

Patterns of Factional Strife in Greece and the Eastern Question: The Story of Ioannis Velentzas (1821-1840)

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Abstract

Patterns of Factional Strife in Greece and the Eastern Question: The Story of Ioannis Velentzas (1821-1840)

Ahmet Talha Karapınar, Master's Candidate at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2023

Assistant Professor Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, Thesis Advisor

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how regional networks of political patronage and violence within the Ottoman provincial administration in the Peloponnese and Rumeli have adapted to the new political environment after 1821, and continued to dominate the political domain in Greece after its independence from the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, while aiming to show how the factions that have emerged during the Greek war of independence have been built on personal relationships prior to 1821, this thesis also attempts to show how each of these factions in Greece became entangled with a specific European power, and thus, was indirectly influenced by the broader political developments in post-Vienna Congress Europe. This study follows the particular patron-client relationship of the two Rumeliot men, Ioannis Velentzas and Ioannis Kolettis throughout the years following the outbreak of the war of independence. The purpose is to explore how the two men have formed their alliance thanks to the violent circumstances provided by the war, the process that made Kolettis's Rumeliot faction labelled as the French party, and ultimately to see how through his relationship with Kolettis, Velentzas' irredentist foray in 1840 to Ottoman territories could be seen as a scheme designed to involve Greece into the politics of the Eastern Question.

31.000 words

Özet

Yunan Hizip Çatışmaları ve Doğu Sorunu: İoannis Velentzas'ın Hikayesi
(1821-1840)

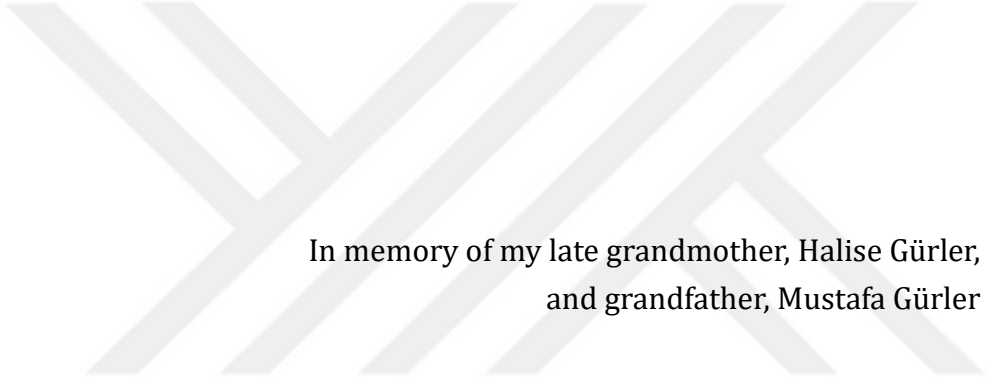
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Doktor Öğretim Üyesi Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, Tez Danışmanı

Bu tez, Osmanlı taşra idaresi altında Mora yarımadası ve Rumeli'de gelişen bölgesel siyasi himaye ve şiddet ilişkilerinin nasıl 1821 sonrası siyasi iklime adapte olup Osmanlı'dan bağımsızlığını kazanan Yunanistan'daki siyasi alana egemen olduğunu ortaya koymayı amaçlıyor. Bunun yanı sıra, Yunan bağımsızlık savaşı sırasında ortaya çıkan bölgesel hiziplerin 1821 yılı öncesinden kalma şahsi ilişkiler üzerine kurulduğuna dikkat çekilirken; bu tezde aynı zamanda bu hiziplerin her birinin ayrı birer Avrupalı güçle yakın ilişkilere girerek dönemin Viyana Kongresi sonrası Avrupa siyasi düzeninin dolaylı özneleri olmaları sürecinin de ortaya konması amaçlanıyor. Bu doğrultuda, bağımsızlık savaşının başlamasını takip eden süreç içerisinde iki Rumelili İoannis Kolettis ve İoannis Velentzas'ın siyasi ve askeri himaye etrafında şekillenen ilişkisi özel olarak izleniyor. Buradaki amaç bu iki adamın nasıl Yunan bağımsızlık savaşının oluşturduğu uzun şiddet ortamı sayesinde siyasi bir ittifak oluşturabildiğini ve Kolettis'in Rumeli hizibinin nasıl süreç sonunda "Fransız Partisi" ismiyle anılmaya başlandığını göstermek. Nihayetinde de Velentzas'ın 1840 yılında Osmanlı topraklarına yönelik organize ettiği başarısız bir irredentist saldırıyı kendisinin Fransız partisi lideri Kolettis ile olan ilişkisi üzerinden okuyarak, bunun Yunanistan'ı dönemin doğu sorunu olarak adlandırılan doğu Akdeniz üzerindeki bölgesel siyasi hesaplara dahil etme tasarısı olduğunu ortaya koymak.

31.000 kelime





In memory of my late grandmother, Halise Gürler,
and grandfather, Mustafa Gürler



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

B.O.A	<i>Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivleri</i>
AA	<i>Academy of Athens</i>
AYE	<i>Arheio tou Ypourgeiou ton Eksoterikon (Foreign Ministry Archives of Greece)</i>
TNA	<i>The National Archives</i>





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Introduction



During the Greek war of independence and the years following the creation of the independent Greek kingdom, a variety of prominent and influential figures have burst onto the scene and left their mark in the history of modern Greece. Some of these men hailed from the previously present Ottoman administration in the region and managed to maintain their political influence in the post-Ottoman transition, while some of them benefited from the opportunities of social advancement to move up the social hierarchy that had been presented by the extraordinary circumstances of war. As such, the latter group was mainly the product of the Greek war of independence, and consequently relied even after

the war ended on the war-time alliances and networks of power that shaped their political capital.

The war providing channels of upward mobility was inevitable. Since in early nineteenth-century Greece, like other rural Mediterranean societies, taking arms and joining a band was one of the few ways for a peasant to acquire riches or reach a position of honor and power; whether as a bandit or a captain who was authorized to protect the land from bandits was often not important, as the line dividing these two groups was very blurred. When the war broke out in 1821, continental Greece (Rumeli)¹ was crowded with irregular bands, who quickly adapted to the new military conditions and became centers of power with ever increasing potential of political influence. Naturally, in addition to not having many alternative options during the war other than taking up arms in an extraordinarily uncertain and hostile environment, many young Rumeiot men coming from poverty such as peasants, shepherds, outcasts, and vagabonds were inevitably gravitated towards the charm of the irregular bands that were not only fighting against the Ottoman troops, but also increasingly accessing and controlling resources by means of physical force.

This thesis focuses on Ioannis Velentzas, who was one such men, placing him within significant and transformative events that influenced the Greek political domain in the first half of the nineteenth-century. Velentzas was a native of Almyros in Phthiotis, a mountainous region between Thessaly and Attica. His date of birth is unknown, but it is plausible that he was in his twenties when he participated in the war. In 1822, Velentzas joined the band of Tzamis Karatasos, son of the famous Macedonian klepht Dimitrios Karatasos, who arrived in the region after the Ottomans crushed the Greek insurge in Macedonia, of which Tzamis was a leader. The fact that he joined Tzamis Karatasos, a captain who was a

1 The broad geographic term of "Rumeli" generally refers to the territorial possessions of the Ottoman Empire in the whole Balkan peninsula. In this thesis, the term refers mainly to the geography north to the Peloponnesian peninsula that starts with Attica and includes the lands previously under the jurisdiction of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha in Epirus and Thessaly.

newcomer in the region of Rumeli, indicates that Velentzas was in fact not part of the networks of violence in Thessaly prior to the war.² After all, the social dynamics of the traditional rural society in Rumeli in which these networks emerged, favored personal and more salient relationships such as agnatic kinships and blood ties, as well as patronage networks under powerful men with a strong sense of local identity.

This is an important hypothesis, because it affirms that Velentzas belongs to a group of military men who started to increasingly operate within the traditional networks of violence in Rumeli precisely thanks to the circumstances provided to them by the war. The geography from which Velentzas originates was in the turn of the nineteenth-century particularly home to a society that produced a handful of famous captains that led large bands of armed men. These captains were on the top of their own networks of clientage. Some of them were even authorized with certain fiscal and military tasks, making them an essential part of the social fabric in continental Greece. The fact that Velentzas was not an active part of this regional network prior to the war seems to have compelled him to join Tzamis Karatasos an outsider to the region of Rumeli, where he sought new channels as well. Karatasos consequently conducted his military operations increasingly within a broader scale rather than trying to restrain with a more regional character, because for an outsider, the former was a much more promising way to obtain a profit from the war, with the war of independence being increasingly managed by a

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- 2 The term “Networks of Violence” refers to the informal webs in which participants mostly act autonomously, and can be characterized by their nomadic-militaristic life style and collective experiences with other individuals or groups within the life with whom occasional exchange of information, weapons, and manpower was possible. In addition to their role in the endemic banditry in Rumeli, the emergence of multiple concentrations of power in Rumeli at the turn of the 19th century gave these individuals the opportunity to advance the social hierarchy by becoming clients to powerful office holders, or create their own clientele of violent men, being able to easily use their military talents on both sides of the law. Securing the services of these irregular military networks, who were experts in using direct violence to obtain resources proved to be a crucial element during military conflicts, such as the Greek war of independence.

central administration. Thus, Velentzas became part of a military network that looked up to a central administration that was perhaps foreign to the traditional social structure of Greece at the beginning of the war but would increasingly assert more influence as the years went by. When Ioannis Kolettis, the shrewd politician and former member of Ali Pasha's court, assumed the role of patron of the already present network of Rumeliot bands, Velentzas's career for the remainder of his life was fixed. The war established Kolettis as one of the most influential politicians in Greece, and leader of a political faction for the next decades. Kolettis' big success was to utilize Ali Pasha's method of establishing political patronage for the irregular bands in Rumeli, and in return establishing himself a powerhouse in the region. Around 1823-24 Velentzas established a strong personal relationship with Kolettis and became part of this clientele. Thus, while trying to assert more influence and power through his personal relationships that he established during the war, Velentzas in return became member of a network that turned into a political party in Greece.

Despite all his struggles, Velentzas never became a major political figure in Greece on a national scale. However, neither is he completely invisible in historical records. Both Ottoman and Greek archives mention him directly on and off, describing his activities that spanned a period of three decades. Documents reveal that Velentzas took part in the civil wars of 1823-1825 in Greece, and became a client of Kolettis at this time, who was in charge of the Rumeliot faction that invaded the Peloponnese during the civil war. Through documents it can also be observed that thanks to his relationship with Kolettis, within a few years Velentzas rose up the ranks and became the captain of his own band, with which he took part in yet another civil war that erupted after the assassination of Kapodistrias, and aided Kolettis' Rumeliot faction. After the year 1832, when the Greek monarchy under the Bavarian king Otto was established, Velentzas like other men who made themselves a living through violence during a decade of warfare, struggled to find his place within the new government. For a brief period, he joined the newly created gendarmerie and skirmisher troops. However, his constant insistence on being stationed in

Eastern Rumeli under the command of other Kolettists, and his continued loyalty to Kolettis shows that he was still part of Kolettis' Rumeliot faction that became known as the French Party. After Kolettis was sent to Paris as ambassador in 1835, mainly as an attempt to keep him and the other party leaders away from Greece as the Bavarian monarchy sought to bring the government under its control, Velentzas appears to have increasingly become rogue in his attempts to make a living through traditional violent means due to the temporary loss of his vital political connections provided by Kolettis.

It is also during this period that Velentzas' name started to appear in dispatches sent by the Ottoman officials reporting on the Greek frontier to Istanbul. Velentzas' hometown Phthiotis was along the Ottoman frontier, which became a convenient hub for armed bands to operate raids from into Ottoman lands and return afterwards to hide on the Greek side of the frontier, making use of its mountainous terrain. For a period of two decades Ottoman documents reported about '*Kapudan Velençe*' (Captain Velentzas), summarizing his exploits that were exclusively directed towards the Ottoman province of Thessaly. What is noteworthy and also a central component of this thesis is the nature of one particular foray that Velentzas led on the Ottoman frontier, that is the raid he orchestrated in the fall of the year 1840.

Although the event itself was small and even inconsequential, I argue that it was an attempt by a local powerbroker to play into the politics of the Eastern Question, the question that made the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire a central tenet of European security in the aftermath of the Congress of Vienna (1815). By carefully examining the patron-client relationship between Ioannis Velentzas and the French party leader Ioannis Kolettis, this thesis seeks to carefully explore the evolution of traditional power structures and regional networks of violence in continental Greece in the transition from the Ottoman political system to the Greek nation state. The goal is to investigate how traditional networks of patronage adapted to the new political climate and became political enterprises on a national scale, and to see how through their relationships with Greece's three guarantor powers these political parties, the French

party in particular, attempted to appropriate international affairs in the Eastern Mediterranean in the first half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, while aiming to follow the story of the patron-client relationship between Velentzas and Kolettis that led to Velentzas' involvement in the irredentist foray of 1840, this study discusses the transformation of traditional power structures into modern political enterprises in early nineteenth-century Greece.

There exist a number of studies on the networks of provincial entrepreneurs in Ottoman Rumeli in early nineteenth-century that examine the social circumstances within which they had emerged. For a long time until the 1970's the fiscal decentralization of the Ottoman Empire had been accepted as signs of decline in the Ottoman state apparatus that geared towards disintegration. Ariel Salzmänn shows, however that on the contrary, the decentralization of fiscal offices encouraged provincial enterprises, and with the emergence of competitions and alliances among state elites and non-state elites or central and provincial elites, the provincial units and the center were more connected and the relationships among these fiscal nexuses more dynamic than imagined before.³ According to Ali Yaycıoğlu, these relationships between provincial notables and the imperial center was much more horizontal than previous studies would have shown, stressing that the binary relationship of center-periphery was an inaccurate way to approach the relationship between the empire and the provinces, that the empire was actually fairly integrated, and provincial and central elites were in constant negotiations that redefined their roles. He also discusses how these powerful regional notables nurtured their own patron-client relationships, bureaucracies and alliances in their influence zones, paralleling the Imperial administrative apparatus.⁴ In terms of networks of violence, Tolga Esmer notes that patterns of patronage have a significant place in writing a cultural and social history of violence and power. He depicts how violent

3 Ariel Salzmänn. "An Ancien Regime Revisited: 'Privatization' and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire" *Politics & Society*, 21 no.4 (1993): 393-423.

4 Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

circumstances at the turn of the eighteenth-century created the environment for social dependency between agents of violence, and how center and periphery models fail to explain the dynamism of Ottoman society due to multiple concentrations of political and economic power.⁵

The historiography had for long approached the Greek war of independence as an analytically narrow story of the liberation of a well-defined nation from foreign oppression. Starting with the second half of the twentieth century, historians such as John Anthony Petropoulos, although still in some instances taking the idea of a well understood Greek nationalism in the minds of the protagonists of the struggle for granted, has revealed the regionally fragmented nature of the groups that participated in the making of the Greek state, and how the rivalries among several factions that emerged from this fragmentation had dominated the first decade of the Greek kingdom.⁶ In one of the latest publications on the subject, Mark Mazower emphasizes the same issue and describes how the war of independence had been in fact more of a series of interconnected regional conflicts.⁷ The fact that the Greek war of independence was not simply one single event with a concrete beginning and conclusion, and a homogenous group of protagonists is further revealed in Şükrü İlcak's work in the Ottoman Archival documents that shows how the Ottomans themselves had made sense of these conflicts, as well as that a set complicated dynamics and series of events had determined its outcome.⁸

Until the last quarter of the twentieth century, studies on violent entrepreneurs in pre-modern societies had largely focused on their possible representation of class struggle, or potential role as revolutionary

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- 5 Tolga U. Esmer, *A Culture of Rebellion: Networks of Violence and Competing Discourses of Justice in the Ottoman Empire, 1790-1808* (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009).
 - 6 John Anthony Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968).
 - 7 Mark Mazower, *The Greek Revolution, and the Making of Modern Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2021).
 - 8 Şükrü İlcak, *Those Infidel Greeks: The Greek War of Independence Through Ottoman Archival Documents* (Boston: Brill, 2021).

heroes, based on folklore or sources of retrospective assessment by newly emerged nation states that embrace them as nationalist pioneers who fought against tyranny. Eric Hobsbawm's definition of the bandit was largely based on this description of a fictional/mythical avenger.⁹ Since the 1980s, this understanding started to be reversed. John Koliopoulos revealed that the Klephtic hero in Greece was a myth, and many fighters of the Greek war of independence, particularly the irregular military element in Rumeli, instead of being "national heroes" defying Ottoman rule, had been formerly employed to serve the Ottoman provincial security system, and had been pursuing a violent lifestyle in line with their former life after the Greek kingdom was founded.¹⁰ In another instance of distancing the bandit in Mediterranean agrarian societies from the mythical figure of social bandit, Anton Blok demonstrates how the attraction of the career as a bandit did not emerge due to a class solidarity among the peasantry, but through the desire of power and honor that was enabled through networks of political patronage. This, of course, as he pointed out, was the outcome of the need for violent men to protect the lands of absentee estate holders in provincial areas.¹¹

While engaging with these studies, this thesis slightly departs from them in terms of methodology, as well as its scale and focus. It investigates how historical transformation has been experienced by particular individuals, and the ways these developments have changed their lives and recontextualized their political options after the transition from empire into nation state in the political environment of early nineteenth-century. In a way, regarding the 1840 foray of Velentzas, this study aims to contribute to the field of "global microhistory,"¹² taking relatively modest actions as starting point and pulling back to view grander and more extensive historical changes, this study aims to provide a window into the

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- 9 Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.
 - 10 John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism In Modern Greece, 1821–1912*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
 - 11 Anton Blok, *Honour and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).
 - 12 Francesca Trivellato, "Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?" *California Italian Studies*, 2 no.1. (2011). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/C321009025>

big picture through a smaller micro-scale details.¹³ Drawing on this viewpoint, the aim is to view how with the Greek war of independence, new alliances such as that between Velentzas and Kolettis have formed in line with the previous provincial networks in Ottoman Rumeli, and transformed to adapt to the new political circumstances, when domestic Greek politics increasingly became subject to European geopolitics in the 1830s.

The thesis is comprised of three chapters. The chapters are in chronological order, following various historical stages and political frameworks in Greece, in which the networks central to this thesis have come to evolve. Chapter 1 introduces the various regions most of which became the basic geographical units of Greece, with a particular focus on Rumeli and the historical and geographical conditions that provided the social environment for men like Velentzas and Kolettis to emerge. This chapter also presents key individuals from other regions with diverse cultural and social backgrounds that would be highly significant in the political environment of Greece starting with 1821.

With the start of the Greek revolt, key individuals within the regional political networks present at the time quickly adapted to the new violent circumstances. Chapter 2 aims to follow the actions of these actors and identify the political instruments that these men used in order to obtain leadership in their regions by filling a large vacuum of power. It is significant to understand the nature of their political actions, their objectives in forging alliances and reason of switching between camps to understand the environment in which men like Velentzas have struggled to find their place. As the war went on, conflicts arose between regional camps, who refused to surrender their regional authorities to a provisional government. As the chapter continues, it aims to investigate the nature of these conflicts and their outcome as civil wars in 1824 that almost resulted in the end of the war of independence in particular with the Egyptian invasion that immediately followed it. After providing a brief summary of these events, the chapter follows Velentzas' story throughout

¹³ Konstantina Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800-1850: Stammering the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 3.

these episodes as he slowly made his name known among certain Rume-
liots which eventually resulted in him becoming a loyal client under Ko-
lettis' patronage, whose faction would increasingly become to be associ-
ated with France.

