

E. LATORRE BROTO. *Liberators of a Great People. The Greek Revolution, Philhellenism and the Liberal International in Spain (1821-1822)*. (Τρίγλωσση έκδοση Ισπανικά-Ελληνικά-Αγγλικά). Εκδ. Καστανιώτης: Αθήνα 2022, pp. 317-319.

FOREWORD

The celebration of the Bicentennial has offered the scientific community a great opportunity to review in depth all the various aspects of the Greek Revolution from novel perspectives and approaches. Although it is still premature to draw conclusions on research advances achieved in recent years, we can venture that the most significant one has to do with contextualizing the Greek Revolution within the framework of the Age of Revolutions, and, more specifically, within the so-called “Mediterranean wave”, which began in Spain on January 1st 1820, with the pronouncement of Lieutenant Colonel Rafael del Riego in Cabezas de San Juan, province of Seville. The swearing of the Constitution of Cadiz of 1812 by King Ferdinand VII of Bourbon shook the foundations of Restoration Europe, which, born in 1815 from the Congress of Vienna, advocated returning to the Old Regime based on the legitimacy of the absolute power of monarchs bestowed by Divine Providence.

The establishment of a constitutional monarchy system in Spain had an immediate impact upon the political situation at the time. The European liberal classes hailed Riego’s feat, and the Spanish Constitution soon gained followers: on July 2nd General Pepe proclaimed it in Naples, on August 24th the revolution broke out in Portugal, and in the beginning of March 1821 it was also proclaimed in Piedmont. And while Austrian Chancellor Metternich crushed the Italian revolutions under the order of the Laibach Congress, the news arrived that the Phanariot Alexandros Ipsilandis had rebelled against the authority of the Sublime Porte in the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, claiming to fight for the freedom of the Greeks.

Since Spain was the first country to light the fuse of the revolution, all European political thought, both absolutist and liberal, considered that the Greek Revolution was just another consequence of the Spanish Revolution, and that, therefore, it derived directly from it. Thus, an ideological map was configured in which a clear horizontal line divided Europe into two: Northern Europe or that of the Despots, and Southern Europe or that of the Peoples, turning the Mediterranean into a space of revolution and freedom.

Studied from this global perspective, the Greek Revolution is no longer a local event with an international impact, and divests itself of the “exceptionality” from which it has been traditionally studied, thus becoming integrated into the complex network of factors that, throughout the 1820s, induced the series of movements that ended up transforming the face of Europe.

The relationships established during such critical moment between the Spanish and Greek revolutions were the object of study of my doctoral thesis entitled *Hispanic Philhellenisms. The Greek as a reference for Self-representation in the Ideological Discourses of Spain and Hispanic America (1821-1824)*, to which I would like to refer readers interested in delving deeper into the subject. This book focuses only on two fundamental, interrelated aspects : firstly, the exhumation of early Spanish philhellenism, politically inspired and therefore revolutionary, which could be described as autochthonous, given its ideological distance from the philanthropic, paternalistic, and interventionist — almost crusading — philhellenism, that was beginning to emerge in other European nations. That primordial, civic, supportive, and fraternal Spanish

philhellenism saw the Greek people as their brothers and equals, since they fought for the same as the Spaniards — for national regeneration by virtue of a glorious past, and for establishing a free, enlightened country, governed by Law, with no place for despots.

With the failure of Italian revolutions and of liberal conspiracies in other European countries — as was the case in France — Spain became a safe haven for all political outlaws of any nationality and condition. It is in this space of free circulation, which became a privileged setting for the conspiratorial activities of the Liberal International, that is located the second aspect that we want to make known through this book : the project organized by the Committee of Madrid towards the end of 1821 to help Greece, by sending an expedition of three hundred Italian soldiers and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Spain and Greece. The Greek government accepted this proposal in April 1822, and launched a top-secret diplomatic line, based on a purely revolutionary argument, alternative to the official diplomatic line that it maintained before the powers of the Holy Alliance and its satellite countries, based on a religious, cultural and humanitarian set of arguments. The political circumstances of those times dictated the failure of this project, but had significant consequences, since it ended up leading Andreas Louriotis — the agent in charge of carrying it out — to England, where the foundation of the Philhellenic Committee of London in February 1823 was absolutely critical for the history of the Greek Revolution to be as we presently know it.