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INTRODUCTION

Southern Europe and the Making of a Global Revolutionary South

WAS THERE EVER a revolutionary South, and if so when did it manifest itself, what did it look like, and what was peculiar about it? This book attempts to answer these questions by exploring a wave of simultaneous and interconnected revolutions that broke out in Spain, Portugal, Piedmont, Naples, Sicily and Greece between 1820 and 1821. In this moment it was the southern peripheries of Europe that took the revolutionary initiative. In January 1820, Rafael Riego's military uprising launched outside the city of Cádiz triggered a set of similar events led by army officers in Naples, Portugal, Piedmont and the Ottoman world. Taking inspiration from Riego's initiative in Spain, officers such as Guglielmo Pepe outside Naples, Bernardo Correia de Castro e Sepúlveda and Sebastião Cabreira in the Portuguese city of Porto, Giacomo Garelli and Isidoro Palma in Piedmont and Alexandros Ypsilantis in the Danubian Principalities led army rebellions in favour of representative government. This set of events was marked not only by chronological convergence, but also by a convergence in aims and consequences. The political initiatives taken by these officers and their troops in fact enjoyed substantial popular support, and led to the introduction of constitutions. Their interventions further encouraged a popular participation in revolutionary politics that had no precedents in their countries.

In the historiography of the age of revolutions, southern Europe is largely absent or plays, to say the least, a very marginal role.[1] The conventional

1. A noticeable recent exception is Richard Stites, *The Four Horsemen: Riding to Liberty in Post-Napoleonic Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). For earlier

narrative of this age is therefore a francocentric one that, starting with 1789, moves on to 1815 as a turning point that is required to explain the revolutions of 1830 and 1848.[2] Traditional narratives of European history tend to grant the continent's southern peripheries just a few pages, or even a few lines, which generally focus on the Spanish reaction to Napoleonic rule, the Greek war of independence and the participation of the Italian states in the 1848 European revolution. If mentioned at all, the 1820s uprisings are treated as half-hearted attempts to subvert the new geopolitical order created by the Congress of Vienna. They have been dismissed as elitist events noteworthy for the lack of any substantial social basis. Their weakness is deemed to be borne out by the easy success of the military expeditions by the Austrian army in Piedmont and Naples in 1821, and by the French army in Spain in 1823. Historians have seen these interventions, along with the belated European agreement to underwrite the autonomy of Greece, as evidence of the efficacy of the newly created principle of intervention serving to guarantee the peace and stability of Europe.[3]

The global turn of historiography has had a major impact on our understanding of the age of revolutions. First of all, it has resulted in a revision of its map and extent. Second, it has at the same time firmly rejected the derivative model that dominated the work of Robert Palmer and Eric Hobsbawm, which, based as it was on the assumption that modernity was the product of the ideas of the American and French revolutions, lay at the origins of this chronology. It has had the merit of shifting the focus from western Europe, and from the North Atlantic space in particular, to other parts of the world, incorporating into the narrative of the period between the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century spaces such as the Indian Ocean, Africa and the South Atlantic. It has also entailed a rejection of the derivative approach to revolutionary ideologies as by-products of the French revolution. Finally, this historiography has treated the age of revolutions as a by-product of a broader world crisis. Some, among them David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, have suggested that such a crisis was initiated in

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appreciations of the role played by the European southern peripheries in the age of revolutions, see Franco Venturi, 'Le rivoluzioni liberali', in *Le rivoluzioni borghesi*, ed. Ruggiero Romano, 5 vols (Milan: Fratelli Fabbri, 1973), 4, pp. 193–208.

2. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: 1789–1848* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962); Jonathan Sperber, *Revolutionary Europe, 1780–1850* (Harlow: Longman, 2000).

3. Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

the early eighteenth century.[4] For Christopher Bayly, this crisis was inaugurated by the Seven Years' War (1756–63), a conflict between Europeans in America and Asia that precipitated the end of the ancien régime, and was directly associated with its financial bankruptcy. The increasing costs of war determined by imperial competition became unsustainable and caused the existing monarchies to lose their legitimacy.[5] The expansion of, and conflicts between, empires led to a generalised crisis of sovereignty, in which state power and state independence were combined in novel ways, and projected within state borders and beyond.[6] In this context, the relationship between the boundaries of political communities and the rights and obligations of citizens, between peoples and monarchs, between territories within the same polity or between different ones, was questioned, rethought and reconstituted.[7] Southern Europe and the Mediterranean are still largely absent, however, from this recent scholarship on the global age of revolution. The idea of Europe behind this otherwise revisionist scholarship remains virtually unchanged, although it does integrate Spain and Portugal with France and Britain as the centres of empires.[8]

The 1820s revolutions in southern Europe belonged to this long-term global crisis of sovereignty. However, if we give due importance to the revolutionary space stretching from Portugal to Greece, then not only the chronology offered by the histories of Europe, but also that suggested by global approaches to the age of revolutions requires some revision. In fact, neither 1763, nor 1776, 1789 or 1815 can be considered as the key moments unleashing the crisis that led to the revolutionary wave of the 1820s in southern Europe. Rather, the onset of this crisis should be associated with a set of dates related to the direct or indirect impact that the Napoleonic wars had on the countries and empires of this continental periphery, and with their repercussions on the Ottoman world. This moment following on from the American (1776–83), and the French (1789–99) revolutions,

4. David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds, *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

5. Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 93–96.

6. On this notion, see Jeremy Adelman, 'An Age of Imperial Revolutions', *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (2008): 319–40.

7. Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 391.

8. Armitage and Subrahmanyam, *Age of Revolutions*; Susan Desan, Lynn Hunt and William Max Nelson, eds, *The French Revolution in Global Perspective* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Sujit Sivasundaram, *Waves across the South: A New History of Revolution and Empire* (London: William Collins, 2020).

led to the dissolution of the Ibero-American empires, and had political, ideological, financial and economic consequences for empires and states worldwide.[9]

The first and most tangible side-effect of the Napoleonic expansion towards the southern peripheries of the continent was the physical displacement and replacement of existing monarchs. The foundations of authority and the sources of its legitimacy in southern Europe and the Ibero-Atlantic world were thereby shaken. In Spain this crisis was triggered by the forced abdication of Fernando VII in 1808. Both Spain and its American empire were left without a legitimate king, with individuals on both sides of the hemisphere having to establish new institutions acting on behalf of the absent monarch. The absence of the monarch provided the preconditions for the drafting of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812. In the Ibero-American colonies it led, at least in a first phase, to the recognition of provinces and *juntas* (committees, councils) as the legitimate holders of monarchical sovereignty in the ruler's absence, and to demands for the equal treatment of the American provinces within the Iberian empires. But once the principles of autonomy and equality underpinning the claims of the colonial elites had been challenged or rejected, this crisis led to a more radical hostility against the metropolis and to independence, an outcome that coincided with the revolutionary explosion of southern Europe described in this book. The military occupation of the Iberian peninsula by the French resulted also in the departure of Dom João, the prince regent of Portugal, from Lisbon for Brazil in 1807, an event that transformed dramatically the mutual relations between centre and periphery in the Portuguese Empire, turning Brazil into the new metropolis, and leaving Portugal in the hands of the British army. The prolonged civil war that broke out during the 1820s as a result of the crisis of the dynasties in Portugal and Spain was another dramatic consequence of the physical displacement and revision of authority that had taken place after 1808.[10]

The French invasion of the Italian peninsula in 1796 produced equally dramatic effects: existing monarchies were deprived of their authority there too. Ferdinando IV of Naples and Sicily was first displaced, albeit temporarily, in 1799 when, under the protection of the French revolutionary army, a republic was declared in Naples by a group of Enlightenment intellectuals. The republic was immediately crushed, and Ferdinando

9. Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, pp. 106–7, 125–27.

10. Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

restored to power, although it was not until the end of 1801 that he went back from Sicily to Naples. Ferdinando lost the continental part of his kingdom again in January 1806. In that year, Naples was turned into a Napoleonic satellite state, and the king once again found shelter in Sicily, by then a British imperial protectorate, until the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815. Likewise, in December 1798 King Carlo Emanuele was forced to leave Turin in the hands of the French and to retire to his only remaining possession, the island of Sardinia (in fact he owed the title of king to this territory, not Piedmont). In 1802 a separate republican administration in Piedmont came to an end, and its territories were directly annexed by France. Carlo Emanuele abdicated the throne in favour of his brother Vittorio Emanuele, who was only able to return to Turin in 1814. Popular opposition to French rule in the territories annexed to Napoleon's empire or in the satellite states taught Italian patriots that republicanism was not a viable political option. Notions of popular sovereignty, however, had an enduring impact. As revolutions in Piedmont and Naples show, although loyalties to the old dynasties were not replaced by new ones, their foundations had nonetheless been shaken and were therefore open to revision.[11]

This attack on monarchical authority in southern Europe coincided with a dramatic dynastic crisis in the Ottoman Empire. Between 1807 and 1808 two sultans, Selim III and Mustafa IV, were deposed and murdered in quick succession. These dramatic events were not the direct result of the Napoleonic occupation, as after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 the Ottoman Empire had been only tangentially affected by French military expansion. However, the crisis of sovereignty affecting southern Europe and the Ottoman world were interconnected. The latter's internal crisis was in fact due to its almost permanent state of war between 1787 and 1812, mainly against Russia. The Napoleonic conflicts indirectly increased the pressure on Constantinople. From 1806 onwards the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were occupied by Russian forces. Attempts at reform driven by this external military pressure, and the domestic resistance to them, explain the dramatic events between 1807 and 1808. The glaring inadequacies of the traditional military forces of the Ottoman Empire, the Janissaries, revealed in their encounters with European armies, led to the decision by Selim III to establish the 'New Order' (*nizam-ı cedid*), an alternative standing army trained and

11. Stuart Woolf, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993); John A. Davis, *Naples and Napoleon: Southern Italy and the European Revolutions (1780–1860)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

organised according to the Western system. Unsurprisingly, the Janissaries themselves, along with popular groups, clerical elites and notables, who deemed the innovation incompatible with Islam, resented Selim III's creation. It was a rebellion on the part of the Janissaries that led in 1804 to a revolution of the Christian population of Serbia and to the recognition of its autonomy as a vassal state of the empire in 1817. Furthermore, it was a coalition between the Janissaries, their affiliates and the crowds of Constantinople (Istanbul) that brought about the deposition and murder of Selim III in 1807. The following year, a coalition of provincial notables led by Alemdar Mustafa Pasha marched on Constantinople, deposed Mustafa IV and reintroduced the New Order under the new Sultan Mahmud II. As in Spain or in Sicily, this crisis of authority occasioned some experimentation with a new 'constitutional' arrangement: the short-lived Deed of Agreement. This document, signed in 1808 by the new sultan and by the notables of the empire, provided a mutual guarantee of the rights and duties of all the central and provincial authorities to ensure its stability and peace, repress any rebellion and support the financial and military needs of the empire.[12]

Napoleonic military expansion more directly threatened Ottoman sovereignty in its Mediterranean peripheries. The French occupation of the Ionian islands in particular offered further opportunities for provincial groups within the Ottoman Empire to undermine its sovereignty and challenge its integrity. In 1808 Mavromichalis, a leading notable from the peninsula of Mani in the Peloponnese, entered into communication with the French in the hope that they would replace the Ottomans as a superior authority and provide a protectorate over an autonomous Beylik. In the same year a coalition between Christian and Muslim leaders from the Peloponnese, all equally hostile to a newly appointed Ottoman governor and his local allies, entertained similar plans to reject Ottoman authority and submit themselves to French protection.[13]

What further contributed to the rethinking of the monarchical authority in southern Europe and the Mediterranean was the British military presence. British imperial agents and officers did not simply provide a concrete defence of the pre-existing political order, and ideological weapons against Napoleonic rule. They showed the existence of alternative political models to both pre-revolutionary absolutism and Napoleonic

12. Ali Yaycioglu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

13. Dean J. Kostantaras, 'Christian Elites of the Peloponnese and the Ottoman State, 1715–1821', *European History Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (2013): 628–56 at pp. 637–38.

despotism. In response to the Napoleonic expansion in southern Europe, the British Empire had in fact extended its presence at the expense of the French and Dutch empires, not only in the Caribbean, South Africa and South-East Asia, but also in the Mediterranean. While the occupation of Sicily would prove to be temporary (1806–15), Britain acquired Malta in 1800, and Corfu and the rest of Ionian islands in 1815. Portugal was not directly annexed, but the presence of the British army there, poised to fight the French on the Iberian peninsula, continued for some years after 1815. British military occupation and colonial rule were bitterly resented for their despotic character in particular in Portugal, where under Marshal William Carr Beresford the British prevented any form of constitutional government until the outbreak of the 1820 revolution. However, besides military occupation, the British brought with them constitutions. It was in the Mediterranean during the Napoleonic wars that the British first toyed with the idea of transferring constitutions as a tool to consolidate their hegemonic power. They did this in Sicily under William Bentinck, who in 1812 had introduced a constitution inspired by the Britain's own. There, at least temporarily, they demonstrated that imperial expansion and protectorates could be compatible with liberal institutions. This is why, in the following decade, revolutionaries in the region (in Greece, Sicily and Genoa in particular) came to see the British Empire as a potential guarantor for their new political aspirations.[14]

The impact of these events was so dramatic that the efforts made at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 to find a lasting peace and to reconstitute the monarchical authority shattered during the previous decade were never likely to succeed.[15] Between 1808 and 1815 the populations of southern European states and empires had all been directly affected by military occupation, had fought for and against their legitimate sovereigns both in national and foreign armies travelling far and wide, had experienced new forms of government and had acquired novel political ideas. By 1815 army officers, members of the clergy and civil servants, as well as ordinary citizens, had new expectations for political participation—expectations that were disappointed by the authorities restored after the Congress of Vienna. The impact of wars on society, and the new social and political role played

14. On the constitutional experiment in Sicily, see John Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck and the British Occupation of Sicily, 1811–1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

15. Brian Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Glenda Sluga, *The Invention of International Order: Remaking Europe after Napoleon* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).

by armies during the Napoleonic era, account for the military revolutionary activism of the following years. In 1820 and 1821, in Spain, Portugal, Piedmont and Naples, revolutionary military leaders such as Riego, Pepe and Ypsilantis all argued that after the Napoleonic struggles a return to absolute rule was inconceivable. The people had fought to defend their monarchs and therefore their sacrifices (or so the insurgents maintained) deserved to be rewarded with new constitutional pacts. The scant resistance that the insurrections encountered when they broke out between 1820 and 1821, and the fact that only diplomatic and military intervention by stronger countries was able to determine their fate, points to the weak legitimacy of the restored regimes in these countries, and the existence of substantial political and social support for change. My claim here is that it is therefore insufficient to treat these revolutions as minor events in the context of the newly found stability of the European continent after 1815. Rather, the 1820s uprisings in southern Europe demonstrate the fragility, not the solidity, of the political order re-established in 1815.

Admittedly, in this decade France, Britain, Austria and Russia, by interfering with, and limiting, the sovereignty of the states on the southern and eastern peripheries of the continent, constrained the possible outcomes of revolutionaries' attempts in this area in both direct and indirect ways. Indeed, southern Europe experienced every possible type of diplomatic, political or military intervention on the part of the European hegemonic powers—both those that they adopted elsewhere within the continent itself and those that they were testing in other parts of the world. It is in southern Europe that, as a result of the Vienna settlement, new types of military and political intervention were tried out (as in the invasion of Naples and Spain) with a view to guaranteeing the stability of the continent. To these forms of intervention we must add heightened European interference in Ottoman affairs in the aftermath of the Greek revolution (which led to the recognition of Greece as a state whose sovereignty was guaranteed by the European powers) as well as the consolidation of an existing colonial presence (with the strengthening of British colonial rule in Malta and the Ionian Islands), limited military intervention as a form of police action (such as the 1816 bombardment of Algiers, or the naval battle of Navarino against the Ottomans in 1827) and colonial expansion (for the decade closes with the conquest of Algiers in 1830): all new forms of gunboat diplomacy.[16] These forms of interference forced southern patriots to imagine possible solutions to the question of freedom that would

16. Joanna Innes, 'Popular Consent and the European Order', in Innes and Philp, *Re-imagining Democracy*, pp. 271–99 at 284–85.

be compatible with the European geopolitical preponderance in their territories. Such interventions did not succeed, however, in repressing the revolutionary potential of southern populations.

