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8 The Respatialization of Cypriot Insularity during the Age of Revolutions

The working assumption behind the present volume is that the French Revolution produced a set of tectonic movements on a global scale: a respatialization that entailed a reorganization and reconceptualization of space. This chapter examines one particular kind of space – insularity – a concept that I define as the condition of being an island. Focusing on Cyprus, I examine how perceptions of the island shifted during the Age of Revolutions by investigating the correlations between insular space and the development of economic, social, and political structures.[1] In doing so, the chapter is informed by how various historical actors (local denizens, petitioning villagers, local power holders, imperial appointees, travellers, merchants, and sailors) experienced, imagined, and projected their engagements with the island to different audiences. These interactions reflect material conditions, administrative organization, and the vernacular facets of power at the local level.

This chapter opens with an in-depth analysis of the idea of the island and complicates a word often taken for granted. Elaborating on the content of insularity as a spatial category and as an analytical and heuristic tool, the chapter then provides the historical context for Cypriot insularity while bringing examples from the preceding Venetian and subsequent British rule. It then goes on to demonstrate how during the Age of Revolutions perceptions of Cypriot insularity had significantly shifted, with lasting consequences in the historical trajectory of the island.

This shift was brought about most noticeably by Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt and eventual occupation of the country (1798–1801). This is not to say that France's imperial ambitions and civilizational mission were the sole catalyst responsible for the changes observed in Cyprus. Ottoman as well as local and regional historical processes also contributed to these outcomes, while the temporal horizon goes deeper than the turn of the nineteenth century. Moreover, changes were not simply at the level of perceptions: shifts in the way the island was understood in the Ottoman or Eastern Mediterranean order also

1 For an earlier discussion along similar lines, see M. Aymes, "'Position Délicate' ou Île sans Histoires? L'Intégration de Chypre à l'État Ottoman des Premières Tanzîmât", in: N. Vatin and G. Veinstein (eds.), *Insularités Ottomanes*, Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose-Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 2004, pp. 241–275.

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impacted the organization of the economy, society, and politics of the island. Finally, the chapter closes with an enquiry into what heuristic and analytical insights respatialization can lend to the study of the Age of Revolutions. How radical of a break did the Napoleonic interlude in the Mediterranean bring about, and what can this tell us about the historical forces behind the particular respatialization at hand?

Conceptualizing Insularity

Drawing inspiration from the "cultural turn", spatial history has been questioning conventional and "self-evident" geographical categories for the past two decades. This has contributed greatly to the conceptualization and theorization of all things spatial. More specifically, spatial history has questioned the singular semantics of geography and has argued for the socially constructed nature of space, emphasizing, for instance, that the idea of "natural borders" is a mirage.[2] The historiographical implications and further development of this research agenda have had a lasting effect, ranging from applications in global history to challenging the state-centred nature of dominant forms of spatial imagination.[3] Directly relevant to the growth of transnational history, the proliferation of non-state-centric spatial categories questions the analytical tools of the modern nation-state.[4]

On a different level, geographical categories have also been reconsidered as units of historical analysis. For example, perhaps echoing the title of the opening section of the first chapter of Braudel's *Mediterranean* – "Mountains

2 K. Wigen, *A Malleable Map: Geographies of Restoration in Central Japan, 1600–1912*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2010; M.W. Lewis and K. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*, Oakland: University of California Press, 1997; B. Warf and S. Arias (eds.), *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, London: Routledge, 2009.

3 M. Middell and K. Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization", *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010) 1, pp. 149–170; P. Cheney, "The French Revolution's Global Turn and Capitalism's Spatial Fixes", *Journal of Social History* 52 (2019) 3, pp. 575–583; K. Schlögel, *Im Raum lesen wir die Zeit: Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* [In Space we Read Time: On the History of Civilization and Geopolitics], G. Jackson (trans.), Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016; J.C. Scott, *The Art of not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

4 C.A. Bayly et al., "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History", *American Historical Review* 111 (2006) 5, pp. 1441–1464.

come first"[5] – mountain settings attracted sustained interest following two groundbreaking books: one by Peter Sahlins on the Franco-Spanish border in the Pyrenees and another by J.R. McNeill on the environmental history of Mediterranean mountains.[6] Another particularly productive trend has been the shifting attention from land to sea. The efflorescence of thalassology has transformed historical understandings of space.[7]

One particularly intriguing development has been the critique of terracentrism. This trend calls for shifting attention to aquatic spaces – which are overlooked and marginalized by a historiography that privileges land as the stage in which history plays out – as sites of historical processes.[8] Another outcome from these discussions has been the so-called "new coastal history". While no "old" coastal history really existed before, this mode of enquiry does not study the sea as an undifferentiated body of water, but focuses on the terraqueous nature of the coast as the spatial zone where land and sea blend into each other.[9]

5 F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'epoque de Philippe II* [The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II], S. Reynolds (trans.), vol. 1, New York: Fontana, 1972, p. 25.

6 J.R. McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: An Environmental History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; P. Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, Oakland: University of California Press, 1989; B. Debarbieux and G. Rudaz, *The Mountain: A Political History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015; P.H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering After the Enlightenment*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013; Scott, *The Art of not Being Governed*.

