

THEORY AND HISTORY OF CULTURE



UDC 94:008

<https://doi.org/10.23947/2414-1143-2026-12-1-50-55>




Original Theoretical Research



The Visionary European Geopolitics of Ioannis Kapodistrias: Socio-Political and Spiritual-Religious Aspects

Tamara S. Olenich  , Dmitry I. Pykhtin

Don State Technical University, Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation

 tamara1970@inbox.ru

Abstract

Introduction. In today's world, questions regarding the role of the individual and their influence on the formation and development of a nation-state, as well as its interactions with other countries, remain highly relevant. The purpose of this article is to reconstruct the socio-political and spiritual-religious views of Ioannis Kapodistrias, which are essential for understanding his visionary European geopolitics. Main objectives: to analyze the activities of Ioannis Kapodistrias as an outstanding politician and diplomat; to identify the socio-political and spiritual-religious views of Ioannis Kapodistrias; to determine the role of Kapodistrias as an individual in building relations between the peoples of the Greek state and the European community.

Materials and Methods. The study employs general scientific research methods, including the method of universal connections, the method of comparative analysis and synthesis, the descriptive method, and scientific generalization. The underlying methodological framework of this work is based on dialectical and systems approaches.

Results. The visionary European geopolitical vision of Ioannis Kapodistrias was aimed primarily at upholding Greece's political, socioeconomic, and spiritual-religious independence, as well as at maintaining and developing relations with European states, including, first and foremost, Russia. The Greek president sought to create for his compatriots an independent European-style state based on the values of the Enlightenment and professing the Orthodox Christian values inherent in the Russian state.

Discussion and Conclusion. It has been concluded that, during his brief tenure as head of the Greek state, Ioannis Kapodistrias of Kiveritis contributed, through his visionary geopolitical efforts, to the restoration of Greece and its political independence, as well as to the choice of a religious path for the country's development. This study may serve as a basis for further research into the activities of the first Greek president and for assessing his outstanding contributions to his compatriots and foreign partners in his political, socio-economic, religious-educational, and diplomatic endeavors.

Keywords: Ioannis Kapodistrias, Visionary European Geopolitics, and Its Socio-Political and Spiritual-Religious Dimensions


For Citation. Olenich T.S., Pykhtin D.I. The Visionary European Geopolitics of Ioannis Kapodistrias: Socio-Political and Spiritual-Religious Aspects. *Science Almanac of Black Sea Region Countries*. 2026;12(1):50–55. <https://doi.org/10.23947/2414-1143-2026-12-1-50-55>

Оригинальное теоретическое исследование

Визионерская европейская геополитика кивернитиса Иоанниса Каподистрии: социально-политический и духовно-религиозный аспекты

Т.С. Оленич  , Д.И. Пыхтин

Донской государственный технический университет, г. Ростов-на-Дону, Российская Федерация

 tamara1970@inbox.ru

Аннотация

Введение. В современной действительности актуальны вопросы об определении роли личности и ее влияния на становление и развитие отдельного государства и взаимодействие с другими странами. Цель статьи – рекон-

струкция социально-политических и духовно-религиозных взглядов кивернитиса И. Каподистрии, необходимых для понимания его визионерской европейской геополитики. Основные задачи: проанализировать деятельность Иоанна Каподистрии как выдающегося политика и дипломата, выявить социально-политические и духовно-религиозные взгляды кивернитиса И. Каподистрии; определить роли личности Каподистрии в построении взаимоотношений между народами греческого государства и европейского сообщества.

Материалы и методы. Используются общенаучные методы исследования: всеобщей связи, метод сравнительного анализа и синтеза, описательный метод и научного обобщения. Исходной методологической идеей работы являются диалектический и системный подходы.

