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Entangled allegiances: Ottoman Greeks in Marseille and the shifting ethos of Greekness (c. 1790–c. 1820)*

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An attempt is made here to consider 'the Greek experience of Ottoman rule' beyond the frontiers of the Empire itself, by focusing on the resilience of the Ottoman aspect of collective identity among the Greeks in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Marseille. Beyond the classic questioning of political, social and cultural categories and labels, this article makes a plea for taking this resilience seriously, as part and parcel of a broader process of identity formation in a diaspora context. Making the case for a richer and more complex analysis of the phenomenon of 'entangled identities' among the Greeks in Marseille, some suggestions are made for what this claim might bring to the analysis of identity formation in the context of diaspora communities.

If 'the Greek experience of Ottoman rule' has become a major topic of historical investigation over the last two to three decades,[1] it may be more than ever necessary to consider this experience beyond the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire itself. Indeed, long gone are the days when an overwhelmingly nationalist historiography would call the Greek diaspora communities the true repositories of the Greek national identity.[2] However, the more

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1 Reference works on this issue include B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York and London 1982), and D. Gondicas and Ch. Issawi (eds.), *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism: Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton 1998). See also A. Gerasimos, *The Greeks of Asia Minor: Confession, Community and Ethnicity in the Nineteenth Century* (Kent, OH and London 1992); S. Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία, 19ος αι. Οι ελληνορθόδοξες κοινότητες. Από το μιλλέτ των Ρωμιών στο ελληνικό έθνος* (Athens 1997); P. Konortas, *Οθωμανικές θεωρήσεις για το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο* (Athens 1998).

2 See for instance D. J. Geanakoplos, 'The diaspora Greeks: the genesis of modern Greek national consciousness', in N. P. Diamandouros et al. (eds.), *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821–1830): Continuity and Change* (Thessaloniki 1976) 59–77.

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'liberal' historiography that has since prevailed within the field of diaspora and minority studies has been remarkably consistent with the earlier assumption of the radical singularity (and even exceptionalism) of the diaspora as a social, cultural and ultimately political experience. As Stathis Gourgouris recently put it,

> Diasporic communities now come to embody the symbolic cohesion of ancestral nationality, often even voluntarily assuming the agency of the nation abroad, in a bizarre (ultimately paradoxical) simultaneity of both confirming and exceeding national boundaries. [. . .] Diasporic communities have become nations themselves, even if of a different sort.[3]

Such a convergence does not mean that both historiographies should be dismissed altogether. Rather, it reminds us that any attempt made at studying the complex set of allegiances and affiliations at play among diaspora Greeks should not be merely thought of as a way to engage the (now long debased) nationalist master narratives, but rather as a strategy to address issues of broader historical and historiographical significance. Such is the case here, where the issue of identity formation in a diaspora context is examined, focusing on the resilience of the Ottoman dimension of collective identity among the Greeks in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Marseille,[4] in order both to make a plea for taking this resilience seriously, and to offer some suggestions for what this might bring to the analysis of identity formation in the context of diaspora communities.

Statuses, categories and beyond

The issue of political and legal statuses among the diaspora Greeks has long remained a 'blind spot' within the rich historiography devoted to the topic.[5] Indeed, it forms only

3 S. Gourgouris, 'The concept of "diaspora" in the contemporary world', in I. Baghdiantz-McCabe *et al.* (eds.), *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* (Oxford 2005) 389.

4 Aside from Pierre Echinard's classic work *Grecs et Philhellènes à Marseille, de la Révolution française à l'Indépendance de la Grèce* (Marseille 1973), recent scholarship on the Greek community in Marseille include A. Mandilara, *The Greek Business Community in Marseille, 1816–1900: Individual and Network Strategies* (PhD thesis, Florence 1998), G. Tsilis, *Η ελληνική παροικία της Μασσαλίας (1820–1922)* (Ph.D. thesis, Ioannina 2000), E. D. Prontzas, *Από την ενορία στο χρηματιστήριο: Η ελληνική κοινότητα της Μασσαλίας (1820–1910)* (Athens 2005), M. Calapodis, *La Communauté grecque à Marseille: Genèse d'un paradigme identitaire (1793–1914)* (Paris 2010), and M. Grenet, *La fabrique communautaire: Les Grecs à Venise, Livourne et Marseille, v.1770–v.1830* (PhD thesis, Florence 2010).

5 Recent exceptions include O. Katsiardi-Hering, 'Central and peripheral communities in the Greek diaspora: interlocal and local economic, political, and cultural networks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries', in M. Rozen (ed.), *Homelands and Diasporas: Greeks, Jews and Their Migrations* (London and New York 2008) 169–80; V. Seirinidou, 'Grocers and wholesalers, Ottomans and Habsburgs, foreigners and "our own": the Greek Trade diasporas in Central Europe, seventeenth to nineteenth centuries', in S. Faroqhi and G. Veinstein (eds.), *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire* (Leuwen 2008) 81–95. For a later period, see the still engrossing reflection offered by Ch. Hatziiossif, 'Εμπορικές παροικίες και ανεξάρτητη Ελλάδα: Ερμηνείες και προβλήματα', *Ο Πολίτης* 62 (1983) 28–34.

a small part of the problem of identity formation within the context of the diaspora communities — which includes as well other aspects such as sociability, cultural values, family strategies or even business practices. However, the importance of political statuses and claims should not be underplayed, for at least two reasons.

First, these statuses and claims had a direct impact on many aspects of the foreigners' everyday lives in Early Modern Europe — from legal protection to commercial opportunities and popular representations. For instance, we know that Greek diaspora communities (with the notable exception of that of Venice[6]) mostly consisted of Ottoman Greeks. And although these may have been widely considered 'as being under the Porte's yoke rather than as being its subjects',[7] they were nonetheless regarded as Ottoman subjects by the local authorities of the cities they lived in. Indeed, this status could itself be negotiated depending on the circumstances: for instance, when, in fear of an attack on Marseille by the Second Coalition, the Directoire decreed in 1799 that all foreigners should retire twenty leagues away from the coastline and, although the Ottoman Empire was at that time at war with France, an exception was quickly made for those Greeks who had 'served the Republic with their commercial relations, [and demonstrated] their attachment to France as well as the dangers they would have to face if forced to return to their country (*patrie*).'[8] Although calling for a more careful reading of issues of categories and statuses, the latter case also makes clear that — chronologically as much as politically — the special treatment Greeks could at times enjoy on the part of local authorities could only come second to their recognition as subjects of the sultan.