At the same time, southern Europe is the geographical space that best demonstrates the interconnection and convergence between European, Ibero-American and Asian uprisings. The 1820s revolutions coincided with a much broader revolutionary wave that affected the entire global South, from the Ibero-American world to the Indian Ocean. This were not just a matter of random simultaneous events; a number of shared causes and a set of global transformations account for the emergence of this global revolutionary South. These revolutions thus invite us to consider southern Europe as part of the Ibero-American world, and vice versa, and to think about both the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean as interconnected imperial and revolutionary maritime spaces.

A first crucial global consequence of the Napoleonic wars was a considerable strengthening of the military and fiscal apparatuses of states and empires alike, which resulted in more assertive central government through the expansion of administrative controls, fiscal impositions and military reforms. Linda Colley has forcefully argued and demonstrated that, in the age of revolutions, it was the intensification of warfare that led to an unprecedented circulation and adoption of constitutions across the globe. Constitutions served the purpose of legitimising the expansion of empires, but also represented tools of resistance to them among local populations and armies alike.[17] The uprisings of the 1820s across the global South confirm the validity of these claims. However, as I argue in this book, constitutions were also a response to the reorganisations of territory that took place in this period as a result of such imperial expansion, and served the purpose of reconfiguring these to meet the expectations of a variety of local provincial and imperial groups. Such administrative and fiscal transformations in fact carried with them demands that autonomy be safeguarded, as well as resistance to the increasingly intrusive financial and administrative structure of the states that emerged from this era of global warfare. The debates about constitutional government that characterised these revolutions, especially from Latin America to southern Europe, can only be understood in relation to the conflicts triggered by these processes.[18]

17. Linda Colley, *The Gun, the Ship, and the Pen: Warfare, Constitutions, and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2021).

18. Defence of self-government against centralisation emerged also in France at the same time. See Annelien de Dijn, *French Political Thought from Montesquieu to Tocqueville: Liberty in a Levelled Society?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Demands for autonomy from increasing central controls were, without exception, by-products of the Napoleonic period, and represent a shared cause for revolution in the global South up to the 1820s. In the Spanish Empire after 1808, the determination of local and regional authorities to participate in new constituent powers stemmed from a vacuum of authority occasioned by the decapitation of the monarchy in Spain. Between then and the 1820s in the revolutionary contexts of the Spanish Empire, the relationship between state structures, provinces and local authorities was contested and rethought, while regions, provinces and communes sought to reaffirm their autonomy.[19] However, attempts by the metropolis to reassert state authority and to crush self-government in an unprecedented fashion very soon followed, exacerbating resistance. Between 1812 and 1814 first, and in 1820 yet again, Spanish governments attempted to extend to the colonies those parts of the Cádiz Constitution which envisaged a single imperial nation with a centrally controlled administration. Failure by Spanish liberals to take into account aspirations for self-government that had emerged after 1808 resulted in revolution and the full independence of the Spanish colonies. Metropolitan Spain itself was not untouched by such reaffirmations of autonomy: the declaration of the Cádiz Constitution in 1820 triggered counterrevolutionary movements that defended the traditional territorial privileges or *fueros* of the Basque country and Navarre that had been abolished by the constitution.[20]

By contrast with the territories of the Spanish Empire after 1808, the revolution in Naples and Sicily in 1820 did not originate from a temporary power vacuum. Rather, it represented a reaction to, and an act of resistance against, the new centralised state structures that the Neapolitan Bourbon dynasty inherited from the Napoleonic occupation after 1815. In Naples the local and provincial authorities that hoped to participate in exercising the new constituent powers of 1820 did so because they resented the abolition of traditional self-government. They aspired to re-found the monarchy by combining constitutional rights with local self-rule. Thus in this monarchy too, as in the Spanish Empire, revolution was marked by a quest for local autonomy. As a consequence, in spite of the different circumstances leading to revolution, the Cádiz Constitution was understood in strikingly similar ways both in the Mediterranean and in Spanish

19. José M. Portillo Valdés, *Crisis atlántica: Autonomía e independencia en la crisis de la monarquía hispana* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006), p. 158.

20. Portillo Valdés, *Crisis atlántica*, p. 48; Pedro Rújula and Manuel Chust, *El Trienio Liberal en la monarquía hispánica: Revolución e independencia (1820–1823)* (Madrid: Catarata, 2020).

America. In Central America and New Spain, support for Cádiz was conflated with the defence of the *pueblos* (Spanish colonial towns), according to the colonial administrative tradition. Here the *pueblo* in the sense of nation was conceived first and foremost, as in Sicily and the Neapolitan provinces, as being made up of communes.[21] The elites of both the Spanish colonies and Sicily, a separate state within an ancient composite monarchy, could only accept constitutional government if it guaranteed the reorganisation of their monarchies on a federative basis. Those Spanish American patriots who wished to remain loyal to the Spanish monarchy demanded that their territories be put on an equal footing with those of Spain. They requested either equal representation in the Cortes in Madrid or the creation of Cortes on both sides of the Atlantic. Sicilian patriots likewise demanded the establishment of two separate parliaments, one in Naples and one in Palermo. Similar requests were put forward in 1822 by the representatives of Brazil in the Portuguese Cortes, with the object of federalising the empire with assemblies on both sides of the Atlantic.

Like the Neapolitan and Sicilian revolutions, the Greek revolt represented an affirmation of autonomy against an increasingly intrusive central power. Although the nature of 'centralisation' was different, outcomes were similar. In the Ottoman context, central power was exerted not though new administrative structures, but rather in a violent and unprecedented way by sultanic determination to crush any form of independent power. Following the end of the war against Russia in 1812, Mahmud II embarked on new policies aimed at strengthening his authority, and set about repressing any form of insubordination from the notables who controlled the provinces of the empire and constituted its main military forces. Mahmud intervened against all of those who were acting no longer as representatives of the empire but merely as independent rulers, reaffirming his authority by killing them and replacing them with loyalists. Among those disposed of was Ali Pasha of Yannina, who had carved out a semi-independent state around Epirus and controlled parts of the Morea and mainland Greece. His presence provided a modicum of stability and protection to these territories previously subject to constant

21. Jordana Dym, *From Sovereign Villages to National States: Cities, State, and Federation in Central America, 1759–1839* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Antonio Annino, 'Cádiz y la revolución territorial de los pueblos mexicanos 1812–1821', in *Historia de las elecciones en Iberoamérica, siglo XIX*, ed. Antonio Annino (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995), pp. 177–226. On reactions to Cádiz, see also Brian R. Hamnett, *The End of Iberian Rule on the American Continent, 1770–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

incursions by Albanian bandits. In 1820 the sultan decided to launch a military campaign against him headed by the new governor of the Morea, Hursid Pasha. Thereupon the Greek notables, fearful that they might be the next target of Ottoman repression, rebelled and triggered the Greek revolution.[22]

The Greek revolution was not the only uprising to shake the Ottoman Empire in this turbulent decade in response to increasing pressures from the centre. Another revolt broke out in Lebanon in 1821, where the Christian communities reacted to unprecedented fiscal demands from local notables that had disrupted traditional community bonds; and a major rebellion broke out in Bosnia in 1829, in reaction to the abolition of the Janissaries carried out in 1826 in Constantinople, but resisted across the empire. Among all of these Ottoman events the Greek revolution was the only one to take on a clear-cut confessional dimension—the Mount Lebanon insurrection remained multiconfessional in nature—and the only one to converge with other southern European insurrections in terms of its political and constitutional culture.[23]

Administrative and fiscal reforms and enhanced state interference account for the explosion of anticolonial rebellions in the British and Dutch empires in the same years. Although it was only later that the language of constitutionalism would be adopted in the Asian and Mediterranean territories of these empires, the resulting grievances had origins similar to those arising in the lands already mentioned that were subject to other imperial regimes.[24] This phase of extension and consolidation of British imperial rule across the world represented a specific moment of its history marked by colonial or 'proconsular' despotism, aristocratic and military government, neo-mercantilist economic policies and attacks on feudal privileges and local oligarchies, accompanied by the establishment

22. Frederick F. Anscombe, *State, Faith, and Nation in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Lands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). On these policies, see also Sukru Huseyin Ilikak, 'A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence (1821–1826)', unpublished PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2011, pp. 27–93.

23. Frederick F. Anscombe, 'The Balkan Revolutionary Age', *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 3 (2012): 572–606; Peter Hill, 'How Global Was the Age of Revolutions? The Case of Mount Lebanon, 1821', *Journal of Global History* 16, no. 1 (2021): 65–84; Hill, 'Mount Lebanon and Greece: Mediterranean Crosscurrents, 1821–1841', *Historein* 20, no. 1 (2021), DOI: https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.24937.

