

# Introduction

## *The History of Technology in Modern Greece from the Nineteenth Century to the Present Day*

STATHIS ARAPOSTATHIS AND ARISTOTLE TYMPAS

The first European state to be instituted on territory extracted from the Ottoman Empire was that of modern Greece. By defeating the Ottoman Armada at the 1827 Battle of Navarino, the last major naval battle to be won by relying exclusively on sails, three Great Powers of the day – a troika formed by England, France and Russia – rescued the 1821 revolution of some Greek-speaking and orthodox Empire populations and solidified the institution of the modern Greek state. Almost two centuries later, in 2010, Greece became the first European state to be rescued financially by its subjection to the International Monetary Fund, which arrived in Greece through a troika that also included the European Commission and the European Central Bank. The intervention of a troika at the start and at the end of the period covered in this volume represents high Greek drama with international repercussions.

Two more high dramas defined the end of the first sub-period (1827–1922) and the middle of the second sub-period (1922–1974) of the periods covered here: the Asia Minor Disaster (1922) and the Greek Civil War (1947–1949). A series of late nineteenth-century wars between the expanding modern Greek state and the shrinking Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Wars, two twentieth-century world wars, and armed resistance to the Nazi regime further overwhelmed politically the course of industrial capitalism in Greece and set a context that cannot be ignored by those undertaking research on the history of technology in modern Greece. Also, let us not forget a series of dictatorships, including one at the end of the interwar period (1936–1940) and another at the end of the post-war decades (1967–1974).<sup>1</sup>

Acknowledging the presence of a pattern of political dramas in the history of a modern nation-state should not lead us to assume that technological experiences were limited in this history, and accordingly, that the history of technology that refers to these experiences is unimportant. On the contrary, the articles collected in this volume prove that technology was no less important during this extremely dramatic Greek political history than in paradigmatic cases of histories of technologies in other European modern states. This further suggests that the history of technology in Greece could be of broader importance, precisely because of its coexistence with an extreme history of politics. To point to this broader importance, the articles in