The second striking feature of political statuses and claims is the fact that Greeks themselves often resorted to the same political categories that are often held by historians as the mere products of a 'top-down' effort by local administrations to register and control individuals and groups. For instance in eighteenth-century Naples, the Greek community was reportedly profoundly divided into two factions: the *Greci-Veneti* (subjects of the Most Serene Republic) and the *Greci-Ottomani* (subjects of the Porte). In the same period, the Greek community in Vienna was torn between two groups, respectively composed of Ottoman and Habsburg subjects, each one with its own church and its own type of sociability.[9] And when asked in 1776 whether or not they wanted to share their church with their Habsburg 'fellow-countrymen', the Ottoman Greeks would strongly reject the

6 On the composition of the Greek community in late 18th- and early 19th century Venice see N. G. Moschonas, 'La comunità greca di Venezia: aspetti sociali ed economici', in M. F. Tiepolo and E. Tonetti (eds.), *I Greci a Venezia* (Venice 2002) 242.

7 Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Paris), *Correspondance Commerciale Odessa*, I, f. 228, French Consul in Odessa to State Secretary, 28 Dec. 1809.

8 Archives Nationales (Paris) [hereafter A.N.], *Affaires Etrangères* [hereafter A.E.], B III 218, *Correspondance de l'agent du ministère des Relations extérieures à Marseille, an VII*, no. 165, Agent of the Foreign Ministry in Marseille to Foreign Minister, 26 floréal an VII (15 May 1799).

9 V. Seirinidou, *Έλληνες στη Βιέννη, 1780–1850* (Ph.D., Athens 2002) 255–71; H. Porfyriou, 'La diaspora greca fra cosmopolitismo e coscienza nazionale nell'impero asburgico del XVIII secolo', *Città e Storia* 2.1 (2007) 235–52.

proposal.[10] Indeed, this distinction ran deep inside the migrant's experience, as it spoke not only to one's political, but also to one's socio-cultural status; as historian Marco Dogo argued,

> In Trieste as in the rest of the Empire, once they had become naturalized Hapsburg subjects, the former Ottoman merchants were no longer Ottomans strictly speaking, but so they remained from a cultural perspective, perhaps to a greater extent than their respective national historiographies care to admit.[11]

In the same way, distinctions between *Greci-Veneti* and *Greci-Ottomani* or between 'Ottoman' and 'Habsburg' Greeks also cut across a variety of other dividing lines, such as those between people of different regional origins, or speakers of different idioms. Eventually, differences of political status did not preclude expressions of other forms of belonging articulated by both individuals and groups 'on multiple and simultaneous levels'[12] — for instance to one's family, kin, social group, or to a wider and often ill-defined 'Greekness'. However, the very use by Greeks themselves of political categories such as *Greci-Ottomani*, *Greci-Veneti* or 'subjects of the Emperor of the Romans' (here Joseph II), testifies both to their currency in the daily life of Greek communities, and to the central, sometimes strategic role they came to play in the definition and fashioning of individual and collective identities.

Stemming from these observations is the fact that historians need to consider seriously the resilience of references to what Dogo called the 'Ottoman quality' of diaspora Greeks.[13] I am certainly not advocating taking categories literally, as we know that terms such as 'Ottoman' or 'Turk' (or even, for that matter, 'Greek') might have very different meanings according to the larger context in which they came to be mobilized.[14] However, for all the lability it entailed, the very operation of labelling individuals and groups had practical consequences on both their political and legal statuses and their social being. Although diaspora studies have consistently emphasized the ability of ethno-religious minorities to operate across the political, religious and social boundaries running through the Early Modern Mediterranean, I would like to suggest that this pattern of cross-cultural brokerage does not necessarily preclude the actors' genuine sense of allegiance to a given polity.

10 S. Efstratiadis, *Ο εν Βιέννη ναός του Αγίου Γεωργίου και η κοινότης των Οθωμανών υπηκόων* (Alexandria 1912) 167.

11 M. Dogo, 'Merchants between two empires: The Ottoman colonies of Trieste in the XVIII century', *Etudes balkaniques* 32–3.3–4 (1996–7) 93.

12 R. Murphey, 'Forms of differentiation and expression of individuality in Ottoman society', *Turcica* 34 (2002) 135.

13 Dogo, 'Merchants between two empires', 91.

14 On the problem of categories, see E. Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden 1999) 181, 218; C. Kafadar, 'A death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim merchants trading in the Serenissima', *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986) 193–4; G. Ricci, 'Crypto-identities: Disguised Turks, Christians and Jews', in A. Molho and D. R. Curto (eds.), *Finding Europe: Discourses on Margins, Communities, Images, c. 13th–c. 18th Centuries* (New York 2007) 40.

In the case of the Greek diaspora, archival evidence seems to directly contradict widespread assumptions about the limits and shortcomings of one's status as an Ottoman subject. In fact, many examples suggest that it could at time constitute a resource, if not an opportunity. This was for instance the case in both French-ruled Venice and Amsterdam (1797), as the occupying forces levied a heavy tax on the main stakeholders of the local economies. Trying to preserve the Sultan's neutrality during their war against the rest of Europe, the French exempted Ottoman subjects from paying this tax, thereby prompting a number of local Greek merchants to petition the city authorities in order to be recognized as subjects of the Sultan.[15] In a recent study, Gelina Harlaftis and Sophia Laiou pointed out that, in the wake of the maritime and commercial reforms undertaken by Sultan Selim III, a number of Greek captains who had once opted for the Russian or the Austrian flag came back to the Ottoman one, as they looked for the precious 'neutral' status that would allow them to trade with all European powers.[16] There is little doubt that such a move was primarily guided by economic opportunism. These examples, however, also remind us that claiming (or having recourse to) Ottoman protection was not unusual for diaspora Greeks, thereby inviting us to further examine this often overlooked question. In this perspective, I have chosen to turn to the handful of diaspora Greek who settled in Marseille between the last decade of the eighteenth century and the early years of independence of the Greek State, and focus on the interplay of political allegiances, collective identities and ethnic loyalties at stake in this small community.

