The impact of the major force shaping European modernity in the nineteenth century, nationalism, upon the foremost institution around which Orthodox society traditionally cohered in Southeastern Europe, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, forms a complex story that can be seen to unfold on many levels. The response of the patriarchate to the secular challenge of nationalism was equally complicated and could be traced in many contexts. To avoid confusion, anachronism, and unfairness in attempting to recover, at least partly, this story, one precondition must emphatically be borne in mind: an understanding of the encounter of the patriarchate with nationalism should not be reduced to a power struggle over simply the control and direction of the Orthodox community, but it should be seen and interpreted as the response of a religious institution to the challenge posed to its core values and self-definition derived from a centuries-old tradition by a secular threat to this heritage—a threat from which the church saw as its nonnegotiable duty to safeguard the Orthodox community. This is the core of the historic encounter to be sketched in outline in what follows. Losing sight of the deeper spiritual and ideological incompatibilities of the two world-views locked up in the encounter would reduce the story to a confusing record of personal conflicts, antagonisms over power, and violent disagreements concerning the prospects of the Christian community in the Ottoman Empire. The approach to be followed here will involve an attempt to gauge and appreciate the response of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the foremost repository and self-conscious guardian of the Orthodox religious tradition to nationalism.

The initial encounter of the Orthodox Church and its institutional exponent, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, with the challenges of modern secular thought had, of course, taken place before the age of nationalism. The earliest such encounters had been well under way in the eighteenth century in the interplay of the Orthodox tradition with the Enlightenment. As I have attempted to suggest on a number of previous occasions, that earlier encounter too was more complex and nuanced than it has often been assumed by conventional historiographical approaches. As a rule, the Orthodox Church, especially before the period of the French Revolution, manifested a noteworthy openness to the exponents of modern secular learning and, as long as questions of doctrine remained untouched, it proved quite prepared to enlist them in its projects for the education of the faithful.¹

Even after 1789, and despite the intensification of ideological confrontations between proponents and opponents of modern ideas in the Orthodox community both within and without the Ottoman Empire, the church's openness to the Enlightenment made possible the emergence of a remarkable phenomenon that could be described as "ecclesiastical Enlightenment." This was represented by a number of senior prelates who occupied leading positions in the hierarchy during the first two decades of the nineteenth century and in their pastoral work that appeared sincerely devoted to the modernization and improvement of education, attracting the admiration and approval of important and outspoken leaders of secular thought such as Adamantios Korais.²

One particular manifestation of the impact of the Enlightenment and its expectations of cultural refinement upon the inner life of the church was registered in the style and diction of the official documents issued by the secretariat of the patriarchate or by the Holy Synod. A conscious turn to a more learned style, reflecting a deeper command of ancient Greek is noticeable already in the mid-seventeenth century and it became a generalized tendency from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. The new style is obvious in the dating of patriarchal documents where the ancient Greek names of months are preferred to those of the Roman calendar; it is also reflected in the tendency to hellenize episcopal titles by making place names conform to Greek grammar and "by hunting names with an air of Hellenism."³ The most eloquent and literal record of the "prevalence of
Hellenic spirit” in the praxis of the church was the special concern for the use of language. The chronicler of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Manuel Gedeon, makes a quite strong point of this: “The most splendid and powerful means of strengthening and preserving Hellenism inviolate in its integrity, was for the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the other patriarchates the pure Greek language, free from the cacophony of foreign accretions and this was the language in official patriarchal documents drafted by the chief secretaries, who as a rule were also the head teachers of the patriarchal academy.”

Such had been the intellectual substratum of the work of the church. In the period of the Enlightenment, concern for the proper use of language became a distinctive feature of patriarchal practice in Constantinople, and, according to Gedeon, it set a precedent and a standard for the nineteenth century. I have dwelled on this aspect of ecclesiastical practice not only on account of the intrinsic interest of the subject but also in order to illustrate a broader interpretative problem. The concern for language and the special care for the proper usage of Greek could be easily interpreted as an intellectual expression of the spirit of nationalism, thus confirming a conventional historiographical view of long standing that saw the Orthodox Church as a primary agent of Greek nationalism. The cultural initiatives connected with the proper use of language could thus be seen as a precocious manifestation of such a secular spirit in the bosom of the church.

In fact, such a reading of the evidence, plausible as it appears at first sight, would only betray the characteristic inability to grasp the historicity of pertinent phenomena, and a total misunderstanding of the character of ecclesiastical practice. Concern for the proper use of Greek did not possess for the church ethnic significance, let alone nationalist meaning. It rather confirmed its status within the cultural tradition of Orthodoxy that went back to the Greek fathers of the fourth century. It should thus be seen as a reclaiming and an affirmation of an ancient religious identity with a distinctly ecumenical content, rather than as a sign of a form of ethnic awareness.

The question of language, and the easy ways in which it can be misunderstood and misinterpreted, illustrates the broader cognitive and methodological problems facing any attempt to understand and interpret, or even simply to narrate, the story of the attitude of the church toward modern secular systems of values and, most particularly, toward the complexities and conflicts involved in the advent of nationalism within the ethnic communities over whose spiritual life the Orthodox Church had presided for millennia. In the particular case of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the question of nationalism could be seen to present serious challenges to the church on many levels: spiritual, pastoral, political, and administrative.