24. But for early engagement with southern European constitutionalism by an Indian liberal such as Rammohan Roy, see Christopher Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 42–50.

of racial hierarchies and a commitment to 'civilise' local populations. In spite of the obvious ideological differences, its style of governance had similarities to that introduced by Napoleon and, after 1815, was politically consistent with the absolutism dominant in continental Europe, aiming as it did at strengthening state power. After 1815 the experiment of exporting constitutions to the Mediterranean was abandoned, as imperial agents came to be convinced that the local aristocracies were not capable of self-government. The circulation of imperial administrators among colonies across the world guaranteed a degree of consistency in outlook and objectives. Sir Thomas Maitland, who had ruled over Saint-Domingue in 1797 and acted as governor of Ceylon between 1805 and 1811, was appointed governor of Malta in 1813, and from the following year to 1823 also lord high commissioner of the Ionian Islands.[25] In subsequent years the administrative reforms introduced in the colonies of Malta and the Ionian Islands were also inspired by the example of what the French had done after conquering Naples. Unsurprisingly, the grievances of the local elites in these insular dominions were similar to those of their counterparts in the Neapolitan provinces and in Sicily, where the Bourbons had retained the French centralised system. As a consequence, in Britain's recently established colonial dependencies within and beyond the Mediterranean, attempts at curbing local autonomy and aristocratic self-rule produced either resentment or outright rebellion. In the Ionian Islands, the distaste for administrative despotism that triggered revolution in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies did not lead to a fully-fledged revolution. Only very localised disturbances associated with the outbreak of the Greek revolution occurred in 1821 on these islands. Most members of its elites remained loyal to Britain, but some of them considered service with imperial Russia, and were drawn to the new ideas of Greek and Italian nationality.[26] More substantial resistance to colonial rule than in the Mediterranean came, however, from the aristocracies in Ceylon and in Java, under the British

25. Christopher Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780–1830* (London: Routledge, 1989); Lauren Benton and Lisa Ford, *Rage for Order: The British Empire and the Origins of International Law (1800–1850)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

26. On the Ionian islands in the 1820s, see Konstantina Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800–1850: Stammering the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Sakis Gekas, *Xenocracy: States, Class and Colonialism in the Ionian Islands, 1815–1864* (New York: Berghahn, 2016). On Napoleonic influence over the Ionian administrative reorganisation, see Giuseppe Grieco, 'The British Empire and the Two Sicilies: Constitutions and International Law in the Revolutionary Mediterranean, ca. 1800–60', unpublished PhD dissertation, Queen Mary University of London, 2022.

and the Dutch respectively. The colonial rebellions in Ceylon between 1817 and 1818, and subsequently in 1821 and 1823, and the long and bloody anti-Dutch revolution led by Prince Diponegoro in Java between 1825 and 1830 are cases in point.[27] In the Pacific Ocean and Asia anticolonial rebellions and wars resulted in the strengthening and centralisation of kingdoms and empires and not, as in the Ibero-American world and the Mediterranean, in their temporary fragmentation. Faced with British military pressures, monarchies superseded local and tribal identities in Burma, New Zealand and Tonga alike.[28]

A second global interrelated consequence of the Napoleonic wars was that by permanently transforming the relationship between centres and peripheries in states and empires alike, they unleashed a multiplicity of territorial crises. The wars between 1808 and 1815 and the administrative reforms that followed them resulted in radical revisions of territorial relationships. These revisions in turn triggered new rivalries between urban centres and provinces, and renewed long-standing conflicts. In other words, the 1820s revolutions in both southern Europe and Latin America were either rebellions against metropolitan centres, or reactions to the transformation of former centres into new peripheries; they might be civil wars opposing different provinces within the same polities, as well as conflicts between secondary cities and their capitals within colonial and European territories. It was through constitutions that attempts were made to settle these conflicts, but their implementation in turn produced new disagreements and alternative constitutional projects.

The revolutions that affected the Portuguese Empire on both sides of the Atlantic between 1817 and 1824 are a case in point. The transfer of the seat of power of the Bragança dynasty from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 changed the internal balance of the empire, and produced long-lasting shocks on both sides of the Atlantic. It left Portugal at the mercy of Great Britain, and with a very distant monarch. The 1820 revolution in Porto was caused by the transformation of Portugal, formerly the centre of the empire, into a provincial appendage ruled from Brazil.[29] But this transfer triggered territorial conflicts also within Brazil, where some provinces resented the excessive power of the new imperial centre, which they

27. Kingsley M. De Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1981); James Wilson, 'Reappropriation, Resistance, and British Autocracy in Sri Lanka, 1820–1850', *The Historical Journal* 60, no. 1 (2017): 47–69; Peter Carey, *The Power of Prophecy: Prince Diponegoro and the End of the Old Order in Java, 1785–1855* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

28. Sivasundaram, *Waves*, pp. 53–55, 59–61, 62–64, 77, 207.

29. Paquette, *Imperial Portugal*.

would have preferred to remain in Portugal. The republican revolutions of Pernambuco in 1817 and 1821–25 were not only antimonarchical in nature, but also a defence of provincial autonomy against Rio de Janeiro.[30]

Yet the explosion of these multiple conflicts was not unique to the Portuguese Empire. In 1820 in Sicily, the city of Catania engaged in a civil war with the capital of the island, Palermo. Like Pernambuco, Catania preferred the rule of the distant centre, Naples, to the renewed oppression of its ancient insular capital that was now leading an independentist revolt. In the same years other striking parallels can be found: between the territorial crisis and revolutionary events of Spanish America and the Ottoman world, for example. In both empires, independence first resulted in the affirmation of provincial sovereignty, not national emancipation. The transition to independence of the viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, which was declared in 1816, resulted first and foremost in the self-rule of its constituent provinces. When the former capital of the viceroyalty, Buenos Aires, tried to assert its primacy over the provinces, exert control over them and advance a unitary notion of the nation, civil war ensued. The province of Córdoba attempted to create an alternative and federal governmental structure, against the claims of Buenos Aires. It was only the urgent need to create a common front to defeat the royalist army in Peru that forced the provinces to arrive at a compromise and establish some form of administrative cooperation.[31] The Greek revolution, meanwhile, was strikingly similar in nature to that of the Río de la Plata. It was a revolt of discrete and sovereign territories that first joined the revolution as separate entities in 1821. Attempts to coordinate and centralise government led to clashes between these territories and civil war between the Peloponnese, the islands and continental Greece. As in Río de la Plata, so too in Greece the emergency of the war forced the insurgents to find a compromise. In Greece as in South America, nation building was therefore the result of war pressures.[32] Likewise, the revolution that broke out

30. On Pernambuco in particular, see also Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *A outra Independência: O federalismo pernambucano de 1817 a 1824* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2004); Denis Antônio de Mendonça Bernardes, *O patriotismo constitucional: Pernambuco 1820–1822* (São Paulo: Editora Universitária UFPE, 2001).

31. Geneviève Verdo, 'L'Organisation des souverainetés provinciales dans l'Amérique indépendante: Le cas de la république de Córdoba, 1776–1827', *Annales* 69, no. 2 (2014): 349–81; Marcela Ternavasio, *Gobernar la revolución: Poderes en disputa en el Río de la Plata, 1810–1816* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2007).

32. Clément Thibaud, *Républiques en armes: Les armées de Bolívar dans les guerres d'indépendance du Venezuela et de la Colombie* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006).

in the coastal city of Genoa in the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia represented the rebellion of a former capital (the centre of the ancient republic absorbed by Piedmont in 1814) turned into a provincial city against its new capital, Turin.