7 D. Armitage, A. Bashford, and S. Sivasundaram (eds.), *Oceanic Histories*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017; P.N. Miller (ed.), *The Sea: Thalassography and Historiography*, Ann Arbor: Universiy of Michigan Press, 2013; J. Mack, *The Sea: A Cultural History*, London: Reaktion Books, 2011; see the forum "Oceans of History" in the *American Historical Review* 111 (2006) 3; P.E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; M.P.M. Vink, "Indian Ocean Studies and the 'New Thalassology'", *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007) 1, pp. 41–62; A. Wick, *The Red Sea: In Search of Lost Space*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2016.

8 N. Frykman et al., "Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: An Introduction", in: N. Frykman et al. (eds.), *Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: A Global Survey*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 5–6; R. Mukherjee, "Escape from Terracentrism: Writing a Water History", *Indian Historical Review* 41 (2014) 1, pp. 87–101; J.H. Bentley et al. (eds.), *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.

9 I. Land, "Tidal Waves: The New Coastal History", *Social History* 40 (2007) 3, pp. 731–743; D. Worthington (ed.), *The New Coastal History: Cultural and Environmental Perspectives from Scotland and Beyond*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; A. Bashford, "Terraqueous histories", *The Historical Journal* 60 (2017) 2, pp. 253–272; J.R. Gillis, *The Human Shore: Seacoasts in*

This kind of spatial category goes beyond the land/sea dichotomy, pointing to an ecological continuum, in the words of John R. Gillis.[10]

Whether directly or indirectly influenced by this historiographical context, more and more historians have been turning their attention to islands in recent years.[11] A large corpus of works from the field of island studies has gone to great lengths over the past two decades to articulate and elaborate on ways of thinking about islands.[12] Archaeology and classics have a long and productive experience in theorizing insularity, with a particularly rich body of literature on insular spaces. Especially useful, but not surprising, is the sensitivity of archaeologists to the material conditions of island societies, rather than just the conceptualization of insular space.[13]

All of these issues are not necessarily new. Lucien Febvre's *A Geographical Introduction to History* identified and addressed many of the above issues

History, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012; M. Talbot, "Maritoriality", in: B. Struck, R. Bavaj, and K.C. Lawson (eds.), *Doing Spatial History*, London: Routledge, forthcoming.

10 J.R. Gillis, "Not continents in miniature: Islands as ecotones", *Island Studies Journal* 9 (2014) 1, p. 163.

11 S. Sivasundaram, *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka, and the Bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013; A. Hadjikyriacou (ed.), *Islands of the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2019, also published as *Insularity in the Ottoman World*, special issue of *Princeton Papers* 18 (2017); S. Gekas, *Xenocracy: State, Class and Colonialism in the Ionian Islands, 1815–1864*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2016; N. Vatin and G. Veinstein (eds.), *Insularités ottomans*, Paris: Maisonneuve et Laros, 2004; E. Zéi, V*isages et visions d'insularite: l'ile de Paros sans l'archipel Grec pendant la premiere moitie du XVIIIe siècle*, Istanbul: Isis, 2017; R. Margariti, "An Ocean of Islands: Islands, Insularity, and Historiography of the Indian Ocean", in: P.N. Miller (ed.) *The Sea*, pp. 198–229; L. Sicking, "The Dichotomy of Insularity: Islands between Isolation and Connectivity in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, and Beyond", *The International Journal of Maritime History* 26 (2014) 3, pp. 494–511.

12 For a comprehensive overview of the literature, see G. Baldacchino (ed.), *A World of Islands*, Luqa: Agenda, 2007; see also the various issues of *Island Studies Journal*; J.R. Gillis and D. Lowenthal (eds.), *Islands*, special issue of *Geographical Review* 97 (2007) 2; E. DeLoughrey (ed.), *The Literature of Postcolonial Islands*, special issue of *New Literatures Review* 47–48 (2011).

13 C. Constantakopoulou, *The Dance of the Islands: Insularity, Networks, the Athenian Empire and the Aegean World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007; C. Broodbank, *An Island Archaeology of the early Cyclades*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; K. Kopaka, "What is an Island? Concepts, Meanings and Polysemies of Insular *Topoi* in Greek Sources", *European Journal of Archaeology* 11 (2009) 2–3, pp. 177–194; B. Erdoğu, "Visualizing Neolithic Landscape: Archaeological Theory in the Aegean Islands", in: C. Lichter (ed.), *How did Farming Reach Europe? Anatolian-European Relations from the Second Half of the 7th through the First Half of the 6th Millennium Cal BC*, Berlin: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 2005, pp. 95–105.

almost a century ago, eloquently articulating the multiplicity of the meanings of geographical conditions as the "vicissitudes of possibility".[14] At stake is less the impressionistic identification of geographical attributes of space, or the conceptualization thereof, but rather their analytical and heuristic employment for the pursuit of historical knowledge. In this sense, one of the latest trends in the study of insular, littoral, coastal, archipelagic, oceanic, or transoceanic history is the focus on human mobility with varying degrees of volition or coercion.[15] The role of labour in these processes contributes greatly to a shift towards a research agenda that brings material factors back into the study of the experience of and interaction with space.