Competing definitions: the establishment of an Orthodox church in Marseille (1796–1821)

The first case under scrutiny concerns the competing logics of collective definition among the Ottoman Greeks in Marseille during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as evidenced through the long and complex history of the establishment of the first Greek Orthodox church in the Provençal port.

The first request for the establishment of an Orthodox church in Marseille was a petition addressed in 1796 to the French authorities by a captain from Hydra named Antonios Vassilis Ginis (in the French documents 'Antoine Basile Guiny').[17] Already a

15 On this episode see Grenet, *La fabrique communautaire*, 383–5.

16 G. Harlaftis and S. Laiou, 'Ottoman state policy in Mediterranean trade and shipping, *c*.1780–*c*.1820: the rise of the Greek-owned Ottoman merchant fleet', in M. Mazower (ed.), *Networks of Power in Modern Greece: Essays in Honour of John Campbell* (London2008) 1–44. For another recent attempt at reframing the pre-1821 Greek merchant marine within its Ottoman context, see N. Pissis, 'Investments in the Greek merchant marine (1783–1821)', in S. Faroqhi and G. Veinstein (eds.), *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire* (Leuwen 2008) 151–64.

17 A.N., A.E., B III 215, *Correspondance de l'agent…, an IV*, no 84, Ginis to Secretary of State, 13 germinal an IV (2 April 1796).

famous figure by the time of this petition, Ginis was among the handful of Greek captains who had bravely violated the British maritime blockade of the city in 1794–5, in order to supply the city with wheat and ensure the transportation of diplomatic dispatches to the French representatives in the Levant.[18] In return, Ginis was granted French citizenship,[19] and therefore had every right to call himself in his petition a 'Grec de nation, citoyen français'. However, his petition did not specify an Orthodox church: rather, Ginis introduced himself as a spokesman for 'his fellow-countrymen' ('ses concitoyens'), requesting a 'temple of their rite [. . .] where the Greek Ottoman nation could establish its worship' ('un temple de leur rit [. . .] pour que la nation grecque ottomane puisse y établir son culte'). For all its apparent vagueness, this phrasing in fact betrays Ginis' effort to 'decode' his own political categories (heavily influenced by the Ottoman *millet* system) and 'recode' them in a language that — Ginis thought — could be understood by the French authorities. The ultimate failure of this request (allegedly because of the insufficient number of Greeks residing at this time in Marseille) should not make us overlook an important point, namely the strong and deep influence of Ottoman criteria on patterns of collective self-perception and self-definition among the diaspora Greeks. By examining the two other requests addressed later for the same purpose, I shall now try to understand if and how this feature evolved through time.

Twenty years after this first attempt, another petition was sent in 1817 by the Greek Orthodox priest Arsenios to the Russian ambassador in France, asking him to endorse the establishment of an Orthodox church in Marseille.[20] It is difficult to assess whether this move was prompted by the priest's personal acquaintance with the ambassador — Arsenios had resided in Paris for some years after serving as an Orthodox chaplain in Napoleon's army.[21] Nor can we tell with certainty that, by resorting to the ambassador, the priest in fact tried to claim the advantage of the Russian protection that was granted to Ottoman Greeks by the treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji (1774). In any case, Arsenios' request was misunderstood by the French authorities, who at once reminded the Russian ambassador that there were practically no Russian subjects leaving in Marseille. Under these circumstances, and as they believed the Greeks would be the only ones to benefit from the establishment of an Orthodox church, they looked askance at what seemed to them a suspicious political move.[22] Within the double context of the building of the French

18 N. Svoronos, 'Les marins grecs au service de la Première République française', *France-Grèce* 11–12 (1953) 11–12 and 26–8; P. Échinard, 'Les Grecs au service de Marseille et de la République sous la Révolution et le Consulat', *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique de Provence* 47.4 (1969) 259–62; M. Grenet, *La fabrique communautaire*, 117–18.

19 A.N., BB 11 2, *Naturalisations et changements de noms*, file 487, 'Antoine Basile Guini'.

20 Archives Départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône (Marseille) [hereafter A.D.], 128 V 1, *Grecs schismatiques et cultes christophiles*, Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône to Home Secretary, 3 June 1817.

21 P. Echinard, 'Arsenios (Januko)', in P. Guiral and F. Reynaud (eds.), *Les Marseillais dans l'Histoire* (Toulouse 1988) 36.

22 A.D., 128 V 1, Home Secretary to Russian Ambassador in France, 14 June 1817.

nation-state and post-revolutionary suspicion against foreigners,[23] one could argue that Orthodox Greeks would have had a better chance of having their request satisfied by resorting to the person the local authorities saw as their legitimate representative, namely the Ottoman consul in Marseille.