Результаты исследования. Визионерская европейская геополитика кивернитиса Иоанниса Каподистрии направлена прежде всего на отстаивание политической, социально-экономической и духовно-религиозной независимости Греции и на поддержание и развитие взаимоотношений с европейскими государствами, включая в первую очередь Россию. Греческий президент стремился создать для соотечественников независимое государство европейского типа, основанное на ценностях эпохи Просвещения, исповедующее православные христианские ценности, присущие русскому государству.

Обсуждение и заключение. Сделан вывод, что Кивернитис Иоаннис Каподистрия в течение непродолжительного времени своего правления греческим государством своей визионерской геополитической деятельностью способствовал восстановлению Греции и ее политической независимости и выбору религиозного пути развития. Данное исследование может послужить материалом для дальнейшего изучения деятельности первого греческого президента и определению его выдающихся заслуг перед соотечественниками и зарубежными партнерами в его политической, социально-экономической, религиозно-просветительской и дипломатической деятельности.

Ключевые слова: Иоаннис Каподистрия, визионерская европейская геополитика, социально-политический и духовно-религиозный аспекты

Для цитирования. Оленич Т.С., Пыхтин Д.И. Визионерская европейская геополитика кивернитиса Иоанниса Каподистрии: социально-политический и духовно-религиозный аспекты. *Научный альманах стран Причерноморья*. 2026;12(1):50–55. <https://doi.org/10.23947/2414-1143-2026-12-1-50-55>

Introduction. The relevance of this study stems from the recent surge in interest in the role of the individual in history and their influence on the formation and development of the state. Ioannis Kapodistrias (Ivan Antonovich Kapodistria) was one of the outstanding figures of the national liberation movements in early 19th-century Europe, a man who in many ways was ahead of his time and shaped it. Kapodistrias also left a significant mark on Russian history [1]. A study of the multifaceted and diverse activities of Ioannis Kapodistrias allows us to identify the socio-political and spiritual-religious views of Greece's first president and to determine their impact on European states.

As head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire, Ioannis Kapodistrias represented the interests of Russian foreign policy as well as those of the Greek Republic and European states. His achievement lies in securing a rightful place for the Russian state among European nations. The essence of Kapodistrias' diplomatic activity lay in his commitment to the legal foundations of international relations, his opposition to unilateral interference in the internal affairs of other states, and his desire to ensure the stability and sustainability of the peaceful order among European states [2]. Ioannis Kapodistrias conceived the idea of creating an organization that foreshadowed the United Nations.

The purpose of this article is to reconstruct the socio-political and spiritual-religious views of Ioannis Kapodistrias, which are essential for understanding his visionary European geopolitics. The object of this study is the visionary European geopolitics of Ioannis Kapodistrias. The subject of this study is Kapodistrias's socio-political and spiritual-religious views.

Materials and Methods. The primary methods employed in this study include the methods of universal connection, comparative analysis and synthesis, the descriptive method, and scientific generalization. The underlying methodological framework of this study is based on dialectical and systemic approaches. The study of archival data, scholarly works, historical sources, memoirs of contemporaries, letters, and diplomatic documents formed the basis of this research.

Results. Ioannis Kapodistrias, a man of letters of his time with a thorough knowledge of philosophy and medicine, began his diplomatic career in his homeland, Greece [3]. In 1800, at the suggestion of Russian Admiral F.F. Ushakov, Ioannis Kapodistrias became secretary of the Legislative Council of the Ionian Republic, or the Republic of the Seven United Islands. In 1803, he was appointed State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Ionian Islands, and in January 1809, Count Ioannis Kapodistrias, a native of the island of Corfu and a Greek patriot, arrived in St. Petersburg

and became a confidant of Russian Tsar Alexander I. From 1814, Kapodistrias effectively became the head of the Tsar's foreign policy office of the Russian state [4, 5].

A significant event for the Russian state and for Capodistria himself was the signing of the peace treaty with France in Paris. Throughout his service to the Russian sovereign and the state, Capodistria distinguished himself by his complete selflessness, both in financial matters and in his official duties. His boundless modesty, absolute restraint, and candor were combined with a sense of obedience, which gradually strengthened and increased his positive influence on Alexander I [6].