Insularity is neither a fixed spatial or geographical condition nor a state that simply oscillates between connectivity and isolation. They are not just in juxtaposition to each other, but can also blend into each other. These antinomies oscillate between a fluid and consolidated form, and the way such dichotomies coexist in insular environments testifies to this observation: bridge/frontier, finite/expansive, introvert/extrovert, or backwaters/cutting-edge laboratories. These, and many other possibilities, fluctuate and shift depending on temporal, spatial, environmental, economic, social, or political contexts. In what follows, I elaborate on what Cypriot insularity meant in the early modern Mediterranean.

Cypriot Insularity in the Early Modern Mediterranean

Envisioning the Cypriot insularity entails an appreciation of the geographic, environmental, and climatic conditions conducive to the formation of a polycultural, yet cash crop– and export-oriented economy. This economy engaged with and

14 L. Febvre, in collaboration with L. Bataillon, *La Terre et l'évolution humaine: introduction géographique à l'histoire* [A Geographical Introduction to History], E.G. Mountford and J.H. Paxton (trans.), London: Kegan Paul, 1925, p. 172.

15 S.S. Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015; C. Anderson et al., "Locating Penal Transportation: Punishment, Space, and Place c. 1750 to 1900", in: K.M. Morin and D. Moran (eds.), *Historical Geographies of Prisons: Unlocking the Usable Carceral Past*, London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 147–67; C. Anderson, "The Andaman Islands Penal Colony: Race, Class, Criminality and the British Empire", *International Review of Social History* 63 (2018) S26, pp. 25–43; R. Durgahee, "'Native' Villages, 'Coolie' Lines, and 'Free' Indian Settlements: The Geography of Indenture in Fiji", *South Asian Studies* 33 (2017) 1, pp. 68–84.

was integrated into networks of international trade within and beyond the Mediterranean: apart from other Ottoman ports such as Istanbul, Alexandria, or İzmir, commercial links included Venice, Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Marseilles, and London. It was based on water-demanding, labour-intensive commodities: cotton, silk, and cereals. Nonetheless, the main products of the island, lucrative as they may have been for local entrepreneurs, were also available in the adjacent region. This condition guarded Cyprus-based commercial interests and their privileged position in the struggle to keep the island's surplus hidden from the attention of offshore players. In this fashion, this struggle primarily concerned local actors, particularly from the latter third of the seventeenth century, when Ottoman rule had by then been consolidated a century after the conquest of the island in 1571.[16]

After the second century of Ottoman rule, sources remain cryptic on what the Ottoman vision for Cyprus was. Indicative, however, is that the most voluminous category of records in the Istanbul archives concerns exiles or imprisonments, while anyone seeking references concerning Cyprus in the narratives of Ottoman historians is confronted with case after case of banishment or punitive appointment. It would be no exaggeration to state that this was the most consistent use that the Ottomans made of Cyprus throughout their rule. This should raise few eyebrows: islands are considered ideal places of exile.

In this context, the high hopes that the Ottomans had invested in their newly conquered province had soon vanished into thin air. The island was little more than an average province. It neither stood out from the provinces in its surrounding region, nor did it perform any extraordinary function for the empire as a whole. Occasionally, the island would send grain supplies to campaigning Ottoman troops, but from the seventeenth until the mid-eighteenth century there is little indication of Cyprus actively contributing to Ottoman war provisioning despite being a grain-rich province. Military presence was little more than a token garrison, for the island was usually peaceful enough to not need strong troops. Periodic disturbances of a socioeconomic nature were easily dealt with dispatching troops from South Anatolia and Syria to the island. In 1783, four out the six fortresses on Cyprus had no gunpowder or bullets.[17] Just like the British three centuries later, the Ottomans realized that the island had value and interest only when it was in the hands of another competitor. Once Cyprus became part of the empire, they did not quite know what to do with it.

16 M. Hadjianastasis, "Crossing the Line in the Sand: Regional Officials, Monopolisation of State Power and 'Rebellion'. The Case of Mehmed Ağa Boyacıoğlu in Cyprus, 1685–1690", *Turkish Historical Review* 2 (2011) 2, pp. 155–176.

17 20 Cemaziülevvel 1197/23 April 1783, C.AS. 46425, BOA.

As a result, the most consistent pattern in Ottoman governance was periodic crisis management, with indifference at intervals.

The Respatialization of Cypriot Insularity

The turn of the nineteenth century marks a watershed in Cypriot history. In 1804, rioting crowds stormed the residence of the most powerful Ottoman official on the island: the dragoman (interpreter) and representative of non-Muslims Hadjiyorgakis Kornesios. They were protesting against his appointment as collector of the extraordinary taxes levied to cover the expenses of the Ottoman military and its British allies in their campaign against Napoleon in Egypt and Syria. This, however, was not just a tax riot. It was also triggered by the rumour of an ensuing dearth due to grain hoarding, like the one that took place two years earlier and was actually caused by the dragoman, who had manipulated the grain market. Using his administrative prerogatives, he managed to concentrate most of the island's grain and illegally export it to Spain. While the continental blockade ensured handsome profits for the dragoman, Cyprus experienced a famine. Fast-forwarding to 1804, the riots turned into an outright revolt, with the rebels capturing the capital and entrenching themselves inside the city walls. A two-year-long period of instability ensued, with Ottoman troops sent to restore order at a massive financial and material cost to the locals, a chain of revolts, and a radical reorganization of power in the long term. While the dragoman escaped to Istanbul unscathed, he was eventually executed in 1809 in front of the Sublime Gate. Dearth, famine, popular unrest, a chain of revolts, and a devastated countryside were all elements that threatened the very sustainability of the surplus-extraction capacity of the province. Such were the effects of the events of 1804–1806, that their aftershocks were felt well into the 1840s, when Cypriots were still repaying collective debts and fines incurred in the aftermath of the revolt.[18]