The complex nature of the territorial crises associated with the southern European revolutions is reflected in the declarations of national independence they produced. Besides the famous declaration of independence of Greece in 1821, a number of lesser known such documents were issued in southern Europe. Independence was thus declared in Sicily in 1820, in Portugal in 1821 and in Piedmont (Alessandria) and Naples in 1821. These declarations bear witness to the 'global contagion of sovereignty' that followed the American declaration of 1776, to cite David Armitage's felicitous description. They belong to a 'first Eurasian rights moment' of dissemination of these documents across the world that lasted until 1848.[33] Yet these declarations each meant something entirely different, as did the idea of nation that each embodied. The affirmations of sovereignty contained in them can only be understood in relation to the variety of their domestic, imperial, international, trans-imperial and transnational contexts. The Greek declaration of independence was an anti-despotic document that challenged the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire, but did not exclude an accommodation with it. The Portuguese declaration of 1821 was a declaration of independence from Brazil, but by no means a request that the empire be dissolved; rather it sought the return of its centre to its European component. In the citadel of Alessandria in Piedmont, a reference to the future independence of Italy conveyed hopes for a federation of autonomous Italian states after the expulsion of the Austrians from the peninsula. The declaration of Italian independence endorsed by the Neapolitan parliament was for its part compatible with the existence of the Neapolitan nation, and similarly the Piedmontese declaration was an act in defiance of Austrian imperial hegemony over the peninsula. For the Neapolitan revolutionaries, therefore, pushing the claims of Italy was a means of revising the international order, not an attempt to abolish or undermine the separate existence of their kingdom. The Sicilian declaration served the purpose primarily of protecting the autonomy of the island: this could be achieved either within a federalised kingdom—one which contained many elements of continuity with the old composite

33. David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 103, 107.

Sicilian monarchy—or, alternatively, by the establishment of a separate state under the protection of the British Empire.

The revolutionaries in southern Europe were aware of the global space within which their own demands were articulated. The trans-Atlantic space in particular caught the attention not only of supporters of the constitution in Portugal and Spain, who aimed at reforming their empires, but also of observers in Naples, Sicily and Greece. In these countries, revolutionaries related their own aspirations to those of the Latin American movements for independence. While colonial rebellions in Asia were only scantily known of, southern European revolutionaries were aware of the global outreach of the British Empire and its increasing direct or indirect geopolitical influence. Nonetheless, they often saw its presence in the Mediterranean and its role in European politics as compatible with their own agenda, and went so far as to call for British imperial protection as a guarantee for their constitutions.

At the same time, contemporaries in these countries understood this revolutionary wave as a peculiarly southern European phenomenon. It is even more remarkable that it was mainly the Portuguese, whose revolution was quintessentially Atlantic (rebelling as they did also to call their monarch back from Brazil), who came to perceive their revolt as part of a wave that stretched all the way to the Aegean. The existence of a specific revolutionary space between Portugal and Greece is not an ahistorical projection of our own understanding of these events. The idea that they represented a set of relatively peaceful military uprisings in the name of the constitution, when set against the memory of the French revolutionary conquest and destruction of preceding years, echoed among constitutionalists in Portugal, Spain and Naples. It was only the Greek revolutionaries, concerned as they were to disassociate themselves from the other uprisings, who rejected the notion of a 'southern regeneration'. The Greeks preferred to define their insurrection as an assertion of Europe's Christian civilisation against Ottoman despotism.

Another reason to treat these southern European events together is that they shared many converging, or at least comparable, features. Revolutionaries from Portugal to Greece came up with a similar set of answers in response to a number of similar problems related to the question of sovereignty. What encapsulates the peculiarity of all of these revolutions, if compared to the French revolution, is the existence of a widespread hostility to excessive centralisation among large social sectors supporting them. In addition, right across southern Europe, revolutionaries remained resolutely in favour of monarchies, if constitutional ones, and considered

the republican option embraced in Latin America or in France in the past as inconceivable. Finally, what justifies further a focus specifically upon the southern European/Mediterranean region within the context of the global 1820s is the existence of multiple forms of exchange, not only within the various imperial and colonial spaces to which each of the countries involved belonged, or with which they interacted, but also within southern Europe itself. These were the result of the circulation of individuals, information and ideas. The revolutions enhanced existing bonds between these countries and created new ones. One of these was their constitutional culture.

What constitution did revolutionaries fight for? A few introductory remarks

What constitutions did revolutionaries fight for, defend and implement in the 1820s? This book does not focus on theoretical debates in which constitutional thinkers were engaged. Its main object is to explore the ways in which constitutions were experienced by the population at large, and understood by revolutionary agents in particular. Nonetheless, a few introductory words are needed here about the texts that were introduced during this revolutionary wave in southern Europe, and how they related to each other. This brief sketch suggests that the constitutional cultures of this period were not only interconnected, but also constantly evolving, even within the narrow chronology of this specific revolutionary period. Local contexts and shifting national and international circumstances, as well as the different agendas and expectations of a variety of revolutionary leaders, account for these cultures' complexity.

As has been observed, by 1820, 'more than 60 different constitutions had been attempted within continental Europe'.[34] Among them, there is no doubt that by 1820 the Cádiz Constitution was the most widely known and favoured in southern Europe. It was this charter that revolutionaries saw fit to introduce not only in Spain in 1820, but also in Naples and Palermo in the same year, and in Piedmont in 1821.[35] Its association with the anti-Napoleonic struggle and its religious definition of the nation—evocative

34. Linda Colley, 'Empires of Writing: Britain. American and Constitutions, 1776–1848', *Law and History Review* 32, no. 2 (2014): 237–66 at p. 237.

35. On its southern European fame, see Jens Späth, 'Turning Constitutional History Upside Down: The 1820s Revolutions in the Mediterranean', in *Re-mapping Centre and Periphery: Asymmetrical Encounters in European and Global Contexts*, ed. Tessa Hauswedell, Axel Körner and Ulrich Tiedau (London: UCL Press, 2019), pp. 111–34.

connotations combining with an indirect electoral system—accounted for its widespread popularity. The peculiarities of this text owed much to the context in which it had been conceived. Its drafting and implementation had in fact been the consequence of the dynastic and political crisis precipitated by the French invasion of the Spanish monarchy and Napoleon's replacement of the Bourbons with a member of his own family, his brother Joseph, in 1808. In order to defend its independence from Napoleon's despotism, first local juntas were set up, then a central junta, and finally a Cortes Constituentes was elected to draft the constitution. The Spanish insurgents against Napoleon claimed that the legitimacy of these new bodies stemmed from the fact that, in the absence of the monarch, sovereignty had reverted to the nation.[36] The idea of the nation as sovereign lay at the centre of the constitution approved in Cádiz in 1812. The constituents conceived it in communitarian terms, as a sovereign entity that subsumed the rights of its citizens and was defined by Catholicism. It was a religious text that protected the Catholic unity of the monarchy and did not tolerate any other cult. This communitarian understanding of the Spanish nation accounted for the fact that the constitution lacked a separate catalogue of rights: these were in fact scattered through the document. To reflect the unity of the nation, the constitution introduced one single representative assembly, the Cortes, elected by quasi-universal male suffrage, albeit indirect. The Cortes had a central function in the architecture of the state and enjoyed very broad competences, not only legislative, but also in the sphere of international relations and military affairs. The monarch shared legislative powers with the Cortes, and was the sole executive authority. However, the Cádiz Constitution substantially reduced his prerogatives. Besides the Cortes, what limited his powers was the Council of State. This institution, whose members were appointed from a list chosen by the Cortes, was created to support him in his executive authority, but also to limit and contain his sphere of action.

While the Spanish liberals had dramatically transformed their political system, they did not seek to define their act as a revolutionary one. On the contrary, they strove to highlight the historical continuities of the text with the ancient institutions of a monarchy gradually eroded by absolutism. They did so firstly to demonstrate its national origin and deny the influence of any foreign documents (and in particular French revolutionary

36. José M. Portillo Valdés, *Revolución de nación: Orígenes de la cultura constitucional en España, 1780–1812* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2000); Ignacio Fernández Sarasola, *La Constitución de Cádiz: Orígen, contenido y proyección internacional* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2001).

doctrines), and secondly to appease those loyal monarchists who were fearful of any radical innovation. According to this national historicism, apparent in the 'Discurso preliminar' of the constitution, the origins of the sovereignty of the Spanish nation could be found in its ancient laws and institutions. By these means, the constitution was presented as a reformist text. This historicist attitude to constitution-making was not, however, simply a useful fiction: it also underpinned the way in which the constitution was implemented as a reformist document. It did not in fact abolish pre-existing legislation and institutions, but left it to the Cortes to repeal selectively those elements that were deemed to be despotic, without questioning in their entirety the *leyes fundamentales* of the monarchy.[37]

The 1820s represented a new context for the reception of the 1812 Spanish constitution, both nationally and internationally. The political realignments that emerged during the revolution in Spain, the so-called *Trienio Liberal* (or *Trienio Constitucional*; hereafter 'the Trienio'; for Portugal, 'the Triénio') of 1820–23, gave rise to alternative interpretations of the Cádiz Constitution. The most radical wing of the revolutionary front, the so-called *exaltados*, set themselves up as defenders of popular sovereignty. As a consequence, they not only supported any and every form of direct and indirect popular participation in the decision-making process, but defended in particular the prerogatives of the Cortes as the central institution of the constitutional regime. The more conservative supporters of the revolution, the so-called *moderados*, on the contrary wished drastically to limit the suffrage guaranteed by the constitution, to introduce a second chamber, or turn the Council of State into a fully-fledged senate, and to reinforce the powers of the monarch at the expense of those enjoyed by the Cortes.[38] Another key factor that affected the workings of the constitution was the monarch's resistance to any limitations upon his absolute power. The possibility of replacing the 1812 constitution with a more conservative document temporarily gathered momentum at the end of the constitutional period. In 1823, at the time of the French invasion of Spain that put an end to the revolution, the French government, along with some of these Spanish moderate liberals, pushed for the adoption of

37. Carlos Garriga and Marta Lorente, *Cádiz 1812: La constitución jurisdiccional* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2007), pp. 36–38.