Chapter 3 takes over from the previous chapter chronologically, and further details the process in which Greece's traditional leaders and fac-
tions began to create relationships with the three powers, eventually be-
coming labelled as the English, French, and Russian factions. Despite Ka-
podistrias' and the Bavarians' serious attempts to eliminate traditional
regional networks of power, the summary of which constitutes half of the
chapter, these leaders remained to be the primary actors in Greek politics
especially following the assassination of Kapodistrias, which once again
through another civil war victory brought Kolettis into the center of
Greek politics, and opened up channels for Velentzas to become a recog-
nized military figure through his assistance to the former. The chapter
then continues and summarizes the Bavarian monarchy's attempts to ba-
sically realize policies similar to that of Kapodistrias, and how the strong
reactions in the provinces necessitated the Bavarian regime to recognize
traditional elements particularly in Rumeli. After showing how the three
guarantor powers have interfered in domestic Greek politics in various
ways, the chapter concludes with Velentzas organizing an irredentist
foray into neighboring Ottoman provinces, as part of a pro-French
scheme of the Kolettis faction during the Ottoman-Egypt conflict of 1839-
1841.

The Political and Social Setting in Greece in 1821

Understanding the particular trajectories of each region that made up the basic geographical units of modern Greece is key to mapping out the origins of various regional factions and their conflicts. Each region had different forms of social organization that influenced the modus operandi of their political factions during the revolutionary years and after the birth of the Greek nation state. The protagonists of the Greek insurrections in 1821 were very diverse in terms of regional and social identification. The insurgents in the Peloponnesian peninsula were various landowning primate families such as the Londos, Zaimis, Deligiannis families, and the Mavromichalis clan of the Mani region, Moreot Klephts like

Kolokotronis and Nikitaras, and their bands consisting of Peloponnesian peasants. In Rumeli the insurgent leaders were mainly the military chieftains and armatoles of Thessaly, Epirus, and Attica, Souliot clans, and prominent civilian Rumeliots who were formerly at the court of Ali Pasha. In the Aegean islands the leaders of the uprising were the ship owners and maritime merchants of the islands of Hydra, Spezza and Psara such as the Koundouriotis clan. Besides the actors from these regions that eventually became the three basic regional units of Greece, there were Phanariotes and other heterochthon civilians from the diaspora¹ who would also play a significant role in the war of independence and within the political domain of revolutionary Greece, such as Alexandros Mavrokordatos and the Kapodistrias brothers.

The strong regional identities and the very fragmented nature of the Greek speaking society would be a predominant element in Greece's political domain throughout the war of independence. In fact, the developments that would follow during the war would further sharpen these divisions this time within the newly emerging domain of national politics, and the new political setting that would come with it. Simultaneously, this strong regional emphasis was further exacerbated due to the absence of a strong central authority among the insurgents and the emergence and rise of the regional. The differing objectives of these actors regarding the rebellion in 1821 was to be among the primary factors that shaped the internal conflicts. This chapter aims to present a picture that would provide an understanding of how the historical functions of these various groups in the Ottoman provincial regime prior to 1821 heavily influenced the nature of their political action within the framework of the Greek war of independence. To examine the historical developments and geographical conditions in these regions is useful as well in presenting certain features of the origins of these divisions, regional factions, and party politics that came to dominate the Greek political domain in the following decades.

1 Konstantina Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism*, 5.

§ 2.1 The Setting in Rumeli in 1821

Continental Greece (Rumeli) has a distinct feature in that its social structure has equally been formed strongly by environmental conditions as well as historical developments. The Pindus Mountain range that stretches over the peninsula starting from Attica to today's Albania has a central role in shaping the social, economic, and administrative conditions in the region due to its extremely harsh and challenging physical environment. As a consequence of this sharp contrast to the surrounding regions, these highlands were home to an immense number of mountain communities that sustained their livelihood mostly through animal husbandry and nomadic pastoralism. These nomadic shepherds had been moving their animals and flocks through the Balkans for centuries, and in central Greece, this transhumance economy was practiced between the various mountain districts on the Pindus range.²

It appears that pastoralism became increasingly widespread in central Greece around the turn of the nineteenth century. In addition to the region's mountainous environment favoring transhumance pastoralism above agriculture, the increasing political and economic power of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, whose policies of consolidating small landholdings into large estates (chiftliks) leaving many peasants landless and certainly adding to the numbers of mountaineers, more importantly it left large areas of arable land empty and open for pasture.³ In fact, many absentee estate holders in Rumeli found it much more lucrative and less risky to rent their lands as seasonal grazeland to pastoralists instead of hiring tenant farmers or sharecroppers,⁴ further increasing the number of mountain dwelling shepherds at the expense of agricultural cultivation.

This pattern of ecological adjustment and transition to a way of living in response to arbitrary fiscal administration contributed to the population of an already separate society on the highlands of Rumeli that

2 William W. McGrew, *Land and Revolution in Modern Greece, 1800-1881* (New York: The Kent State University Press, 1985), 13.

3 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 21.

4 Ibid. 22.

showed insecurity and hostility towards sedentary town life on the plains, and the administrative and fiscal responsibilities that come with it. The mistrust towards outside authority strengthened local bonds. In traditional agrarian societies at the time such as those found in Rumeli, trust within a community was primarily located in bonds between agnatic kinsmen when a strong state control was absent.⁵ This is a valid interpretation of Rumeli at the turn of the nineteenth-century. Blood ties became the primary base for attachment along with other traditional ties such as that of godparenthood and adoption. As one historian puts it, a strong patriarchal nucleus and its values were at the center of where individual loyalty and service was expected to be directed at, and social behavior was based on.⁶

Another important feature of these groups was arms bearing. In addition to the obvious necessity of security concerns, this practice served occasional brigandage, sheep stealing and robbery. The knowledge of Rumeliot mountain communities on the local terrain and their talent in using arms led to the emergence of a distinct military class originating from the mountains of Rumeli. The utilization of personal violence became a vital element in everyday life, in particular with the emergence of the endemic banditry as an economic endeavor. To prevent banditry from disrupting the order, another group of men called Armatolos were contracted in order to protect peasants, and in particular the lands of absentee chiftlik holders. They were also usually authorized to collect taxes on the lands they were stationed on. It appears that the armed men employed within armatolos corps were much more frequent to come across than simple vagabond bandits, and to become an armatolos captain was the ultimate goal of almost every bandit. After all, no matter how talented or powerful, outlaws required protection to a certain extent in order to survive, and that protection could not be provided by the peasantry. Therefore, the bandit profile of Rumeli does not have the features

5 Blok, *Honour and Violence*, 89.

6 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 25.

understood by Hobsbawm.⁷ The men of arms in Rumeli fit more into the category of men who constantly struggle to acquire a position of power, recognized by a higher authority that would enable them to harbor as many men as possible. As Anton Blok defines the character of patronage of this type of armed men: "Protectors of bandits may range from a close though narrow circle of kinsmen and affiliated friends to powerful politicians, including those who hold formal office as well as grassroots politicians. Protection thus involves the presence of a power domain. Of all categories, the peasants are the weakest. Unless bandits find political protection, their reign will be short."⁸ Or to put another way, while these mountaineers created disorder, issues of security and threat to the effective processing of the administrative mechanisms in Rumeli, around the turn of the nineteenth-century, they at the same time formed a pool of armed men ready to be hired by provincial notables or absentee landowners for protection.⁹ This form of political protection was an essential feature of Rumeliot bands, and as we will see in the following chapters, its practice continued throughout the war of independence and brought many men into the political landscape of revolutionary Greece.

The group of men called *Armatoles* were lawfully contracted arm bearers employed by Ottoman authorities to chase brigands, guard passes, and maintain order in their contracted regions ever since the seventeenth century.¹⁰ The brigands (*klephts*) and the *armatoles* of Rumeli were originating from the same social and cultural environment. The distinction between a brigand and *armatolos* was significantly blurred in the early nineteenth-century. The more fortunate men coming from this culture of violence became *armatoles* and enjoyed certain politically recognized privileges. When they lost the trust of their superiors, they simply

7 Eric Hobsbawm's famous definition of the "Social Bandit" proposes a type of "mythical criminal" originating in agrarian societies as a form of social protest. See, Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.

8 Blok, *Honour and Violence*, 18.

9 Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 33.

10 See, Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Derbend Teşkilatı* (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1967).

returned to banditry until acquiring a pardon again. Both groups, armatoles and brigands occasionally switched sides as a rule whenever they saw their fortunes on the other side of the law. This tendency to do so would also be predominant among several Greek captains who were former armatoles during the war of independence, many of whom had switched sides, and some even done so for multiple times.

The districts policed by the bands of armatoles were called *armatolik* or *captanlik*, which were units sometimes consisting of several villages. These *captanliks* were autonomous and had the *armatolos* captain responsible for the collection of their taxes, which he sometimes further farmed out for his own profit.¹¹ Clientelism was a defining characteristic of the Armatolic system. Some powerful *Armatolos* captains had several villages, families, and subordinate captains with smaller bands under their command. In addition to his duties, the captain as well had his own very large herd of cattle, which he let out to herdsmen, who in return provided him with a percentage of the yearly product.¹² Over the course of time, some of the *armatolics* developed into small scale military aristocracies. By being powerful men and proving their efficient use of violence to obtain resources in areas with lower central state authority, these men inspired respect among the common people. They became ‘men of honor’. They solved disputes and provided protection to the people in their districts, creating a network of patronage of their own with a strong emphasis on local identity, that is founded on personal relationships. This was a very common occurrence in agrarian Mediterranean societies at the turn of the nineteenth-century.

The notion of honour as expressed in a person’s successful control over resources by means of physical force is characteristic of medieval Europe and contemporary Mediterranean societies and other agrarian societies.... In the absence of stable central control over the means of violence, people could not rely for protection on state institutions. With respect to sheer physical survival, they

11 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 27.

12 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 55.

were largely dependent on themselves, or on the protection of more powerful persons. Successful bandits inspire fear and respect. Hence the fascination they radiate, especially for those who are themselves in no way respected – the peasants, from whose ranks they usually emerge.¹³

During the decades preceding the Greek war of independence, many influential Armatolos captains had inherited their posts from their father or another patriarch within their family, as agnatic kinships were the central defining feature of a sense of belonging. Notable examples include the two rival clans of Tzavelas and Botsaris of the Souli region, Odysseas Androutsos and Ioannis Gouras in eastern Rumeli, Georgios Karaiskakis (the illegitimate son of another captain, Dimitris Iskos) in Karditsa, Georgios Varnakiotis and Gogos Bakolas in western Rumeli, Vasos Mavrovouniotis (of Montenegrin origin) in Euboea, and Athanasios Diakos in Phocis. When the war erupted in 1821, these were the names of the military chieftains of the region who wielded a significant amount of influence, and led bands of armed men in the region where Velentzas was from. Velentzas grew up in the environment that was mostly inside the jurisdiction of the armatolik system.

As the power and jurisdiction of the chieftains grew, competition and rivalries started to occur. Blood feuds among these clans were frequent and a natural part of their ethos. As a move of retaliation, the act of shedding the blood of the enemy, or that of a relative of the enemy was a powerful element of this culture of violence in way that it symbolized cleansing the filth of dishonor. In some cases, avoiding this might lead to social exclusion.¹⁴ Many of these blood feuds that mostly emerged during Ali Pasha's domination in the region, such as that between the two Souliot clans Tzavelas and Botsaris, or between Bakolas and Botsaris— Gogos Bakolas had killed Markos Botsaris' father with the orders of Ali Pasha¹⁵

13 Anton Blok, *Honour and Violence*, 21.

14 Ibid, 97.

15 H. A. Lidderdale, ed. *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis 1797-1864*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 27.

during the latter's siege of Souli in 1803¹⁶ — would continue in the following decades and have an impact in the national political domain of insurgent Greece, as both Kitsos Tzavelas and Markos Botsaris would become important political actors during and after the war. Kitsos Tzavelas would even become Prime Minister of Greece for a brief time in 1847.¹⁷ The noteworthy feature of the blood feud between the Souliot clans of Tzavelas and Botsaris is that it defined the political orientation of their leaders, and consequently that of their kins in the following decades within the national politics in Greece.

Ali Pasha, too, had made use of these feuds. His conquest of Souli was assisted periodically by the leaders of either one of these clans. In another note, Ali Pasha's expansion towards Souli is also significant in showing his method of expanding his regional holdings in spite of the Porte's position on the issue and imposing this encroachment by making use of the conditions of a militarily turbulent period that diverted the attention of Istanbul.¹⁸ This understanding of acquiring taxable land through military means and imposing this fait accompli to the senior political authorities within a violent period had been adopted by the captains during the Greek war of independence, who were formerly under the employment of Ali Pasha.

Most of these prominent captains were also under the authority of Ali Pasha, the famous governor of Ioannina. Ali Pasha himself was the son of a prominent bandit.¹⁹ In early nineteenth-century when Ali Pasha was at the height of his power in the region and pursued a policy of gradually consolidating his power in Epirus and Thessaly (also for a brief time when his son Veli Pasha was appointed governor in the Peloponnese), he had direct authority over the network of armatoles as the Derbent Pasha of Thessaly. The relationship between Ali Pasha and the armatoles was

16 B.O.A. HAT 82, 3414 [18 Safer 1219 (23 May 1804)].

17 B.O.A. A.}MKT 96, 97 [22 Şevval 1263 (3 Oct 1847)].

18 Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 50.

19 K. E. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 33.

not an easy one. Both Ali Pasha, and the captains were known for their changing allegiances, and some captains along with their captanlik suffered severe persecutions by the hands of the Pasha. His famous campaigns against the Souliots in 1792 that bore fruit in 1803 had almost the entire area forced to migrate to Parga and later to the Ionian islands to escape persecution.²⁰ He had also moved against several captains whom he suspected of Russian sympathy during the Napoleonic wars.²¹

Captains who proved their loyalty to the Pasha, or the ones fortunate enough to have gained his sympathy, enjoyed several privileges and were frequently at the company of the Pasha in his court in Ioannina. Famous captains who would be key actors in the war of independence such as Androutsos, Varnakiotis, Tsongas, Karaiskakis and Iskos were among them.²² There, they also had the opportunity to make acquaintances with other military and civilian officials both Muslim and Christian. Notable other names from the circle of Ali Pasha who would become very influential in the following years in Rumeli were Ömer Vrioni who commanded several Ottoman campaigns against the Greek insurgents in Rumeli; and Ioannis Kolettis, the physician of Ali Pasha's son Muhtar Pasha, who would in the following years become the undisputed patron of the Rumeliot captains like Velentzas, and make a political career based on this relationship.²³

20 George Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1861), 62.

21 Ibid. 79.

22 Ibid. 94.

23 Beside his role as one of the most prominent leaders of the Greek war of independence, and patron of Rumeliot fighters throughout the war and its aftermath, Ioannis Kolettis is also the person first to formulate the concept of "Megali Idea" during the debates before the promulgation of the 1844 constitution. One of his speeches on the subject is as follows:

"The Kingdom of Greece is not Greece; it is merely a part, the smallest, poorest part of Greece. The Greek is not only he who inhabits the Kingdom, but also he who inhabits Ioannina or Salonika or Serres or Adrianoupolis or Constantinople or Trëbizond or Crete or Samos or any other region belonging to Greek history or the Greek race.... There are two great centers of Hellenism. Athens is the capital of the Kingdom. Constantinople

Ioannis Kolettis was born to an Epirot family with Vlach origins. He studied medicine in Pisa, and upon his return, he became the personal physician of Ali Pasha's son Muhtar Pasha. There, he became friends and enemies with a number of people, many of whom would become important figures in Greece in the following years. It is also at this court where he learned his share of politics. He was a man who was able to combine traditional Epirot and western manners. As Petropoulos described:

Kolettis revealed a fascinating combination of coarse manners and personal charm, ruthless ambition and fervent patriotism, shrewd realism and naïve sentimentalism. Many of the contradictions in his personality reflected his mixed cultural orientation, which proved a distinct political asset. His oriental qualities, which he publicized by his dress in the native kilts, appealed to the people. Yet his partial familiarity with Western ways permitted him to hold his own against Westernized Greeks and even to charm Europeans. Other traits, prized by the Greeks because unusual among them, were absence of boastfulness or pretentiousness, gravity, reserve, and silence. These he perhaps owed to his Vlach ancestry.²⁴

Velentzas was not among these men called *Ali Pasalides*. It is plausible to think that his involvement in this kind of life started during the downfall of Ali Pasha. His personal acquaintance with certain Albanians from the Ali Pasha court such as a certain Vehis Vashari (probably referring to the famous Frasheri clan) has been attested.²⁵ Yet considering the fact that Vashari comes from the same Albanian clan that was employed by Ali Pasha to seek the support of the Greek captains in 1821 in In Rumeli,²⁶

is the great capital, the City, the dream and hope of all Greeks." See, Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor, 1919-1922* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), 2-3.

24 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 86.

25 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 117.

26 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1. 112-113.

it could be said that Velentzas became acquainted with them during this brief period. What is important here is that in Koliopoulos' account, Vehis Vashari and Velentzas met personally in late 1840 when Velentzas was leading a foray into Ottoman territories. Vehis Vashari was the Ottoman Derbent ağa in the same region, and the two had met there. They allegedly discussed a possible cooperation,²⁷ but more detail on the event is not available. It shows however that even two decades later, the networks of violence in the region from the time of Ali Pasha was still an effective defining feature in the relationships between these men, and one that was a much more valid element for them than national consciousness.

