



Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη της Ελλάδος National Library of Greece

International Conference – Call for Papers Philhellenism and the Greek Revolution of 1821: Towards a Global History

We invite proposals for this international conference, organized as part of the research project, *Unpublished Archives of British Philhellenism During the Greek Revolution of 1821*, funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) at the British School at Athens (BSA) and carried out in collaboration with the National Library of Greece (NLG).

Venue: National Library of Greece, Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, Athens (SNFCC)

Dates: Wednesday 15 – Friday 17 March 2023

Rationale

The Age of Revolution as a field of study is once again in the air. Although scholarly interest in the field is hardly new, recent scholarship has given it a new lease of life by expanding the geographical scope of studies to include revolutionary experiences in the colonial and ‘peripheral’ world, and by embracing the insights of transnational and global history. Although the Greek Revolution was a key moment in the revolutionary age, it is usually absent from this literature. The bicentenary of the start of the Revolution, and many recent studies to which the anniversary has given rise, have played a large role in turning this state of affairs around. This conference aims to build on these latest developments in scholarship. It also seeks to take them further by focusing on one of the clearest demonstrations of the essentially transnational character of the Greek Revolution: Philhellenism.

Despite decades of engagement with Philhellenism, scholarship remains ambivalent about its nature and contribution to the course and outcome of the Revolution. To take just one unresolved issue, is it still useful to define contributions along national lines (French, American, British etc.)? How can we account, for example, for the conspicuous presence of Irish and still more of Scottish contributors to the British Philhellenic movement? What if we take a more regionalized approach, one closer to the spatial configurations of the period?

At the level of individuals, we still lack knowledge of the personal affinities of many of these people, their experiences before the revolution, the reasons why they mobilized, as well as what exactly they did in revolutionary Greece and how effective it was. The same goes for their political thought. Although conventionally seen as adherents of early liberalism and of ideas of national emancipation, many Philhellenes had deep experiences of empire. Having been actively involved in the imperial and colonial expansion of the era, for many of them, empire and nation were not mutually exclusive. For these people, the Greek Revolution became a sort of crucible for their political visions. The Greek Revolution and Philhellenism thus make a perfect case for studying how the political and intellectual currents of the era (liberalism, republicanism, romanticism, nationalism) played out in an instance of revolution in the Mediterranean ‘periphery’, one which for a short period of time became the international and liberal cause par excellence. In fact, far from being just a testing ground, the Greek Revolution became a factory that produced novel and conflicting ideas about politics, society, gender, religion, as well as about what it means to be modern and European.

Conference aim and topics

Our aim in this conference is to build on these developments in scholarship and these still-unresolved questions, to bring together scholars from around the world and from a range of academic disciplines to re-assess the nature and significance of Philhellenism and its role in the Age of Revolution, as seen from a global perspective.

We welcome proposals which will address any of the following topics:

Mobilization

- The formation of Philhellenic networks and their distinctive features; why were some faster and others slower to develop at least in their activist dimensions (i.e. in the British Isles)?
- Philhellenism, associationism, and dissenting denominations in Britain and elsewhere
- Motivation for fighting someone else's war; socioeconomic, political and cultural conditions that propelled people to mobilize in favour of the Greeks
- Philhellenism and the wider 19th-century context of colonialism, empire, but also revolutions
- Rethinking the relationship between the intellectual and political experiences of the Philhellenes prior to the Revolution and their engagement in the Greek cause
- Role of neo-humanism, the European Enlightenment, and the 'Greek Revival'
- Historiography of Philhellenism; rethinking the validity of distinguishing Philhellenic movements along national lines; 'regionalization' of Philhellenism as a possible path towards a global history.