It took the Greeks another four years to obtain, in the spring of 1821 (in the early days of the Greek revolt in the Peloponnese), the right to celebrate the Orthodox liturgy in Marseille. This eventual success was probably due in large part to the steady rise of Greek trade in the Provençal port immediately after the collapse of Napoleon's empire.[24] However, another factor can be considered as instrumental, namely the role played by the Ottoman consul in Marseille, Demetrios Kapoudas (himself a Greek Orthodox), in handling the negotiations with the local authorities. Apparently on good terms with the mayor of Marseille and the prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, Kapoudas took it upon himself to petition them, and obtained their approval to celebrate the Orthodox liturgy in a small chapel he henceforth rented — and which officially operated as the consul's private chapel.[25] When, to everyone's surprise, the French Home Secretary finally refused to give his authorization for the opening of the chapel, the consul simply cut a deal with the mayor and the prefect: the two of them would tolerate the existence of the chapel and keep the national authorities in Paris out of the secret, and the Greeks would in exchange pledge to celebrate their liturgy in the most discreet way possible. When he eventually learned about the affair some years later, the Director General of the Police had no choice but to 'maintain this toleration, as long as no problem occurs'.[26] Indeed, this episode provides us with a rare occasion to break down 'the authorities' into different actors and groups whose interests, logics and politics might be at times divergent. At the same time, however, evidence for a trial of strength between the Greeks and the French administration can hardly be dismissed, and the result of this struggle appears to have been rather ambivalent. Testifying for it are the conclusions of the tacit agreement that granted Greeks the freedom of worship in Marseille, while at the same time depriving their worship of any form of public visibility.

This brief chronological overview of the establishment of an Orthodox church in Marseille ultimately points in two main directions. First, patterns and strategies of collective definition among the Greeks in Marseille appear to have been constantly shifting, as a result of the complex interplay between the categories mobilized both by the local authorities and by the Greeks themselves. As Sia Anagnostopoulou once convincingly argued,

23 On this issue see M. Rapport, *Nationality and Citizenship in Revolutionary France: The Treatment of Foreigners, 1789–1799* (Oxford 2000).

24 Another explanation is the inauguration, in the same days of 1821, of a Greek–Catholic (Uniate) church in Marseille, and therefore the concern to subdue any jealousy among the Orthodox; see A.D., 128 V 1, Prefect to Director General of the Police, 9 April 1821.

25 Ibid., Ottoman Consul in Marseille to Prefect, 24 March 1821; ibid., Prefect to Mayor of Marseille, 29 March 1821; ibid., Mayor to Prefect, 4 April 1821.

26 Ibid., Director General of the Police to Prefect, 29 Nov. 1825.

> The content of [political] terms can be amended on two levels: a diachronic one and a synchronic one. On the one hand, their content changes in function of the complex realities of the times; on the other hand, their content also changes in function of the ideologies of the forces who use these terms.[27]

Second, the prominent role played by the Ottoman consul was by no means anecdotal, nor was it only a consequence of Kapoudas' personal relations among the local authorities. In fact, the French repeatedly insisted that the Orthodox Greeks should be vouched for by a legitimate polity, and one could well argue that the consul's intervention was not the outcome of, but rather the precondition for negotiating their new place in their host society.

I shall now try to link these two dimensions of the analysis by studying the role played by the Ottoman consulate within the complex interplay between competing claims of allegiances and political identities among the Greeks in Marseille.

The Ottoman consular system: a reassessment

One of the key measures of an important set of administrative reforms promoted under the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789–1807), the establishment of representatives of the Porte in some of the major European capitals — first London in 1793, then Vienna (1794), Berlin (1795) and Paris (1796) — has long aroused great interest among historians of the Ottoman Empire.[28] In comparison, the concurrent implementation of an Ottoman consular network in the western Mediterranean has received scant attention.[29] However, this latter movement was far from anecdotal: between 1792 and Selim's overthrow in 1807, Ottoman consulates opened in Palermo, Marseille, Messina, Otranto, Naples, Livorno, Genoa, Trieste, Lisbon and Barcelona.[30] By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth

27 S. Anagnostopoulou, 'L'historicité des termes: les Grecs et la domination ottomane, XVIe–XIXe siècles', in M. Chehad, Y. Ioannou and Fr. Métral (eds.), *Méditerranée, ruptures et continuités* (Lyon 2003) 195.

28 Reference studies on this topic include J. C. Hurewitz, 'Ottoman diplomacy and the European states system', *The Middle East Journal* 15 (1961) 141–52; Th. Naff, 'Reform and the conduct of Ottoman diplomacy in the reign of Selim III, 1789–1807', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 83.3 (1963) 303–4; S. J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789–1807* (Cambridge 1971) 185–93; C. V. Findley, 'The foundation of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry: The beginning of bureaucratic reform under Selim III and Mahmud II', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3.4 (1972) 388–416. For a recent synthesis, see Ö. Kürkçöğlu, 'The adoption and use of permanent diplomacy', in A.N. Yurdusev (ed.), *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?* (Basingstoke 2004) 131–50.

29 For a first (and sketchy) attempt at mapping the early Ottoman consular network in Europe, see A. I. Bağış, *Osmanlı ticaretinde gayri müslimler: kapitülasyonlar, avrupa tüccarları, beratlı tüccarlar, hayriye tüccarları (1750–1839)* (Ankara 1983). For a recent overview see M. H. van den Boogert, 'Consul', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three* (Leiden 2011), http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=ei3_COM-24356.

30 Harlaftis and Laiou, 'Ottoman state policy', 18.

century, the Ottoman Empire was therefore well represented in the western European world, through a network of consulates that was particularly dense in some areas such as Sicily — where no fewer than seven vice-consuls assisted the two consuls in Palermo and Messina.[31]

Indeed, a number of these officials operated outside the Empire's control, maintaining very loose relations (if any) with the Porte during their term in office. When requested in 1814 to supply the 'name and address of the current sultan' ('il nome, e l'indirizzo dell'attuale Gran Signore'), the Ottoman consul in Livorno complied, adding 'that he [thought] it [could] be this, but that he never had the chance to write to the sultan' ('dicendomi, che crede possa esser questo, giacchè non hà avuto mai luogo di scrivere al Sultano').[32] However, and even if part of these personnel probably neither played a prominent political or economic role, their presence in some of the major Mediterranean port-cities meant that Ottoman subjects passing by or residing in these towns could ask them for assistance and protection.

In an effort to understand the way these consulates operated, I shall now turn to examine the case of the one that opened in Marseille in 1797. If truth be told, we actually know very little about this consulate, since its archives are not well preserved, and the material is scattered among different places (Marseille, Paris and Istanbul).[33] I shall therefore make clear that my purpose here is to use the case of Marseille in order to formulate a working hypothesis, rather than to suggest an analytical framework for the study of the whole Greek diaspora.