To see the nature of the political understanding and reflexes of the Rumeliot captains, it is essential to see the system and network of violence of Ali Pasha that they were directly or indirectly part of. Ali Pasha was the patron of a network that allowed several men to make a military career of irregular nature. The blessing of the Pasha created many opportunities for violent men of Rumeli. With his recognition they were able to assert influence in their own region and create their own clientele, and they had the freedom to pursue a violent lifestyle with partial impunity. This was also due to Ali Pasha recruiting them for his own campaigns. A notable example of his use of the Rumeliot *eşkiya* was when he was ordered by the Porte to aid the siege of Vidin when the Ottoman government declared war on Pasvanoğlu Osman.²⁸ When we think of the argument made by Anton Blok that guardians of bandits could be patrons in formal office that provide political protection, Ali Pasha may fit into this category.²⁹ This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that this kind of patron-client relationship was continued to be sought after by the bandits of Rumeli who were formerly employed by the Pasha after the latter's death. It was Ioannis Kolettis, another protégé of Ali Pasha, who succeeded him and became the protector patron of Rumeliot captains. This was made possible with the creation of a provisional government during Greek war of independence, in which Kolettis held many influential

27 B.O.A. HR.SYS 1678, 6/54 (4 June 1831).

28 Esmer, *A Culture of Rebellion*, 107.

29 Blok, *Honour and Violence*, 18.

offices, giving him the power to provide necessary funds and resources to his clientele of armed bands in Rumeli. It is safe to assume that his time as the physician of Ali Pasha's son Muhtar Pasha enabled Kolettis to meet and create relationships with several captains, and then capitalize on these relationships, as having an office would not have been as effective in creating a strong local clientele without the personal kinships established prior, which was a significant element within the social dynamics of Rumeli. That it is believed that it was Karaiskakis for example, the famous captain in Rumeli who escorted Kolettis out of Ioannina in 1821, proves that Kolettis had already well-established ties with the military element in Rumeli.³⁰

It appears that certain correspondence with the Philiki Etairia and the captains was made at Ali Pasha's court in the year 1820. The dragoman of the Russian consulate in Patras, K. Paparrigopoulos was a member of the Etairia and when the rebellion of Ali Pasha against Ottoman government started in 1820, the two have met in Preveza to negotiate a possible Russian invasion of the Balkans that would help the cause of the Pasha.³¹ Before his departure to St. Petersburg, Paparrigopoulos met with armatolos captains to encourage them to support Ali Pasha in his war against the Sultan.³² In the initial phases of Ali's rebellion, many Greek captains sided with him. Despite the fact that their total devotion to Ali Pasha's cause can be attested, due to their characteristic of always keeping their options open, they knew very well that in the case of an armistice between the Pasha and the Porte, the wrath of the Pasha for their treachery would be far more devastating for them than that of the far away Ottoman capital. Their pragmatic attitude towards political circumstances showed itself once again when the tide had turned against the Pasha and his defeat became imminent. Many captains such as Androutsos, Varnakiotis, and Iskos abandoned Ali Pasha, moved against Muslim Albanians still loyal to him and expanded their captanlik at the expense of them. This incentive of taking military possession of taxable land during politically

30 Gianni B. Benekou, *Kolettis: O Pateras Ton Politikon Mas Ithon* (Athens: Kypseli, 1961), 38.

31 B.O.A. I.DUİT, 192, 55/23 [24 Rebiülahir 1236 (29 January 1821)].

32 Frary, *Russia and the Making of the Modern Greek Identity*, 29.

turbulent periods as a *fait accompli*, such as their former patron Ali Pasha, would be among the central characteristics of Rumeliot military chieftains and their political stance in their participation in the war of independence.³³

§ 2.2 The Setting in the Peloponnese in 1821

The administrative system, social structure, and demography was different in the Peloponnese. In contrast to Rumeli, demographically the peninsula was overwhelmingly Greek Christian. Before the war erupted, there were around 40.000 Muslims on the entire peninsula that had a total population of 400.000,³⁴ and almost all of the Muslims and Jews were living in urban centers such as Tripolitsa, Patras, and Corinth. Rural areas were almost entirely inhabited by Greek peasants, which may partly explain the swift successes and spread of the insurrection on the whole peninsula as early as 1821, and the only instances of resistance being limited to a few urban centers. In a sharp contrast to their demographic weakness, Muslim landowners controlled the majority of the landed property in the region, making it possible for the emergence of certain landed notables with immense wealth. The most obvious example is Kamil Bey. From his seat in Corinth, he controlled dozens, if not a hundred, villages and their revenues. However, in contrast to those notables of other regions, Kamil Bey and Muslim notables of the Peloponnese did not have the military strength equal to their economic power, mainly due to a limited number of Muslim males in the region. Back in 1770, during the Orlov revolt in the Peloponnese that took place during the Russo-Ottoman war between 1767-1774, Muslim Albanian irregulars had to be brought over from Rumeli to crush the rebellion due to this lack of Muslim manpower in the region.³⁵ In 1821, when Hurşit Pasha, the governor

33 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 45.

34 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 73.

35 Ibid. 74.

of Morea was ordered to take his garrison and move against Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, Tripolitsa, the capital of the Mora Vilayet was entrusted into the hands of Albanian mercenaries led by Elmas Bey (Elmas Meçe).³⁶

The Peloponnese was also home to a number of influential Christian primate families called Kocabaşı. These Christian notables were valuable for the Ottoman government due to their function in raising revenues and collecting taxes from Christian peasants within their jurisdiction. In return for their service, these primates were granted a significant degree of autonomy within their districts. Being an aristocratic class as a product of both Ottoman imperial governance in the region as well as the traditional communal rule in the region, the kocabaşı's served in the advisory council of the Ottoman governor in Tripolitsa and capitalized from the Ottoman fiscal administration in the countryside. In addition to these features, they were also known for their partly imitation of the Ottoman elites' way of living to distinguish themselves from the Greek peasants that they ruled over. The cultural affinity of the primates to their Muslim counterparts in Tripolitsa had reached such an extent that they had begun to be addressed with titles such as "bey", and their sons as "beyzade", such as the clan of Giorgos Sisinis,³⁷ or Petrobey of Mani, and his sons, who appear even in Makrygiannis' memoirs as "Beyzade".³⁸ Their clothing and houses were imitations of those of the Muslim notables and Pashas in Tripolitsa and Corinth. In the sense of this imitation of the Ottoman ruling class in order to strengthen their place within it, they do to a certain extent resemble the Phanariotes.³⁹

For the peasants living in miserable conditions under these primates, they were not only seen as oppressors who lived luxuriously at their expense, but also as collaborators with the Muslim overlords. Besides being tax farmers, these primates were also moneylenders to the peasantry, through which they often made them dependent, and subject to their

36 Ilıcak, *Those Infidel Greeks*, 1651.

37 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 30

38 Lidderdale, ed. *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 69

39 Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 6.

clientele.⁴⁰ Even though many primates became important politicians in the war of independence, such as Kanellos Deligiannis, Andreas Zaimis, Petros (Petrobey) Mavromichalis, and Andreas Londos, this enmity between these two classes continued and was capitalized on by other influential political and military figures, such as the famous klepht Theodoros Kolokotronis, and the first president of Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias, both of whom presented themselves as the champion of the peasantry and common people.

Although these families and their clientele represented the same interests as a whole, they were also competitive amongst each other. The most prominent of the Peloponnesian primate families, Deligiannis, Zaimis, Notaras, and Londos, and their estates were located in the north-western part of the peninsula, south of the Corinth Gulf, making their estates neighbor to each other: Deligiannis in Karytaina, Zaimis in Kalavryta, and Londos in Vostitsa. Historically, the Deligiannis clan and the Zaimis and Londos clans were rivals. Andreas Zaimis and Andreas Lontos were lifelong allies, often mentioned as the Lontos-Zaimis faction. The rivalry between the Londos-Zaimis and Deligiannis factions along with their clientele had already been further deepened in the decades before the revolution by the act of every Ottoman governor in the Peloponnese allying himself with one faction and alienating the others in order to strengthen his authority.⁴¹ An important instance on this rivalry among the Peloponnesian kocabaşı is the series of events that followed the appointment of Veli Pasha, son of Ali Pasha as governor of Peloponnese in 1807. This appointment caused an immediate controversy among the landed elite in the Peloponnese Muslim and Christian alike, many of whom feared that this appointment would lead to an eventual loss of their dominions, as Ali Pasha's objective to enlarge his dominions by

40 Vaso Serinidou, "Communities," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*. ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides, and Constantinos Tsoukalas. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2021), 87.

41 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 65.

obtaining appointments for his sons and other relatives was well known.⁴² A strong opposition emerged among the Peloponnesian notables, who tried to use their political and financial influence to get rid of Veli Pasha.⁴³ Despite this common reaction across confessional divide however, local rivalries have nevertheless demonstrated themselves. Sotirakis Londos had allied himself with Veli Pasha and managed to use his rival Deligiannis' opposition to Veli Pasha for his own fortunes, becoming one of his favorites. When the unified opposition of Muslim and Christian notables bore fruit and they convinced the Porte to replace Veli with another governor called Icilli Ahmet in 1812, this change caused the execution of Londos, and the brief ascension of the Deligiannis faction as favorites.⁴⁴ After the replacement of Icilli Ahmet in 1815, this time Deligiannis was executed by the new governor Şakir Ahmet in 1816.⁴⁵ Like the rivalry of the Souliot Botsaris and Tzavelas clans, the rivalry between the Deligiannis and Londos-Zaimis factions originating during Ottoman administration would have a long-lasting impact on the national political arena in independent Greece. Both Kanellos Deligiannis and Andreas Zaimis would often join separate factions and political parties instead of creating a unified Peloponnesian primate faction, except for the brief period of civil war that will be explained in the following chapters.

On the southernmost tip of the Peloponnesian peninsula is the Mountainous Mani region. This area had a distinguished status due to its complete autonomy, and separate administration from the rest of the peninsula. The chieftain of Mani was Petros (Petrobey) Mavromichalis, head of the very large Mavromichalis clan that administered the Mani district. Despite their dominance in the region, the Mavromichalis clan was not

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- 42 Dimitris Dimitropoulos, "Aspects of the Working of the Fiscal Machinery In the Areas Ruled by Ali Paşa," in *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaption*. ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos, and Elias Kolovos. (Rethymno: University of Crete – Department of History and Archaeology, 2007), 63.
- 43 B.O.A. TS.MA,e 710, 27 [29 Zilhicce 1225 (25 Jan 1811)].
- 44 Dean Konstantaras, "Christian Elites of the Peloponnese and the Ottoman State, 1715-1821," *European History Quarterly* 43 no.4 (October 2013): 628-656, 639.
- 45 B.O.A. HAT 686, 33324 [18 Safer 1231 (19 Jan 1816)].

wealthy. The Mani region in general was not yielding much revenue to begin with. One of the primary incomes of the Maniots was the occasional raid and plunder in the surrounding lowlands in southern Peloponnese such as Kalamata that were held by Turkish landowners,⁴⁶ and the mountains of the autonomous Mani in return provided refuge from persecution. Among his other responsibilities, Petrobey, was apparently assigned by the Porte to eliminate the endemic brigandage of Maniots.⁴⁷ Despite his partial attempts in curbing the banditry originating from Mani to satisfy the Porte, Petrobey also had his eyes set on the large estates in southern Peloponnese. In 1818, he became a member of the Philiki Etairia, and was one of the first Greek notables to join the revolution in March 1821. After quickly capturing large lands in southern Peloponnese, Petrobey and his Mavromichalis faction with their strong patriarchal bond and local attachment, became a powerhouse in future Greek politics.

In the Peloponnese the military element as well was different than that in Rumeli. Rumeliot *armatolos* bands were military enterprises that provided their service to the imperial authorities in their region. They were instructed to protect a certain district and enjoyed fiscal privileges and a certain amount of administrative autonomy. The military class in the Peloponnese that had a legitimate operation were called *kapoi* (plural for *kapos*).⁴⁸ In the Peloponnese, where large estates were much more abundant, and powerful Christian estate holders present, *kapoi* were armed Greek militia hired by these notables to protect their lands from bandits in return for wages. They were not entrusted with authorities that went further than simply guarding estates. Like in Rumeli, the distinction between a *kapos* and a bandit was very blurred however, and men found themselves frequently on both sides of the law. Despite the fact that similar to the *armatoles* there was a deep traditional element to the military class in the Peloponnese, the latter never occupied administrative positions like the former, and were almost always dependent on

46 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 69.

47 B.O.A. HAT 574, 28126 [27 Rebiülevvel 1234 (24 Jan 1819)].

48 Probably originating from the Italian word *Capo*, which was also used in Sicily to name the heads of the Mafia clans hired to protect estates from bandits.

their primate patrons for recognition and livelihood, but also to be able to pay their men. Otherwise, they themselves would have to resort to banditry. The war of independence provided an opportunity for these men to rise within the social hierarchy. Famous chieftains who have served as kapoi were the renowned klepht Theodoros Kolokotronis, his nephew Nikitaras, Basil Petimezas, and Dimitrios Koliopoulos. Kolokotronis, Nikitaras, and Koliopoulos served the Deligiannis family, and Petimezas the Zaimis family.⁴⁹

Being a kapos was not a full-time occupation however, as they worked as kapoi only when they were not engaging in brigandage themselves. In 1806, after a vigorous campaign by Ottoman troops, most of the klephts had fled to the Ionian islands.⁵⁰ In the following decade, the Ionian islands went from the French to the Russians and eventually to British control. During their exile in the Ionian islands the Peloponnesian klephts such as Kolokotronis joined the regiments that were created by each of these powers. Kolokotronis became close friends with Richard Church, the commanding officer of the 1st Regiment Greek Light Infantry, in which Kolokotronis himself was junior officer.⁵¹ Two decades later, Richard Church joined the Greek cause and became the one of the most influential military commanders in western Rumeli.

§ 2.3 The Setting in the Islands

The islands of Hydra, Psara, and Spezza were home to influential maritime merchant families and their commercial fleet. The entire economy of these islands was based on maritime trade. The islands enjoyed complete autonomy and in return paid an annual tribute to the Ottoman capital. The islands also provided sailors for the imperial fleet.⁵² Unlike in the Peloponnese, despite a social divide between ship owning aristocratic families such as the Koundouriotis family, and common sailors

49 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 34.

50 Ibid. 34.

51 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 80.

52 Ibid. 152.

existed, the profit from commercial voyages was shared with every participant.⁵³ During the Napoleonic wars, Greek maritime merchants had increased their revenues from the Mediterranean trade and prospered further with the increase of grain prices, due to the war in Europe having a negative impact on the harvest in the continent. After 1815, however, grain prices started to decrease, and the sailors on these islands in particular were heavily affected. In 1821 when the revolution in mainland Greece erupted, there was great unrest in the islands, mostly due to increased unemployment caused by the economic stagnation. Therefore, it is no surprise to see that the revolution, and the prospect revenues through privacy was received enthusiastically by the common sailors. The notables of Hydra, however, were not that desirous. The idea of giving up the administrative and fiscal privileges by the Porte that they had been enjoying for the last decades, and having to utilize their small commercial fleet to face the imperial navy was understandably making them hesitant to devote to what they saw as the arbitrary cause of Etairists from Russia, and a few Peloponnesian notables.⁵⁴ Despite the hesitance, however, Konstantinos Koundouriotis, the wealthy notable of Hydra, accepted the call eventually, and Hydra formally joined the insurgents. This was achieved mostly due to the ever-increasing pressure and threats of the mob of sailors led by the sea captain Andreas Oikonomou, leaving the notables in the end no other choice but to declare the participation of Hydra.⁵⁵ The contribution of the Aegean islands to the rebellion was crucial, in terms of the economic as well as military survival of the uprising. While the Aegean and Ioanian islands had contributed to the war effort with an estimated fleet of six hundred vessels⁵⁶, the Aegean islands, Hydra in particular, had played a significant role during the civil wars as well. The Rumeliot camp took refuge in the islands, and this influence on

53 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 36.

54 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 153.

55 Ibid. 153-155.

56 Katerina Galani, and Gelina Harlaftis, "Aegean Islands and the Revolution at Sea," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, 147

the civilian government enabled Giorgos Koundouriotis, the magnate of Hydra to assume the role of head of the executive between 1823 and 1826.

§ 2.4 Phanariots

Another distinct group of influential people that would take an important role in Greece were the Phanariotes. In the Phanar neighborhood of Istanbul, where the Ecumenical Patriarchate is located, certain local elite families emerged such as the Mavrokordatos (İskerletzade), Karatzas, Kallimaki, Soutsos, Mourouzis, and Ypsilantis families. Their influence originally derived from their commercial activities in the capital and the Aegean Sea. However, from the late seventeenth century onwards, these families would increasingly be able to attach themselves to the Ottoman Imperial governance and be trusted with important bureaucratic and administrative positions in the Empire. There were two major posts for Phanariots. The first was the office of grand dragoman, which granted an important diplomatic function to the Phanariotes such as engaging in highly delicate diplomatic negotiations with foreign diplomatic emissaries.⁵⁷ The other one was the two offices of Haspodar of Wallachia and Moldavia. Thanks to their dominance over the Orthodox Patriarchate, the Phanariot families were able to create a monopoly on these two offices. Along with occupying important offices in the empire, and being representatives of the ruling elite, they also adopted certain elements from the way of living from their Muslim counterparts, such as their clothing, and their terminology; while developing similar kinship practices by creating their own courts in the Principalities.⁵⁸ In that sense, they resembled the Peloponnesian primate families. Where they differed heavily however, was that Phanariots were complete foreigners to the lands that became insurgent Greece. Besides the fact that they never exercised any form of influence in the region, they were resented by local elites.⁵⁹ In addition to

57 Ariel Salzmann, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire: Rival Paths to the Modern State* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 111.

58 Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 11.

59 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 26.

the hostility towards outsiders, the Phanariotes' European demeanor and their disdain towards locals made them increasingly unlikeable. This would particularly cause a problem in the Peloponnese where the primates were highly uncompromising in sharing political authority with newcomers; whereas in Rumeli, the Phanariotes found a relatively genial environment, mostly due to the fact that the revolutionary leaders in Rumeli were military chieftains, and their attachment to a higher political authority would benefit their cause of seeking recognition in the political arena. We saw this way of seeking political protection in the passages about Ali Pasha, and how this practice continued when Kolettis assumed this role. In fact, Kolettis and the Phanariot Mavrokordatos, who established his power base in western Rumeli would be lifelong political rivals.

In the early nineteenth-century, many young Phanariotes started to join the Philiki Etairia. Apart from Alexandros Ypsilantis, the leader of the society and commander in chief of the society's foray into Moldova, and his brother Dimitrios Ypsilantis; the future Russian ambassador to Greece, Gavriil Katakazy was an Etairist and Phanariot.⁶⁰ The haspodar of Moldavia between 1819-1821 Michael Soutsos was also a member. The Ypsilantis brothers' political careers in Greece would not last very long. Alexandros was to be captured by the Habsburgs police, where, due to Prince Metternich's zealous anti-revolutionary policies he ended up in a Vienna prison. Dimitrios capitalized on his brothers' fame and remained somewhat politically relevant in the Peloponnese for the next few years. Soutsos was to be slightly more fortunate in terms of a political career in Greece, where he occupied several domestic and diplomatic posts. However, the most prominent Phanariot who would dominate the political domain in Greece was Alexandros Mavrokordatos. When the uprisings in the Peloponnese began, Mavrokordatos was in Pisa along with his cousin prince Karatzas, former haspodar of Wallachia, who had fled to Europe due to his maladministration of the principality causing the Sultan to turn against him.⁶¹ Upon learning of the uprisings, Mavrokordatos took off to

60 Frary, *Russia and the Making of the Modern Greek Identity*, 28.

61 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 116.

Greece and arrived in Missolonghi, where he would create his powerbase in western Rumeli.

§ 2.5 Conclusion

In the following years, starting with the uprisings in 1821, these protagonists coming from diverse backgrounds became involved in conflicts beyond anybody's expectation. They were the products of different segments within Ottoman society, and the cultural and social elements that united them were indeed fewer than those dividing them. In addition to conflicting interests due to personal rivalries, historical feuds, and class antagonism, regional sentimentalism became a primary factor in determining one's alliances and the scope of his armed struggle within Greece's war of independence. As soon as the possibility of a central administration emerged that would threaten historical power arrangements, regional factionalism came forward, which is going to be the subject of the next chapter. Velentzas, too, was the product of this environment and thanks to the war, was increasingly becoming entangled in these networks of violence in Rumeli that were present prior. The Rumeliot character was to be a defining element of his military future.

3

The Formation of the Regional Factions and the First Civil Wars (1821-1828)

The purpose of this chapter is to go through the military and political developments after the war started. In the previous chapter we have seen the various complex dynamics in each region that produced the protagonists of the Greek war of independence, and the following pages will try to show how revolutionary leaderships had either been built on the previous social arrangements within each region or been born thanks to the revolutionary circumstances that provided channels for other individuals to climb the social hierarchy. In any case, political roles have still continued to be defined within the models and relationships of the previous Ottoman administration. This becomes obvious with intra-revolutionary conflicts whenever the possibility of a break from previous

arrangements occurs. We will see in the following pages that the participation of historically privileged persons and groups in the war, who in the future became prestigious leaders in Greece was conditioned by their need to contain and restrain the unpredictable mobility from below, in particular among the Peloponnesian primates and islanders. In Rumeli, despite the fall of Ali Pasha, types and patterns of patronage among the irregular military element continued to be an essential element.