38. Joaquín Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, *La monarquía doceañista (1810–1837)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2013), pp. 243–317; Antonio Elorza, 'La ideología moderada en el Trienio Liberal', *Quadernos Hispanoamericanos* 288 (1974): 584–652.

the bicameral French 'Charte' of 1814 as a means of preventing the return to absolutism, but this project failed due to the hostility of the monarch.[39]

Outside Spain, the Spanish constitution provided a way of getting the constituent process off the ground with a minimum of complication and a measure of consensus. Yet even in those foreign countries where the Spanish constitution was declared and implemented, substantial groups of its supporters were keen to make some revisions to its text. This was due to a variety of reasons. First of all, revolutionaries drew upon a variety of other sources of inspiration when reflecting upon their own local political problems. In particular, although not exclusively, they were inspired by the French revolutionary constitutions and by the United States of America. Moreover, although the constitutional culture of the 1820s was defiantly international, there was a widespread consensus that constitutional texts and institutions could not simply be transferred from one country to another without taking into account national traditions and historical peculiarities. While revolutionaries resolutely rejected climatic theories employed to argue or insinuate that only some peoples were suited to constitutional government, they tended to agree that local circumstances should be taken into account when adopting a constitution.[40] As a Neapolitan admirer of the Spanish constitution claimed, this 'very wise constitution had to be accommodated to our own needs'; otherwise 'a religious esteem is easily turned into superstitious adoration'.[41] Finally, as had happened in Spain in 1823, the perceived radicalism of the Spanish monocameral constitution, and the hostility of the kings to it, along with an unfavourable diplomatic context, led the most moderate fringe of the revolutionary elite to consider the possibility of an alternative constitution. These moderate groups hoped that an entirely different document, often inspired by British institutions or the French bicameral Charte, would be more agreeable to the monarchs while still guaranteeing limited government.

For all of the above reasons, outside Spain, the Cádiz Constitution was often interpreted in diverging ways in 1820, and adapted to local circumstances. In the Italian states, the immediate adoption of the Spanish

39. Emilio La Parra López, *Fernando VII: Un rey deseado y detestado* (Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 2018), p. 476; Gonzalo Butrón Prida, 'From Hope to Defensiveness: The Foreign Policy of a Beleaguered Liberal Spain, 1820–1823', *The English Historical Review* 133, no. 562 (2018): 567–96.

40. See the article in a Portuguese periodical, 'On How to Translate a Constitution from One Country to Another' (my translation), *O Liberal*, no. 24, 14 March 1821, p. 4.

41. *L'Amico della Costituzione*, 4 August 1820, p. 1.

constitution was due to the fact that, as a symbol of anti-despotic resistance, it had already acquired considerable popularity among conspirators. As such, it was the document most likely to obtain the broadest consensus, and for this reason all revolutionaries initially rallied behind it. This, however, meant neither that it was universally supported nor that it was interpreted univocally. In Naples the provisional government decided that a constituent assembly was not needed in adopting this constitution, but the Neapolitan parliament elected according to the system of the Spanish charter then proceeded to discuss in detail the adaptation of each of its provisions, although it rarely modified them dramatically. As mentioned above, it was nonetheless interpreted by the majority of Neapolitan revolutionaries as an anti-Napoleonic, anti-centralising and quasi-federal document that sought to recast the state as an assemblage of communes and provinces. In addition, more than anywhere else in the region, in Naples the revolution was marked by the publication of an array of old and more recent constitutions and by the translation of the writings of constitutional thinkers such as Benjamin Constant and Jeremy Bentham.[42] In Palermo, the two key social groups behind the revolt, the aristocracy and the artisans' corporations, had both agreed that a national assembly elected by the communes of western Sicily and the capital would use the Spanish text as a basis of discussion for the future constitution of the island. However, artisans and aristocrats assuredly entertained different expectations and objectives. Many aristocrats wished for their part to reintroduce the 1812 Sicilian constitution approved during the British occupation. This was a document that, being inspired by the institutional architecture of the unwritten constitution of Great Britain, granted separate representation to the island's aristocracy. This constitution had introduced a bicameral system with an elective Camera dei comuni (Chamber of commons) appointed by restricted suffrage. The aristocracy of Palermo saw it as a peculiarly national constitution, as its new Camera de' pari (Chamber of peers, modelled on the British House of Lords), of 1812, granted membership to the members of the two *bracci* of the ancient medieval Sicilian parliament, aristocrats and churchmen.[43] For their part, artisans defended

42. Werner Daum, *Oscillazioni dello spirito pubblico: Sfera pubblica, mercato librario e comunicazione nella rivoluzione del 1820–21 nel Regno delle Due Sicilie* (Naples: Società napoletana di storia patria, 2015); Carlos María Rodríguez López-Brea, 'La Constitución de Cádiz y el proceso revolucionario en las Dos Sicilias (1820–1821)', *Historia Contemporánea* 47 (2013): 561–94.

43. Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*; Andrea Romano, 'Introduzione', in Andrea Romano, ed., *Costituzione di Sicilia stabilita nel Generale Parlamento del 1812* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino editore, 2000 [Palermo, 1813]), pp. xix–lvii.

the Spanish constitution but wanted to blend its principles and universal suffrage with the recognition of their corporations' authority.

In Piedmont, too, the introduction of the Spanish charter in 1821 concealed the fact that supporters of constitutionalism were split on the institutional future of the kingdom. Support for the Spanish charter had been a strategic decision taken to maximise consensus across the conspiratorial networks that had organised the revolution.[44] A number of prominent aristocratic liberals were critical of it, however. This group included both those who had taken a leading role in the conspiracy, such as Count Santorre di Santarosa, and those who would have preferred a transition towards representative government without violent means (a group that included intellectuals and officers such as Cesare Balbo, Emanuele Pes di Villamarina and Cesare D'Azeglio). This second group favoured instead either the Sicilian constitution, or the French Charte. What rendered these alternative models appealing was the role that they granted to the nobility and the greater powers they assigned to the monarch. For Santarosa, the Sicilian constitution turned the British constitution into a written document, but without its original flaws, as it abolished feudalism, and corrected the glaring deficiencies of Britain's electoral system. These aristocrats deemed the Spanish constitution too radical and revolutionary. For Villamarina it amounted in fact to nothing less than 'true democracy', a term that pointed to its popular nature, disregard for any aristocratic institutional role and de facto destruction of monarchical power. For him, democracy and monarchy were incompatible.[45]

In Portugal, the Spanish constitution represented an unavoidable point of reference for the constituents assembled between 1820 and 1822, but the constitution approved in the latter year in Lisbon did not simply replicate its Spanish equivalent.[46] The constituent assembly elected on December 1820 on the basis of the indirect system borrowed from the

44. On Piedmontese constitutional debates, see Jens Späth, *Revolution in Europa 1820–23: Verfassung und Verfassungskultur in den Königreichen Spanien, beider Sizilien und Sardinien-Piemont* (Cologne: SH Verlag, 2012); Gonzalo Butrón Prida, *Nuestra sagrada causa: El modelo gaditano en la revolución piamontesa de 1821* (Cádiz: Fundación Municipal de Cultura del Ayuntamiento de Cádiz, 2006), esp. pp. 51–70.