Although recurring over the medium and long term, these crises were short-lived. Yet, one can notice a qualitative change at the imperial level, as far as the attitude of Istanbul towards Cyprus was concerned during this period. Correspondingly, there were major shifts at the local level regarding the political economy of insularity. Starting from the vantage point of the capital, from 1798

18 A. Hadjikyriacou, "The Province Goes to the Center: The Case of Hadjiyorgakis Kornesios, Dragoman of Cyprus", in: C. Isom-Verhaaren and K.F. Schull (eds.), *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Sultans, Subjects, and Elites*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016, pp. 238–253.

onwards there was a flood of Ottoman documentation regarding Cyprus in the aftermath of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. Overall, the documentation concerned the geopolitical significance of the island, which had spiked as a result of the French operations in the eastern Mediterranean. This was in sharp contrast to the generally marginal position of Cyprus in Ottoman grand strategy.

First of all, the island was directly affected by the occupation of Egypt as it faced a direct military threat – an extremely rare occasion since the Ottoman conquest (1571).[19] Second, Cyprus became a provisioning base, a key outpost for military operations, as well as a centre for the collection and distribution of intelligence.[20] Indicative of this change is that this is one of the rare instances when the commander of Cyprus (*Kıbrıs muhafızı*) actually appears in the documentation to be performing military duties. This is in contrast to the vast majority of all other instances I have encountered documentation mentioning the office from earlier periods and concern other administrative or fiscal affairs.[21] Moreover, emergency troops were dispatched,[22] and the defence of the island became a major preoccupation.[23] Accordingly, the bad state of the island's defences was immediately made apparent, pointing to the lack of ammunition.[24]

19 19 Muharrem 1215/12 June 1800, HAT 2856, BOA; c. 1214/1799–1800, HAT. 5305, BOA; 23 Zilhicce 1213/28 May 1799, HAT. 6038, BOA; 15 Safer 1215/8 June 1800, HAT. 6250, BOA; c. 1216/1801–02, HAT. 6478, BOA; 17 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/29 August 1798, HAT. 6511, BOA; 25 Zilhicce 1213/30 May 1799, HAT. 6519 A, BOA; 7 Cemaziülahir 1214/6 November 1799, HAT. 6525, BOA; 19 Cemaziülahir 1214/18 November 1799, HAT. 6526, BOA; 26 Muharrem 1213/10 July 1798, HAT. 6543, BOA; 26 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/7 September 1798, HAT. 6658, BOA; 29 Cemaziülevvel 1214/29 October 1799, HAT. 6796, BOA; 20 Ramazan 1214/25 February 1800, HAT. 6832, BOA; 25 Cemaziülahir 1214/24 November 1799, HAT. 6834, BOA; 24 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/5 September 1798, HAT. 6755, BOA.

20 c. 1213/1798–99, HAT 6423, BOA; 7 Rebiʿülahir 1213/1798, HAT. 6423 A, BOA; 8 Rebiʿülevvel 1214/10 August 1799, HAT. 6455, BOA; c. 1214/1799–1800, HAT. 13461, BOA; 17 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/19 August 1799, HAT. 14079 A, BOA; 20 Cemaziülevvel 1214/20 October 1799, HAT. 15372, BOA; c. 1213/1798–99, HAT. 15504, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, HAT. 1731, BOA; 5 Rebiʿülevvel 1213/17 August 1798, C.AS. 8012, BOA; 9 Zilkaʿde 1215/24 March 1801, C.AS. 21288, BOA; J. Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 154, 234; *Copies of Original Letters From the Army of General Bonaparte in Egypt, Intercepted by the Fleet Under the Command of Admiral Lord Nelson*, 3 vols., London: J. Wright, 1799, vol. 1, pp. 112–115, 147–162; vol. 3, pp. 14–27.

21 Representative cases are 16 Muharrem 1159/17 February 1746, C.DH. 6328, BOA, regarding the dismissal of civil officials because of corruption, or 2 Safer 1103/25 October 1691, AE. SAMD.II. 1829, BOA, regarding tax collection.

22 5 Rebi'ülevvel 1213/17 August 1798, C.AS. 8012, BOA; 29 Muharrem 1214/3 July 1799, C.AS. 4319, BOA; 15 Rebi'ülevvel 1214/17 August 1799, C.AS. 3490, BOA.

23 19 Muharrem 1215/12 June 1800, C.AS. 3028, BOA.

24 28 Rebi'ülevvel 1213/9 September 1798, C.AS. 39254, BOA.