Philhellenism in action, in Greece and abroad

- Volunteers in Greece: what they did, who they were, their impact on events
- Philhellenes of the 'home front': philhellenism as an international 'movement'
- The economics of national emancipation (1): fundraising and loans for Greece
- Philhellenism as a form of early international lobbying; the press and public opinion as tools for mobilization, political action and international intervention
- Philhellenism in the arts: theatre, fiction, poetry, music, visual arts; political discourse; folklore (Fauriel, Müller); publishing; philhellenic themes in taste and fashion; producing philhellenic audiences
- State-sponsored philhellenism: British official attitudes to the LGC; the Bavarian expedition of 1826; the French expedition to the Morea in 1828; Russian attitudes
- Philhellenes as historians (Raybaud, Gordon, Finlay).

Global impact of philhellenism

- Greece as a testing ground for innovative ideas (including colonial projects); economic and technological aspects of Philhellenism
 - The economics of national emancipation (2): the British Philhellenes, the international market for sovereign debt in the 1820s, and the re-shaping of the international order in the Mediterranean and beyond
 - 'Us' and 'them': Philhellenism and the modern formulation of the familiar binary civilizational categorizations: Christians-Muslims, Europeans-Barbarians, East-West, etc.
 - Philhellenic thinking about time and history; utopian thinking and new regimes of historicity
 - Philhellenism, abolitionism and 'humanitarian intervention'
 - Philhellenism and gender: the Greek Revolution as locus for the representation of women
 - Philhellenes and the Global South during the 1820s: bridging and connecting the different revolutionary developments in South America, the Mediterranean and South-east Asia
 - Political visions and ideas of the Philhellenes; their influence on liberal/ revolutionary politics
 - Philhellenic international thought and competing visions of a liberal international order (radical visions of transnational solidarity and friendship, but also moderate liberal colonial projects as tools for emancipation).
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Guidance for submitting a proposal

Contributions must be original (i.e. not presented at a previous public event or published) and may be considered, if contributors wish, for inclusion, in expanded and revised form, in a volume of essays with the same title, to be published by Routledge in the BSA's series Modern Greek & Byzantine Studies, subject to the publisher's normal peer review process.

Proposals may be submitted, and papers may be given, in either **English or Greek**. Simultaneous translation will be available at the conference. The length of papers must not exceed **20 minutes**.

We intend that this will be mainly, if not entirely, an in-person event. But we are also making contingency plans to allow for online participation, should this be necessary. If you would prefer to contribute virtually, please indicate this at the time of making your proposal.

For those attending in person, we are able to cover accommodation costs for up to 4 nights in Athens. For travel from outside Athens we encourage speakers in the first instance to seek funding from their home institution. Please advise us at the time of making your proposal whether this is likely to be available in your case, and if not, the anticipated cost of your travel (based on advance booking by the cheapest practical route). We will endeavour to reimburse as fully as possible the travel expenses of those who cannot draw on alternative funding, but we cannot guarantee this at present.

Please send your proposal by 31 May 2022 to m.sotiropoulos@bsa.ac.uk. This should include your name and your affiliation (if you have one), a provisional title and an abstract of up to 250 words. Please also include information about your anticipated travel expenses, if applicable, based on the above guidelines. We will inform you of our decision by 8 July 2022.

Academic committee

Michalis Sotiropoulos, BSA 1821 Fellow in Modern Greek Studies, Principal Organizer
Roderick Beaton, King's College London and Chair, BSA
John Bennet / Rebecca Sweetman, Director, BSA
Stavros Zoumboulakis, President of Supervisory Council, National Library of Greece

Organizing committee

Roderick Beaton, King's College London and Chair, BSA
John Bennet / Rebecca Sweetman, Director, BSA
Amalia Kakissis, Archivist, BSA
Evi Kapoli, Manuscripts Department, National Library of Greece
Michalis Sotiropoulos, BSA 1821 Fellow in Modern Greek Studies, Principal Organizer
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For the research project *Unpublished Archives of British Philhellenism During the Greek Revolution of 1821* visit the webpage: <https://www.bsa.ac.uk/research-2/britishphilhellenism/>

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