Nationalism was a force of change transforming European societies in the direction of modernity. Ipso facto, therefore, the nexus of modernity and nationalism involved a confrontation with the church. In a context of ethnic heterogeneity and national pluralism such as that of Orthodox Christianity in the age of nationalism, the confrontation between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and national modernity could be traced—primarily for reasons of analytical efficacy—on three levels: firstly, on the level of relations with the new national states of the Balkans, which, as an integral part of their nation-building projects, claimed the independence of their local churches from Constantinople; secondly, on the level of governance of the Orthodox community within the Ottoman Empire, a community that since the Fall of 1453 had been defined in terms of religion and had been placed under the jurisdiction of its ecclesiastical leadership; and, thirdly, on the level of relations with the Ottoman state, once the empire itself was set, rather belatedly, into the orbit of nationalist transformation.

The Orthodox Church and the Advent of National States in the Balkans

On the level of the relations of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the new Orthodox national states of the Balkans, one can discern quite clearly the inner logic of ecclesiastical attitudes toward the array of secular changes represented by nationalism. Between the 1830s and the 1880s, a process of drastic changes transformed the political map of Southeastern Europe as, one after another, the Orthodox nationalities of the region acceded to independent statehood: Greece, Serbia, and Romania became sovereign kingdoms, Greece in 1830 after a ten year war of independence, Serbia in 1878 after a protracted period of autonomy under Ottoman suzerainty since 1831, and Romania in 1881 after the union of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859 and the election of a European prince as head of the new autonomous state in 1865.

The new nation-states demonstrated a particular sense of urgency to integrate the Orthodox Church in their nation-building projects by detaching its local branches within their new state borders from Constantinople and
proclaiming them autocephalous. Inevitably, this created problems with Constantinople. The Ecumenical Patriarchate did not, in principle, object to autocephaly. There were serious precedents to the recognition of autocephaly in medieval Orthodoxy, as in the cases of the medieval patriarchates of the Bulgarian and Serbian empires that had remained in complete canonical communion with Constantinople until their abolition by the Ottomans following the disappearance of the states to which they had been attached. Furthermore, Constantinople had proceeded at the close of the sixteenth century with the granting of autocephaly and patriarchal status to the Orthodox Church within the Russian Empire, thus creating a fifth Orthodox patriarchate in 1589.

The objections Constantinople voiced to the new autocephalies of the age of nationalism were directed primarily at the unilateralism whereby the new secular states attempted to impose their will on the church. This can explain the different forms the question of autocephaly took in the Serbian case, on the one hand, and in the Greek and Romanian cases on the other. Serbian political and ecclesiastical authorities in the autonomous principality of Serbia in 1831 and the sovereign kingdom of Serbia in 1879 took the formal steps required by canon law by applying to the Synod of Constantinople for ecclesiastical autonomy first and autocephaly subsequently, receiving both smoothly with the blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. By contrast, Greece and Romania proclaimed unilaterally their churches independent of Constantinople, putting the claims of nationalist sensibility before the formalities of canon law. This secular modus operandi created serious problems in the Orthodox communion. Constantinople totally rejected the unilateral actions creating Greek autocephaly with the consequence of a schism between the autocephalous Church of Greece and the Orthodox communion lasting from 1833 to 1852. Another schism appeared in the making on account of Romanian state policies in the ecclesiastical domain without prior consultation with Constantinople in the 1860s, the 1870s and the 1880s. In both the Greek and Romanian cases, the conflicts were healed and full communion restored once the formalities required by canon law were finally followed, the national governments and their local churches applying for autocephaly on the grounds of their accession to political independence and receiving their new status by means of an official document, Patriarchal Tomos, issued by the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The way Constantinople, under a number of different patriarchs and at points in time at some distance from each other, handled the question of the autocephaly of national churches illustrates, characteristically, the fundamentally different logic of Orthodox ecclesiology from the secular values of nationalism. This became even more obvious in the protracted and sad story of the Bulgarian ecclesiastical question. In the case of the Bulgarian Orthodox community, the aspiration to ecclesiastical emancipation preceded the claim of independent statehood as a preparatory stage of national assertion, paving the way to state sovereignty. The Bulgarians were latecomers to nationalism, in comparison to the other Balkan Orthodox communities, but once they did, their commitment and enthusiasm were second to none. They expressed their aspirations by clamoring for an independent Bulgarian Church, as a herald, obviously, of an independent Bulgarian state. It would be reasonable to suppose, in view of the extreme intermixture of nationalities and ethnic communities in the region, that the aspiration to set up an independent Bulgarian ecclesiastical entity was also a means to attempt an initial delineation of the territorial basis of a future Bulgarian state.