Another qualitative shift can be observed at this juncture: the recurring use of the term *sevahil* (coasts) with reference to Cyprus. An opaque term though it may be, it might actually open a window into the spatial imagination of the Ottoman bureaucratic mind, for it is the exact same feature that the abovementioned clerk from 1721 used while attempting to highlight a special attribute of Cyprus: its large circumference. The term *sevahil* is not frequently found in earlier documentation. Its only regular use is during the war for Cyprus back in the sixteenth century, but I have not come across the term in the documentation I have examined prior to 1770 (see below).[25] It only appeared once at the turn of the eighteenth century, while discussing a different kind of maritime threat, corsairs.[26] In this sense, Cyprus' shoreline, a defining aspect of the Ottoman spatial imagination of insularity, appears in the documentation only when the island is under military threat due to naval operations nearby.

At the local level, the extraordinary conditions had also created new opportunities. In 1800, the previous governor had failed to pay the monthly allowance of the military commander. Hadjiyorgakis had quickly moved in to remedy the problem by paying the amount himself, thus earning the right to collect it from the population later with interest.[27] Apart from the monetary benefits from this transaction, this was part of the dragoman's strategy to make himself indispensable in the administration of the island, particularly so at a time of crisis. It also increased his political capital, since in the relevant documentation he is addressed as "the devoted Hadjigeorgakis, the lord dragoman".[28] This is the only time I have seen the title *sadakatlü* (devoted) and *bey* (lord) used to address a non-Muslim in Cyprus.

The military operations around Cyprus also meant that the island became a primary source of supplies and provisions not only for Ottoman but also British naval and military forces. There are several imperial orders for the requisition of grain, the baking of hardtack biscuit, or the purchase of other supplies.[29] Local pleas and petitions frequently claimed that such obligations were too onerous or could not be met. In such cases, the payment of a monetary

25 29 Recep 1213/6 January 1799, C.BH. 1094, BOA; 29 Cemaziülahir 1215/17 November 1800, C. HR. 5918, BOA.

26 c. 1113/1701–02, AE.SSLM.III. 9490, BOA.

27 11 Recep 1215/28 November 1800, C.ML. 5155, BOA.

28 9 Receb 1215/26 November 1800, C.ML. 5155, BOA.

29 23 Cemaziülevvel 1213/2 November 1798, C.BH. 316, BOA; 27 Zilkaʿde 1215/11 April 1801, C. HR. 2137, BOA; Safer 1215/16 July 1800, C.AS. 5835, 23 BOA; 13 Zilkaʿde 1214/8 April 1800, C.AS. 46084, BOA; 11 November 1800, C.AS. 6023, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, C.AS. 36694, BOA; 7 Ramazan 1215/22 January 1801, C.AS. 42087, BOA; 17 Rebiʻülahir 1213/19 August 1798, HAT 14079 A, BOA; 1215/1800–01, HAT 14824, BOA; 1215/1800–01, HAT 15583, BOA.

equivalent was arranged.[30] However, this procedure was not merely an administrative one. The monetary payment of requisitioned commodities opened up new opportunities to make profit at two levels. First, buying the grain at fixed state-controlled prices for the purposes of provisioning meant that the cost was far below market price. Thus, the officials charged with these duties, or those with access to these officials, were able to concentrate production at an extremely low price for the purposes of the requisition, and when the in-kind delivery obligation was discharged, they could sell it at market prices or indeed illegally export it.[31] Second, the payment of a monetary equivalent essentially constituted extraordinary taxation, and therefore a tax collection had to be organized. This process opened up additional opportunities to make profit through various financial means. The person on top of the tax-collection pyramid (in this juncture, the dragoman) would contract a loan to immediately pay the amount on behalf of the community, thus gaining the right to collect it; this would include the interest, administrative costs, as well as a profit margin.[32] The direct and indirect engagement of the island with the military and provisioning operations in the eastern Mediterranean meant not only that the way it was perceived by Istanbul was transformed, but also that this shift also transformed the balances of the political economy on the ground, greatly enhancing the position of individuals who could efficiently and effectively mobilize monetary resources and key commodities for the needs of the imperial army and its allies.

Another incident indicates the snowballing effect of minor issues in the context of such "major" events. Upon Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, the Ottoman state responded by shutting down all French consulates throughout the empire. A further retributory action against the French invasion of Egypt was to confiscate the property of local consular personnel, which, by virtue of the capitulations, enjoyed various legal and fiscal prerogatives as "protected" employees of foreign diplomatic missions. Cyprus was no exception. Among those employed by the French consulate and thus had these privileges revoked and had their

30 23 Safer 1215/16 June 1800, C.AS. 5835, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, C.AS. 36694, BOA; 13 Zilkaʿde 1214/8 April 1800, C.AS. 46084, BOA; 23 Safer 1215/16 June 1800, C.AS. 5835, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, C.AS. 36694, BOA; 11 Cemaziülevvel 1197/14 April 1783, C.AS. 42357, BOA; 13 Zilkaʿde 1214/8 April 1800, C.AS. 46084, BOA; 1 Receb 1221/14 September 1806, C.BH. 8026, BOA; 23 Safer 1192/23 March 1778, C.BH. 10754, BOA; 7 Ramazan 1222/8 November 1807, C.ML. 4354, BOA.

31 Y. Spyropoulos, *Othomaniki Dioikisi kai Koinonia stin Proepanastatiki Dytiki Kriti: Archeiakes Martyries, 1817–1819*, Rethymo: G.A.K. – Arheia N. Rethimnis, 2015, pp. 79–81.