45. Quoted in Butrón Prida, *Nuestra sagrada causa*, p. 57.

46. A comparison between the two constitutions is in Joaquín Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, 'El constitucionalismo español y portugués durante la primera mitad del siglo XIX (un estudio comparado)', *Estudos Íbero-Americanos* 33, no. 1 (2007): 38–85. See also Paquette, *Imperial Portugal*, pp. 130–34; António Manuel Hespanha, *Guiando a mão invisível: Direitos, Estado e lei no liberalismo monárquico português* (Coimbra: Almedina, 2004); Hespanha, 'O constitucionalismo monárquico português: Breve síntese', *Historia Constitucional* 13 (2012): 477–526.

Cádiz Constitution approved, one year later, a working document, the *Bases da constituição*, heavily dependent on the Spanish charter, to draft the new constitution. Similar to the Cádiz Constitution, the *Bases*—as also the Portuguese constitution approved the following year—retained a historicist approach. Both proclaimed that they did not represent revolutionary acts or a breach with the past, but were rather reforming documents aiming at the re-establishing of traditional rights and forgotten fundamental laws. This cautious reformist rhetoric was designed to reassure its audiences that it had nothing to do with French Jacobinism.

At the same time, the 1822 Portuguese constitution differed in a number of important ways from the Spanish one. It was a much more concise text. While it reaffirmed the sovereignty of the nation, unlike the Spanish constitution it included a separate list of the rights and duties of the citizen that owed much to the French declarations of 1789. It retained a single representative chamber, but it replaced the Spanish indirect electoral system, used in 1820 to appoint the Portuguese constituent assembly, with a direct one. Finally, although like the Spanish constitution it proclaimed that the religion of the nation was the Catholic faith, it diverged from it in affording toleration to other denominations.

In addition, it should be noted that Portugal was the only southern European state among those undergoing revolution in the 1820s in which the demise of monocameral constitutions led to a new compromise between liberals and the monarchy. Such a compromise proved impossible in Spain, Piedmont and Naples because of the resolute opposition of their kings. In Portugal, the consecutive repression of the revolutions in Naples, Piedmont and Spain, and increasing hostility towards the 1822 constitution, paved the way to its repeal in 1823. Yet when Dom João VI died, his heir Dom Pedro of Brazil approved in 1826 a new and more moderate constitution, the so-called 'Carta'. This new text, in force for a biennium, retained a role for representative government but gave the monarch greater powers than those stipulated by the previous constitution. It ceased to operate only because of the re-establishment of absolutism by Dom Miguel in 1828. This moderate constitution, heavily influenced by the Brazilian constitution of 1824, introduced a second aristocratic chamber (Câmara dos Pares) which included a hereditary nobility, and a chamber of deputies (Câmara dos Deputados) appointed through an indirect electoral system limited by census. The monarch was given a central role in the new institutional architecture of the state. The constitution endowed him with executive authority, and legislative powers shared with the Cortes, and declared him to represent the nation along with the Cortes. But additional

attributes were granted to him as holder of the so-called 'moderating power', a fourth power beyond the judicial, legislative and executive ones listed by the constitution. By virtue of this fourth power (a notion borrowed from the writings of Benjamin Constant), the monarch was entitled to appoint an unlimited number of peers to the upper chamber, to summon and dissolve the Cortes and to appoint and dismiss ministers. It crucially also gave the sovereign an absolute veto over legislative measures.[47]

A further factor limiting the impact of the Spanish constitution upon southern Europe was its absence from the constitutional debates of the Greek revolution. While Greek constitutional culture reveals an array of foreign influences, the Spanish text was not among them. During the Greek revolution the process of constitution-making was led primarily by members of the Greek Phanariot families, an elite with a tradition of service to the Ottoman Empire as interpreters and as governors of the Danubian Principalities, and by Greek scholars who had studied at German, Italian and French universities. Frequent travel to France and Britain by members of these groups had exposed them to a variety of legal and constitutional texts. One of the authors of the first constitution, Prince Mavrokordatos, was widely known to be a fervent admirer of the institutions of Great Britain. One of the authors of the declaration of independence of 1821, Anastasios Polyzoidis, a jurist who had studied in Vienna and Göttingen, had taken inspiration from the American Declaration of Independence. His publications reveal a breadth of interest in a variety of international texts. They included translations of Jeremy Bentham's essays and the American constitution, as well as of Magna Charta. At the same time, like most contemporary Portuguese and Neapolitan revolutionaries too, Polyzoidis argued against an unthinking and unqualified transfer of foreign political models, as Greeks had to 'imitate and transfer within our own polity what is transferable, imitable and implementable'.[48]

47. Paquette, 'The Brazilian Origins of the 1826 Portuguese Constitution', *European History Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2011): 444–71; Hespanha, 'O constitucionalismo monárquico'.

48. On Polyzoidis, see Anastasios Polyzoidis, *Κείμενα για τη δημοκρατία, 1824–1825* (Texts on democracy, 1824–1825), ed. Filimon Paionidis and Elpida Vogli (Athens: Ekdoseis Okto, 2011). Quotation from Anastasios Polyzoidis, *Προσωρινό Πολίτευμα της Ελλάδος και σχέδιον οργανισμού των επαρχιών αυτής. Αμφότερα επιδιορθωμένα και επικυρωμένα υπό της Δευτέρας Εθνικής Νομοθετικής των Ελλήνων Συνελεύσεως εν Άστρει, οίς έπονται το πολιτικόν σύνταγμα της Βρεταννίας και το των Ηνωμένων Επικρατειών της Αμερικής, μετά της διατυπώσεως του συνεδρίου αυτών, εξ Αγγλικών και Γαλλικών συγγραμμάτων μεταφρασθέντα υπό Α. Πολυζωίδου* (Provisional polity of Greece and a plan of the organisation of its provinces. Both revised and ratified by the second national assembly of the Greeks in Astros, accompanied by the Political Constitution of Britain and that of the United States of

Like the Cádiz Constitution, the three main revolutionary constitutions of 1821, 1823 and 1827 were deeply religious documents. The first national charter, the Provisional Constitution of Epidavros, approved in January 1822, included in its preamble a declaration of the independence of the Greek nation 'in the name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity', and 'before God and man'. Its first article, devoted to religion, declared Orthodoxy to be the state religion, thus offering first and foremost a religious definition of the nation, as in Spain. Yet this religious dimension owed more to the very nature of the uprising as an anti-Ottoman revolt than to any direct influence from Spanish constitutionalism.

In Greece, not the Cádiz Constitution, but instead the French constitutions of 1791 and 1795 and the American constitution played an important role. The first Provisional Constitution included a catalogue of civil rights (applying only to those residents in Greece of the Christian faith), guaranteeing equality before the law, protection of property, personal safety and equal access to 'dignities'. It introduced an elected senate that could not be dissolved by the executive (as in the 1791 constitution) and an executive of five members appointed by a separate assembly (as in the 1795 constitution). While it introduced a separate and independent judiciary, its originality lay in the fact that legislative and executive powers were shared between the executive and the senate. In addition, while this constitution introduced for the first time some sort of centrally organised government, it left untouched the regional assemblies that governed the territories that had declared the revolution.[49] Consecutive revisions reflected the circumstances of the war and the need to find new compromises between the regional groups that led the revolution. The revision of this text, approved in Astros in 1823 and known as the Law of Epidavros, further centralised the structure of the state and at the same time reinforced the power of the senate. It abolished the regional assemblies but weakened also the veto wielded by the executive over the assemblies' decisions, which from being absolute became only temporarily suspensive. It also gave a role to

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America, with the proceedings of their congresses, translated according to English and French treatises by Anastasios Polyzoidis) (Messolonghi: D. Mestheneos, 1824), p. iv.

49. A full translation in English was published as *The Provisional Constitution of Greece, Translated from the Second Edition of Corinth, Accompanied by the Original Greek; Preceded by a Letter to the Senate of the Grecian Confederation, and by a General View of the Origin and Progress of the Revolution, by a Grecian Eye-Witness; and Followed by Official Documents* (London: John Murray, 1823); the articles referred to here are at pp. 57–61. On Greek revolutionary constitutions, see Nicholas Kaltchas, *Introduction to the Constitutional History of Modern Greece* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), pp. 34–57; Aristovoulos Manessis, *Deux États nés en 1830: Ressemblances et dissemblances constitutionnelles entre la Belgique et la Grèce* (Brussels: Maison Ferdinand Larcier, 1959), esp. pp. 10–27.

the legislative assembly jointly with the executive in appointing all governmental officials, a provision inspired by the American constitution.[50] A third and final constitutional revision led in 1827 to the approval at Troezena of another and no longer provisional text with a more extensive catalogue of rights and an explicit reference, for the first time, to the principle of national sovereignty. The executive was now reduced to a single person, and the legislative powers of the elected assembly were reinforced. The originality of the Greek constitutions lay not only in their creative adaptation of a number of different models, but also in the persisting influence of local institutional and intellectual traditions. The pre-existing Ottoman administrative and territorial organisation provided a matrix for the administrative structures and electoral procedures of the newly declared state.[51] In addition, unlike the other constitutions of southern Europe, its models were republican texts. Yet, most Greek revolutionaries agreed on the need to find a monarch from a European dynasty as head of their new state, and started to look for one as early as 1823. They did so to legitimise their uprising in the eyes of the European powers, and to gain their support, but also out of sheer conviction that a monarch would be the best option to represent and bring together all the territories and people of Greece.[52] Thus, in spite of the peculiarities of the Greek case, most revolutionaries there agreed with their counterparts in Naples, Spain and Portugal that their future would require a monarch whose powers were limited, and not republican government.