The first Bulgarian claims to ecclesiastical autonomy were voiced after the Crimean War (1854–56). In order to accommodate the demands of their Bulgarian flock, two Ecumenical Patriarchs, Joachim II in 1861 and Gregory VI in 1867, proposed arrangements for ecclesiastical autonomy in predominantly ethnic Bulgarian areas under the spiritual jurisdiction of Constantinople. Since there was no Bulgarian state, the Ecumenical Patriarchate judged that there was no canonical basis for anything else. This proved unsatisfactory to the Bulgarians who were actively encouraged in their aspirations by Russian foreign policy and by the broader Panslavist movement. In 1870, with the support of the Russian ambassador in Istanbul, Count Ignatiev, the Bulgarians managed to obtain an edict from the Sublime Porte setting up an autonomous Bulgarian Exarchate in thirteen dioceses that belonged to the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The synod of the patriarchate rejected this proposed arrangement as uncanonical and proceeded to the convocation of a major synod of the Orthodox patriarchates to consider the issue. Russia abstained, but the other Orthodox patriarchates and the autocephalous Church of Cyprus agreed to take part. The synod met in Istanbul in late August 1872, and, by Sep-
November 17, it concluded that the Bulgarian claims were uncanonical and the demand for a separate church along ethnic lines represented the heresy of ethnophyletism. The exarchate was proclaimed schismatic, condemned, and its ecclesiastical leaders were defrocked and excommunicated. The Bulgarian schism introduced intense conflicts into the Orthodox community and caused tremendous suffering to large numbers of people in Macedonia, Thrace, and Eastern Rumelia, who paid the heavy costs for the secular values that had crept into the church and brought about this confrontation over essentially secular issues of power and politics. The Patriarchate of Constantinople, nevertheless, was consistent in its attitude in facing up to this challenge of secular nationalism: the absence of an independent state in the Bulgarian case could not warrant the canonical steps that had led to autocephaly in the cases of Greece, Serbia, and Romania. The schism lingered on until 1945 when it was settled in less than a month once certain formalities were transacted by the Bulgarian Church under Exarch Stephen.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Governance of the Orthodox Community in the Ottoman Empire

The Bulgarian Orthodox was not the only group that questioned the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate after the Crimean War. The broader changes that marked the government of the Ottoman Empire during the age of reforms, ushered in by the Hatt-i Humayun of 1856, raised the expectations of the Greek Orthodox flock of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as well as for a different, more active role in the administration of the church and in the management of the affairs of their own community. Up until then, the church and the affairs of the community were managed through an oligarchic system of power-sharing between the incumbent patriarch and a group of about eight senior metropolitans who occupied the thrones of sees in the vicinity of Constantinople.

This was the system of gerontismos, government by the elders, instituted around the middle of the eighteenth century as a way of breaking the patriarch’s monopoly of power. Lay influence was extensively exercised to be sure, especially by Orthodox officials and dignitaries of the Porte like the grand dragomans and the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia, as ruler members of the Phanariot families. Increasingly, as the nineteenth century progressed, lay influence in the affairs of the church was wielded by persons of great wealth who had risen to prominence through success in commerce and banking and had amassed enormous fortunes. All these forms of influence, however, remained informal and noninstitutionalized and very often involved unwarranted intervention of laymen in purely ecclesiastical issues beyond their competence, which, inevitably, bred corruption.

The new claims voiced after 1856, precisely involved a demand for formal institutionalized representation of the lay element in the administration of the church, and this could be only connected with the rise of secularization marking the age, of which nationalism was a particular expression in the Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire. The picture, of course, was neither uniform nor predictable as to who stood where or to the consistency of the positions adopted. All this was determined by circumstances, short-term alliances, and calculations of interests. As a result of the movement of lay assertion in the affairs of the church, nevertheless, major institutional changes came into place whereby the old oligarchic system of government by the elder metropolitans was abolished and was replaced by a new system by which the governance of the church was entrusted to a Holy Synod of twelve prelates, drawn from the entire body of the hierarchy, renewable every two years while affairs of the Orthodox community were managed by a “permanent mixed council,” composed by eight elected lay members and four metropolitans. Both bodies were presided over by the patriarch, and the two together formed an electoral college, broadened with the addition of lay dignitaries and other representatives from the parishes of Constantinople and the provinces, which elected the patriarch.

These institutional changes were provided for by the “General Regulations,” enacted officially on January 27, 1862 as part of the broader structure of Ottoman reforms that sought to modernize and make government more accountable in the empire. The “General Regulations” were the product of protracted negotiations in the Orthodox community that took years to transact, following the initial edict of the Sublime Porte concerning the introduction of reforms. An initial “national assembly,” composed of representatives and dignitaries of the Orthodox community, was convoked between 1858 and 1860 with the charge to draft the regulations that would implement the reforms among the Orthodox. The assembly
produced the draft that eventually, after further revisions, was enacted as the General Regulations in 1862. The text and its various specific provisions, however, remained an object of contention and it was repeatedly subjected to revisions by other assemblies in 1870 and 1872 and by successive appeals of the two bodies to the Porte.

The institutionalized presence of the lay element provided outlets for the introduction of nationalist sensibilities and conflicts into the affairs of the church, and it also fostered the emergence of many-sided conflicts between the lay element and the leadership of the church, which attempted in most instances to maintain a nonnational approach to ecclesiastical and community affairs on the basis of the traditions of Christian ecumenism, as noted above, for instance, in the attempts to accommodate Bulgarian claims before the schism.

The wider story of the politics of the Orthodox community in the Ottoman Empire in the age of reforms is certainly beyond the scope of the present essay, which attempts to bring some order to the consideration of the equally complex question of the encounter of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the proteme challenge of secular nationalism. On this level of analysis, the relevance of the story of the new institutional arrangements brought about by the application of the Ottoman reforms in the system of governance of the Orthodox community consists in the recognition of the outlets it provided whereby nationalism and national passions influenced the policy options and decisions of the church. The formal presence of the laity, with its own divisions, factions, conflicting views and interests in the process of ecclesiastical governance, and especially direct lay participation in patriarchal elections, influenced in significant ways, through various forms of dependence and patronage, the policies of the patriarchate.