According to N.I. Karamzin, Kapodistrias deserves to be called “the most intelligent man at the present court.” While continuing to live in the capital and enjoying success in his service at the Russian embassy, Kapodistria never ceased to think about the fate of his Greek homeland. In 1821, an anti-Turkish uprising led by Alexander Ypsilanti took place. Kapodistrias did not support a letter from Ypsilanti, the leader of the Eterist rebels in Bessarabia, calling on Russia to drive the Turks out of Greece and Europe. He was opposed to hasty military action, as was the Russian Emperor Alexander, who had no desire to start a new war with Turkey. Despite the common interests of Kapodistrias and Alexander, from the early 1820s their relationship began to weaken, as the Russian emperor, fearing revolutionary sentiments in Europe, was prepared to seek a rapprochement with Austria and did not wish to go to war with the Ottoman Empire. These disagreements with the Holy Alliance and Alexander in 1822 led Capodistria to decide to distance himself from the conferences of the European powers on Greece and not to participate in their preparation or discussion in official reports [7, 8].

While in Switzerland, Kapodistrias began actively supporting the Greek revolutionaries with money, weapons, and food. The Greek Revolution of 1821–1829 served as the catalyst for the emergence of the Philhellenic movement within the international community. English, American, and later French philhellenes came to the defense of the young Greek republic and flocked to Greece. Russia did not remain indifferent to the Greeks' heroic struggle for independence [9].

It was particularly important to the Greeks that Russia was at that time the only Orthodox country with close historical and cultural ties to Greece. Furthermore, Russia saw the development of trade and economic ties with Greece as advantageous, especially since most Greek ships sailed under the Russian flag. The peoples of the Balkan Peninsula saw Russia as their ally in the struggle for national liberation and counted on it in their campaigns against the Sultan's yoke on the Balkan Peninsula. These calculations were reinforced by a sense of religious, national, and cultural kinship with Russia [10].

In the spring of 1827, the question of electing a president (ruler) of Greece became a pressing issue. Kapodistrias's authority and experience were of paramount importance to the Greeks. Count Kapodistrias once again found himself at the center of Greek political life. On April 2 (14), 1827, the Third National Assembly of Greece, sitting in Trizene, elected Kapodistrias for a seven-year term to the post of *kyvernitis* (literally “helmsman”), that is, the ruler and political head of Greece. While in Europe, *Kyvernitis* Ioannis not only dealt with foreign policy and economic issues to defend Greece's interests but also fought for a significant expansion of the borders of the future Greek state. Kapodistrias had to counter the foreign policies of Turkey, England, and France, which viewed him as a Russian agent. According to researchers, the “political death” of young Greece would have been inevitable had it not been for the political neutrality of Kapodistrias, who had “a certain pro-Russian lean” [11].

The fate of Greece, “which was looked down upon as a beggar” [12], became clear following the events at Navarino in October 1827: the Turkish fleet was destroyed by Russian, British, and French forces. In early January 1828, Alexander Ypsilanti, released from an Austrian prison and terminally ill, upon hearing of Kapodistrias' decision to return to Greece, managed to whisper “Glory to You, Lord” and died [13].

Discussion and Conclusion. Kapodistrias's return to his homeland in January 1828 as head of state enabled him to fulfill his duty to Greece and to his compatriots: “to protect the people from the horrors of anarchy and to provide them with the opportunity to gradually achieve national and political revival.” As a result of a prolonged and brutal religious war, the Greek state and its population were in a state of utter ruin, with a population that had become embittered and violent. Kapodistrias's goal was to transform Greece into a European-style state based on the values of the Enlightenment.

The population of the Greek state comprised four main opposing parties: 1) the People's Party, which portrayed the president as the savior of the fatherland; 2) the *Kojabashi*, or Party of Elders, whose supporters advocated for the fragmentation of Greece into small territories within a federal union; 3) the party of ignorant politicians (envious of the president), who proclaimed themselves statesmen and the president; 4) the *Phanariot* party, supporters of organizing the state along the lines of Moldavia or Wallachia.