The chapter then continues to reveal the conflicts between the regional leaderships. Despite the military successes on multiple fronts, the insurgent Greeks on a majority did still not see their actions within a framework of a unified Greece. A territorial unity under the common Greek identity that included the Peloponnese, Rumeli, and the Aegean islands made little sense for most of the agents of the revolution, because most of them had never seen their identities exceed regional definitions, and even if they did, many of them were not keen on giving up their privileges to a central authority. This became painfully obvious when attempts were made by the civilian authorities to centralize the Greek insurgence under a single government, and consequently led to the reactions which resulted in civil wars. These internal conflicts deepened the factional divide among the insurgents, and personal followings and regional factions evolved into separate political enterprises. Among the purposes of this chapter is to create a genealogy of these factional divides.

Furthermore, this chapter aims to see how these factions established alliances with the emissaries of the great powers and evolved into the “French”, “English”, and “Russian” parties during the Kapodistrian and Othonian period. For the story of Kolettis as well as Velentzas, this period is in particular significant, because it provided Kolettis the political means to ascend to the position of a Rumeliot faction leader. His personal following in the later years came to be known as the French party. In the case of Velentzas, this was when he started to find his place within this changing world and made a name for himself in certain important circles thanks to his actions during the Rumeliot invasion of the Peloponnese, and later on during the fight against the Egyptian invaders. Both men

established their patron-client relationship in the same period. Through tracing the beginnings of this relationship, it will be possible to discover the ways Kolettis made himself a political benefactor for Rumeliot captains, as well as how through his allegiance to Kolettis, Velentzas, aware or not, became involved in a political network that later on transcended the Greek political domain and got increasingly entangled with the European diplomatic system.

§ 3.1 The Rebels of the Peloponnese

The insurrection in the Peloponnese began in March 1821, and spread rather quickly to the whole peninsula in the span of a few months. Among the developments that drove these earlier uprisings were the continued belief of a guaranteed Russian aid even after Ypsilantis' defeat,⁶² the effect of the Etairists' endless encouragements,⁶³ and the obvious vulnerability of the Ottoman military in the Peloponnese after Hurşit Pasha and his troops took off to siege Ioannina. The uprisings occurred more or less at the same time in numerous places without the arrival of Alexandros Ypsilantis or any other higher authority. This is perhaps the most significant function that the Philiki Etairia had served in the region in 1821. They succeeded in infiltrating and using the existing networks of patronage in the Peloponnese. As early as March 1821, Ottoman authorities in the Peloponnese immediately noticed the kocabaşı's of Kalavryta and Vostitsa, Zaimis and Londos of engaging in suspicious activities.⁶⁴ The induction of key members within this traditional network into the Etairia enabled the insurrection to spread fast and mobilize vast amount of the population in the countryside at once.⁶⁵

Upon hearing the news, Kolokotronis secretly crossed to the Peloponnese and made it to Mani. With prior knowledge that the chieftain of

62 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 93.

63 Ibid. 91.

64 B.O.A. HAT 839, 37816 [27 Cemaziyelahir 1236 (1 April 1821)].

65 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 91.

Mani, Petrobey is a member of the Etairia, Kolokotronis pledged his services to him. Ottoman authorities immediately requested Petrobey to seize him. Apparently, they still had the belief that Petrobey would stay loyal, since his son was held hostage in Istanbul to ensure that very thing. The son had already escaped however, making it easier for his father to act in favor of the insurrection. Maniot troops, led by Kolokotronis, and Nikitaras along with Petrobey as commander in chief, quickly captured Kalamata and the plains in Messenia. The southern plains of the Peloponnese apart from a few well-fortified towns were captured by the insurgents by the summer of 1821.

After Kalamata was captured, Kolokotronis took his few men and wandered further north to Karytaina, his birthplace. Despite a lack of personal wealth, Kolokotronis had the fame of being the most skilled military leader in the Peloponnese, which neither the primates, nor other revolutionary leaders possessed. This quality made him immediately one of the most key actors of the revolution in the Peloponnese. Kolokotronis was already a well-known and influential bandit. Yet, his life took a similar path with Velentzas in the sense that it was the war that brought him the reputation with which he would be remembered, although Kolokotronis' level of prestige and reputation was and still is significantly higher than any other revolutionary hero. The war provided these men in the Peloponnese and Rumeli the perfect violent circumstances to advance the ranks of the social hierarchy, because they were the experts of the private use of violence as a means of control in the public arena.⁶⁶

In Karytaina, Kolokotronis' social origins provided him with two significant benefits. The first one is that the troops consisting of peasants in the region felt a certain social relatedness to him due to him coming from a humbler social background than that of the primates.⁶⁷ This very same feature made him also a convenient partner in the eyes of Deligiannis, the primate of Karytaina and his former employer. Deligiannis did not consider him as a potential political challenger in the future, but merely as a

66 Anton Blok, *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860-1960: A Study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975), 6.

67 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 76.

kapos in the service of his patron. Kolokotronis took control of the troops in Karytaina and created a powerful military foundation for his future role in revolutionary politics. An important aspect of Kolokotronis' political rise was his relationship with Deligiannis, as well as the differences between the two men. The dynamic between them shows further dimensions of the war of independence, perhaps even one of its most revolutionary features. Clearly, Deligiannis' plan for the insurrection did not involve a radical break with the present social arrangements. It merely anticipated a political future that involved the replacement of the Muslim overlords with Greek primates. On the other hand, the rise of the likes of Kolokotronis, along with a strong popular support, signaled the possibility of the future disintegration of historically entrenched power structures in the Peloponnese.⁶⁸ This possibility was later on probably noticed by Deligiannis, too, as he abandoned his fur and robes that symbolized his kocabaşı status and put on the traditional foustanella, which could be taken as a clear symbolic gesture to appeal to that trend.⁶⁹

After becoming the de facto military commander of the troops in Karytaina, Kolokotronis along with Deligiannis took their troops to Tripolitsa and began to siege the provincial capital of the Mora eyalet. They were soon joined by Petrobey and his Maniot forces, and Dimitrios Ypsilantis, who, as the proxy of his brother, was seen by many as the supreme commander of the revolution. However, besides his name and the affection that the peasantry seemed to have for him, again mostly due to him not being a kocabaşı, Ypsilantis had neither a particular political nor military skill to offer, and his synthetic authority would soon perish as the primates and captains realized his incompetence and took advantage of it.⁷⁰ During the siege of Tripolitsa, suspecting that he would get in the way of letting the soldiers plunder the city after its eventual surrender, Peloponnesian chieftains made sure Ypsilantis left the siege and took his small

68 Ibid. 76

69 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 97.

70 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1. 289.

force to the golf of Corinth, after he was wrongly made to believe that an Ottoman attack was imminent from that direction.⁷¹

The fall of the city of Tripolitsa was made easier after secret negotiations with Elmas Bey and his unit of 1,500 Albanian mercenaries, whom Hurşit Paşa had left in the city as a security force. According to Makrygiannis, Hurşit left Elmas, because he was an Ali Pasha loyalist.⁷² Kolokotronis personally negotiated with Elmas Bey and made a *Besa* (word of honor) with him, after sending him a letter assuring him that they would not be harmed if they accept the proposal, and emphasizing that he (Kolokotronis) has never violated his *Besa*.⁷³ As a result, the Albanian unit was allowed to leave the city unharmed. This emphasis by Kolokotronis on the term *Besa* shows the distinct kind of shared mentality and conduct of honor these military men had among themselves. It is a word of honor that both men know that the other one will hold. This kind of mentality was explained by a historian as follows: “While the eşkiya leaders were willing to rescind the promises they made to the sultan and his officials, they seemed to have their own codes of conduct and honor that informed how they interacted with each other.”⁷⁴

A day after the Albanians left, on 8th of October, Tripolitsa surrendered and became a scene of an unprecedented civilian massacre.⁷⁵ Despite the wealth he gained through the plunder of his men during the massacres of Tripolitsa, Kolokotronis’ reputation suffered for a while due to his role in the whole affair. Not long after Tripolitsa, Corinth was also captured, making the Peloponnese almost entirely liberated from Ottomans, except Patras. Other than due to its effective defenses, the siege of Patras was further damaged by a clear example of Peloponnesian

71 Ibid. 265.

72 Lidderdale, ed. *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 27.

73 B.O.A. HAT 915, 39917 [29.Zilhicce 1837 (16 September 1822)].

74 Esmer, *A Culture of Rebellion*, 114.

75 For the Report of the Ottoman Vezir on the aftermath of the fall of Tripolitsa, see; B.O.A. HAT 877, 38842 [15 Rebiülahir 1837 (9 January 1822)]; For a more detailed account on the Tripolitsa massacres from a contemporary source See: Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1. 269.

factional controversy. Andreas Zaimis, who as their primate, was the commander of the Kalavryta troops during the siege of Patras, prevented Kolokotronis from taking over the siege.⁷⁶ Most probably fearing that the former's rising fame would damage his authority for the benefit of his rival Deligiannis, who was still seen as the patron of Kolokotronis. Zaimis' concerns in regard to Kolokotronis potentially liberating Patras after the events in Tripolitsa was also confirmed by a letter he had sent to Mavrokordatos, making extensive complaints about Kolokotronis' exploits in the Peloponnese and emphasizing that captains such as the latter should not be entrusted with military affairs.⁷⁷ The date in which the letter was sent is unknown, but it shows that in addition to fierce primate factionalism, as early as the 1821-1822, the emergence of former bandit captains as prominent political figures thanks to the war and creating potential threats to the entrenched power structures in the Peloponnese was a development that was reckoned with.

In June 1821, the Peloponnesian Senate was created for issues such as Zaimis' concern of preserving the privileges of primates against the rising star of revolutionary heroes. This reflex of putting aside differences in order to focus on their collective interests like preserving their privileges regarding statuses and property rights was a common characteristic of the Peloponnesian *kocabaşı* class.⁷⁸ Now that almost the whole peninsula was in the hands of the insurgents, the collection of taxes, organization and payment of the troops, and the question of the large estates captured by Muslim notables and pious foundations (*waqf*) were primary issues of the senate.⁷⁹ Its members were almost entirely primates and influential clergymen. The Senate self-proclaimed itself the supreme authority in the Peloponnese and was a strong indication of Peloponnesian particularism throughout the war.⁸⁰ This particularistic reflex of the

76 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1, 276.

77 B.O.A. HAT 938, 40518 [29 Zilhicce 1837 (16 September 1822)].

78 Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 114.

79 McGrew, *Land and Revolution in Modern Greece*, 56.

80 John S. Koliopoulos, Thanos Veremis, *Greece: The Modern Sequel, From 1831 to the Present*, (London: C. Hurst & Co, 2002), 45.

Peloponnesian senate would create a conflict later on with the provisional government, and evolve into an open civil war, that saw the invasion of the Peloponnese by Kolettis' Rumeliot troops, which Velentzas was also a part of.

§ 3.2 The Rebels of Rumeli, and the Mavrokordatos and Kolettis Factions

In Rumeli, the prospects of a military success like that in the Peloponnese were much lower. Demographically, the region was very mixed, which made it much harder for definitive control over the countryside. In the summer of 1821, Hurşit Paşa's troops along with other Ottoman forces in Epirus, Thessaly, and Macedonia were much closer, Ali Pasha was still alive, and the overall uncertainty of a possible general Greek uprising made it much harder to guarantee the participation of the majority of the captains, whose fate was not necessarily dependent on an independent Christian state to begin with. The *armatolic* character of always keeping their options open applied here as well. Throughout the war, Rumeliot captains switching sides between Ottoman and Greek camps, or between multiple Greek factions was frequent and most of the time not something that much of a shock for contemporaries. It was not seen necessarily as treachery, but as a certain prudence that was a necessary feature of the military element in Rumeli for survival, in which principal stances were less important than personal relationships. Within a few years, Karaiskakis, and Androutsos for example would fight on the side of Ali Pasha against the Sultan, then switch to the Sultans side, and eventually ending up fighting on the side of the Greek uprising, before briefly switching to the Ottoman side, and back again.⁸¹

It was not only to avoid betting on the wrong horse that contributed to the versatile nature of the allegiances of Rumeliot captains, but also individual rivalries and feuds, especially when it came to seizing disputed territories. After Karaiskakis abandoned Ali Pasha, he seized the district

81 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 137.

of Agrapha and claimed it his own *armatolik*, trying to benefit from the absence of authority with the downfall of the latter and farm its taxes; whereas Rangos, who had already become a client of Mavrokordatos, was appointed by him to the same area. Clearly showing how political protection of an influential patron was utilized. The dispute for Agrapha reached such heights that in order to evict Rangos once and for all from the district, Karaiskakis entered into negotiations with the Ottomans, figuring that he could not win over Rangos from within the same camp without the political backing that the other one had; but he could eliminate his rival if he could confirm his claim by the Ottomans and then assist them in their efforts to recapture the area.⁸² This would also enable Karaiskakis to obtain the necessary political legitimacy for his use of violence as a means of controlling a public domain. Whether from the Christian Mavrokordatos, or the Muslim Ottoman commander was irrelevant at that point. Karaiskakis would eventually rejoin the Greek camp. Perhaps because Mavrokordatos became the president of the central government, Karaiskakis thought that a local dispute such as that for Agrapha would not be among his primary concerns. In the later years of the war, Karaiskakis would become one of the most celebrated symbols of the Greek war of independence. However, the dispute over Agrapha would continue until his death in 1827.⁸³

Upon arriving in Missolonghi, Alexandros Mavrokordatos immediately started his efforts to create a provisional regional administration. Etairists were never as influential in western Rumeli as they had been in the Peloponnese, so Mavrokordatos did not face a very heavy challenge in persuading the chieftains and notables of western Rumeli to support him. The provisional administration of western Rumeli was founded on the principles of an extraordinary contract that Mavrokordatos made the notables and chieftains of the region sign. Through this document, he introduced certain western principles of statecraft that were novel to the region and tried to create an impersonal form of administration with

82 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 45-46.

83 Ibid. 46.

participation of representatives of various localities.⁸⁴ This was a sharp contrast to the situation that was going on in the Peloponnese, where another Phanariot Dimitrios Ypsilantis was desperately and unsuccessfully trying to establish his personal undisputed leadership, frequently emphasizing his role as the representative of his brother Alexandros Ypsilantis whom he still naively assumed of having the claim of the title of Prince of Greece.⁸⁵ It is noteworthy that the arguably more moderate liberal Mavrokordatos would later on become the leader of the so-called English Party in Greece, and many western Rumeliot notables and captains would be his political clients.⁸⁶ The Peloponnese in return, especially under the future leadership of Kapodistrias that heavily invested in a more autocratic administration would become the backbone of the so-called Russian party.

Being from a particular region did not automatically make a person belong to a regional faction. Western Rumeliot chieftains were heavily involved in rivalries and feuds against each other. In fact, this was among the reasons for Mavrokordatos' relatively easy ascendancy into the regional leadership. In addition to the overall political vacuum caused by the absence of Ali Pasha's presence, for the chieftains of the region it was much more preferable to have an outsider as leader or mediator than having to accept the leadership of another one amongst themselves. While the Souliot Botsaris was a Mavrokordatos loyalist and one of the most influential military leaders of western Rumeliot troops, his rival Tzavelas was not a Mavrokordatist, and would later ally himself with the Russian party, the rival party of Mavrokordatos' English party. Another chieftain that had a feud with Botsaris, Gogos Bakolas, went even further and negotiated with Ömer Vrioni, commander of the Ottoman troops, which led to a series of events that almost cost Botsaris his life.⁸⁷

Another Mavrokordatos loyalist chieftain, Varnakiotis as well switched sides and came into an agreement with Ömer Vrioni, whom he

84 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 127.

85 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1. 286.

86 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 81.

87 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1. 327.

probably knew from Ali Pasha's court. Unlike Gogos Bakolas however, he left the Mavrokordatos camp after finally coming to understand that the political system that Mavrokordatos was trying to eventually bring into the region had no place for the likes of him, since the disposal of traditional military elites in the provinces like him would come at the expense of his personal authority and revenues. Worse even, without sufficient amount of revenues, they would be unable to pay the men under their command who could possibly go serve a rival chieftain.⁸⁸ In the words of Mark Mazower:

Varnakiotis remains a shining example, not of treachery – a term which implies allegiance to a sovereign state – but of the lingering impact of the old Ottoman system of regional governance upon the behavior of some of the military men of continental Greece. That was the system they had grown up with, and their actions – prompted by their own self-interest with its roots in the prosperity of the villages under their control – pointed to the power of localism that lingered in the region long after independence had been gained.⁸⁹

In eastern Rumeli and Attica, where Velentzas hailed from, the power vacuum in 1821 was large. Neither was the *armatolik* system as strong as in western Rumeli, nor had there ever been very powerful large estate holding Kocabaşı's like in the Peloponnese.⁹⁰ In 1821, the weak regional administrative body was headed by the Phanariot and friend of Alexandros Mavrokordatos, Theodoros Negris, who tried to imitate what Mavrokordatos was trying to do in western Rumeli, but ultimately was unsuccessful. The real political authority in the region was soon held by Odysseus Androutsos (Disava), the *armatolos* and former guard of Ali Pasha. By the end of 1821, Androutsos had driven out the weak primates of Livadeia, and established a strong military foothold in Attica, including the districts of Livadeia, Thebes, and Atalanti. He became the virtual ruler

88 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 58.

89 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 186.

90 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1. 373.

and commander in chief of eastern Rumeli, and like his many counterparts, started to increasingly treat the liberated areas under his command like his own *kaptanlık*, and appropriated its resources to consolidate his own personal influence.⁹¹ This would perhaps explain why many men like Velentzas joined the bands that came from another region like that of Tzamis Karatasos, since Androutsos increasingly left little domain and resource to be exploited by others.

Tensions grew between Androutsos and the regional administration in 1822. Being fed up with what George Finlay describes as a “state of anarchy” caused by Androutsos’ bands roaming the region and raiding civilians, the provisional government formally dismissed Androutsos, and with the initiative of Ioannis Kolettis, sent two men to the region to replace him, namely Palaskas and Noutsos.⁹² The two men were known by Androutsos from their shared time in Ali Pasha’s court. Interpreting this move as an attempt to eventually remove him from the political scene altogether, Androutsos, shockingly, killed the two men and increased the tensions between him and the government to a high point. With a similar traditional *armatolos* logic to that of Karaiskakis and Varnakiotis, whose priorities had also been focused more on asserting their regional military and fiscal control than to offer their service to a new civilian authority, particularly one that was seen alien by them; Androutsos, entered into secret negotiations with the more familiar Ottoman authorities. His primary concern was not to lose his grasp on the districts that he had been controlling into the hands of an appointee of the revolutionary administration. This concern grew further when he failed to prevent the troops of Mehmet Pasha, and Dramalı Mahmut Pasha from advancing into Attica, creating another possible opportunity for his rivals to intervene.⁹³ In December 1822, Androutsos went into negotiations with Mehmet Paşa, offering to abandon the Greek cause and entering Ottoman service again, in return for his appointment as *armatolos* in the districts that he captured. In a dispatch sent to Celal Pasha, governor of Rumeli in December

91 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 189.

92 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1. 346.

93 *Ibid.* 376.