On the evidence of the historical record, it was largely the pressure, coming from lay elements in the Orthodox community, who had been converted to the values of Greek nationalism, that, in the 1860s and 1870s, led to the escalation of the conflict with the Bulgarian Orthodox that culminated in the schism. It was such elements, influenced largely by the nationalist politics of Epaminondas Deligiorgis, prime minister of Greece in the mid-1860s and in the early 1870s, that, against the more moderate counsel of senior leaders of the Orthodox community in Constantinople, pushed for a sharp showdown with the Bulgarians, motivated to a considerable degree by anti-Russian attitudes. It was characteristic of the climate of the time that at the Synod of 1872, the Patriarch Cyril of Jerusalem, who wished for moderation toward Bulgarian aspirations, was subjected to threats and forced to remain away.

The Bulgarian question remained the crucible of the church’s encounter with nationalism. As Bulgarian activities on behalf of the exarchate escalated in Macedonia and Thrace, and the Greek state became more actively involved to protect Greek interests in the regions, the panorthodox policies preferred by Patriarchs Joachim II and Joachim III went unheeded by a younger generation of prelates, who had to face the consequences of the schism on the ground. Thus these younger prelates were forced, very often by pastoral necessity, to align themselves with Greek nationalism and to espouse its values. This group of senior clergymen included some of the most dynamic and gifted bishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, charismatic men like Chrysostom of Drama and then of Smyrna and Germanos of Kastoria and then of Amasya. Their conversion to nationalism through their involvement in irredentist politics in Macedonia signaled, in a way, what the wave of the future would bring in the relationship of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to nationalism.

Concurrently, in another domain of the church’s traditional concerns, that of education and cultural life, the wave of ethnonationalism was also actively transforming the mentality and values of the younger generations of its flock through the active promotion of Greek cultural policies in the Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire, both in the Balkans and Asia Minor. These cultural policies, through the foundation of schools and nurseries, the training of teachers, and the active encouragement of the foundation of local cultural associations, aimed at, and to a considerable extent, did achieve the cultivation of Greek national consciousness among the Orthodox populations of the empire, even in distant and isolated regions in the far interior of Asia Minor. The church, which in fulfilling its pastoral duties had been traditionally the leading agent in the education of the faithful, could not, of course, oppose educational initiatives that did not threaten Orthodox doctrine (as similar initiatives of Western missionary groups did), and, therefore, the process of the nationalization of its flock through the expansion of the network of Greek schools proceeded apace in the new environment of freedom, toleration, and equality made possible by the institutional context of Ottoman reforms.

The process of the internal and initially inadvertent nationalization of the Orthodox Church in the course of the nineteenth century could be
more clearly illustrated if we turned our attention for a moment to the insular microcosm of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. Although Cyprus is an autocephalous church and does not belong to the jurisdiction of Constantinople, under Ottoman rule the two churches became closely identified and ties in the nineteenth century were particularly close to the point that developments in the ecclesiastical life of Cyprus followed closely the broader patterns unfolding on a much larger scale in the extensive territorial jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Asia Minor and the Balkans.

Cyprus had gained ecclesiastical autocephaly at the Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus in 431. It thus ranked sixth after Rome and the four Eastern patriarchates in ecclesiastical seniority. Under the medieval Frankish kingdom and the subsequent period of Venetian rule, the autocephaly of the Church of Cyprus was suppressed by Rome (1260–1571), but it was restored by a synod of Orthodox patriarchs held in Constantinople in 1572, following the Ottoman conquest of the island the previous year.

Under archbishops Chrysanthos (1767–1810) and Kyprianos (1810–21), the Church of Cyprus went through a period of revival and reconstruction, taking many initiatives in the cultural domain. Archbishop Kyprianos was a genuine representative of the ecclesiastical Enlightenment noted above and took important measures in the field of education, establishing a higher “Hellenic school” in Nicosia in 1812 and supporting, in 1819, the initiation of a “Philological Gymnasium” in Limassol, modeled after the Philological Gymnasium of Smyrna, one of the foremost hearths of the culture of the Enlightenment in the Greek world. All this creative energy shown by the Cypriot exponent of the ecclesiastical Enlightenment came to a tragic end in 1821, when the archbishop, the three metropolitans, Chrysanthos of Paphos, Meletios of Kition, Lavrentios of Kyrenia, and hundreds of other senior ecclesiastical dignitaries and lay notables fell victims to the savagery and rapacity of a local Ottoman governor, who staged a major massacre on July 9, 1821, and in subsequent weeks.

Thus the Church of Cyprus shared in the martyrdom brought upon the Orthodox hierarchy throughout the Ottoman Empire in reprisal for the Greek revolution in 1821. Later on, this legacy of martyrdom supplied a powerful symbolic impetus to the growth of Greek nationalism in Cyprus, endowing it with its “ethnomartyr” founding fathers.

