justice and the Ecclesiastical Affairs of the Kingdom of Sardinia, he confirmed his intentions: "This is precisely the pardon I can take advantage of, because it does not oblige me to undertake that act of submission, which, involving the confession of a crime and the need to change conduct, cannot be applied with justice in my case."⁷⁴

Despite his firm decision not to return to his homeland except as a free man and cleared of all charges, he continued throughout his life to be interested in the evolving situation in Italy, endeavouring in every way to consolidate the solidarity of the two peoples through his association with the newspapers *Il Corriere italiano in Grecia* and *Il Novellista italiano* both published in Athens.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 500.

⁷⁴ Ibidem.

The Surgical Academy of Turin wished to honour him, when they could do so without fear of retaliation by the Savoy judiciary, sending him a diploma of honorary membership in July 1849.⁷⁵

He died on 6 February 1851 in Syros, exactly thirty years after he had fled his homeland to which he never returned. According to some testimonies, his last words were “I die a happy man, having seen my country regenerated, and close maritime connections established with this adopted homeland of mine, which has given generous hospitality to Italian exiles.”⁷⁶

The funeral was officiated by a fellow countryman, the Catholic bishop of the Cycladic capital, Luigi Maria Blancis da Ciriè.

A few months later on 10 July, his friends and former fighting companions from the Canavese paid homage to him in a funeral service in the church of San Michele in Rivarolo and the priest, Francesco Vallosio, recalled the virtues and learning of the man who thirty years earlier had been sentenced to hang for “crimes against the Majesty” by the Senate sitting in Turin.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 504.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem.*