Through Capodistria's efforts, a system of government was established in a previously fragmented country: an army and navy, a judicial system, the church, public education, and agriculture; the path to the country's economic development was laid out. The president understood the importance of educating the people politically, the need to provide citizens with freedom and material stability, and the need to eradicate banditry and piracy in the adjacent maritime territories.

Kapodistrias is working to establish a combat-ready, centralized regular army. Such an army will help consolidate the success of the struggle against the armed opposition and prevent an advance by the Sublime Porte. Greece's national officer corps is being replenished by graduates of the first officer training school – the School of Evelpides. I.A. Kapodistrias does not limit himself to financing and providing spiritual care for the army; the Kivernitis issues an order to establish an institute of regimental chaplains.

Kapodistrias took decisive steps to establish a judicial system, the fundamental foundation of state governance. The organization of the courts and their staffing with qualified judges were carried out with Kapodistrias's personal involvement and under his close, direct supervision. Greek lawmaking was guided by models of European legislation. A code of civil procedure was enacted in the country; cities were to be under the control of a magistrate, and each province had a court of first instance. The court system in Greece was intended, among other things, to replace certain social and legal institutions established during the Ottoman era. Through Kapodistrias' efforts, a state administration was established, and a statistical service was created, which conducted the first census of the population of independent Greece [14].

Kapodistrias resolved one of Greece's most pressing problems: the state of the country's economy. Greece was required to repay debts to British bankers and Greek shipowners. At Kapodistrias's initiative, the country began minting its own currency. The main currency became the "silver phoenix," which was worth about one and a half rubles at the time. In addition, copper coins of three denominations were put into circulation: 10, 5, and 1 obol (where one obol was equal to a quarter of a kopeck). The National Mint was established to ensure the production of coins.

Kapodistria's fiscal policy regarding national finances yielded the desired results: the state treasury began to be replenished through the collection of taxes and customs duties by special officials, and the budget deficit gradually began to shrink. The military began to receive small fixed salaries. However, it was not possible to fully resolve all financial problems, which led to discontent with the president's policies, resulting in armed uprisings, the plot against, and the assassination of Capodistria. Capodistria's death brought about changes in the country's political regime: the repeal of reforms, the outbreak of civil war, and so on [15].

The development of agriculture in Greece required a solution to the complex issue of national lands, which took on a political dimension after the revolution. Kapodistrias saw the path to the country's economic independence through the redistribution of land resources: part of the land was to be transferred to landless peasants and participants in the revolutionary events, while another part was to be sold at auction, replenishing the state treasury with the proceeds.

Kapodistrias succeeded in carrying out a partial distribution of land among refugees and veterans despite active opposition from the local landed gentry – the kodzabs – who sought to appropriate former Turkish property for themselves. However, these measures failed to fully resolve the existing agrarian problems.

From the very beginning of his reign, Capodistria faced the complex issue of autocephaly: it was necessary to ensure the well-being of the Orthodox Church and strengthen its position within the state. A decisive step in church reform was taken in January 1828, when the Church Committee was established: a temporary supreme body of church administration comprising five bishops. The next significant reform was the creation of the Ministry of Church Affairs and Public Education, which demonstrated a serious approach to the country's spiritual development and education.

Kapodistrias made tremendous efforts to restore churches destroyed during the revolution and to preserve and protect church property from looting. The president decided to provide state salaries to the clergy and to fund the education system, which was inextricably linked to the Orthodox faith.