The making of a constitutional order and its conflicts: plan of the book

The southern European revolutionaries' ambition to introduce constitutions and, in the case of Greece, to create a state as the precondition to it, demonstrate the extent to which these events belonged to 'a constitutional

50. The decrees amending the constitution at Astros in 1823 are available in French in *Constitution, loix, ordonnances des assemblées nationales des corps législatifs et du président de la Grèce, 1821–1832* (Athens: Imprimerie Royale, 1835), pp. 370–80.

51. Michalis Sotiropoulos and Antonis Hadjikyriacou, '*Patris*, *Ethnos*, and *Demos*: Representation and Political Participation in the Greek World', in Innes and Philp, *Reimagining Democracy*, pp. 99–126. See also Michalis Sotiropoulos and Antonis Hadjikyriacou, '"Βαδιζοντας προς τη μάχη ανάποδα": Οι πολιτικές αντιλήψεις του 1821 και η Εποχή των Επαναστάσεων'' ('Walking backwards into battle': Political concepts of 1821 and the Age of Revolutions), *Μνήμων* [*Mnimon*] 32 (2021): 77–109.

52. Michalis Sotiropoulos, '"United we stand, divided we fall": Sovereignty and Government during the Greek Revolution (1821–28)', *Historein* 20, no. 1 (2021), DOI: https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.24928.

moment in global liberalism', in Bayly's phrase.[53] Crucially, one important effect of this historical experience was that it gave rise to a new popular constitutional culture. The claim of this book is that although relatively short-lived and enduringly successful only in Greece, these revolutions politicised new sectors of society, generated unprecedented quantities of printed material and fostered the discussion of novel ideas and experimentation with practices such as elections. They provided a crucial context for the emergence of liberalism as a popular political force in favour of constitutional government across southern Europe, and different in character from French and British liberalisms. These revolutionary experiences informed the political life of Portugal and Spain for many decades, and helped to forge a long-lasting revolutionary tradition on the Italian peninsula. They stirred considerable interest among public audiences beyond the boundaries of their states, and influenced events outside them. The Greek revolution was the most popular cause in Europe at the time, since it was construed as a defence of Christianity and European civilisation, but the revolutions in Naples, Spain and Portugal also attracted much attention. In France and Britain they were keenly followed and acclaimed by radicals and liberals advocating constitutional reform. In addition, events in Spain and Greece in particular had an important role in influencing the political culture and the objectives of the Decembrist insurrection of 1825 in Russia.[54]

The book argues that the most remarkable feature of these revolutionary events is the widespread political awareness among the populations that they produced. In fact, if we exclude the extremely short-lived Piedmontese revolutions, they all enjoyed substantial popular support, and were not elitist. Admittedly, the introduction of constitutions was divisive, led to alternative understandings of what rights should be guaranteed and produced bitter conflicts and civil wars, as well as popular movements against those same constitutions. Nonetheless, these conflicts helped to politicise the societies of the countries in which they took place, producing novel and unprecedented forms of participation and political awareness. In Spain and Portugal in particular, they gave rise, among other things, to new and to some extent popular counterrevolutionary movements.

53. Christopher Bayly, 'Rammohan Roy and the Advent of Constitutional Liberalism in India, 1800–30', *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 1 (2007): 25–41.

54. Derek Offord, 'The Response of the Russian Decembrists to Spanish Politics in the Age of Fernand VII', *Historia Constitucional* 13 (2012): 163–91; Richard Stites, 'Decembrists with a Spanish Accent' *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 1 (2011): 5–23.

The book explores political participation, mobilisation and politicisation—whether in favour of or in opposition to constitutions and new institutions—thematically, as experiences that simultaneously affected Portugal, Greece, Piedmont, Naples and Sicily, adopting a comparative and transnational approach. The existence of shared features and connections facilitates the task. Such an method, if rigorously pursued, forces us to look not only at converging features, but also at differences and peculiarities, while circumventing the pitfalls of exceptionalism. With this in mind, I shift focus from one space to another, and zoom in and out, moving from country to country, province to province or city to city, comparing these with each other or disclosing connections between them. While comparisons and exchanges between national contexts remain important, they do not always provide the most fruitful unit of analysis. The existence of interactions at various levels, across state borders and across the sea, suggests the need to adopt the approach of connected and transnational or trans-local history. Comparisons are explored through a variety of perspectives that complement intellectual and cultural history with the history of institutions and political practices, and social and political history, microhistory and biography with the analysis of larger-scale events and spaces. By so doing, the book seeks to arrive at an understanding of how different social groups, from army officers to clerics, from artisans to shopkeepers and peasants, understood the constitution. Its central argument is that the distinctiveness of the popular constitutional culture produced by the societies here examined lay in its hybrid nature: it was a culture that upheld not only individual rights and the sovereignty of the people, but also the corporate privileges of professional bodies, the autonomy of local communities and territories and the cultural and religious uniformity of the nations. I also chart the circulation of printed material, information, rumours, political and military practices and individuals between different revolutionary contexts.

In order to do this, I have employed a wide range of primary sources, both printed and archival, and have also drawn on the existing secondary scholarship, both nationally and locally focused. At the same time, my book builds on existing scholarship that has adopted comparative and transnational approaches to compare and connect revolutions. However, most of the existing research has tended to focus on exchanges and connections between no more than two countries in southern Europe in this period, or on circulation from or into just one of these revolutions. Even the most ambitious of these comparative works, Richard Stites's *The Four Horsemen* treats each revolution separately. While it includes Russia—a

country that I do not cover in my work—it leaves out Portugal, Piedmont and Sicily.[55]

A comparative and transnational approach is adopted throughout the book in each of its sections. Part I is devoted to the relationship between army, war and revolution. Its first and second chapters explore the military origins of these revolutions, which all started as *pronunciamientos* (public proclamations by the army) by military officers. It looks at the impact that these officers' participation in the Napoleonic wars and as members of secret societies had in moulding new forms of patriotism and in developing insurrectionary plans in favour of constitutions. By studying the content and the transnational circulation of the manifestos issued by the insurgent officers and their contact with crowds, as well as the impact of war on society, this part of the book demonstrates the influence that military experiences had on popular mobilisation, and the extent to which such experiences redefined the relationship between political and military powers. After an initial consensus, ideological cleavages within the armies (in Spain and Portugal), and resistance by irregular armed groups against submission to political authorities (in revolutionary Greece) led to multiple conflicts that divided societies and territories along with their military forces. The third chapter looks at the impact that civil wars had in polarising public opinion around specific political programmes, and explores the role that guerrilla warfare and violence played in support of military operations. The fourth chapter in this section explores wars of national liberation. It seeks to explain why armed mobilisation against foreign armies called to crush the revolutions in Spain, Piedmont and Naples failed in spite of the popular support that had existed for the constitutions. Although in Greece the national insurrection succeeded, its fate, as everywhere else, was determined by foreign intervention.

By looking at the movement of volunteers, refugees and migrants across the Mediterranean, chapter five illuminates the connectedness of the revolutionary experience, and highlights the importance of trans-Mediterranean and trans-imperial crossings. It uses the biographies of three individuals who took part in the events in Palermo in 1820—an Ottoman Greek formerly employed by the Neapolitan navy, an Irish general at the service of the Bourbon absolutism and later head of the Greek revolutionary army, and a Sicilian revolutionary—to track the variety of mobilities that existed over the area between Portugal and Greece. It

55. Stites, *Four Horsemen*.

(continued...)

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Note: page numbers in *italics* refer to illustrations.