The history of the Church of Cyprus for the remainder of Ottoman rule down to the British occupation of 1878, was, in fact, a protracted endeavor to recover from the heavy blow dealt to it by the tragedy of 1821. The 1820s was a decade of instability in the church with three prelates alternating on the archiepiscopal throne, but during the relatively longer reign of archbishop Panaretos (1827–40), a systematic effort at reconstruction was undertaken with the convocation of two assemblies of senior clergy and lay notables in 1830 and 1839, which provided especially for the organization of the island’s Orthodox community and the establishment of schools. An important initiative took place in 1828, shortly after Panaretos’s accession, whereby the archbishop, the bishops, and lay notables of Cyprus signed an appeal to the first head of state of liberated Greece, Governor Ioannis Capodistrias, to take measures for the inclusion of Cyprus within the borders of the fledging new state. This appeal set a pattern that was going to be repeated on many occasions for the rest of the nineteenth and during the twentieth century, with the Church of Cyprus leading the movement for the incorporation of the island in the Kingdom of Greece.

Although Archbishop Panaretos was expelled from his throne with an imperial command in 1840, in the age of reforms that marked the last phase of Ottoman rule in Cyprus, the Orthodox Church on the island enjoyed relative tranquility and respect. Three archbishops at the close of the Ottoman period received high Ottoman decorations, marking the new age in the relations of the Orthodox Church with the Ottoman state. The new climate allowed the church to concentrate on its internal reconstruction and the promotion of Greek education. In her educational projects, the Church of Cyprus was repeatedly assisted by Constantinople, especially by the Sylllogos, the Greek Literary Association of Constantinople. Ties with the Ecumenical Patriarchate remained close throughout this period and Constantinople was constantly the main point of reference for the Church of Cyprus. Clergy from the island began being trained at the new Theological School established by Constantinople in 1844 on the island of Halki in the Sea of Marmara. These cultural initiatives and expanding ties with the new Greek state and major centers of Greek diaspora and ecclesiastical life around the Eastern Mediterranean, especially with Alexandria and Jerusalem, contributed decisively to strengthening the sense of Greek identity in Cyprus and laid the foundations for the future growth of a dynamic nationalist movement in the island.
Meanwhile at the center of the empire and the Orthodox Church, the return of Patriarch Joachim III to the throne in 1901, with the support of the neo-Phanariot group in the lay leadership of the Orthodox community, who saw in the preservation of the Ottoman Empire the safest guarantee for the survival and prosperity of the church and its flock, acted as a brake that slowed the wholesale conversion of the Ecumenical Patriarchate toward nationalism. Amid all other Orthodox churches that had been transformed into national churches and, led by the Church of Russia, were pursuing active nationalist strategies, the Ecumenical Patriarchate under Patriarch Joachim still held out, professing the values of Christian universalism and ecumenicity. The patriarch passed away on November 13, 1912, literally on the morrow of the outbreak of the first Balkan War. The Greek army had just taken Thessaloniki on October 26, the day of the city’s patron saint, St. Dimitrios. In the age of Balkan Wars and of the Great War that followed, the resistance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to nationalism finally withered away. Ten years later, in the wake of Greece’s Asia Minor disaster, the patriarchate paid the heaviest of costs for this transient flirtation with nationalism, with the martyrdom and eventual expulsion of its flock from its historic hearths in the land of the seven Churches of the Apocalypse.

### The Church and the Ottoman State

Since its reestablishment by Mehmet the Conqueror in 1454, the Patriarchate of Constantinople had functioned as an institution of the Ottoman imperial order. Upon their accession, the patriarchs, in their personal capacity as leaders of their religious community, were issued imperial edicts (berats) recognizing their status and detailing their duties, especially their foremost obligation to secure the loyalty and submission of their Christian flock to their Ottoman master. Despite the official recognition of their status as religious leaders of a significant part of the population of the empire, the patriarchs, as a rule, suffered the consequences of the arbitrariness of despotic power. This is reflected in the frequency of changes on the patriarchal throne, some patriarchs serving only a few months or even weeks, many of them returning to the throne for second, third, or even further terms and several falling victims to martyrdom, including some of the most prominent ones such as Cyril I, Gregory V, and Cyril VI.

Of the many cases of patriarchal martyrdom under Ottoman rule, the story of Patriarch Gregory V is particularly revealing in connection with the multiple facets of the church’s relation to secular thought, in general, and to nationalism, in particular. Gregory came to the ecumenical throne in 1798 from the Metropolis of Smyrna. His background linked him with the movements of revival of Orthodox spirituality emanating from Mount Athos earlier in the eighteenth century. When he ascended the throne of Constantinople in 1798, the Ottoman Empire was in dire straits, besieged by the pressures of the age of revolution on all sides: French revolutionary troops had just occupied the Ionian islands on the empire’s Western front, Napoleon had landed in Egypt, putting the empire’s territorial integrity in serious jeopardy, separatist movements by local troparchs were threatening the empire from within, and revolutionary initiatives inspired by Jacobinism like the one led by Rhigas Velestinlis were rising among the Christian subjects of the empire. The Sublime Porte, in a state of alarm, obviously pressed the patriarch to do something to keep his flock in line and to secure its loyalty to the empire. The patriarch did not need to be convinced. Deeply committed to Christian culture and to the cultivation of the faith of his flock through the improvement of education and intent on fulfilling his pastoral responsibilities by establishing, on safe foundations, the canonical order in the church, the patriarch did not think that any form of disloyalty to the Ottoman state could be conducive to anything edifying for the Orthodox community. For him, as for most of his predecessors, the legitimacy of the Ottoman state was a fundamental premise of the condition of the earthly existence and conduct of the church. Hence the patriarch’s active campaign against the revolutionary ideas of liberty and equality that were infiltrating the conscience of a segment of his flock came as a natural consequence. This campaign was particularly notable in 1798—the critical year of Napoleon’s landing in Egypt—and included the patriarch’s famous encyclical to the inhabitants of the Ionian islands, warning about the pernicious spiritual consequences of French revolutionary principles, the condemnation of the revolutionary initiative of Rhigas Velestinlis, and the publication of the tract Paternal instruction, which attempted to systematically reinterpret the terms liberty and equality to make them conform to the idea of submission to the Ottoman state.