Kapodistrias attached particular importance to the issue of training the clergy. Among the first state educational institutions in the country, a theological seminary was opened on the island of Poros. The president nurtured the idea of establishing a Theological Academy in Greece modeled after the higher theological educational institutions of Russia. He entrusted the development of this idea to the renowned scholar and church and public figure K. Ikonomos, who was then in Russia. As early as the summer of 1828, Ikonomos presented Kapodistrias with a "Plan for a Church Academy," which, however, could never be implemented due to a lack of funding. As a patriot and a faithful son of the Church, Kapodistrias was murdered on the threshold of a church [16]. Later, his supporters interpreted this circumstance symbolically: the interrupted connection of the Greek nation's movement toward the revival of the Greek Orthodox tradition.

The development of the public education system became one of the priorities of Capodistria's domestic policy. As a result of the reforms, an extensive network of educational institutions emerged. A historic breakthrough occurred with the emergence of public schools, which opened the doors of secondary education to the common people. It is noteworthy that these educational institutions were funded by the state treasury, which was not particularly wealthy.

A distinctive feature of the new educational system was the synthesis of secular and religious education. Schools were modeled after monasteries, where the acquisition of knowledge was organically intertwined with Orthodox upbringing.

Even such everyday moments as mealtimes became part of the educational process – during meals, students were read the lives of the saints, instilling in them spiritual values and a religious worldview.

The direct involvement of Greek President Kapodistrias made it possible to open an orphanage on the island of Aegina. The Kivernitis's future plans included the establishment of a national university. Educational institutions of that time had curricula and teaching methods in line with European models, since Kapodistrias envisioned an independent Greece modeled after those states, which required personnel trained accordingly.

In Russia, Kapodistria's assassination was received as a tragedy. A.Y. Bulgakov wrote from Moscow to his brother Konstantin on November 1, 1831: "...Zhukovsky told me yesterday the most terrible news, that Kapodistria has been killed by the Greeks. What monsters! The Tsar still hoped that this was not true. God willing! I was struck by this news. After Kapodistria's assassination, a difficult time of civil strife and the gravest trials began for Greece [2].

Thus, Ioannis Kapodistrias played a significant role in the emergence of the new Greek state on the map of Europe. The establishment of the state was the culmination of the Greek people's national liberation movement and a compromise among European powers pursuing their own geopolitical interests [17]. For Russia, Kapodistrias's activities coincided with the national aspirations of the Greeks, who looked to a "protector state" – a role tacitly attributed to Russia following the victorious Russo-Turkish wars under Catherine II.