1822, it is stated that as the price for his mercy, Androutsos also offered to pay the jizya amount of two years in advance, which gives a fair idea of how much revenue he had amassed in the past year as a rebel captain.⁹⁴

It is unclear whether Androutsos really attempted to abandon the Greek cause altogether. His claim was that he was merely trying to stall the Turkish advance led by Mehmet Pasha to create time for civilians to leave the region.⁹⁵ Like in the case of Karaiskakis, Androutsos' moves reflect the Rumeliot reflex of constantly keeping their options open; as rather than an all-in struggle in the name of an abstract concept such as the Greek nation, it was survival within the traditional world of the Rumeliot captain that is built on personal relationships what determined his motivation of political action. In George Finlay's words, the ambition of Androutsos and other captains such as Bakolas and Varnakiotis was "to ape the tyranny of Ali Pasha in a small sphere".⁹⁶ He eventually returned to the Greek side. However, as a man of high military and administrative capacity combined with little to no trust at all, he was soon started to be sidelined and saw his former underlings to be promoted.

Ioannis Kolettis, another former Ali Pasha man, and an increasingly powerful minister in the government during the civil wars of 1823-1825, had a particular interest in eliminating Androutsos and becoming the undisputed patron of the Rumeliot palikars. In fact, it is believed by contemporaries like Makrygiannis and Finlay that it was part of Kolettis' plan all along to send Palaskas and Noutsos, his other two potential political rivals, against Androutsos, knowing well how the latter would eliminate them, and create a justification for his own downfall along with it, while eventually reducing the competition for the leadership of a Rumeliot faction significantly in favor of Kolettis. The political plot here is noteworthy due to the fact that all of the people involved had been former Ali Pasha

94 B.O.A. BEO. AYN. 577, 185. Cited in Ilıcak, *Those infidel Greeks*, 489.

95 Ilıcak, *Those infidel Greeks*, 1653-1654.

96 George Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution, Vol.2* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1861), 92-93.

protégés and viewed each other as rivals.⁹⁷ While doing that, Kolettis was also using the funds that were entrusted to him in aiding other Rumeliot fighters, creating strong bonds with younger Rumeliots like Velentzas and Gouras.

In 1825, Androutsos contacted Ömer Vrioni and once again asked for amnesty to switch sides, fearing that Kolettis' increasing influence would soon be directed against him.⁹⁸ The Ottoman governor of Rumeli, Reşid Mehmet Pasha (Kütahi) accepted Androutsos' request,⁹⁹ partly with the motivation to capitalize as much as he can from the civil strife the Greeks were experiencing at the time. However, the firm impression of Androutsos' untrustworthiness did not change in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities, either.¹⁰⁰ Androutsos' gains from his constant tricks of playing one side against the other had come to an end, and even though his request for amnesty was accepted, he did not gain this time as much as he hoped. His dream of becoming the next Ali Pasha had failed. Kolettis, pleased with Androutsos presenting him with the opportunity, sent a force led by Androutsos' former subordinate, Ioannis Gouras, of whom Androutsos was also the best man in his wedding, to take over Attica and capture Androutsos. Left without aid from Kütahi Pasha, Androutsos was captured and executed by Gouras.¹⁰¹ Thus, Kolettis eliminated another rival, and strengthened his political influence in eastern Rumeli

§ 3.3 The Rumeliot-Peloponnesian Conflict and the Civil Wars of 1823-1825

In December 1821, after the first initial military successes against the Ottoman troops in both Rumeli and the Peloponnese, regional leaders

97 Lidderdale, ed. *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 61; Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.2. 93.

98 B.O.A. BEO .AYN. 580, 100. Cited in Ilıcak, *Those infidel Greeks*, 797,

99 Ilıcak, *Those infidel Greeks*, 1650.

100 B.O.A. BEO .AYN 580, 100. Cited in Ilıcak, *Those Infidel Greeks*, 797.

101 Dimitrios Papastamatiou, "Military Leaders," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, 404.

from all over insurgent Greece came together in Epidaurus. The meeting was first decided to be held in Tripolitsa. Yet, because of the plague that was caused due to the massacres after the insurgents entered the city, Epidaurus became the place where the first national assembly was held.¹⁰² The first national assembly established Mavrokordatos as the head of the executive, and Kolokotronis as the commander in chief, sidelining Ypsilantis to an insignificant post as the head of the legislative.¹⁰³ However, the first national assembly did not have a very long lasting and binding impact, because after its conclusion, everybody immediately returned to their respective regions to continue the fighting. Mavrokordatos for example, despite his post not requiring doing so, went back to western Rumeli to assume military leadership of the defenders during the first siege of Missolonghi. He knew that in practice, the office of the executive was not giving him any real authority, but it was his firm grasp on the military networks that he established in western Rumeli that gave him the capacity to influence revolutionary politics.

In December 1822, the second national assembly was held in Astros. It is the developments that followed this assembly that led to the divide between several political factions and personal followings, which dominated the remainder of the war, perhaps even the first decade of independent Greece. The civilian leaders of the revolution and the military party led by Kolokotronis came into a conflict. Suspicious of Kolokotronis and his following of a military class consisting of Peloponnesian peasant soldiers and bandits' increasing influence on the Peloponnese at the expense of the central government, the civilian party led by Mavrokordatos and other Peloponnesian primates, mainly Zaimis and Londos, rivals of Kolokotronis' primate ally Deligiannis, tried to curb his military strength by offering him the civilian office of vice-presidency. As an attempt to further strengthen civilian central authority, the office of supreme military commander that was held by Kolokotronis was abolished by the legislative in April 1823. This led to Kolokotronis openly defying the assembly.

102 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.1. 294.

103 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 83.

He captured the members of the new executive. Zaimis, one of the captured members of the executive escaped and joined the civilian camp.

The insurgents had now two rival governments. One was dominated by the Peloponnesian military class led by Kolokotronis and his allies such as Petrobey Mavromichalis, Kanellos Deligiannis and Andreas Metaxas.¹⁰⁴ The other government was comprised of heterochthon civilians, Rumeliots, rival Peloponnesian primates, and the primates of the islands. Since this government had fled and took refuge on the islands, it saw the rise of islander primates to key offices, such as Georgios Koundouriotis who became the president.¹⁰⁵ The real rising star thanks to this conflict however was Ioannis Kolettis. In 1822 he had become minister of interior and thus gained a strong foothold on the national political arena. Through this office he was able to strengthen his profile as patron of Rumeliots with more concrete means, such as financing Rumeliot captains with necessary funds.

Actual fighting between the two camps did not break out until late 1823 when the season of Ottoman offensives was over. This first stage of the military conflict among the Greek insurgents did not last very long. After a few minor battles between Kolokotronis' men and the Rumeliots who were brought by Kolettis, Kolokotronis gave up and surrendered Nafplion to the government in Kranidi. This rather quick victory was partly the result of the news of the arrival of the English loans that were ensured by the Philhellenes in London.¹⁰⁶ The fact that Mavrokordatos was the choice as the recipient of the money made all the difference, and the prospect of having a share of this money gave the Peloponnesians led by Kolokotronis the reason for a truce.¹⁰⁷ Zaimis and Londos acted as mediators between the two camps, trying to re-establish themselves in their regional stronghold, the Peloponnese.¹⁰⁸

104 An ancestor of Ioannis Metaxas, the dictator that ruled Greece between 1936-1941.

105 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 85.

106 Dimitris Livanios, "Civillian Leaders and the Beginnings of the Modern State," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, 360.

107 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 86.

108 Ibid. 87.

Another man who saw his fortunes change to the positive during the civil wars was Ioannis Velentzas. Kolettis capitalized on his ability to direct the violence of Rumeliots towards the Peloponnese. Velentzas benefited by participating in the invasion of the Peloponnese, through which he gained the recognition of men like Makrygiannis, who talks about Velentzas in his memoirs in very high regard. At the time, Velentzas was still with Tzamis Karatasos' band.¹⁰⁹ Through Makrygiannis, Karatasos and Velentzas became an acquaintance and client of Kolettis.¹¹⁰ This relationship with Kolettis allowed them, like other numerous captains from Rumeli to exploit the internal conflict and invade the Peloponnese in the following second civil war.

The brief period that followed the truce saw Zaimis and Londos' allegiances further gravitate towards the Peloponnese. Being powerful primates of the Peloponnese, they had no real power in the civilian faction due to being away from their strongholds. Moreover, the domination by Rumeliots and islanders in the government, the explicit nepotism that Kolettis was showing towards Rumeliots,¹¹¹ and Zaimis being removed from office that further displayed his subordinate role in the eyes of the Rumeliot-Island faction, led Zaimis and Londos to join the Peloponnesian camp. It was earlier mentioned that Peloponnesian particularism was strong, and with the creation of a unified Peloponnesian faction, Kolokotronis once again revolted against the government with much stronger support from the entire peninsula. The second civil war started in the fall of 1824. It was partly the result of the military party in the Peloponnese led by Kolokotronis trying to capitalize on their military successes with political rewards. But also, according to one Ottoman report, it was due to the conflict on the distribution of the English loan.¹¹² The money was distributed by the governments nepotism toward Rumeliots with the impact of Kolettis. The inclusion of the primates in the Peloponnesian camp

109 Lidderdale, *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 44.

110 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 94.

111 Dimitris Livanios, "Civilian Leaders and the Beginnings of the Modern State," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, 360.

112 B.O.A. HAT 938, 40529 [29 Zilhicce 1242 (24 July 1827)].

despite their class antagonism was the consequent result of the government's attempts to completely subjugate the Peloponnese with the use of Kolettis' Rumeliot chieftains. The military nature of the conflict made Kolokotronis the natural leader of the Peloponnesian faction. It is also in the Ottoman report that was sent to Ömer Pasha in Euboea, which explicitly named Kolokotronis and his allies from Karytaina as the leaders of the rebellious faction. It states unsettled issues (probably referring to the distribution of the English loan) and leadership disputes as the reason of this conflict and expresses the hope that this civil strife brings the end to their rebellion.¹¹³ Kolokotronis used the undisputed leadership of the Peloponnesian faction given to him thanks to his military talents and capitalized on it by increasingly becoming the sole political leader and creating a strong political following. The Peloponnesian alliance between former bandits, peasants and primates led by Kolokotronis would become the nucleus of the future Russian party.¹¹⁴

In the second civil war (1824-1825), the Peloponnese saw an overwhelming Rumeliot invasion led by Kolettis. In the course of six weeks, the whole peninsula was destroyed. Kolokotronis and Deligiannis imprisoned, and the estates of Zaimis and Londos plundered and destroyed by the troops of Karaiskakis.¹¹⁵ Kolettis was joined by almost every major military leader from Rumeli such as Karaiskakis, Tzavelas,¹¹⁶ Karatasos, and Makrygiannis,¹¹⁷ most of whom did not pass on the opportunity to raid the Peloponnese and further enrich themselves, but also to prove their allegiance to Kolettis, who was in the unique position to distribute funds to literally whomever he pleased. There is almost no Rumeliot chieftain who did not ask Kolettis for financial help during this period.¹¹⁸ Kolettis used public office to create a loyal following and dissociate the

113 B.O.A. BEO. AYN. 580, 7. Cited in Ilıcak, *Those Infidel Greeks*, 780.

114 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 105.

115 Lidderdale, *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 56.

116 "Tzavelas and Karaiskakis to Kolettis" AA 67220 (14 April 1825).

117 Lidderdale, *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 56.

118 "Vasos Mavrvouniotis to Kolettis" AA 67152 (21 June 1825); "Markos Botsaris to Kolettis" AA 67217 (14 April 1825); "Makrygiannis to Kolettis" AA 74039 (4 April 1826).

men he harbored from his rivals in eastern Rumeli. It was this period when he convinced Gouras to eliminate his former chief Androutsos in Attica, which was mentioned earlier. On top of these developments, the second civil war gave Kolettis the unique opportunity to further capitalize on his position of patron of Rumeliots by commanding them to fight the Peloponnesians thus giving them the opportunity to gain booty from Peloponnesian primate estates.

As a former Ali Pasha protégé, Kolettis using Rumeliot captains, most of whom were former *armatoles* or bandits to fight an internal conflict, significantly resembles Ali Pasha using the Rumeliot *eşkiya* during the siege of Vidin when the Porte had attacked Pasvanoğlu, and asked Ali Pasha for reinforcement.¹¹⁹ It is this familiar role of a political office holder giving the irregular military element of Rumeli opportunity to fight and plunder with impunity that further strengthened Kolettis' position as head of a Rumeliot faction during the civil wars. The civil wars were the result of factional conflicts; however, the consequences of these confrontations also made sure that this factional divide became even sharper. Another noteworthy aspect is the fact that at this stage of the war of independence, regional particularism was still so strong that it could lead to an invasion of such a devastating magnitude, almost like a war against a completely alien entity. The factional fight between Greeks and the destruction of the Peloponnese, would make it much easier for the troops of Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt to defeat the Greek insurgent the next year after Sultan Mahmud asked his governor of Egypt Mehmet Ali for reinforcements.¹²⁰

Like Kolettis, albeit to a lesser degree, Velentzas has also made his bones thanks to the factional strife that led to the civil wars, but also due to the fight against the Egyptians that unfolded that episode. In 1824, Velentzas was stationed in Attica, still with Tzamis Karatasos. They were soon convinced to join Kolettis' Rumeliot army and headed to the Peloponnese and joined the exploits that took place there. Velentzas became

119 Esmer, *A Culture of Rebellion*, 107.

120 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.2. 37.

a mainstay in Kolettis' network and became more and more dependent like other captains of his caliber on Kolettis holding office. This became much more apparent when the fighting stopped after 1827, and the prospects of acquiring material gains through plunder significantly decreased. Therefore, it is at a later stage of the war that Velentzas became a completely devout Kolettis loyalist, due to his need of patronage. After the civil war ended, with the Egyptian invasion, another major episode in the Greek war of independence began that temporarily led to peace among the factions and enabled them to focus on their common goal. After the Egyptian invasion started, in a letter addressed to the Rumeliot Karaiskakis, the Peloponnesian primate Zaimis assures him that he is on his way to the Peloponnese to join the fight, stating that their old differences belong to the past.¹²¹

§ 3.4 The Egyptian Invasion and the Internationalization of the Greek Crisis

In February 1825, the Egyptian troops of Ibrahim Pasha started to invade the Peloponnese. With the addition of another Ottoman advance from the north, which pulled the majority of the Rumeliot army to the northern frontier, the Greek government was left unable to fight on two fronts. On top of that, Peloponnesian soldiers refused to be commanded by Rumeliot commanders whom they regarded alien.¹²² Therefore, the government released Kolokotronis and the other Peloponnesian captains because their military experience was strongly needed against their formidable Egyptian foes. The joint Ottoman-Egyptian attack led also to a cool down in the animosities among the Greeks because everybody rushed back to their home regions for defense. The offensive began from multiple direction and included the siege of Missolonghi, the siege of Athens, and the Egyptian invasion of the Peloponnese.

121 "Zaimis and Londos to Karaiskakis and Tzavelas" AA 67239 (20 April 1825).

122 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 300.

Ibrahim Pasha's Egyptian army set foot on the Peloponnese near Navarino, and partly thanks to the exhaustion among the Greeks due to their civil strife, easily captured the town with only the first five thousand soldiers that he brought over from Crete.¹²³ Velentzas was near Navarino when the Egyptian invasion began in 1825.¹²⁴ The Egyptian forces had overwhelmed the united Peloponnesian troops consisting of Kolokotronis, Zaimis, Deligiannis and Lontos, and in a letter addressed to the other leaders in which he gave account of the battles, Kolokotronis mentioned that he requested the help of Rumeliots such as Karatasos, and despite not mentioned, it is highly likely that Velentzas was among the men who accepted to join the Peloponnesian defense with this request.¹²⁵ Together with Makrygiannis, he organized the defense of Neokastron and became a close friend with the latter. They resisted Ibrahim Pasha's army up until they ran out of water and ammunition. Without aid from the government, they surrendered the fort and made a pact with Ibrahim Pasha, who let them leave on an English ship and sail to Kalamata.¹²⁶ Ibrahim Pasha himself went on to sail to Patras in order to make preparations to aid the siege of Misolonghi.¹²⁷

Velentzas' destination after he left Neokastron is not documented. However, it is plausible that he went along with Makrygiannis to Attica and joined the defense there. Velentzas' presence there is likely because almost every other major captain of eastern Rumeli was there such as Karaïskakis, Gouras, Makrygiannis, and Karatasos. A year later Velentzas addressed Kolettis in a letter asking for financial aid.¹²⁸ The reason was the hope of defending Attica and preventing Mehmet Reşit (Kütahi) Pasha and Ömer Vrioni from passing through the region and entering the Peloponnese and combining their forces with Ibrahim. Almost all Rumeli was recaptured by the Ottomans and some captains like Rangos and Iskos

123 B.O.A. BEO.AYN.580, 117. Cited in Ilıcak, *Those Infidel Greeks*, 801.

124 Lidderdale, *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 75.

125 B.O.A. HAT 893, 39418 [20 Zilhicce 1240 (3 August 1825)].

126 Lidderdale, *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 80.

127 B.O.A. BEO. AYN.580, 110. Cited in Ilıcak, *Those Infidel Greeks*, 800.

128 "Velentzas to Kolettis" AA 71482 (8 April 1827).

switched to the Ottoman side, allured with the promises of tax-farming contracts.¹²⁹

The collapse of the entire insurgence at this point was becoming more and more likely. It is at this point when the Egyptian troops enabled the Porte to turn the tide, the governments of the European powers became more involved in what they called the Greek question. Their involvement completely changed the course of the Greek crisis and guaranteed the liberation of Greece. In order to frame the relationship between Greek politicians and the three guarantor powers in the following pages, we shall briefly remember the course of events that established the Greek crisis as a European matter involving multiple powers.

After it became obvious that the Concert of Europe's expectation from the Ottoman Empire to crush the rebellion in the Peloponnese would not bear fruit, the attitude towards the Greek crisis slowly changed. For Britain the involvement in the crisis had several reasons. The Ionian islands had been under British suzerainty. Revolutionary sentiments had the potential to spread to their own dominions, possibly with the objective to join the Greeks from the mainland. Many Greek fighters were taking refuge in these islands to escape Ottoman reprisals, in particular during the first siege of Missolonghi in 1822, and the Ottoman victory in Peta that had almost cost Botsaris his life, which resulted in the suppression of the rebellion in Souli.¹³⁰ In fact it was these series of Ottoman advances that had made Mavrokordatos decide to return to the region. As a side note, it can also be said that instances of interaction with Greek insurgents was also directed from the British controlled Ionian islands to the Greek mainland. On a note sent to the Ottoman Grand admiral in January 1826, it is mentioned that a memorandum was sent to Stratford Canning complaining about how the Ionian islands were used by the Greek fighters to escape Ottoman authorities, but also that financial aid from British merchants from the islands were sent to Missolonghi.¹³¹

129 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.2. 153.