Before 1797, and as Philip Curtin rightly pointed out, Ottoman subjects in Marseille were 'still outside the range of formal representation'.[34] More precisely, the Chamber of Commerce in Marseille acted as the consulate for Ottoman subjects until it was abolished in the aftermath of the French Revolution (September 1791). After 1791, Ottoman subjects in Marseille found themselves without any legal representative, and therefore started petitioning the local authorities for their protection. In a letter to the French minister of Foreign Affairs, his agent in Marseille eventually reported in the autumn of 1797 that the Ottoman ambassador, on his way to Paris, had appointed a consul in Marseille 'upon request of the Greeks' ('sur la requête des Grecs').[35] One of the first to open, the Ottoman consulate in Marseille seems to have been originally set up to manage Ottoman interests in the whole Mediterranean, as the official title of the first appointed consul (Stefanos Alexandrakis, whom the French authorities regarded as a 'zealous and intelligent young

31 F. Buonocore, 'Consoli e procuratori di Tripoli e di Tunisi nelle Due Sicilie (e cenni ad altri consoli o agenti di paesi musulmani nell'epoca precoloniale)', *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto Italo-Africano* 31.2 (1976) 257–76.

32 Archivio di Stato di Livorno, *Governo civile e militare di Livorno*, 997, *Copialettere Civili, 1814–1815*, no. 896, Governor of Livorno to Prime Minister of Tuscany, 21 Dec. 1814.

33 Échinard, *Grecs et philhellènes*, XXVIII.

34 P. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge 1984) 200.

35 A.E. B III 217, *Correspondance de l'agent…, an VI*, no 19, Agent to Foreign Minister, 21 vendémiaire an VI (12 Oct. 1797).

man') was 'Consul Général du Grand Seigneur pour la Méditerranée'. However, this early appointment was soon invalidated by the outbreak of the Franco-Ottoman war the following year. But the consulate reopened in 1804 and operated continuously until 1823, when it was shut down as a consequence of the outbreak of the Greek war of Independence.

The Ottoman consuls in Marseille, 1797–1823

From 1797 to 1823, the consuls were:

1797–8: Stefanos Alexandrakis
1804–6: Andreas Giustinianis
1806–8: Antoine Pérétié
1808: Jacques-Marc Marchand
1808–11: Panayotakis Pettizza
1811–13: 'Nicolas Georges' (or 'Georges Nicolas'?)[36]
1813–16: Joseph Raphaël Cohen
1816–23: Demetrios Kapoudas

It appears that, out of eight persons in charge of the Ottoman consulate in Marseille between 1797 and 1823, five were Greeks, one was a Levantine (Pérétié), one was French (Marchand) and one was a Jew (Cohen). The share of the Greeks even increases if we consider other staff members of the consulate, such as vice-consuls, chancellors and interpreters. Another striking feature is the short duration of their terms of office,[37] as well as the often dramatic conditions in which these often end. While both Alexandrakis' and Kapoudas' terms abruptly ended because of hostilities (the Franco-Ottoman war in 1798 and the War of Independence in 1823), Marchand was removed for weaving a conspiracy against Napoleon, and Pettizza was revoked on charges of corruption (see below).[38]

36 Very little is known about this enigmatic character, entrusted with the Ottoman consulate in Marseille from September 1811 until January 1813. Appointed on a temporary basis by the Ottoman ambassador in Paris (Abdürrahim Muhibb Efendi) after the former consul was revoked on charges of corruption, Georges Nicolas eventually requested leave two years later to visit his family in Salonica. See Archives Municipales de Marseille [hereafter A.M.], 12 F 1, *Agence des Relations extérieures — Consulats divers*, Agent to Mayor, 18 Sept. 1811 and 30 Jan. 1813.

37 Only later in the 19th century would consular appointments become more stable, to the point of becoming quasi-hereditary offices. See S. Küneralp, 'Diplomates et consuls ottomans en France au XIXe siècle', in H. Batu and J.-L. Bacqué-Grammont (eds.), *L'Empire ottoman, la République de Turquie et la France* (Istanbul 1986) 311.

38 On Marchand, see Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, Istanbul) [hereafter B.O.A.], HAT 1345/52596A, Coded report from the Ottoman ambassador in Paris, '9 B 1223' (30–1 Aug. 1808). On Pettizza see below.

Despite its short and hectic existence, the consulate played an important role in supervising and controlling the Ottoman subjects in Marseille, and the very conditions of its institution testify to the link that existed between the consulate and the settlement of Greeks in Marseille by the end of the eighteenth century. Beginning as a small settlement of around fifty individuals in 1799, it grew to the point of reaching by 1820 a respectable total of one hundred and fifty individuals, more than three-quarters of whom were Ottoman subjects.[39] To these must be added at least a dozen Turkish merchants, as well as some Arabs, Armenians and Jews, most of them merchants as well.

In charge of representing the interests of the Porte, consuls also played a major role in protecting the rights of Ottoman subjects abroad. As the commercial counsellor in Trieste Pasquale Ricci once put it in a report to Habsburg Emperor Francis I, the Ottoman state protected the Greeks 'in the foreign states like their own nationals' ('negli stati alieni come i loro nazionali').[40] In contradiction to widespread assumptions about the Porte's lack of interest in its subjects abroad as well as about the Empire's lack of a strong commercial and maritime policy, we also find evidence of consuls being removed for incompetence or misconduct. Such was the case of Panayotakis Pettizza, consul in Marseille from 1808 to 1811: as he started extorting unjustified fees from 'Turkish' captains calling at the Vieux Port, the Ottoman ambassador in France took it upon himself to have him replaced by the Greek Nicolas Georges, who ran the consulate as a simple chargé d'affaires for the years 1811–16, namely until the rise of Greek trade in Marseille made it necessary to restore an Ottoman consul in the port-city.[41]

While studying the institution of Ottoman consuls in Western European port-cities, one should keep in mind that their authority was not limited to this small number of Ottoman subjects residing in the city, but also applied to the many Ottoman subjects passing through Marseille, and especially to the numerous crews of the Ottoman ships calling at the Vieux Port. Entrusted with the burdensome task of enforcing the laws regulating the activities at the port among people of their 'nation', the consuls were held accountable by the local authorities, who often complained to them when they found sailors sleeping ashore (instead of on board), wandering drunkenly through the streets, or frequenting inns and cabarets.[42] However, in spite of all the uncertainty entailed in the

39 A.N, A.E., B III 218, no. 166, '*État des Grecs résidants [sic] à Marseille et reconnus par l'Agent des Relations Extérieures*', 26 floréal an VII (15 May 1799) ; Ch. de Villeneuve-Bargemont, *Statistique du Département des Bouches-du-Rhône*, III (Marseille 1826) 61.