All these expressions of official ecclesiastical policy reflected the distance the Orthodox Church wished to maintain from modern secular
ideas in order to keep the faithful within its fold and expressed with sincerity an ancient tradition of which the Patriarchate of Constantinople felt itself to be the guardian. The patriarch's attitude remained consistent in his following two patriarchates (1806-8 and 1819-21). His third patriarchy coincided with the escalation of the ideological preparation of the Greek struggle for freedom and the outbreak of the war of independence. The patriarch remained consistently opposed to all these movements, fearing—rightly as it turned out—that they would lead to violent reprisals by the Ottomans that might put the very physical survival of the Christian people in jeopardy. Gregory's last patriarchate turned into an active campaign to contain the radical effects of secular ideas among his flock and to strengthen the bases of traditional Orthodox culture. Among other initiatives, the patriarch set up a patriarchal press, appointed a patriarchal censor and invited Orthodox scholars to submit their works for publication. Counter-Enlightenment initiatives among the learned laity, both within the Ottoman Empire and in the diaspora, were encouraged, including the publication in Vienna of the journal *Kalliope* in 1819, as a forum of conservative opinion against the liberal *Ernis o Logios*, also published in Vienna, and the radical journal *Melissa*, published in Paris. The most important initiative of the period was the attempt to bring Greek education in line by affirming the control of the church over the main high schools of the Greek world and closing down, through the initiative of local metropolitans, the major institutions following a predominantly secular curriculum like the Philological Gymnasium in Smyrna and the High School of Chios. Just as the Greek war of independence was breaking out in March 1821, the patriarch convoked a synod in Constantinople that issued a condemnation of "philosophical lessons," meaning exactly the curricula of the Enlightenment introduced into Greek high schools.

The best-known measure of ideological control came at the very end of Gregory's third patriarchate and involved the encyclicals disowning the curricula of the Enlightenment introduced into Greek high schools. The month of March 1821 was marked by many parallel initiatives, including an encyclical of March 11, 1821, confirming that the condemnation of the outbreak of the revolt "had been signed amid a torrent of tears on the holy altar."25

All this, however, "an authentic expression of ecclesiastical politics under Ottoman rule" as it has been rightly characterized by Gregory's most objective modern biographer,26 did not assuage the Ottomans' panic at the revolutionary outbreak, neither did it convince them of the loyalty of the Orthodox Church. On April 10, 1821, Easter Sunday, the Patriarch Gregory V and four senior prelates resident in Istanbul, Dionysios of Ephesus, Athanasios of Nicomedia, Gregory of Derkoi, and Evgenios of Anchialos, were executed for high treason. The patriarch, who had celebrated Easter liturgy at midnight, was hung from the central gate of the patriarchate at Phanar in Istanbul; his body was given over to a mob and eventually thrown into the Bosphorus. The gate of the patriarchate where the patriarch had been hung has remained closed ever since.

The patriarch's martyrdom at the outbreak of the Greek revolution despite his active opposition to secular values and to any form of liberation initiatives throughout his tenure of the patriarchal throne, transformed him immediately into an icon of Greek nationalism. Throughout the period of the liberation struggle in the 1820s, his name became a slogan for the fighters of Greek freedom and later, in the independent Greek state, he was ceremoniously incorporated among the protagonists of the liberation of Greece. Somewhat ironically, in the 1870s, his statue was erected outside the University of Athens next to that of Rhigas Velestinlis, whose political ideas he had condemned as "full of rottenness."

On the centennial of his martyrdom in 1921, Patriarch Gregory V was canonized by the synod of the autocephalous Church of Greece, an initiative faced with skepticism by Constantinople at the time although subsequently the patriarch as an "hieromartyr" was included in the patriarchate's calendar of saints. It is interesting to note that whereas for the Church of Greece Gregory V is an "ethnomartyr," the Church of Constantinople prefers to refer to him as an "hieromartyr," recalling and connecting him to the tradition of the early church and associating him with such great and popular early saintly bishops like Charalambos and Eleftherios martyred by the Romans.

The story of Patriarch Gregory V is extremely important, as it reveals the whole nexus between Orthodoxy and nationalism. As it should be clear from the brief survey of the patriarch's pastoral activity and ecclesiastical policies above, he remained, throughout, with impressive consistency, dedicated to the spiritual, canonical, and pastoral traditions of Orthodoxy that ipso facto turned him into an opponent of the multiple expressions of secularism, including its foremost political manifestation, nationalism. This, in fact, was an authentic expression of the Orthodox
position, which Gregory incarnated with a deep sense of responsibility with his life and death. His martyrdom, nevertheless, delivered him to the ideology of Greek nationalism and to the historiography that embodied this ideology, for which Gregory's antinationalist policies and his skepticism about plans for the liberation of Greece remained a source of profound embarrassment. Throughout the nineteenth and repeatedly during the twentieth century, there have been historiographical attempts to "exonerate" the patriarch from the charge of "collaborationism" with the "foreign and infidel tyrants" of the Greek nation leveled against him by equally ideologically motivated arguments of historians and other commentators with a leftist or "progressive" orientation. Of course, both positions are simply symptomatic of anachronistic thinking, ideological prejudice, and an inability to recover and judge on its own terms, taking into account its religious premises, the ways the Orthodox Church, with the Ecumenical Patriarchate at its head, strove against enormous odds to discharge its pastoral duties and to preserve the Orthodox faith within the institutional framework set by the Ottoman state.

