

Call for Papers

“1821 in 2021: Rethinking the Birth of Modern Greece”

Special section/issue of the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Spring 2021

Guest Editor: Yanni Kotsonis, NYU

General overview:

The two hundred-year anniversary of outbreak of the Greek War of Independence should be an occasion for serious rethinking. The *JMGS* aims to showcase recent reconsiderations and new directions in the historiography, by scholars working in any discipline of the humanities and/or social sciences. To that end, we issue this call for papers for a special feature entitled “1821 in 2021: Rethinking the Birth of Modern Greece,” to appear in the journal’s May 2021 issue. We especially encourage submissions that present broad and innovative views and foreground that novelty, but which are still based on serious investigation.

We are soliciting proposals in the form of **abstracts in English of 350 words by 15 May 2019**. Abstracts should be submitted electronically to yk1@nyu.edu.

Commissioned articles of 8,000 words will be due by 28 February 2020, for distribution to outside reviewers. Articles will be subjected to the *JMGS*’s regular peer review process. Potential contributors should consult the [JMGS author guidelines](#).

Further rationale and description:

Scholars have complicated the story of the Greek War of Independence with a European dimension, but Europe itself invites complexity. It was a continent of revolutions and liberalisms, but Europe was not, and would never be, the creature of the progressive Enlightenment alone. The Greek Revolution took place in a moment of reaction and restoration, and the “successful” Greek Revolution can be appreciated alongside the “failed” revolutions of the same period. At the same time, Europe was producing the global age that would provincialize Europe itself: the movement that led to the Greek nation state was linked with movements in Egypt and Lebanon, and with a world of revolutionary foment stretching from Cairo to Philadelphia, from Haiti to Buenos Aires. Greece in turn offered a new model of national revolution and was the start of an Ottoman unravelling that ended with the final anti-Ottoman revolution, that of Turkey itself.

Internally, too, the revolution can be appreciated as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-confessional unfolding, and one may reflect on the great diversities that were produced by, or flattened by, the national idea. From the normative base of Greek speaking Orthodox communities, we should also move to Vlachs, Roma, Albanians, and Slavs; to Catholicism and Judaism and the largest casualty of the war, Islam. In our haste to arrive at 1821 or 1832, we may

pause to consider the many signs of diversity, some assimilated into the national idea, some demonstrably not, in what amounted to a thoroughgoing demographic revolution.

The anniversary will be an occasion to marvel at or remark on the novelty of the revolutionary decade, to treat it as something other than natural and inevitable. Nevertheless it was the first *national* European revolution and one of two successful revolutions in Europe of the era of restoration and reaction—somehow Greece emerged at the same moment as Belgium. What made for this success, and in what ways was it successful? If nationalism triumphed, what became of the other main thrusts of the movement, the liberal and the social?

Methodologically gendered and sexualized understandings of the events invite serious consideration. Large topical gaps also remain, and we invite perspectives and interventions that allow us to investigate the role of women as something more than the exceptions of a few captains and concubines: e.g. to consider the mass mobilization of women behind and on the lines. We are also interested in the ubiquitous peasantries that were at the great battles and campaigns but who have been difficult to incorporate into statues and monuments or even into textbook narratives.

How was the memory of the revolution created, in books, memoirs, statues, and textbooks, as great individuals but not often as masses? Who was remembered and who was forgotten? What are the monuments and events, and how was the existing material culture of archeological ruins and stones incorporated into a national culture?

We are looking for submissions that offer fresh approaches and new, sound assertions. In broad thematic and methodological terms, topics for submissions may include and are not limited to:

- The revolution as praxis and conjuncture: One will usually assume that the nation produced a revolution, but in what ways was the Greek nation a product of the Revolution itself, its contours in the making and its outcomes not predetermined?
- Imperial creatures: What were the inter- and trans-imperial dimensions of this place in this time, i.e., the empires in which Greeks lived before the nation-state? How did the empires deliberately and inadvertently incubate a new national consciousness?
- What were the ramifications of the revolution in the Mediterranean and beyond? How was it interpreted, from South America to Alexandria?
- New perspectives: How can a different lens open a view of the less studied but very large populations of peasants, allowing us to add their experiences to those of the known actors, and indeed qualify the role of the singular individual?
- How can one narrate the roles and experiences of women, in a manner that not only adds them to the existing narrative, but reshapes the narrative itself?
- Notions of space: What was what we now call the Hellenic world, and where was Greece before 1830?

- Revisiting basic terms: The many versions of freedom and liberty; Greece and Greek; uprising, revolution, and war; independence and sovereignty. How was a new language of self-representation as coherent Hellenes universalized in such a short time, given the great diversity of imperial experiences? What were the multiple revolutions that unfolded in the 1820s?
- Metamorphosis: How did the local, the partial, the particular, and the inward-looking become integrated into the national and the global, even as the new state announced its autarkic existence?
- De-naturalizing: What have we taken for granted that deserves emphasis, marveling, and contemplation?
- Dead, left out, or assimilated: What became of Muslims after 1821, and why? What of Catholics and Jews? Vlachs, Roma, and Albanians? How does the topic go beyond filling a gap but sheds light on the character of the national movement and the new state, its origins and inception?
- The dynamics and spatialities of mobilization, violence and contention.
- Contemporary uses/appropriations of 1821 and the Greek War of Independence, including by extremist groups.
- The new international reality: What could and could not be created out of the ruins of the revolutionary decade, bearing in mind the local and the broader European, be it the pan-European reaction and the moments of liberal and revolutionary flare-up?
- Mobility and Stasis: The traveling Greeks and their tethering to a new homeland, from merchants and soldiers to uprooted farmers and shepherds and migrant laborers.