40 Biblioteca Labronica (Livorno), Mss. Ricci, *Umilissima relazione che accompagna i rapporti consolari con una breve dissertazione sul commercio in generale applicata alli Stati Ereditari*, 8 March 1761.

41 A.N., AF IV 1689, 'Turquie 1811', no. 133/1, Ottoman Ambassador in France to Ottoman chargé d'affaires in Paris, 17 Sept. 1811; ibid., 133/3, Captain Konstantinos Zakidopoulos to Ottoman Ambassador in France, n.d.; B.O.A., HAT 307/18134, Ottoman chargé d'affaires in Paris to Grand Vizier, '15 Ra 1231' (13–14 Feb. 1816).

42 A.M., 1 I 720, *Logeurs et garnis: rapports des commissaires de police, surveillance, etc. (1806–1819)*, Police captains of Marseille to Mayor, 21, 23 and 28 March 1807.

exercise of their functions, one can argue that during the two first decades of the nineteenth century, Ottoman consuls gradually became key actors in the public life of some Western port-cities. At the same time, however, Ottoman consulates in Marseille and elsewhere also became crystallizing points (if not major actors) in some of the struggles and tensions which punctuated the daily existence of Ottoman subjects abroad.

A fragmented picture: Isaiou, Giustinianis, Pirgoulis and Carus (1798–1806)

Marseille, late August 1798: a few days before the outbreak of the Franco-Ottoman war, consul Stefanos Alexandrakis interceded with the local authorities to obtain the release from prison of a Greek and a Turk who had got into a fight over issues of international politics. On his way back from the jail, Alexandrakis was attacked by Giorgos Emmanouil Isaiou (Georges-Emmanuel d'Isay), a young Greek trader who accused him of betraying the 'national cause' for having freed the Turk as well as the Greek. Appalled by such an attack against their legal representative, some Ottomans petitioned the Agent of Foreign Affairs in Marseille to obtain Isaiou's imprisonment.[43] In view of the risk that the situation might get out of hand, French authorities chose to sternly suppress what they called 'the affair of the Greeks and the Turks'.[44] As for Isaiou, he was immediately sent to jail, and remained imprisoned until September 1799: from within the narrow walls of his confinement, he would send many letters to the French authorities, complaining about what he considered a plot against him led by the Ottoman consul and the 'Mahometans living in Marseille'.[45]

At first glance, this case seems to be one of a Greek dismissal of Ottoman authority, but several clues invite a different interpretation. First of all, Isaiou, after having assaulted Alexandrakis, reportedly told him that 'he did not recognize him as the chargé d'affaires of the Ottoman Porte' ('qu'il ne le reconnaissoit point comme le chargé des affaires de la Porte ottomane').[46] Clearly, he did not aim at negating or even contesting the legitimacy of Ottoman rule, but at disavowing the consul's status as representative of the Ottoman colony. Besides, Isaiou's theory of a plot hatched against him by the 'Mahometans' in Marseille is blatantly contradicted by the fact that the petition in favour of his imprisonment bears the signatures of at least five Greeks (Orthodox and Catholics alike).[47] In this respect, Isaiou's theory of a Muslim plot resembles an attempt to play on French anti-Muslim feelings, rather than the expression of a particular political stance. Likewise, his

43 A.N., A.E. B III 217, no. 217, Petition by 'Moulla Osman Aga, Mamet Aga, Bellul Aga, and other Ottoman subjects' to Agent, 7 fructidor an VI (24 Aug. 1798).

44 A.N., F 7 7387, *Police générale-Affaires diverses*, file B 6 2476, 'George d'Isay', Military Commander of Marseille to Police Minister, 11 fructidor an VI (28 Aug. 1798).

45 See for instance ibid., Isaiou to Swedish Ambassador, 4 ventôse an VII (22 Feb. 1799).

46 A.N., A.E. B III 217, no. 217, Petition, 24 Aug. 1798.

47 Ibid.

claim of being persecuted by the Ottoman ambassador in France comes up against strong evidence that his imprisonment was decided by the military commander of Marseille, who considered him a threat to public order.[48] In this respect, of particular interest is the fact that the commander meant his decision as a 'lesson' to Isaiou's 'fellow-countrymen', at a time of diplomatic tension between France and the Ottoman Empire.[49]

Lastly, while Alexandrakis, an Orthodox merchant from Crete, had legitimate claims to call himself a Greek (at least according to a cultural definition of Greekness based on religion and origins), the figure of Isaiou appears far more ambiguous. Claiming to be 'of the Greek nation', he was born into a wealthy Catholic dynasty of traders from Smyrna, had relatives established in Trieste and Amsterdam, was under the Swedish consular protection, and sometimes called himself a 'Levantine' — a term which Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis aptly defined in reference to 'a relational space characterized by its national, ethnic, religious and social heterogeneity'.[50]

The image emerging from the archival evidence is that of a shifting definition of the self, strongly influenced by circumstances as well as by personal strategies, and expressed through a complex set of categories referring both to the political reality of the local context and to the 'Greek experience of Ottoman rule'. And it is precisely because they blurred the lines between modern notions of 'collective identity', 'ethnic loyalty', 'sense of belonging', 'political allegiance' and 'citizenship', that Isaiou's attempts at articulating both political stances and a definition of his own identity appear to be both inscrutable and instructive for today's historian.