It was precisely this institutional framework that seemed to be changing in the age of reforms. For about a quarter of a century, from the 1850s to the 1870s, the official Ottoman recognition of the equality of all subjects of the empire and the project of a common Ottoman identity regardless of religion or ethnic origin involved ipso facto a new attitude toward Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The frequent changes of the holders of the patriarchal office continued throughout the nineteenth century, but the incumbent patriarchs were treated with respect and accorded state honors and top decorations that symbolized the new status of equality and toleration to which the empire aspired.

A small, little known social event late in 1851 reflected the new climate and the hopes it nurtured. On December 15 of that year, the reigning Sultan Abdul Mecid I (1839-61) in a gesture suggesting great favor and good will, graced with his presence the wedding of the daughter of one of the most prominent Orthodox dignitaries at the time, Stefanos Vogoridis, who had served the Porte in various capacities, including that of Prince of Samos. According to a detailed eyewitness account, the sultan arrived at the church where the wedding was blessed and remained standing with his hands crossed throughout the ceremony, saying that he had taken an oath never to sit down on occasions at which the name of the Lord was mentioned.28

The **Hatt-i Humayun** of February 18, 1856, provided the formal context for the new condition of the church in the Ottoman Empire by affirming the rights and privileges that would secure its free and unfettered functioning: it recognized the spiritual privileges and exemptions of Christian communities, secured the complete religious freedom of all religious confessions, granted permission to build and repair places of worship, schools, and philanthropic establishments, forbade forced religious conversions, proclaimed the complete equality of all subjects of the empire, forbade discrimination in favor of any religious community, granted to all the right to assume and exercise public offices, dignities, and visit state schools, it ordered the establishment of mixed courts, gave the option of buying exemption from military service, granted the right of property ownership to foreign subjects, and guaranteed complete religious toleration.29

The new position of the church in the Ottoman Empire was best reflected in ecclesiastical architecture. Whereas for centuries Orthodox churches were built behind high walls and under tiled roofs, which made them as inconspicuous as possible, as can still be seen today in the old walled city of Istanbul, in the second half of the nineteenth century, during the age of reforms and subsequently, new imposing church buildings were erected with impressive domes and belfries. Some of the best known examples of this new ecclesiastical architecture include the Holy Trinity Church in Pera, which still dominates Taxim square in Istanbul, Holy Trinity in Kadiköy, St. Kyriaki, and Panagia Elpida in Kumkapi in Istanbul. Most of all, the best sign of the self-confidence and optimism that the Orthodox community in the Ottoman Empire enjoyed in this period is provided by the domed building of the Patriarchal Great School, built in 1882, which still dominates with its red-brick structure the northern shore of the Golden Horn.

The official Ottoman attitudes, which made possible the public affirmation of Orthodox religious identity in the Ottoman Empire in the age of reforms and its aftermath, were not to last for very long. New needs and priorities in the government of the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Abdudhamid II (1876-1909) changed the climate of recognition and acceptance of the pluralism of Ottoman society that had given prominence to the Orthodox Church. The rise of nationalism among the Christian communities of the empire eventually forced upon the Sublime Porte the recognition of the necessity of a new form of legitimization of state power.
and a new source of loyalty to imperial authority. This new source of legitimacy and loyalty was provided by nationalism. Sultan Abdülmecid, as caliph of Islam, turned first to Islamic nationalism, but this became increasingly Turkified in order to attract the loyalty of the main population group in the empire. In this context, the old struggle between Christianity and Islam was revived and recast in modern: that is, nationalist terms. It was a kind of ideological “Cold War,” as it has been aptly suggested, in which the survival of the one meant the destruction of the other. The ideological militancy that replaced the spirit of toleration of the age of reform destroyed the social theory of Young Orientalism, which had sustained the introduction of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876 and had visualized a basically multicultural transformation of the empire. With the reversal of the prospects of pluralism in the Ottoman Empire, the differentiated official attitude toward Orthodoxy also disappeared. The Hamidian government attempted to break the power and freedom of action of the church by curtailing its traditional privileges that had been confirmed and strengthened by the Hatt-i Humayun. The first attempt was made in 1883 through an attempt to reformulate the text of the berats issued for two newly elected metropolitans. This provoked serious protests on the part of the church, leading eventually to the resignation of Patriarch Joachim III in 1884. All this led to a protracted conflict between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Sublime Porte over the so-called “privileges” of the church. The confrontation lasted for decades and was never resolved, but it did provoke an extensive literature on the traditional privileges of the Orthodox community.

After the turn of the century and the advent of the Young Turk movement, the Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate would experience the suspicion, exclusiveness, and hostility of Turkish nationalism, which would seal its history in the twentieth century.