130 B.O.A. BEO. AYN. 576, 92. Cited in Ilıcak, *Those Infidel Greeks*, 391-392.

131 B.O.A. BEO. AYN. 582, 39. Cited in Ilıcak, *Those Infidel Greeks*, 898-899.

An additional reason for increasing British interest in the matter was the financial boom in London after the end of the Napoleonic wars. Financiers in London were in search for new investments, which was also the reason for Britain's relatively more positive policies to other revolutions that had taken place in that period in Latin America and southern Europe that made Britain distance herself from the holy alliance.¹³² In 1824, after the first civil war, the civilian Greek government had received a loan from the London stock market, and this money was entrusted to the hands of Mavrokordatos, who, with his Anglophile friend Spyridon Trikoupis, headed a political faction that would later be labelled as the English party. This money, of course, was used by Kolettis to fund the Rumeliot troops during the civil wars. The danger of Ibrahim Pasha crushing the Greek revolution altogether and laying waste on the Peloponnese was putting the investments in jeopardy. The reports of rumors that Ibrahim Pasha had started a process of extermination in the Peloponnese and was taking civilian Greeks hostages to Egypt to be made slaves was further agitating the western public.¹³³

Another reason of Britain's increasing involvement in the Greek crisis was Russia's position. When the uprisings began, the Russian government headed by Tsar Alexander and his foreign ministers Nesselrode and Kapodistrias opposed an intervention on behalf of the Greeks, emphasizing the necessity to preserve the conservative nature of the diplomatic structure created in 1815.¹³⁴ The year 1825 marked a break from this stance. After the Egyptian invasion, Britain's involvement required the cooperation with Russia, their rival in the European diplomatic arena at the time, to avoid a major disturbance that could threaten the balance of power in Europe. It was this competition through cooperation that would be the predominant feature of Anglo-Russian relations in the following years.¹³⁵ It was also the government headed by George Canning's aim to

132 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 262.

133 "From Stratford Canning to George Canning" TNA. FO 800.231 p.27 (December 17, 1825).

134 Frary, *Russia and the Making of the Modern Greek Identity*, 35.

135 Ozan Özacı. *Dangerous Gifts: Imperialism, Security, and Civil Wars in the Levant, 1798-1864* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 9.

prevent a potential unilateral Russian intervention. Russia quitting the holy alliance and cooperating with Britain therefore became a prerequisite for British diplomacy.¹³⁶ With the death of Tsar Alexander in 1825 and the succession of his brother Nicolas who was much more open to a proactive policy towards the Greek issue and cooperation with his allies for that end, the road was paved for bilateral Anglo-Russian action.¹³⁷

To establish the ground for a common action, the duke of Wellington was sent to St. Petersburg. On April 4th, 1826, the St. Petersburg Protocol was signed between the two powers. They agreed to act as mediators between the Greeks and the Ottoman empire in the pacification of the Levant, providing security for European commerce, and creating Greek autonomy under Ottoman suzerainty.¹³⁸ The other two members of the holy alliance, Austria and Prussia refused to be involved. France, however, eagerly joined as a mediator in order to regain her position of a Great power, and to check the dominant influence of Britain and Russia in European affairs since their victory over Napoleonic France.¹³⁹ With this triple collaboration, the protocol transformed into the Treaty of London on July 6th, 1827, and the three powers offered their mediation for an armistice.

The Greek side immediately accepted the proposal as the military situation was turning against them after 1826. In fact, the new Greek government headed by Zaimis had already made an appeal in 1826 to Stratford Canning, British ambassador to Istanbul for British mediation.¹⁴⁰ This act, however created an uproar due to the belief that this would potentially cause only the liberation of the Peloponnese, as Rumeli at the time was practically completely recaptured by the Ottomans. The Porte's refusal of the proposal led to a joint fleet made by the three powers sailing to the Mediterranean to enforce an armistice. The Egyptian-Turkish fleet was hunted down in the bay of Navarino where the European fleet for unclear reasons destroyed the entire Egyptian-Turkish fleet, an event

136 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 406.

137 Frary, *Russia and the Making of the Modern Greek Identity*, 36.

138 Özavcı, *Dangerous Gifts*, 124.

139 Ibid. 125.

140 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 354.

that changed the fortunes of the Greeks overnight. These series of events also marked the starting point of the foreign powers' increasing involvement in the domestic politics of Greece, as the idea of a liberated Greece created the questions of how and by whom the country was going to be governed. The future of Greece was now largely dependent on the policies of these three powers, and with the removal of the Ottoman military threat, the factions in Greece and their military following saw the opportunity for political survival in their association with one of these powers.

§ 3.5 The Emergence of Foreign Oriented Factions

Of course, the process that brought the Greek crisis and its agents into the domain of European diplomacy was not unilaterally initiated by European powers alone. The Greeks had been actively involved as well. Starting with his arrival in western Rumeli, Alexandros Mavrokordatos had persistently tried to create a picture of Britain being a potential ally to Greece, both in Greece among his peers, but also by attempting to appeal to British policy makers.¹⁴¹ His policy of creating a much more western oriented form of government could be interpreted in that direction as well, with the aim of giving an image of a modern and responsible government that could be held accountable for potential financial aid. Mavrokordatos' insistence on distancing the Greeks from Russia in favor of Britain made his faction a potential ally in the future for Anglo-Greek relations. Another reason for certain Greek politicians gravitating away from Russia as a potential benefactor was Russia's proposal in 1824 to divide Greece in three autonomous principalities.¹⁴²

Even though the proposal for three autonomous principalities created a distaste in the eyes of many towards Russia, Kolokotronis, and the majority of the Peloponnese were Russophiles, and the Peloponnese with the leadership of Kolokotronis would become the stronghold of the

141 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 43.

142 Pericles S. Vallianos, "Historiographical Traditions and Debates," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, 680.

future Russian party. One probable reason was their still highly particularistic reflex of opposing the western oriented and Anglophile Mavrokordatos faction operating from western Rumeli. The combined Rumeliot forces invading and pillaging the Peloponnese had a traumatic impact on the Peloponnesians, primate and peasant alike. The opposition to a faction that is believed to be backed by the English had an effect on many Peloponnesians being drawn to Russia. Another reason for the strength of pro-Russian attitude of the Peloponnesians was the strong impact of the Philiki Etairia that had created the idea of an Orthodox solidarity with Russia and the expectation of a potential Russian aid in the fight against the Ottoman Empire. Despite Russia's initial diplomatic distance towards the Greek revolutionaries and the failed proposal for the autonomous principalities. The period after the Navarino incident would initiate a period of strong Russian influence in Greece, with the former Russian foreign minister and Corfiot Kapodistrias being elected President of Greece, who accepted the post with Tsar Nicholas' approval.¹⁴³

In addition to cultural and ideological concerns, and regional power struggles, personal rivalries had also played a role in the decisions of factions joining a particular party. Local competitors saw the necessity to ally themselves with different parties. It should be noted that rivalries that were born before the war were frequently determining the political agenda of those allying themselves with a political party. For example, the alliance between the Souliot Botsaris clan and Mavrokordatos was mentioned in the first chapter. This was enough reason for Kitsos Tzavelas, leader of another famous Souliot clan, to join the Russian party. Both men were commanding hundreds of armed Souliot men, which contributed to the military branch of these factions. In the following years, an ideological struggle between the pro-Russian Kapodistrias and pro-English Mavrokordatos would slowly emerge on the national scale. The introduction of this kind political practice was new among the Greeks that fought the war of independence. As a consequence, the parties ended up harboring old local feuds through both sides of the feud siding with separate

143 Frary, *Russia and the Making of the Modern Greek Identity*, 40.

parties, thus creating a domain for the continuity of old socio-cultural practices. Another local power struggle that is frequently mentioned in this thesis is that between the Peloponnesian primate factions of Deligiannis and Londos-Zaimis. Throughout the war the Peloponnese witnessed a change in the entrenched power structures of the Ottoman administration with the emergence of revolutionary heroes from the lower classes. Despite the primate families' struggle to maintain their authority through the creation of the Peloponnesian senate, this class antagonism would play a critical role, as the former kapoi and klephts along with their peasant soldiers would inevitably rise to positions of power due the military nature of the struggle. The former klepht Kolokotronis would become the undisputed leader of the Peloponnesian faction. Hence the primate rival of his former employer Deligiannis, Andreas Zaimis, would frequently look for new alliances such as the Mavrokordatos faction to balance the rise of Kolokotronis. It should also be noted that the alliance of Deligiannis and Kolokotronis would also not last very long. As a concrete example of the dissolving impact of the revolution on Peloponnesian power structures, the rise of Kolokotronis faction created a rivalry between the two former allies.¹⁴⁴ As a result, Deligiannis became a later ally of Kolettis' French party. Of course, France was not a strong contender up until that point in influencing Greek politics, and the rise of the French party that split the Rumeliots in two camps would have to wait until the aftermath of 1827. The dichotomy of Russian and English parties would not last very long, and the emergence of the French party with Kolettis' leadership would complete the Triade of the political parties that dominated the political domain of the Greek nation state in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The sympathy for France among certain men probably started during the famous defense of the Acropolis between 1825-1827 which was led by the French philhellene Fabvier, a former officer of Napoleon.¹⁴⁵ The arrival of the French troops to Greece as authorized by the London

144 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 136.

145 Dimitris Papastamatiou, "Military Leaders," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, 417.

conference to oversee Ibrahim Pasha's peaceful evacuation of the Peloponnese, might also have been a reason for the sympathy of some.¹⁴⁶ Kolettis' sympathy towards France was not personal. Several reasons led to his relationship with France. First of all, he was smart enough to see that both Britain and Russia had big plans for the near east at that point. He predicted that the duel between the two powers would potentially dominate Greece through their respective adversaries. For him, France seemed like the least interested power, hence a more suitable ally in his eyes.¹⁴⁷ French interest in the Near East would of course increase especially after the July revolution in 1830 and the invasion of Algeria the same year, but at that point the French party had already been established. An interesting parallel present itself here regarding the French party's character. On the scale of international diplomacy, it was more of an anti-English and anti-Russian sentiment that drew the party headed by Kolettis towards the French. Domestically, as well many allies of Kolettis' French party were drawn to the party more through their opposition to the adversaries of the other two parties rather than a close ideological or personal affinity towards Kolettis.

The emergence of the French party was the result of Kolettis managing to transform his personal following and allied factions into a political party. The core of the party was Kolettis' Rumeliot clientele dominating eastern Rumeli, with the addition of primates who lost their influences in their localities to the agents of the other two parties. Through consecutive offices in the civilian governments, Kolettis strengthened his ties with the Rumeliot captains by providing them contracts of tax farming on the provinces which they obtained through military means.¹⁴⁸ The close resemblance of this military and fiscal practice through the use of the decades old networks of violence, with that of the Armatolic system from the times of Ali Pasha that has been generated by the former Ali Pasha employee Kolettis, shows how the latter successfully adapted the pre-modern system in Rumeli to a more modern framework. Most of the

146 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 46.

147 Ibid. 100.

148 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.2. 31-32.

future exploits of Rumeliot captains against the Greek government should be considered as attempts to preserve this system within an increasingly centralizing political environment. Kolettis' strong motivation to eliminate his rival Androutsos which has been mentioned earlier in this chapter could also be interpreted as an attempt to dispose of a rival who was creating a monopoly on these revenues, hence leaving little room for lesser captains to obtain rewards for their allegiance to Kolettis. The fact that the person to execute Androutsos, Ioannis Gouras, was a former underling of the former, and the order to execute him was given by Kolettis, has resulted in Gouras acquiring more revenue in eastern Rumeli,¹⁴⁹ and Kolettis in securing another loyal ally in the region. Among the prominent members of this network were captains such as Mavrovouniotis, Makrygiannis, Gouras and Velentzas. All of whom had been involved in the war in eastern Rumeli and Attica, and were clients of Kolettis. Velentzas in particular, being still a rookie in contrast to the others, depended strongly on Kolettis.

This dependence shows itself in various letters that went back and forth between the two and can be explained by the political transformation in Greece after the period that followed Navarino in 1827, and the military defeat of the Ottoman Empire. The decreasing frequency of the battles against Ottoman troops left men like Velentzas little opportunities for revenue. In March 1827, Velentzas addressed Kolettis in a letter asking for financial help, noting that he was unable to pay the little number of men under his command.¹⁵⁰ A month later, he repeated this request with another letter, indicating that his previous request was not fulfilled.¹⁵¹ He additionally asked the former not to lose hope in him, knowing very well that without the need to constantly keep small bands of armed men to fight Ottomans, Velentzas' services would no longer be required as strongly as in they were in the past. He was still dependent on a powerful political figure to act as his patron, and he had not distinguished himself

149 Mazower, *The Greek Revolution*, 352.

150 "Velentzas to Kolettis" AA 78322 (8 March 1827).

151 "Velentzas to Kolettis" AA 71482 (27 April 1827).

fully as an indispensable Rumeliot captain for the Kolettis faction in contrast to the likes of Makrygiannis and Mavrovouniotis.

This is not, however, to indicate that the relationship between Kolettis and Velentzas was on the decline. Of course, Velentzas was not an equal of Kolettis. Nor was he even a strong ally at that point. He was a man who desperately sought to maintain a vital relationship that could enable him political achievements, which he acquired exclusively through the circumstances provided by the war. Now that the military phase of the struggle was coming slowly to an end, his future, like many other participants of the war, depended on capitalizing on whatever political connection they obtained in the previous years. Kolettis' inability to provide aid to Velentzas was due to the fact that Kolettis' authority also depended on him holding public office. The influence that he wielded was the result of him providing a political channel for the Rumeliot military element, which in return gave him the necessary muscle at the local level to enforce his policies on the national level. Kolettis' political fortunes suffered during the years between 1828-1831, which coincided with the presidency of Ioannis Kapodistrias, which will be talked about in the following chapter. The fact that Kolettis maintained to hold his faction together was due to Kapodistrias' policies of centralization at the expense of regional leaders, and his adamant stance against the irregular military element, which succeeded in many dissidents to gravitate towards the traditional politicians such as Kolettis. Velentzas remained loyal to Kolettis as well, with their personal correspondence being documented through letters in 1829.¹⁵² Velentzas' activities between 1827 and 1830 are not well documented in contrast to the previous and upcoming period, which perhaps is on its own an explanation of his involuntary inactivity. It is interesting to note that the fortunes of both men went on a parallel course. With Velentzas' loyalty firmly established, the rise of one man made that of the other also possible, and in many schemes that were created by Kolettis, Velentzas' fortunes would change for the better, which will be further discussed in the following chapter.

152 "Velentzas to Kolettis" AA 66234 (9 April 1929).

§ 3.6 Conclusion

In the span of six years, the Greeks went from rapid military successes to the creation of a provisional government, two civil wars, Egyptian invasion, and the involvement of the great powers that paved the way for independence. This politically and militarily turbulent period created perfect opportunities for Kolettis to use the already present network of violence in Rumeli as an effective force both against his rivals and enemies but also as an instrument to establish political influence through traditional methods. Velentzas, by becoming a mainstay in the Kolettist faction and a client under his patronage became increasingly involved in actions that contributed significantly to the political capital that he accumulated. In addition to the rise of both men's careers, this chapter also aimed to provide a picture of the political environment in which the factional strife emerged in which these men played various important roles. The factions and traditional networks continued to play an important role in the political domain of Greece by collaborating with the three great powers who intervened in the Greek question in this period, and became increasingly labelled as the English, French, and Russian factions. In this chapter, we saw how the traditional networks of violence in Rumeli prior to the war had become to be controlled by Kolettis, and the ways in which his faction began to be drawn towards France. As a result, Velentzas' rising career as a band leader in the ranks of the Kolettist faction made him indirectly subject to French influence in Greek politics.

The Period of Kapodistrian and Bavarian Administrations and the Velentzas Escapade (1828-1840)

The third national assembly of Troezen that convened in April 1827 elected Ioannis Kapodistrias as the president of Greece. Yet, his decision to accept the election and his arrival in Greece was almost a year after the Battle of Navarino. The election of Kapodistrias who had no prior relationship with any faction until that point was no coincidence. The internal factional strife had made it impossible for established actors to assume power in the upcoming government. Starting with this period on and continuing during the Bavarian administration, the center of political power would continually be represented by groups that had no prior political presence in Greece. Of course, this also coincided with the highly transformative impact of the European powers' intervention on the Greek crisis that created a conjuncture in which the foundation of

national political power had increasingly shifted from internal mechanisms such as military control and regional alliances to external factors such as diplomatic support from a European power.¹ Despite vigorous attempts, the traditional political networks had survived the Kapodistrian period and would continue to appropriate the new political climate in the 1830s. The aim of this chapter is to follow the stories of the characters central to this thesis, particularly those of Kolettis and Velentzas, during the presidency of Kapodistrias and the royal period, as well as to describe the political environment both domestically and internationally that made the irredentist foray of Velentzas in 1840 possible.

§ 4.1 The Kapodistrian Period

It is the shift in the nature of politics in Greece to be more foreign oriented that made the presidency of Kapodistrias appealing to certain groups in Greece, with the belief that a stronger relationship with Russia would create a clearer path to military victory. This would be confirmed in a few years by the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-29 that paved the way to Greek independence after the period that followed the treaty of Adrianople. As equally important to Russophile inclinations was the aim to establish a strong balance to the increasing influence of the Anglophile faction. This is also confirmed by George Finlay who says that the election of Kapodistrias was proposed by Kolokotronis and his pro-Russian faction to bring a balance to the increasing English influence with Richard Church becoming the commander of all the Greek troops, and Alexander Cochrane admiral of the Greek fleet.² Additionally, his diplomatic reputation in Europe and anti-revolutionary zeal were seen as potentially positive traits that would help Kapodistrias in providing diplomatic assistance from the other great powers, and his relationship to the Russian tsar would be a particularly crucial head start.

1 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 106.

2 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.2. 139.

This binary distribution of influence in Near Eastern affairs was also in line with the conjuncture in Europe in the 1820s. Despite their desire to see him plant seeds for a politically stable Greece, the British government was cautious. After Kapodistrias had visited London, he was informed that along his journey to Greece, he should not visit Corfu, his birthplace. It was in the interest of the British government to prevent any disturbance in the Ionian islands that might be supported by Kapodistrias in the name of Greek territorial demands that would potentially have Russian support. This was adamantly advised by the Russophobe Lord high commissioner of the Ionian Islands Sie Frederick Adam.³ In this environment of English-Russian competition, the French Party of Kolettis had fallen to a secondary position, and it became clear to him that France had to associate herself more with Greek affairs for Kolettis' party to maintain its influence. After all, it became painfully obvious that from then on traditional leaders like himself would be unable to assert influence without gaining the favor of an outside power. On top of that, Kapodistrias' policies of fiscal and military centralization that would deprive traditional leaders from their influence in the province would further diminish their traditional networks of patronage. Throughout the Kapodistrian period, Kolettis stood relatively quiet. He rightly expected the former's tenure to be temporary and assumed a prudent position, but also because his political action required a political office that would enable him to rally his Rumeliot clientele. Thus, with Kolettis' passive attitude, Velentzas struggled to make ends meet in this period as well, which was the case at least until the assassination of Kapodistrias.

Kapodistrias had been a very controversial person whose political views were difficult to categorize. Throughout his presidency, he had created a devoted following that would be the nucleus of the future Russian party (also called Napist party), so his neutrality can be questioned. On the other hand, multiple historians argued that Kapodistrias'

3 Eleni Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, "Ionian Islands," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, 228.

Russophilism was only second to his Greek patriotism.⁴ Kapodistrias was a product of enlightenment, similar to many educated men of his generation, more so with his humanitarianism rather than radicalism. In fact, he was an adamant opponent of the latter. His constitutionalism was due to his belief that it would save societies from the disruptive effect of revolution, although, in his moderate view of liberalism, not every society was mature enough to be ruled with constitutional rights. He believed in the gradual progression of society through educating the common people and enabling them to own property, and in his view by doing so liberating them from the oppression of traditional leaders.⁵ In fact, eliminating the ruling elite of the Ancien Regime, a number of whom had risen to important positions of revolutionary leaderships in the past decade, was a prerequisite for Kapodistrias' political ideal. The state he envisioned was on the western model, a unitary bureaucratic state with an enlightened law code.⁶ He believed, however, that this ideal of his could only be achieved in the future, not in present. Accordingly, in order to create an environment that would allow his reformist agenda, he insisted on retaining extraordinary powers and turned the Greek government into a provisional dictatorship, which he managed to do rather easily due to the traditional politicians needing him desperately as a prestigious political asset at the state of emergency Greece was in at that time. On 30 January 1828, the constitution of the Troezen assembly was suspended by vote, and its powers were transferred to the president and a consultative body with twenty-seven members, later on to be called the Panhellenion.