32 Hadjikyriacou, "The Province Goes to the Center", p. 243.

property confiscated was a certain Sarkis. An Armenian merchant, Sarkis came from a family with a long tradition of employment as consular staff for various European countries. Such individuals provided their deep knowledge of local commercial and financial networks, and they were indispensable in providing support to the merchants under the consulate's jurisdiction.

Upon the closing of the French consulate, the British acted quickly in an almost headhunting fashion to recruit Sarkis. They asked for his appointment by the Ottoman state to their consulate as well as for the cancellation of the confiscation of his property. The Ottomans flatly refused the request. Despite several requests and the interference of none other than the British ambassador to Istanbul, Lord Elgin, the Ottomans continued to find the request absurd. The situation escalated when the Ottoman ambassador to London was summoned and was made to understand in very clear terms that the denial of this request would affect bilateral relations – this was a time when the two empires were allies in the eastern Mediterranean front of the Napoleonic Wars.[33] One can imagine Sultan Selim III unwillingly authorizing the appointment by annotating the report with his rescript: "let it be permitted".[34]

Clearly, the issue was blown out of proportion. Nonetheless, Sarkis represented an important asset for the British: as a seasoned merchant, and by all accounts one of the most successful ones on the island, he provided access to the cash crops of the island within the highly competitive market of the foreign consulates. This was a time when French domination of eastern Mediterranean was receding and indeed received a powerful blow with the shutting down of all consulates. The British were quick in securing the know-how and connections of someone who could quickly and efficiently channel rural production to the port warehouses. Suffice to say, Sarkis allegedly kept 30,000 *kile*s (769.68–923.62 metric tonnes) of grain in his own warehouses. That means that a single merchant kept the equivalent of three-quarters of the total amount of grain requisitioned from the whole island by the Ottoman military in 1800.[35]

In this context, we can identify two overlapping, if distinct, processes. The first one concerns the repositioning of Cyprus in the Ottoman imperial vision and in the regional geopolitical order of the eastern Mediterranean. For the duration of this juncture, Cyprus was no longer just any other province of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman bureaucracy and military needed to pay attention to the island, as it suddenly, if only temporarily, became a valuable asset. This

33 A. Hadjikyriacou, "Local Intermediaries and Insular Space in Late Eighteenth-Century Cyprus", *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 44 (2014), pp. 427–456.

34 Undated, HAT 15333, BOA.

35 23 Safer 1215/16 June 1800, C.AS. 5835, BOA.

process is directly related to Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. However, this repositioning also entailed another, broader process: the respatialization of Cypriot insularity. The political economy of the island underwent profound changes with a redistribution of wealth and power at the local level. While the original impetus came from the contingencies of warfare and international crisis, its effects and outcomes had much broader implications. During this period, individuals with privileged access to production and the rural surplus were able to manipulate and concentrate production in unprecedented ways – for example, by causing a famine and a chain of revolts. The outcome was the transformation of the experience of space with a much broader variety of historical actors both from above and below.

Respatialization: A Moment, a Process, or Both?

If Cypriot insularity went through a respatialization during the Napoleonic Wars in the Mediterranean, how unique was this respatialization? Was it an isolated incident, or was it part of a larger process with preceding and subsequent continuities?

The sudden, if short-lived, imperial geopolitical attention was not unprecedented. Another instance when similar developments and shifts occurred was in 1770–1774, when a Russian naval expedition force entered the Mediterranean via Gibraltar.[36] Russian forces occupied several Aegean islands and founded the short-lived Republic of the Archipelago as a Russian protectorate; invaded the Peloponnese and lent support to a local revolt; provoked another revolt in Crete, which they failed to support despite their promises; sensationally destroyed the Ottoman fleet in the Battle of Çeşme (1770), and briefly occupied Beirut.[37] Russian presence in the Mediterranean was nothing short of a cataclysmic development, shattering many centuries-old certainties and leaving behind a historiographically underappreciated legacy, most notably as far as the Greek

36 T.W. Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768–1913*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015, pp. 6–11.

37 B.L. Davies, *The Russo-Turkish War, 1768–1774: Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire*, London: Bloomsbury, 2016, pp. 150–160, 178–181; E.B. Smilyanskaya, "Russian Warriors in the Land of Miltiades and Themistocles: The Colonial Ambitions of Catherine the Great in the Mediterranean", Basic Research Program Working Papers 55 (2014), https://www.hse.ru/data/2014/05/13/1321487431/55HUM2014.pdf (accessed 22 November 2018); W. Persen, "The Russian Occupations of Beirut, 1772–74", *Journal of The Royal Central Asian Society* 42 (1955) 3–4, pp. 275–286.

Revolution (1821–1829) was concerned. While Russian efforts lacked consistency and clear-cut planning, they nonetheless brought some tangible results. The island of Poros became the centre of operations, where the Russians built a naval base, hardtack biscuit-baking ovens, and warehouses. Interestingly, they managed to secure the use of the base after the end of the war during the negotiations. If short-lived and largely a failure, the experiment of the Republic of the Archipelago remains a radical and unprecedented endeavour.