References

1. Platonova Z.I. *I.A. Kapodistria: State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1815–1822)*. 2002;1:102–112 (In Russ.)
2. Shapkina A.N. The Establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Activities of Russian Diplomacy in the First Quarter of the 19th Century. In: *Essays on the History of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1802–2002*. Moscow: OLMA-PRESS; 2002. Vol. 1. 290 p. (In Russ.)
3. Zhukovsky V.A. *Works. In 2 vols*. Vol. 1–2. Moscow: I.D. Sytin Publishing House; 1902. 400 p. (In Russ.)
4. Arsh G.L. *I. Kapodistrias and the Greek National Liberation Movement, 1809–1822*. Moscow: Nauka; 1976. 327 p. (In Russ.)
5. Arsh G.L. The First Ruler of Greece as Seen by His Russian Contemporaries. *Hellas*. 2008;5:86–92. (In Russ.)
6. Maruli-Zilemenu M. "The Activities of I. Kapodistrias as a Ruler." In: *First Russian-Greek Civil Society Forum. "Russian-Greek State, Church, and Cultural Ties in World History"*. Athens–Moscow: RFK-Image Lab; 2008. Pp. 175–181. (In Russ.)
7. Sturza A.S. *Memoirs of the Life and Deeds of Count I.A. Kapodistrias, Ruler of Greece*. St. Petersburg; 1864. 189 p. (In Russ.)
8. Teplov V.A. Count Kapodistrias's service record in the Main Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Count Kapodistrias's memorandum on his service in Russia. *Count Ioannis Kapodistrias, President of Greece: A Historical Essay*. St. Petersburg, 1893. Pp. 163–303. (In Russ.)
9. Orlik O.V. The Economic and Political Realities of the Era of Alexander I and Nicholas I. *The History of Russian Foreign Policy: The First Half of the 19th Century (From Russia's Wars Against Napoleon to the Treaty of Paris of 1856)*. Moscow: International Relations; 1999. Pp. 9–27. (In Russ.)
10. Martens F.F. *Collection of treaties and conventions concluded by Russia and foreign powers*. St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Ministry of Transport. Vol. IV, Part I, 1878, 620 pp.; Vol. VII, 1885, 456 p.; Vol. XI, 1895, 514 pp.; Vol. XIV, 1905, 446 p. (In Russ.)
11. Dostyan. A Russian Participant in the Greek Revolution. *PORTALUS.RU Digital Research Library*. (In Russ.) URL: https://portalus.ru/modules/historical_memoirs/rus_readme.php?subaction=showfull&id=1516626368&archive=&start_from=&ucat=& (accessed: 30.10.2025)
12. Divov P.G. St. Petersburg in 1827 (From the diary of P.G. Divov). 1827. *Russkaya Starina*. 1898;93(1):101–110. (In Russ.)
13. Orlik O.V. Russia and the Eastern Crisis of the 1820s. *History of Russian Foreign Policy: The First Half of the 19th Century (From Russia's Wars Against Napoleon to the Treaty of Paris of 1856)*. Moscow: International Relations; 1999. pp. 189–240. (In Russ.)
14. A memorandum by Count Ioannis Kapodistrias on his official duties. *Proceedings of the Imperial Russian Historical Society*. Vol. 3. 1968. St. Petersburg; 408 p. (In Russ.)
15. Chernov A.V. John Capodistrias' political views. *RUDN Journal of Russian History*. 2015;2. (In Russ.) URL: <https://publications.hse.ru/pubs/share/direct/994071757.pdf> (accessed: 30.10.2025).
16. Raik A.N. A Note on the Assassination of Kapodistrias. *Russian Archives*. 1869;7:881–919; 279–308. (In Russ.)
17. ΝΙΚΟΣ ΤΖΑΝΑΚΟΣ Νικολάι Αλεξέγιεβιτς Ράικο Για ένα παράσημο ανδρείας. ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ "ΠΙΚΡΑΜΕΝΟΣ"; 2019. 264 p. (In Greek)

18. Kuznetsov A.I., Raikov, Yu.A., and Samoilenko, V.V. *History of Russian Diplomacy: In 2 vols.* Vol. 1. Edited by A.V. Torkunov and A.N. Panov. Moscow: Aspekt Press; 2017. 352 p. (In Russ.)

About the Authors:

Olenich Tamara Stanislavovna, PhD (Doctorate) (Philosophy), Professor, Department of Philosophy and World Religions, Don State Technical University, Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation (1, Gagarin Sq., Rostov-on-Don, 344003, Russian Federation), [ORCID](#), [SPIN-code](#), tamara1970@inbox.ru

Pykhtin Dmitry Ivanovich, PhD student, Don State Technical University, Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation (1, Gagarin Sq., Rostov-on-Don, 344003, Russian Federation), Dip484@mail.ru

Conflict of Interest Statement: the authors declare no conflict of interest.

All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

Об авторах:

Оленич Тамара Станиславовна, доктор философских наук, профессор кафедры «Философия и мировые религии», Донской государственной технической университет (344003, Российская Федерация, Ростов-на-Дону, пл. Гагарина, 1), [ORCID](#), [SPIN-код](#), tamara1970@inbox.ru

Пыхтин Дмитрий Иванович, аспирант, Донской государственной технической университет (344003, Российская Федерация, Ростов-на-Дону, пл. Гагарина, 1), Dip484@mail.ru

Конфликт интересов: авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Все авторы прочитали и одобрили окончательный вариант рукописи.

Received / Поступила в редакцию 22.12.2025

Reviewed / Поступила после рецензирования 12.01.2026

Accepted / Принята к публикации 14.01.2026