Kapodistrias soon realized, however, that he could not antagonize all of the factions and expect a smooth operation. He either had to seek the support of all the factions, which was almost impossible due to their

4 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 108; Frary, *Russia and the Making of the Modern Greek Identity*, 469.

5 For more information on the "Greek Enlightenment" and discussions on the "Enlightened Absolutism" adapted by Kapodistrias, See, Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), 117-155.

6 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 108.

unwillingness to compromise with each other, an attitude that enabled Kapodistrias' ascension to power in the first place. Alternatively, he could ally himself with one of the factions and try to overpower the others, and due to the increased factional strife as a result, he could rely on the loyalty of his followers. He chose the latter option and hoped that the association of one party with the government would mobilize the support of the masses, a party to end all parties and to create the political stability to undertake his reformist agenda. The pro-Russian faction of Kolokotronis and Metaxas emerged as the nucleus of the Kapodistrian party (as known as Russian/Napist party) with its strongholds in the Peloponnese, and certain areas in Rumeli, mainly with the recruitment of certain former Kolettis and Mavrokordatos clients such as Gouras and Varnakiotis respectively, who sought to detach themselves from the other leading chieftains of the region in order not to be forced to share political influence in their stronghold region with them.⁷ The Kapodistrian party was also joined by the Souliot Kitsos Tzavelas. His nemesis from another Souliot clan, Botsaris was a Mavrokordatos client, hence of the English party, which compelled Tzavelas to gravitate towards the pro-Russian Kapodistrian party, where he would stay even after the assassination of Kapodistrias. This shows again how entrenched pre-independence power struggles in Rumeli were, and how their protagonists adapted to the requirements of the new post-Ottoman political climate to continue their political careers in the same traditional pattern.

Certain captains switching to the Kapodistrian party was also the result of the latter's policy of distributing land to Rumeliot chieftains due to his belief that proper land ownership would help to persuade them not to revert to banditry.⁸ His policy of separating fiscal and military duties, however, led to a conflict between his government and the Rumeliot chieftains who had taken possession of tax farming estates as reward for participating in the revolution. The revolt of Tzamis Karatasos in 1831 was the result of this very attempt. It is also noteworthy that Karatasos, along

7 Ibid. 113.

8 McGrew, *Land and Revolution in Modern Greece*, 69.

with members of his band, were refugees from Macedonia,⁹ which had also the Ottoman authorities alarmed due to their activities potentially spreading to Ottoman lands in Thessaly and Macedonia.¹⁰ The contracts of tax-farming they had acquired by the revolutionary government had been one of the few aspects that secured the loyalty of these refugee bands outside their locality that was now on the northern side of the upcoming frontier. The reactions such as that of Karatasos are understandable. He came from a world in which a captain acquiring a tax farming contract as reward for his services was usual. The fact that Velentzas was not a participant in this revolt despite his former ties with Karatasos might indicate his desire for power through proper political channels, which explained his continued loyalty to Kolettis, whose trust he probably saw as a much more promising political asset than the unstable position of Karatasos.

The distribution of land was also opposed by the British government through the British resident in Greece, Edward James Dawkins. When in 1824 British bond holders had provided a loan to the revolutionary government, these national estates had been pledged as a guarantee for the repayment of the loan capital.¹¹ Finances had played a substantial role in the three great powers' intervention in Greek affairs. According to an Ottoman report after the treaty of Adrianople in 1829, not including naval expenses, the Greeks owed Britain 480.000 kise, most of which to British bond holders. The amount owed to the French was roughly 300.000 kise including the expenses of the French troops. To the Russian, the owed amount was 250.000 kise due to the Russian navy's assistance to the Kapodistrian government.¹²

Another reason for intervention was the judgment that a provisional government should not be undertaking a policy of such a magnitude like land distribution. The provisional nature of this government was in fact at the center of many issues. Until 1830, the opposition to Kapodistrias

9 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 74.

10 B.O.A. HR.SYS 1678, 6/47 (4 June 1831).

11 McGrew, *Land and Revolution in Modern Greece*, 70.

12 B.O.A. TS. MA,e 673, 51 [17 Rebiülevvel 1255 (31 May 1839)].

was relatively soft, as his administration was seen temporary until the monarch arrives. However, when Leopold of Saxe-Coburg¹³ abandoned his earlier decision to accept the Greek throne in 1830, patience ran out among dissidents as Kapodistrias' rule was automatically extended. Another development in the same year, the July revolution in France that brought Louis Phillipe to the throne, provided a convenient rationale for the opposition to increasingly call out for a constitution, which they saw as a valuable element for their opposition to Kapodistrias' increasingly autocratic rule. Despite no apparent relationship with liberal sentiments, this climate of "revolutionary sentiments against tyranny" was successfully utilized by certain dissidents of Kapodistrias' policies, such as Petrobey of Mani.

Kapodistrias' policies had understandably been in conflict with Mani's status. Under the Ottomans, Mani had enjoyed autonomy with its own militaristic social system and customary law. When Kapodistrias attempted to incorporate Mani into the central administration, he came into conflict with the Mavromichalis clan which led to an overall revolt, in which thanks to the traditional corporate nature of the Maniot society, the whole region took up arms. It was more of an attempt to preserve traditional administrative autonomy than a liberal uprising against tyranny.

Another significant uprising was the Hydra revolt. Like Mani, the island of Hydra, too had enjoyed a certain autonomy under Ottoman rule. The grievances of Hydriots towards Kapodistrias were due to the latter's centralizing policies, and the breakdown of negotiations regarding the payment of economic relief that they had demanded from the government. The reasons of this demand were the devastating impact of the shifting patterns of trade in the Mediterranean, new customs duties imposed by the new Greek government, a quarantine system that further slowed down trade, and the overall destruction of their commercial fleet throughout the revolution.¹⁴ The revolt was immediately joined by

13 The future King of Belgium between 1831-1865.

14 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 121.

prominent dissident politicians from other regions such as Mavrokordatos, Zaimis and Trikoupis, all of whom were members of the English faction. To Kapodistrias' aid came the Russian Admiral Ricord with the ships under his command.¹⁵ Yet, the Hydriots did not shy away from engaging into an open conflict with the Russian fleet near Poros and seized the naval arsenal of the government.¹⁶ This conflict would go on until the assassination of Kapodistrias. In the year 1831, the opposition thus consisted of the Hydriots supported by the English party, the Maniots, and several Rumeliot chieftains. After the conflict with Mani, the series of events led to the arrest of Petrobey by the Kapodistrian government, which was turned into a vendetta by his nephews, who assassinated Kapodistrias on 9 October 1831. The assassination of Kapodistrias was interpreted as a blow to Russian influence in Greece by the Ottomans, taking also into account the former's struggle with a Polish revolt that took place in the same year.¹⁷ In fact, the period which saw the assassination of Kapodistrias and the political chaos that followed it, had coincided with a diplomatically turbulent period in other parts of Europe as well. All of the three powers were occupied with matters such as the July revolution in France, the independence of Belgium, and the Polish revolt, which led to a partial indifference to the domestic quarrels in Greece. The assassination also paved the way for Kolettis to re-enter the national political arena and create another series of career opportunities for the likes of Velentzas.

§ 4.2 The Third Civil War and Return of the Kolettis-Velentzas Cooperation

The aftermath of Kapodistrias' death was anarchy. The senate appointed a three men commission to oversee the government temporarily, consisting of Augustinos Kapodistrias, the younger brother of the former

15 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.2, 236.

16 B.O.A. HAT 962, 41202 [11 Rebiülevvel 1247 (20 August 1831)].

17 B.O.A. HAT 1282, 49732 [29 Zilhicce 1245 (21 June 1830)].

president, Theodoros Kolokotronis, and Ioannis Kolettis. The inclusion of Kolettis was due to the aim of the former Kapodistrian establishment to prevent him from joining the opposition and creating a united anti-Kapodistrian front. However, this could not have presented a better opportunity to him. The appointment enabled Kolettis to finally revive his old Rumeliot faction by assuming an opposition from within the assembly. Having a voice in the government also enabled him to win over other oppositional figures. Two camps now emerged, the Kapodistrians, and the Rumeliots.

The two camps were to meet at the national assembly in Argos. However, as seen before, the attempts to unite different camps again led to further divisions among them. The Kapodistrians, consisting of Augustinos Kapodistrias, Kolokotronis and Tzavelas had arrived with a body of corps, and declared themselves the sole national government, and attacked the Rumeliot camp with the orders of Augustinos, attempting a *fait accompli* while they still had the military upper hand.¹⁸ This small-scale clash between the Rumeliots and Peloponnesians resulted in the death of hundred men on each side,¹⁹ and initiated the series of military conflicts which is called the third civil war, and devastated the countryside in the Peloponnese yet once again. The conflict was further deepened when in December 1831 Sir Stratford Canning arrived in Nafplion while he was on his way to Istanbul to obtain the sultans recognition on the selection of Otto, the son of the Bavarian king Ludwig as the King of Greece.²⁰ He made a stop in Greece to announce the selection of Otto. But, despite his warnings to Augustinos to stop the war that he commenced, the news of the upcoming arrival of the King motivated the two camps even further as both sides wanted to obtain the political upper hand and welcome the King themselves, possibly presenting the regency with a set of terms. The London protocol on 13 February 1832 made Greece a monarchy under the sovereignty of Otto, whose arrival in Greece would have to wait another year.

18 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 126.

19 B.O.A. HAT 358, 20024 [18 Şaban 1247 (2 Feb 1832)].

20 Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, Vol.2. 255.

In January 1832, after the clash in Argos, it became practically certain that the conflict between Augustinos and Kolettis would turn into a military clash, and the threat of Kolettis' re-emergence as a Rumeliot leader attacking the Peloponnese revived past hostilities. Remembering the Rumeliot invasion of 1825, figures from the Kolettis led constitutionalist camp such as Zaimis switched to the Kapodistrian-Peloponnesian alliance, paralleling the same move he had done in 1824. The picture in early 1832 very interestingly presented almost an exact replica of the civil wars in 1824-25. Regional sentimentalism and particularism prevented any attempt to create a unified polity, and eventually resulting in a Peloponnesian-Rumeliot clash. It also further shows that despite historical rivalries, the levels of solidarity that Peloponnesian Kocabaşı leaders can create against what they saw as an outside intrusion that threatened their historical privileges. This was the case in the civil wars of 1824-25, and also in 1812 when the majority of them had unified against Veli Pasha. Another similarity of the civil war with the previous ones was its outcome. Kolettis channeled the Rumeliot bands into the Peloponnese and devastated the Kapodistrian troops.

It was also Velentzas' time to shine once again. He inevitably benefited from the military turmoil that presented him with another opportunity to rise in the ranks of the Kolettist faction. This time, however, Velentzas was to become a much more influential captain due to several reasons. After the death of Gouras, the military authority that he had taken in eastern Rumeli was divided among many Kolettist captains, such as Vasos Mavrovouniotis, to whom Velentzas had become subordinate in Phthiotis. Another reason for Velentzas' rising star was probably his prior experience from the successful Rumeliot invasion in the Peloponnese during the first civil war in 1825, which enabled him to yield the trust of his superiors for the upcoming military clash. Kolettis had created his administrative commission in Perachora, from where Velentzas would receive direct military orders. In a letter from late 1831, the committee ordered Velentzas to take his troops consisting of 150 men and come to defend

Perachora against the enemy camp.²¹ The fact that Velentzas had 150 men under his command is a significant indicator of the magnitude of the Rumeliot invasion, considering that despite his rising star, Velentzas was still a secondary figure in Rumeli and there were probably numerous higher ranking captains with significantly more men under their command. It also further shows the ranks that Velentzas had achieved. In another dispatch in January 1832, addressed to Velentzas and Klimakas, another captain under the Kolettist Mavrovouniotis,²² both men were ordered to take their troops and combine their forces with the remaining troops to crush the enemy.²³ Kolettist captains gradually combining their forces further shows the quick evolution of the constitutionalist camp into a military enterprise under the political patronage of Kolettis.

After the victory in the third civil war, the triumphant Kolettis negotiated with the residents of the three powers in his attempts to create a governing commission to welcome the new King. The members of the new commission were the following: Kolettis, Koundouriotis, Botsaris, D. Ypsilantis, Zaimis, Metaxas and Plapoutas. It was an attempt to incorporate all foreign oriented parties under the political umbrella Kolettis tried to create. Kolettis and Koundouriotis were from the French party, Zaimis from the English party, and Metaxas from the Russian party were included. The pro-English Mavrokordatos was to be secretary of state. This excessive re-orientation of Greek politics according to their ties with foreign powers during the interregnum was remarked and criticized by Velentzas' friend Makrygiannis in his memoirs as follows: "Later, you filled us up with factions – Dawkins wants us to be English, Rouen French, and Katakazi Russian: and you leave not one Greek to himself."²⁴ Despite this patriotic outcry, however, he cannot help himself to play favorites among the three powers. Makrygiannis wrote:

21 "Administrative Committee to Velentzas," AA 74400 (5 Jan 1832).

22 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 138.

23 "Administrative Committee to Velentzas and Klimakas," AA 74410 (6 Jan 1832).

24 Lidderdale, *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 146.

Our country owes great thanks to all its benefactors and especially to the French commanders, those good, brave men. For what they gave us was verily of great worth and they set us on our feet amidst our dangers and never resorted to deceit and guile to make living brave men oppress the dead and dying.²⁵

The reason of this confusing sentiment might be that Makrygiannis was an ally of the French party despite his dislike of Kolettis. Another possible reason, in fact perhaps a much more relevant one, is the fact that Makrygiannis probably thought of Fabvriar when he talked about the brave French commander, with whom he took part in the defense of Athens against Ibrahim Pasha in 1826. He very well knew of the likes of the British Richard Church and Cochrane who also led Greek troops successfully against the Egyptian invasion. However, they were commanding the troops of the pro-English faction and operating mostly in western Rumeli and the islands, where Makrygiannis was less politically invested compared to eastern Rumeli, where most of his political alliances had taken place. These are further indicators that regional entrenchment of political factions in Greece towards 1832 was strong.

Despite his attachment to eastern Rumeli and the French party, Makrygiannis became a political rival of Kolettis. This would be a crucial detail in Velentzas' future operations in a way that the latter's loyalty to Kolettis would often lead him to exclude his friend Makrygiannis from his military exploits in the future. Makrygiannis would eventually become a dissident to whoever assumed power in Greece. He described the various politicians in Greece, Mavrokordatos, Metaxas, Kolettis, and Kapodistrias in that order as follows:

The cannibals begrudged us this and sowed amongst us the seeds of their own virtue, dissension, faction, espionage, all their own uncleanness and made our country an old straw dummy with the enlightenment of the Phanari, the virtue of Cephalonia, and the

25 Ibid. 145.

qualities of the pupil of Ali Pasha, and the great Philosopher of Corfu.”²⁶

Despite Rumeliot victory, fierce rivalries continued to prevent a political order before the arrival of the king. Due to several conflicting interests, the ruling commission was reduced to three members consisting of Kolettis, Zaimis, and Metaxas, again one representative from each party. Velentzas was still providing a military muscle to the Kolettist faction and was officially congratulated by the commission in 1832 for his services.²⁷

The extended presence and plunder of the Rumeliot troops made Peloponnesian chieftains like Kolokotronis once again heroes in the eyes of the peasantry and strengthened Peloponnesian sentimentality. On top of that, there emerged a principal conflict among the constitutionalist camp as well. The French party led by Kolettis was in favor of the promulgation of a constitution before the arrival of the king, presenting him with a *fait accompli*, while the English party of the moderate Mavrokordatos supported the idea that it should be in the King’s authority as well as the nations to decide on the constitution.²⁸ In the end, the latter camp prevailed but the country would have to wait another decade for a constitution under the Bavarian monarchy.

§ 4.3 The Regency of the Bavarians and the Armandspurg Regime (1833-1837)

In January 1833, Otto von Wittelsbach, the seventeen-year-old new King of Greece arrived at Nafplion along with the members of his Regency council. The sovereignty of the Greek Kingdom was guaranteed by Britain, France, and Russia, and the three guarantor powers promised a loan of 60.000.000 Francs that was to be transferred in three separate

26 Ibid. 148.

27 “Administrative Committee to Velentzas” AA 68054 (1 Feb 1832).

28 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 131.

installments. Yet only the first installment of 20.000.000 was guaranteed, and the fate of next two installments would in the following years be practically conditioned on the three powers' separate demands from the Greek government. This relationship with the guarantor powers would result for the next years, in the words of Petropoulos, "to recommendations which amounted to the demand for a privileged position both for its minister in Athens, and for the Greek party which it patronized."²⁹ Domestically, the real power would be held by the members of the regency council, who had been appointed by Otto's father Ludwig, King of Bavaria. The London Treaty of 7 May 1832, that determined these developments had made Greece, in the words of Nicholas Kaltchas "a Bavarian protectorate under the suzerain control implicit in the ambiguous 'guarantee' of the three powers."³⁰ The three regents were Count Joseph von Armansperg, General Karl Wilhelm von Heideck, and Professor Ludwig von Maurer. Armansperg was to be first among equals in the counsel, and in the following years, he would become one of the most influential actors in Greek politics.

The Bavarians had also brought with themselves Bavarian troops consisting of 3.500 men to protect the regime as well as to oversee the organization of a regular Greek army. According to Roderick Beaton, the national army had received the highest priority, and since the borders of the new kingdom were internationally guaranteed, the purpose of the new regime's investments in the army was not strengthening the protection of the country. The aim of investing so heavily in the military was to eliminate local power bases and the irregular military element in the provinces.³¹

Similar to Kapodistrias, the Bavarian regency, especially Armansperg were principally not against a constitution and a national assembly, but as a contrast deployed absolutist policies in practice. They had arrived in

29 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 146.

30 Nicholas Kaltchas, *Introduction to the Constitutional History of Modern Greece*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 91-92.

31 Roderick Beaton, *Greece, Biography of a Modern Nation*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 117.

Greece in the aftermath of a bloody civil war that destroyed the country, hence they believed that a national assembly that would presumably be filled with the traditional elite would inevitably lead to a similar political chaos. Furthermore, the regency deployed a policy of employing Bavarians in state service due to their belief in accordance with the nineteenth-century understanding, that the source of civilization was Europe, and creating a modern and civilized state could only be possible with European assistance. This belief has also been explicitly mentioned by Maurer, one of the regents, who went even one step further to argue that it should be Germans specifically who should assume this "responsibility."³² This nepotism towards Bavarians in key positions would understandably lead to conflicts with local actors in the next years.

The policy of the regency regarding the traditional parties was to get rid of them by gradually eliminating the social circumstances that gave them strength. One of the first actions taken by the regency was issuing decrees that ordered the disbanding of irregular bands.³³ Throughout the revolutionary years and the interregnum in 1831-1832, the number of armed men especially in Rumeli had increased immensely, many of whom had come from lands north to the border that remained within Ottoman borders. These men were without home or land, and particularly prone to entering the patronage of traditional politicians. After 1833, with the end of the war, as well as the civil wars, many irregular fighters from disbanded bands took to the mountains and became brigands along the mountainous border zone in Thessaly or crossed the border to seek employment as captains under the Ottoman provincial security system, which they had been familiar with. Presumably, until that point, they had been expecting a kind of future along this line in Greece too.