To a large extent, most of the phenomena observed in Cyprus during the Napoleonic interlude in Egypt are mirrored here as well. However, of the two incidents, it was the former that was novel. Ottoman panic about the state of defences, fortifications, and equipment in Cyprus (or any Mediterranean coastal region) is vividly expressed in relevant documentation. This is also the first time that Ottoman anxiety over the safety of the Cypriot coastline appears as a real issue.[38] In another episode, almost 40,000 kg of gunpowder that was apparently to be safely kept in the port citadel of Famagusta since the conquest of 1571 had gone missing, allegedly sold by a governor a few years earlier.[39] This amount was almost half the annual production of the Istanbul gunpowder works during that period.[40] Finally, this is also the first time that I have identified documentation on Cyprus as a supplier of grain and hardtack biscuit for the Ottoman military and naval forces since 1606.[41] This time, deliveries were made not only to

38 5 Şevval 1182/12 February 1769, C.AS. 38547, BOA; 29 Rebiʿülevvel 1184/23 July 1770, C.AS. 2732, BOA.

39 5 Şevval 1182/12 February 1769, C.AS. 38547, BOA; M. De Vezin, "De Vezin", in: C. Delaval Cobham (ed.) *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908, p. 369.

40 G. Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 135.

41 9 Cemaziülevvel 1205/14 January 1791, C.BH. 5053, BOA; 19 Rebiʿülahir 1206/16 December 1791, C.BH. 6298, BOA; 25 Zilhicce 1224/31 January 1810, C.BH. 6391, BOA; 1 Receb 1221/14 September 1806, C.BH. 8026, BOA; 23 Safer 1192/23 March 1778, C.BH. 10754, BOA; 19 Cemaziülevvel 1184/10 September 1770, C.BH. 12562, BOA; 10 Şevval 1227/19 August 1812, C. AS. 591, BOA; 23 Safer 1215/16 June 1800, C.AS. 5835, BOA; 7 Rebiʿülevvel 1226/ 11 April 1811, C. AS. 4129, BOA; 3 Ramazan 1226/21 September 1811, C.AS. 46709, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, C.AS. 36694, BOA; 14 Şevval 1187/29 December 1773, C.AS. 38775, BOA; 7 Ramazan 1215/22 January 1801, BOA; 11 Cemaziülevvel 1197/14 April 1783, C.AS. 42357, C.AS. 42357, BOA; 13 Zilkaʿde 1214/8 April 1800, C.AS. 46084, BOA; 11 Receb 1214/9 December 1799, C.AS. 47574, BOA; undated, C.ML. 24286, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, HAT. 1731, BOA; 11 Şevval 1217/4 February 1803, HAT 3301, BOA; c. 1215/1800–01, HAT 14824, BOA; c. 1214/1799–1800, HAT 15583, BOA; c. 1238/1822–23, HAT. 16556, BOA; c. 1248/1832–33, HAT. 19932, BOA; c. 1248/1832–33, HAT. 20018, BOA; 13 Şevval 1247/16 March 1832, HAT. 20022 N, BOA; c. 1248/1832–33, HAT. 20145, BOA; 9 Cemaziyelahir 1248/3 November 1832, HAT. 20145 A, BOA; 3 Safer 1238/

nearby ports as at the turn of the seventeenth century, but as far away as the pier of İsakçı on the Danube, the main theatre of hostilities.[42] The irony of Cyprus dispatching grain to the empire's granary is meaningful in view of the fact that pressure on the Danubian principalities forced the Ottomans to look elsewhere for their supplies. The same happened with the urban provisioning of Istanbul. Cyprus was called to send grain or flour to the capital, although not as frequently as in the case of military provisions.[43]

Such contributions were not insignificant, even by empire-wide standards. For example, in 1791 almost 1,130 metric tonnes of hardtack biscuit were required from Cyprus. This was actually the annual amount required from the Peloponnese for the provisioning of the joint Russian-Ottoman fleet operating in the Ionian islands in 1798–1800, and 8.5 per cent of the total requirements of the empire as a whole in 1798/99.[44]

Finally, just like at the turn of the nineteenth century, war and increased demand for grain from Europe provided ample opportunities for profit for those able to control, manipulate, and concentrate production. Hacı Abdülbaki Ağa, an infamous governor of the island, regularly exported grain despite Ottoman prohibitions, accumulating a perhaps unprecedented degree of wealth and power by the end of the 1770s. After being found guilty of various crimes and of oppression of Cypriot subjects of the sultan, the Imperial Council figured that over a period of nine years he had accumulated a personal fortune of 8 million Ottoman kuruş; this was more than half the annual Ottoman revenue for 1785/86.[45]

Many of the above observations are also true of a subsequent period, namely the 1830s. In another such geostrategic contingency, Muhammed Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt, had posed a direct military threat to the Ottoman

20 October 1822, HAT. 20442–20442 B; HAT. 38776 G, BOA; c. 1237/1821–22, HAT. 39064 İ, BOA; 17 Safer 1238/3 November 1822, HAT. 40323 J, BOA; 23 Rebiʿülahir 1237/17 January 1822, HAT. 40547 A, BOA; 23 Receb 1243/9 February 1828, HAT. 44208, BOA; 25 Safer 1229/16 February 1814, HAT. 47823 E, BOA.

42 14 Şevval 1187/29 December 1773, C.AS. 38775, BOA.