However, Isaiou's case was hardly the only instance in which the authority of the Ottoman consul in Marseille was challenged by a Greek. Another episode occurred nine years later, as consul Pérétié saw his authority openly defied by the unruly behaviour of Greek sailors calling at the Vieux Port. We mentioned earlier that the frequent and rather massive arrivals of seamen must have caused serious problems to many a consul, for Ottoman crews (and especially Greek sailors) were famous in Marseille for their lack of discipline.[51] But the insubordination of March 1807 was no minor threat to his authority: unable to suppress the insubordination by himself, Pérétié called the French police for

48 A.N., F 7 7387, file B 6 2476, Military Commander to Police Minister, 28 August 1798; *Ibid*., Isaiou to Swedish Ambassador, 4 ventôse an VII (22 Feb. 1799).

49 Ibid., Military Commander to Police Minister, 30 nivôse an VII (19 Jan. 1799): 'La leçon qu'il reçoit aujourd'hui produira des effets on ne peut pas [sic] plus salutaires, tant sur lui, que sur certains de ces nationaux, qui se sont quelques fois permis des propos très répréhensibles, dans la situation politique où nous nous trouvons vis-à-vis la Porte Ottomane'.

50 M.-C. Smyrnelis, *Une société hors de soi: Identités et relations sociales à Smyrne aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Paris 2005) 228. On the activities of the Isaiou trading house in Smyrna, see E. Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the eighteenth century (1700–1820)* (Athens 1992) 110.

51 As early as 1797, a local newspaper reported that 'we have in Marseille Greek ships whose sailors' daily quarrels usually end with stabbings' ('Nous avons à Marseille des bâtiments grecs dont les matelots ne laissent guère passer de jour sans avoir de querelles entre eux: ils les terminent ordinairement à coups de poignard'); *Journal de Marseille*, 22 pluviôse an V (17 Feb. 1797).

help, which led to the arrest of no fewer than forty-one rioting Greek sailors, as well as two well-established figures of the Ottoman colony.[52] Ioannis Pirgoulis and Adamis Paul Carus were the vice-chancellor and interpreter of the former Ottoman consul, Andreas Giustinianis, whose term had ended in controversy: dismissed by Istanbul and replaced by Pérétié in 1806, the consul had refused to be removed, and had led a fierce resistance with the help of his supporters among the Greeks in Marseille (most of them sailors), while proclaiming himself 'Commissioner to the commercial relations of the Ottoman Porte'.[53] A year later, Pirgoulis and Carus, whom a police report described as 'two persons who could not see without discontent the deposition of the former Ottoman consul' ('deux individus qui n'ont pu voir sans mécontentement la destitution de l'ex-Consul ottoman'), still continued the factional struggle that had characterized the end of the Giustinianis administration, by encouraging the sailors to riot in order to undermine Pérétié's authority.

Beyond the petty conflicts marring the daily life of the Greek community in Marseille, a pattern emerges that calls for further investigation. As a matter of fact, the profiles of Isaiou, Giustinianis, Pirgoulis and Carus appear strikingly similar. To begin with, all of them were Catholic Greeks from Smyrna who were born in the 1770s and had reached Marseille some twenty years later, thereby belonging to the first 'wave' of Greek migrants who had settled in the Provençal port in the wake of the French Revolution and the British blockade.[54] However, other sorts of ties might have linked the four characters in an even stronger way: for instance, all four had married local women, and Isaiou and Carus were even brothers-in-law, having married the two daughters of a Protestant cloth merchant. In addition, Giustinianis had employed Pirgoulis and Carus while holding the office of Ottoman consul, and both Isaiou and Pirgoulis were freemasons who frequented local (albeit different) lodges.[55] This common experience appears to shed new light on the different episodes of rebellion led by the four men over less than a decade (1798, 1806 and 1807). The members of a 'pioneer generation' of Greek migrants in Marseille, Isaiou, Giustinianis, Pirgoulis and Carus witnessed the change of generation within the local Greek community, as the first wave of migrants was swiftly replaced by a new one that

52 The original police report is reproduced in *La Police secrète du Premier Empire*, III (Paris 1922) 199; see also A.N., F 7 3659/ 6, *Police générale. Bouches-du-Rhône, an XI-1809*, Report on the 1st semester of 1807, § 1.

53 Echinard, *Grecs et philhellènes à Marseille*, 52.

54 A. Mandilara, 'Les origines du phénomène migratoire grec à Marseille (1793–1815)', in G. Grivaud (ed.), *La Diaspora Hellénique en France* (Athens 2000) 29–38; M. Grenet, 'Quand "le plus court chemin" n'est pas le chemin le plus court. Les réseaux migratoires grecs vers Marseille de la fin du XVIIIe au milieu du XIXe siècle', in A. Bleton-Ruget et al. (eds.), *Réseaux en question: utopies, pratiques et prospective* (Mâcon 2010) 383–95.

55 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Fonds du Grand-Orient de France*, F.M.2, *Archives de Loges*, 282 (*Aimable Sagesse, 1801–1836*) and 284 (*Amitié, 1801–1814*). On the role played by freemasonry in the integration of Greeks to the local society, see M. Grenet, 'La loge et l'étranger: les Grecs dans la franc-maçonnerie marseillaise dans le premier quart du XIXe siècle', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 72 (2006) 225–43.

presented radically different social and cultural features: mostly consisting of wealthy Orthodox merchants from the Aegean Islands, this new emigration promoted a conception of Greekness based on both ethnic and religious criteria that directly challenged the older, looser definition adopted by Isaiou and his like. Similar episodes in other places testified to the reality of the threat: for instance, in Livorno, by 1775 the Orthodox Brotherhood had already banned all Greek men married to non-Orthodox women.[56] The revolt of the four men was arguably prompted not so much by their gradual marginalization vis-à-vis the social and cultural life of the local Greek community, as by the emergence of a competing notion of Greekness. In this respect, their choice of making the Ottoman consulate the site and the stake of their rebellion accounted for both the resilience of the 'Ottomanness' of the Greeks in Marseille, and the 'crisis' of their own Greekness.