List of Ecumenical Patriarchs

Neophytos VII, 1798–1801
Gregory V (Georgios Aggelopoulos), 1797–1798, 1806–1808, 1818–1821
Kallinikos V, 1801–1806, 1808–1809
Jeremiah IV, 1809–1813
Cyril VI (Konstantinos Serpentzoglou), 1813–1818
Evgenios II, 1821–1822
Anthimos III (Anthimos Horianopoulos), 1822–1824
Chrysanthos (Chrysanthos Manoleas), 1824–1826
Agathangelos, 1826–1830
Constantios I (Sinatis), 1830–1834
Constantios II 1834–1835
Gregory VI (Georgios Fourtouniadis), 1835–1840, 1867–1871
Anthimos IV (Anthimos Vamvakis), 1840–1841
Anthimos V, 1841–1842
Germanos IV, 1842–1845, 1852–1853
Meletios III (Meletios Pagkalos), 1845
Anthimos VI (Anthimos Ioannidis), 1845–1848, 1853–1855, 1871–1873
Cyril VII (Konstantinos), 1855–1860
Joachim II (Ioannis Kokkodis), 1860–1863, 1873–1878
Sophronios III (Stavros Meydantzoglou), 1863–1866
Joachim III (Ioannis Devertzis or Dimitriadis), 1878–1884, 1901–1912
Joachim IV (Nikolaos Krousouloudis), 1884–1887
Dionysios V (Dionysios Choriatonidis), 1887–1891
Neophytos VIII (Joachim Papakonstantinou), 1891–1894
Anthimos VII (Aggelos Tsatsos), 1895–1897
Constantinos V (Konstantinos Valiadiis), 1897–1901

THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE


20. Apostolic Canon 34 states that “The bishops of every nation (ethnos) must acknowledge him who is first among them and account him as their head, and do nothing of consequence without his consent; but each may do those things only which concern his own parish, and the country places which belong to it. But neither let him (who is the first) do anything without the consent of all; for so there will be unanimity, and God will be glorified through the Lord In the Holy Spirit.” Translated in Lucian Turcescu, “Dumitru Staniloae (1903–1993)” in *The Teachings of Modern Orthodox Christianity on Law, Politics, and Human Nature*, ed. John Witte Jr. and Frank S. Alexander (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 295–342.

21. Ibid.


2. The Ecumenical Patriarchate

Paschalis M. Kitromilides


2. These prelates included the Patriarch of Constantinople Cyril VI, metropolitan of Ephesus, Meletios and Dionysios, Metropolitan Ignatius of Hungro-Wallachia, Metropolitan Dorotheos of Adrianople and Archbishop Kyprianos of Cyprus. On Korais’s appraisal, see Προλογίων τοῦ Χριστιανού Πατήστων [Prolegomena to Ancient Greek Authors], vol. 1 (Athens: National Bank Cultural Foundation 1984), 502, 555–56, 561–62.


4. Ibid., 290.


10. Kitromilides, “The Legacy of the French Revolution,” in *Eastern Christianity*, ed. Angold, 240–44. Orthodox attitudes to the Bulgarian question, involving a sharp critique of both Bulgarian but especially Greek nationalism and their impact in the church as incompatible with the catholicity of Orthodoxy, are recorded in a work published anonymously by Manuel Gedeon at the time under the title Μία σέλη εκ της ιστορίας της συγχρόνου εκκλησίας. Σκέψεις ενός ορθοδόξου [A Page from the History of the Contemporary Church. Reflections of an Orthodox] (Athens: n.p., 1874).


15. For extensive discussion, see Stamatopoulos, Μεταρρύθμιση.
NOTES TO PAGES 23-29


20. This was noted by contemporary observers who admired the patriarch’s ecumenical outlook. See the comments by the Anglican clergyman Adrian Fortescue in Claude Delavall Cobham, The Patriarchs of Constantinople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 39–40. See also F. Cayré, “Joachim III, Patriarche Grec de Constantinople, 1834–1912,” Echos d’Orient 16 (1913), 61–67, 163–72, 322–30, 431–43.


25. Ibid., 600.


NOTES TO PAGES 30-34


31. Ibid., 133.


3. The Orthodox Church of Greece

Dimitris Stamatopoulos

1. For a history of the first decades of the Greek autocephalous church, see Charles A. Frazee, The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821–1852 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).


3. The Russian influence was mainly exerted within the Orthodox clerical hierarchy in the environment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, where the pro-Russian wing was always strong and effective in the promotion of patriarchs controlled by the Russian embassy. For the crucial issue of what the “pro-Russian” or “pro-Western” identities meant for the members of the High Orthodox clergy, see Dimitrios Stamatopoulos, Μεταφυσική και Εκκλησιαστική Επίκρατη Ύπατη [Reform and Secularization: Toward a Reconstruction of the History of the Ecumenical Patriarchate] (Athens: Alexandreia, 2003), 367–70. A Greek autocephalous church dependent on the policy and incorporated into the climate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate would increase the possibilities of the empowerment of the Russian party and its supporters in Greece, especially at the beginning of the 1830s when the Ottoman Empire improved its relations with Moscow signing the Treaty of Hünkâr İskesi (July 8, 1833, seventeen days before the proclamation of Greek autocephaly on July 25).

4. The reforms of Peter the Great already foresaw in the early eighteenth century that the “head” of the church was to be considered the ruler, while yielding ecclesiastical authority to the operation of a “Standing Holy Synod,” naturally