43 15 Şaʿban 1183/14 December 1769, C.BH. 9206, BOA; 22 Şaʿban 1233/27 June 1818, C.ML. 56, BOA; 21 Rebiʿülahir 1204/8 January 1790, C.ML. 12864, BOA; 27 Safer 1183/2 July 1769, C.ML. 31698, BOA; c. 1225/1810–11, HAT. 17729, BOA; c. 1238/1822–23, C.ML. 30294, BOA; c. 1204/1789–90, C.ML. 56006, BOA.

44 19 Rebiʿülahir 1206/16 December 1791, C.BH. 6298, BOA; K. Sakul, "An Ottoman Global Moment: War of Second Coalition in the Levant", PhD dissertation, Georgetown University, 2009, pp. 291–292.

45 Hadjikyriacou, "Local intermediaries", p. 439.

Empire and was almost able to reach Istanbul after conquering Syria and parts of Anatolia. In that instance, another flood of military and logistical documentation was produced directly relevant to Cyprus. From Egypt's point of view, the value of Cyprus was also somewhat different to that of the Ottomans. Muhammed Ali's son, Ibrahim Pasha, stressed in a letter the need to bring Cyprus under Egypt's control as a timber-rich region in order to ensure the construction of a strong fleet.[46] Indeed, the island was ruled by Muhammed Ali for a while.

Conclusion

The present chapter examined the shifting perceptions of Cypriot insularity during the Age of Revolutions. The premise of the chapter in examining insularity is that the spatiality of sea-girt realms – or any other geographical category for that matter – is neither obvious nor self-explanatory. Further, it changes in time and context. Historicizing insularity along those lines, the chapter contends that that such spatial categories do not simply concern ideas about space; instead, the intellectual factors should be seen in dialogue with material ones – economic, social, and environmental. The chapter proceeded to examine Cyprus in the Ottoman early modern *longue durée*, demonstrating how the island was little more than a backwater, subsumed by the continental landmass that surrounded it: Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt. It had no outstanding value for the empire at large, and it was at best an average province for most of the period that it was under Ottoman rule.

Taking the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt as a possible manifestation of the moment of respatialization – which the volume at hand examines – the chapter discussed certain major shifts in the attitude of Istanbul towards Cyprus and what its insularity meant in the particular juncture. In the short term, these shifts were in sharp contrast to the normal state of affairs in preceding centuries. This was not a top-down relationship, nor did it exclusively concern issues of geostrategic importance. The political economy of insularity underwent certain qualitative transformations, building upon existing relations of power, the balance of which greatly shifted by the new opportunities offered by the military crisis at the turn of the nineteenth century. In turn, these

46 A. Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 166–167.

changes had left a significant impact upon Cypriot society and economy for the decades to come.

Did this respatialization have an obvious value? Paul Cheney has recently argued against "modeling the Age of Revolutions in terms of the progressive effects of intellectual, economic, or social connectivity caused by globalization".[47] In this spirit, I would heed the critical appraisal of these historical processes. In addition, important though it may have been, the Napoleonic respatialization of Cypriot insularity was not a unique moment. It has striking parallels with a previous naval expedition to the Ottoman Mediterranean almost three decades earlier by the Russians. In more ways than one, the experience of the 1770s was replicated between 1798 and 1802 and had similar effects of the island. The parallels between the two expeditions do not end in the case of Cyprus. In fact, they extend far beyond its shores. For example, Russian presence in the Aegean had certain overtones to the subsequent scientific pretensions of the French occupation of Egypt – at least at the level of intentions. Thus, cartography was extensively employed by the Russians.[48] On a different level, the Russian adventure in the Mediterranean facilitated the articulation of alternative spatio-political visions. In the Peloponnese, where a Russian-backed revolt had taken place, Christian and Muslim notables called themselves "Peloponnesian Confederates" and envisioned a state entity for their "shared *patrie*" that would be under French protection.[49] This was in 1808, almost three decades after the bloody suppression of the Christian revolt instigated by the Russian expedition in the Mediterranean.

These considerations force a rethinking of familiar, if persistent questions of continuity and change. The respatialization discussed here was more of a process than a moment, or rather, a process composed of three specific moments: the 1770s, the turn of the nineteenth century, and the 1830s. In turn, these continuities pose the question of whether the Age of Revolutions was an exclusively Western European–driven process. To add respatialization to the

47 Cheney, "The French Revolution", p. 6.

48 E. Zei, "Theory and Politics of Micro-insularities in Modern Times: The Archipelago of the Aegean", unpublished paper presented at the conference, "Insularities Connected: Bridging Seascapes, from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean and Beyond", Institute for Mediterranean Studies, Foundation for Research and Technology, Hellas, 10–12 June 2016.

49 K. Şakul, "The Ottoman Peloponnese before the Greek Revolution: 'A Republic of *Ayan, Hakim*, and *Kocabaşı*' in 'the Sea of Humans and Valley of Castles'", in: A. Hadjikyriacou (ed.), *Islands of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 121–145.

list of effects that the Age of Revolutions had is one thing. To try to understand respatialization as a broader, multicausal historical process is quite another. To do so, in the case of the respatialization of Cypriot insularity, one needs to go back to 1770 and then fast-forward to the 1830s in order to reconsider the Age of Revolutions and its manifestation in the eastern Mediterranean.