Conclusion: identities on stage, identities at stake

In a recent essay, historian Vasiliki Seirinidou convincingly argued that historians of diasporas and migrations need to 'face the multiplicity of the migrants' affiliations no longer as a taboo or a problem requiring a solution'.[57] More than merely dismissing old nationalist conceptions of a strongly essentialized and reified 'Greek identity', this claim makes the case for a new understanding of past identities — in Seirinidou's words, 'a shift in emphasis from a search for identity in the Greek diaspora to the study of different ways in which historical subjects adopt each identity for themselves'.[58] My study of the resilience of the Ottoman aspect of the Greeks in Marseille has aimed to contribute to this effort made at re-injecting complexity and agency (both individual and collective) into the question of identity formation.

At the point of concluding this study, however, it is also necessary to underline that this question did not simply disappear as the diaspora eventually encountered the Greek state,[59] just as the Ottoman dimension of collective identity among the Greeks did not lose its currency overnight when the War of Independence broke out. Arguably, and however strong the diaspora Greeks' rejection of Ottoman rule might have been by the early nineteenth century, one's 'Ottoman quality' was not perceived as conflicting with one's support for the Greek cause until at least the mid-1820s. Exemplifying this apparent

56 *Costituzioni e capitoli della nostra chiesa eretta in Livorno sotto l'invocazione della Santissima Trinita / Διαταγαί και συνθήκαι της εν Λιβόρνω εκκλησίας των ορθόδοξων Ανατολικών Γραικών κτισθείσης παρ' αυτών επ' ονόματι της Αγίας Τριάδος* (Livorno 1775) 6.

57 V. Seirinidou, 'The "old" diaspora, the "new" diaspora, and the Greek diaspora in the eighteenth through nineteenth centuries Vienna', in Rozen (ed.), *Homelands and Diasporas,* 159.

58 Ibid.

59 On this issue see for instance A. Moutafidou, 'Greek merchant families perceiving the world: the case of Demetrius Vikelas', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 23.2 (2008) 143–64; M. Grenet, 'Citizens abroad: The Greek community of Marseilles and political events in Greece, 1820–1830', *InterCultural Studies* 7 (2007) 39–52.

ambiguity is the case of the Greek merchant Demetrios Kapoudas, who served as Ottoman consul in Marseille between 1816 and 1823. When the War of Independence broke out, Kapoudas had already been an Ottoman consul for five years, and the instrumental role he had just played in the negotiation leading to the establishment of Orthodox worship in the city had just testified to the respect he enjoyed from both the Greek community and the local French authorities. The latter, however, strongly suspected him of being a 'liberal' (as he had expressed sympathy for the subversive *carbonari* movement) and quickly held him to be secretly sponsoring the Greek uprising through the chartering of ships filled with munitions and volunteers.[60] However, police reports from the same period also give a somewhat different picture of the same individual: for instance, when asked in 1821 by a group of French and German philhellenes if he was 'the Greek consul' ('le consul grec'), he replied he was 'the consul of the Sublime Porte' ('non lui répondit-il je suis consul de la Sublime Porte').[61] When deposed in September 1823, Kapoudas and his vice-consul — the 'fanatical Capodistrian' Ioannis Maïs[62] — would eventually refuse to leave their posts.[63] As late as 1825, Kapoudas was reported as being in Paris, 'having as his prime means of support the board and lodging at the house of the Turkish legation' ('ayant pour premier moyen d'existence le logement et la table à l'hôtel de la légation de Turquie').[64] As for Maïs, he was still a candidate for a diplomatic appointment in Marseille eight years later, but this time in the capacity of vice-consul of the Kingdom of Greece.[65]

The choice of the small Greek community in Marseille as a case in point clearly does not exhaust the issue of identity formation and fashioning in the Greek diaspora, just as the emphasis on the Ottoman quality as an object of study by no means precludes the importance of other, intersecting forms of allegiances and belongings. However, I hope to have demonstrated in this article that both choices speak beyond their own specificities, and ultimately allow us to address, from the point of view of the Greek diaspora, questions that bear relevance to the whole of 'the Greek experience of Ottoman rule'.

60 A.N., F 7 6722, *Police générale — Grecs et philhellènes (1821–1830)*, file 1, 'Passagers du brigantin le Baron Strogonoff', Prefect to Director General of the Police, 20 July 1821.

61 A.M., 1 I 40, *Police locale, Correspondance envoyée, 1821–1822*, no 1114, Mayor to Unknown, 25 October 1821. Replying in turn to Capoudas, the philhellenes rather bluntly expressed their indifference to such subtleties: 'Well, never mind: pay us and we'll fight for the Turks against the Greeks, for war is our occupation' ('Eh bien peu importe, payez nous et nous nous battrons pour les Turcs contre les Grecs parce que la guerre est notre métier').

62 C. Loukos, 'Ένας φανατικός καποδιστριακός στη Μασσαλία της Ιουλιανής Επανάστασης: ο Ζακύνθιος Ιωάννης Μάης', in Ch. Loukos (ed.), *Κοινωνικοί αγώνες και Διαφωτισμός: Μελέτες αφιερωμένες στον Φίλιππο Ηλιού* (Irakleio 2007) 61–75.

63 A.M., 12 F 5, *Consulats étrangers à Marseille, IV*, file 'Sublime Porte', Chamber of Commerce of Marseille to Mayor, 3 Oct. 1823.

64 A.N., A.E. B III 221, *Correspondance de l'agent. . .*, 1815–1826, Agent to Foreign Minister, 2 Sept. 1825.

65 *Αρχεία Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών* (Archives of the Foreign Ministry, Athens), 1833, 37/4, *Προξενεία της Ελλάδος εις Μασσαλίαν*, Bavarian Consul in Marseille to Greek Foreign Minister, 4/15 April 1833.