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Ioannis Capodistrias in brief

Capodistrias's father was the nobleman, artist and politician Antonios Maria Capodistrias (Αντώνιος Μαρία Καποδίστριας). An ancestor of Capodistrias had been created a conte (count) by Charles Emmanuel II, Duke of Savoy, and the title was later (1679) inscribed in the Libro d'Oro of the Corfu nobility; the title originates from the city of Capodistria (now Koper) in Slovenia, then part of the Republic of Venice and the place of origin of Capodistrias's paternal family before they moved to Corfu in the 13th century, where they changed their religion from Catholic to Orthodox and they became completely hellenized. His family's name in Capodistria had been Vitori or Vittori. Origins of his paternal ancestors can also be found back in 1423 in Constantinople (with Victor/Vittor – or Nikiforos – Capodistrias). The coat of arms of the family, which today can be seen in Corfu, represented a cyan shield with a diagonal strip, containing three stars, and a cross.

His mother was Adamantine Gonemis (Αδαμαντία "Διαμαντίνα" Γονέμη; Diamantina Gonemi), a countess, and daughter of the noble Christodoulos Gonemis (Χριστόδουλος Γονέμης). The Gonemis were a Greek family originally from the island of Cyprus, they had migrated to Crete when Cyprus fell to the Ottomans in the 16th century. They then migrated to Epirus, near Argyrokastro, when Crete fell in the 17th century, finally settling on the Ionian island of Corfu. The Gonemis family, like the Capodistriases, had been listed in the Libro d'Oro (Golden Book) of Corfu.

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Capodistrias, though born and raised as a nobleman, was throughout his life a liberal thinker and had democratic ideals. His ancestors fought along with the Venetians during the Ottoman sieges of Corfu and had received a title of nobility from them.

Capodistrias studied medicine, philosophy and law at the University of Padua in 1795-97. When he was 21 years old, in 1797, he started his medical practice as a doctor on his native island of Corfu.

For an access to a substantial number of digitized original documents concerning this statesman, I would recommend, for example, a notable digital archive available in both Greek and English: The Kapodistrias Digital Archive (English version) (https://kapodistrias.digitalarchive.gr/thedigitalarchive_en.php) and, Kapodistrias Digital Archive (Greek version) (<https://kapodistrias.digitalarchive.gr/index.php>).

Key Contributions to Capodistrias and European Affairs

Russian Diplomacy (1809–1822)

- Served as **Foreign Minister of the Russian Empire** under Tsar Alexander I.
- Played a crucial role in shaping Russia's diplomatic relations with Europe, especially during and after the **Congress of Vienna (1814–1815)**.
- Advocated for **peaceful conflict resolution** and **balance of power** in Europe to prevent further wars.

Switzerland and the Act of Mediation

- **Instrumental in the creation of modern Switzerland:**
 - Worked as a mediator between Swiss cantons and European powers.
 - Helped draft the **Swiss Federal Constitution of 1815**, which restored Switzerland's neutrality and guaranteed its independence.
 - Promoted **Swiss federalism** and internal harmony, laying the foundation for its current political structure.
- Earned deep respect in Switzerland, where he is still remembered as a "**founding father of modern Swiss neutrality.**"

Pan-European Peace and Stability

- Advocated for the **independence and national rights** of smaller nations within the context of European stability.
- Opposed oppressive imperial practices and sought **equilibrium between great powers and smaller states**.
- Promoted **Christian humanitarian values** in international diplomacy.