Seeing that civilian life was not an attractive option for the irregular troops in Rumeli, the Greek government created the skirmisher troops to incorporate these Rumeliots. Among the captains hired to command

32 Maurer, *Griechische Volk*, II, 39-40. In Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 162.

33 "Government Gazette, 8 March 1933, decree of 2 March 1833." In Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 76.

these units in Rumeli were Makrygiannis, Dyovouniotis, and Velentzas,³⁴ who had been part of Kolettis' Rumeliot faction up until that point. These men were among the secondary figures within their political camp. They had been commanding the troops necessary for the military muscle of their factions, and took orders from the traditional political leaders, whose influence the regency wanted to decrease. Therefore, the attempts at incorporating secondary figures into the gendarmerie and skirmisher troops had two objectives: eliminating banditry in Rumeli through opening state sponsored employment to those having potential to resort to banditry; and gradually taking away the parties' military muscle at the provincial level. With this program the ultimate goal was to bring all domestic parties behind the crown, and to prevent interferences from foreign powers through these parties that they were patronizing.

In this new political environment, Kolettis became member of a short-lived cabinet for a brief period in 1833, and he probably had been influential in the appointment of Velentzas as captain of a skirmisher unit, where he remained until at least 1835 when Kolettis was sent to Paris as ambassador of Greece as honorary exile. In the years 1833-34, however, Kolettis was on the rise. In 1833, the government arrested leaders of the Russian party, such as Kolokotronis and Tzavelas, with the accusation of organizing an uprising against the monarchy. These arrests and accusations were protested by the Russian minister to Athens, Katakazy.³⁵ Through an arbitrary trial process, the accused were sentenced to death, but they were eventually pardoned by the King, giving the inevitable impression of a staged plan to intimidate the Russian party. In late 1833, the Maniots revolted partly as a protest to the Kolokotronis trial, but also as a reaction against the regency's attempts to integrate Mani, an attempt that had eventually cost Kapodistrias his life.

In the following year, a larger revolt erupted in the Peloponnesian region of Messinia that took six weeks to be crushed by the government. To suppress the revolt, which coincided with Kolettis' tenure as minister of

34 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 80.

35 Frary, *Russia and the Making of the Modern Greek Identity*, 81.

interior, the government employed Rumeliots to fight the rebels. These series of events had been useful to Kolettis to such an extent that rumors had circulated that Kolettis had let the revolt to break out despite having known the of the plans.³⁶ He was entrusted with the suppression of the revolt by Armansperg who knew that the Rumeliot Kolettis had every reason to act against the rebels of Peloponnese, the region which was also the stronghold of the Russian party. These series of developments show that within a year, the factions/parties, whom the regency had principally aimed at destroying, showed strong signs of appropriating the new political mechanisms in independent Greece.

After the suppression of the revolts in the Peloponnese, the relationship between Armansperg and Kolettis regressed and the two became political rivals. In 1835, leading politicians from the three parties were sent as ministers to European capitals, in order to cut their ties with their local strongholds. Kolettis was sent to Paris, which agitated his followers. In a letter from December 1835, Velentzas re-emphasized his devotion to Kolettis despite his upcoming absence from the domestic political scene and wished his quick return to Greece. Following these tributary remarks, the letter goes on to reveal its true intention. Velentzas complains that following Kolettis' departure, the government has appointed him to be stationed in Argolis, which is on the eastern coast of the Peloponnese, separating him from Rumeli and signaling the plans of gradually breaking down traditional networks.³⁷ He served there until 1836, when he joined the newly created national guards in eastern Rumeli, under the command of Vasos Mavrovouniotis, a Kolettist chieftain. The national guards were created with the recruitment of Rumeliot irregulars to maintain order in Rumeli after the outbreak of the Acarnania revolt in 1836. Vasos was commissioned to recruit two thousand men with monthly payment, and Velentzas immediately applied to be recruited by Vasos, whose area of operation in eastern Rumeli was close to the area in Thessaly where

36 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 223.

37 "Velentzas to Kolettis" AA 68823 (7/19 December 1835).

Velentzas was from.³⁸ Velentzas remained to be stationed here until 1840, the same year he would launch his irredentist foray from the same area.

The Acarnania revolt in February 1836 signaled a political turning point for Greece, domestically as well as internationally. During the absence of Otto, who had been visiting Bavaria between 1836-1837, Armanperg became the most influential politician in Athens. After the episodes with the Russian party and the conflict with Kolettis, Armanperg increasingly leaned diplomatically towards Britain with the help of the new British minister to Athens, Sir Edmund Lyons, who in return presented Armanperg to London as a skillful liberal leader.³⁹ The increasing ties of the Bavarian regime with Britain has come to the attention of the other guarantor powers, and it appears that it created such an inconvenience that the French and Russian ministers to Athens held secret meetings discussing the future of the monarchy, as well as the possibility of replacing the king with a relative of Louis Phillipe, in order to counter British influence in Greece, and consequently the Near East.⁴⁰ The instigators of the Acarnania revolt that erupted within this political climate had strong party affiliations, such as Nicholas Zervas from the Kolettist French party, and Malamos from the Russian party. It is also rumored that among the instigators were other chieftains such as Grivas, Tzavelas, and Vasos, all of whom are associated with either the Russian or French party.

Apart from its party affiliations, one reason for the revolt is believed to be the confrontation between the regency's attempts to intervene in local customs, and the reactionary position of the population in Rumeli. In 1835, the government had issued a new sheep tax per head,⁴¹ as part of its policy to decrease nomadic pastoralism in the mountains of Rumeli, and force pastoralists to settle in order to facilitate order in the northern frontier. In the winter of 1835-36 the situation became even more tense when the government decided to appropriate pastureland as national

38 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 91.

39 "Lyons to Palmerston" FO 32.52 (2 June 1835). In Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 244.

40 B.O.A. HAT 1218, 47703 [29 Zilhicce 1251 (16 April 1836)].

41 Government Gazette, 17/13 May 1835, decree of 8 April 1835. In Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 84.

estate.⁴² The government's decisions to ignore decades old local customs had also agitated the military element in Rumeli that participated in the revolt. Many participants were dissatisfied with their role in the new army and gendarmerie corps. They resented taking orders from Bavarian officials, and the western inspired military duties such as wearing military uniforms and drills. The anti-Bavarian motivations of the revolt is also explicitly cited by the participants of the revolt who later took refuge on the Ottoman side of the frontier.⁴³ Velentzas, too, in one of the letters in which he describes the situation in Greece during the same period to Kolettis, complains of Armanberg and invites the recipient to take action against him.⁴⁴ In fact, many believe that another cause of the revolt was the anger of Rumeliot pallikars regarding the dismissal of Kolettis, their patron, from the government.⁴⁵

The national guards which later became the frontier guards after 1838, in which Velentzas became a captain under the command of Vasos was result of this revolt. Upon the inability of the newly created regular army led by Bavarian officials to suppress the revolt, Armanberg realized the necessity to take a step back and come to terms with the traditional military element of Rumeli. Instead of the Bavarian troops, Rumeliot chieftains such as Vasos, Grivas and Tzavelas were commissioned to recruit their own irregular soldiers and suppress the revolt. It worked because in addition to their better knowledge of the local terrain and the military tactics that the rebels were using, their corps were providing an opportunity of the type of military employment that the rebels or potential rebels would prefer. The employment of potentially dangerous irregular captains proved to be an effective measure to create order. However it also provided a space for them to recreate their military clientele. In other words, "their very existence was perpetuating the dangerous social elements in the countryside that the regime had an interest in

42 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 88.

43 B.O.A. HAT 1218, 47703 [29 Zilhicce 1251 (16 April 1836)].

44 "Velentzas to Kolettis" AA 75517 (11/23 March 1836) .

45 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 227.

suppressing and principles that were contrary to its most fundamental objectives.”⁴⁶

The Acarnania revolt shows that the formal political program of the Bavarians, and their actual practice would inevitably differ in many instances. Despite the formal adaptation of a western institutional framework by the Bavarian dominated monarchy, at the local level, traditional power structures and networks of patronage remained unchanged in the long run.⁴⁷ In the next years, local powerbrokers managed to appropriate the state machinery in many cases and reversed their roles. Despite their serious initial attempts, the inability of the Bavarian monarchy to create a monopoly on means of coercion by eliminating traditional military forces resulted in instances in which the monarchy itself became the client of protection provided by the irregular military element, as a form of ‘inverse racketeering’,⁴⁸ which was not that different from how the Ottoman rule had functioned in the region. This hypothesis is further supported by the fact that Rumeliot chieftains such as Theodoros Grivas are believed to have encouraged the groups that created disorder in the region in order to force the government to ask for his service, hence gaining the permission to form bands of irregular soldiers in their province and regain their positions of local patrons.⁴⁹ The change of attitude by the regime towards the traditional military element is noteworthy in terms of showing its resilience. According to Makrigiannis, in 1833, he had been told by Heideck, member of the Bavarian regency, that his position in terms of the reward that shall be given to the veteran captains is “A dry bone to worry at, till their teeth are worn out.”⁵⁰ In less than five years

46 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 83.

47 Kostas B. Kostis, “The formation of the state in Greece, 1830–1914” in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey* ed. Dragona, Thaleia, and Faruk Birttek. (London: Routledge, 2005), 19.

48 Achilles Batalas, “Send a Thief to Catch a Thief: State-Building and the Employment of Irregular Military Formations in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Greece” in *Irregular Armed Bands and Their Role in Politics and State Formation* ed. Diane E. Davis, and Anthony W. Pereira. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 150.

49 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 85.

50 Lidderdale, *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 152.

after this conversation, the regime had managed to exile away the party leaders such as Kolettis, but captains within their military clientele such as Velentzas and Vasos, had become an indispensable element for the security of the country.

§ 4.4 Otto's Absolute Rule and the "Dilemma of Neutrality" (1837-1840)

In 1837, upon his return to the country, Otto, now an adult, dismissed Armansperg as first chancellor, and abolished the office altogether, initiating the period of his absolute rule in Greece. The dilemma in which Otto found himself as a result was similar to that of Kapodistrias a decade earlier: The question of how to create a loyal following around the crown that would provide the necessary political infrastructure. In contrast to Kapodistrias, who chose to patronize one particular party at the expense of alienating other sections of the society, Otto decided to assume a role of arbitration between the parties, giving each of them representation in the administration in different periods, thus also aiming to satisfy the periodic demands of the powers that were sponsoring them.⁵¹ In a sense, from a starting point that aimed to break down traditional patron-client relationships in Greece, the monarchy ended up becoming the biggest patron of them all. Otto managed to create a loyal personal following from the likes of Kolokotronis, Mavromichalis, Kountouriotis, Zaimis, Tzavelas, and Botsaris. All of these men had been influential figures from the period preceding the war of independence, many of whom having been persons of power within the Ottoman provincial administrative machinery. With their association on a personal level with the crown, they gained the social respectability that they had been pursuing throughout the revolutionary years. Kitsos Tzavelas, and Kostas Botsaris, members

51 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 288.

of the two Souliot clans from the times of Ali Pasha, had even become Otto's aides-de camp.

Among the reasons behind Otto's decision to refrain from an exclusive affiliation with a particular party was the need to secure the next two installments of the loan. The second and third installments had already come to be at risk due to Armansperg's pro-English policies eventually resulting in the governments of France and Russia deciding to withhold their share of the loan in 1836. France's consecutive foreign ministers, De Broglie, and Thiers had presented Greece with a series of political demands in 1835-1836, which included the return of Kolettis to Greece and his appointment as head of government.⁵² It is safe to assume that Kolettis' presence in Paris had an influence on anti-Bavarianism of the French government, and he was continuing his opposition from abroad. Despite his efforts from abroad, and the letters in which he assures the king that he is making efforts to convince the French government to grant the third installment of the loan,⁵³ Kolettis remained in France, and Otto's absolutist rule continued until 1843.

In the late 1830s, Otto decided to appease to Russia by bringing key members of the Russian party into administrative posts such as Paikos as foreign minister and Glarakis as minister of interior. He also appointed certain secondary figures from the French party and tried to not isolate France altogether in the pursuit of seeking Russian support for his regime.⁵⁴ Domestically, too, the Russian party increasingly became a much safer ally for Otto, due to its popular support among the peasantry, its strong Orthodox identification that could protect the still catholic king from a religious opposition, and it being the party with the least association with constitutionalism. The ascendancy of the Russian party would continue until 1839, when the so-called "Philorthodox society" conspiracy turned the king against the Russian party.

52 Ibid. 260.

53 "Kolettis to Otto" AA 66854 (Undated).

54 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 303.

In late 1839, a secret society called the “Philorthodox Society” had been discovered through one of its members, Emmanouil Papas,⁵⁵ turning himself in as one of its members. Other members of the society were Georgios Kapodistrias, the youngest brother of the former president, and Nikitaras Stamatellopoulos, nephew of Kolokotronis.⁵⁶ The alleged plan of the society was to overthrow the king and replace him with an Orthodox monarch, and initiate a territorial expansion towards Thessaly, Epirus, and Macedonia, the rumors of which had led the Ottoman government despite the assurances of their Greek counterparts that the conspirators have been arrested, to increase security in these provinces.⁵⁷ Despite the fact that the objectives of the society were contrary to the Near East policies of Russia in 1839, and Katakazy’s additional assurances to Otto, the allegations inevitably resulted in Otto putting a distance to his former pro-Russian policies, also partly with the influence of the English minister to Athens, Sir Edmund Lyons putting pressure on the Greek government.⁵⁸

This reorientation away from Russia in terms of foreign policy with encouragement from the other two powers had also showed itself in the commercial treaty negotiations between Greece and the Ottoman Empire in 1839-1840. A commercial treaty between the two sides that would strengthen political tranquility, hence commercial security in eastern Mediterranean was particularly in line with British interests in the region, especially as the military conflict between the Ottoman government and Egypt had put forward the question of Crete’s future as a potential conflict for Greek foreign policy as well, the impact of which in Greece will be elaborated shortly. Diplomatically, it is understood that this treaty that Lord Palmerston was advocating from London would assist their policy of decreasing Russian influence in Greece.⁵⁹ Interestingly enough,

55 A relative of Emmanouil Papas the famous founding member of the Philiki Etairia.

56 Lidderdale, *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 164.

57 B.O.A. İ. MTZ (01) 1, 2 [15 Zilkade 1255 (20 January 1840)].

58 Katakazy to Nesselrode, Athens, Mar. 10, 1840, AVPRI, f. 133, op. 469, d. 9/1840 ll. 68–71. In Frary, *Russia and the Making of the Modern Greek Identity*, 177.

59 B.O.A. HAT 1221, 47762 [25 Muharrem 1254 (20 April 1838)].

despite an initial agreement between the two sides, when Zographos, the Greek ambassador to Istanbul returned to Athens to present the draft that they had agreed upon for its ratification by the king, it created a negative public uproar in Greece. The issue of the commercial treaty has shown the impact of the eastern crisis' influence on nationalist sentiments of the Greek public at the time. After the full text of the treaty being published in the newspaper *Aion*,⁶⁰ it became the primary subject of conversation in Athens. One particular criticism towards the treaty is understood to be a clause that forbade merchants to renounce their citizenship in either state.⁶¹ The Ottoman side had also been dissatisfied with the treaty, particularly regarding the proposition that Greek merchants shall pay three percent tariff in Ottoman domains, whereas Ottoman subjects were to pay much more.⁶² The treaty did not materialize, however. It was rejected by Otto, blaming Zographos, to protect himself from public criticism, which resulted in a protest with a diplomatic note from the Porte.⁶³

§ 4.5 The Eastern Question and the Foray of Velentzas (1840)

The Eastern Question, a term that in its broader definition refers to the problem of the unforeseeable potential problems for European and Near Eastern peace that might result from the territorial disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, had come to strongly determine Greece's foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. During the episode in 1839-40 that brought the Ottoman government into a military conflict with their governor of Egypt, Mehmet Ali of Kavala, the diplomatic attention of the European powers had strongly focused on the Eastern Mediterranean, which gave the parties in Greece, especially the French party unique political opportunities. After the collapses of the pro-English, and pro-

60 "Aion, 18 April 1840." In Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 352.

61 Ibid. 355.

62 B.O.A. HAT 832, 37554 [29 Zilhicce 1254 (15 March 1839)].

63 B.O.A. HR.SYS 1678, 23 (31 December 1840).

Russian foreign policies throughout the 1830s, a pro-French foreign policy became much more popular in 1840, especially now that the French prime minister and foreign minister, Adolphe Thiers was openly supporting the cause of Mehmet Ali, showing his inclination against the territorial status quo in the region.⁶⁴ The eastern crisis was also exploited by the French party in Greece to increase its popular support, especially among the irregular military element along the Ottoman frontier, where Velentzas was stationed as a frontier guard captain, and launched an irredentist foray into the Ottoman side of the frontier.⁶⁵

The origin of the conflict included a familiar episode in the Greek war of independence. When the Sultan had invited Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Mehmet Ali of Egypt to invade the Peloponnese and crush the rebellion, he had also promised him the governorships of the Peloponnese and Crete. In 1831, a year after the independence of Greece was recognized, and Mehmet Ali's prospects of obtaining the governorship of the Peloponnese for his son had failed, Mehmet Ali launched an assault to Syria, using his conflict with Abdullah Pasha the governor of Sidon (Acre), as an excuse.⁶⁶ The military confrontation of the Porte and the army of Ibrahim Pasha in northern Syria had led to an Egyptian victory, and with Russian intervention in favor of the Porte,⁶⁷ the conflict ended in a stalemate, leaving the territories up until Syria practically under the rule of Ibrahim Pasha. The developments in the late 1830s revived this conflict. The Baltalimanı Convention of 1838 that abolished local monopolies and opened up Ottoman markets to British merchants had, despite its economic nature, more short term political objectives. Since the treaty nominally included the provinces in Syria, it gave the British a stake at the preservation of Ottoman sovereignty in her Near Eastern provinces. For Lord Palmerston, among the objectives was to balance the influence of Russian

64 Özavcı, *Dangerous Gifts*, 215.

65 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 357-359.

66 Khaled Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali: From Ottoman Governor to Ruler of Egypt* (Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2009), 83.

67 Özavcı. *Dangerous Gifts*, 161.

commercial privileges that were granted with the Treaty of Edirne in 1829.⁶⁸ It is also after the signing of this treaty that the British had encouraged the Greek government to sign a commercial treaty with the Ottomans to further gravitate Greek foreign policy away from Russian influence. In 1839, Lord Palmerston managed to satisfy the Russian government by guaranteeing the closure of the Straits, however French foreign policy had shifted the same year to a more overt diplomatic support to Mehmet Ali's cause.

In Paris, the treaty of 1838, and its implication in terms of British commercial influence in Eastern Mediterranean had not been received positively, and pro-Egyptian publication started to occur in French newspapers.⁶⁹ French foreign policy had become increasingly involved with the eastern Mediterranean after their invasion of Algiers in 1830. Furthermore, on 15 July 1840, as a result of the disagreement between Thiers and Palmerston, the London convention of the pacification of the Levant was signed with four of the European powers, excluding France due to her ongoing diplomatic support to Mehmet Ali.⁷⁰ In the meantime, Thiers was also encouraging several Greek politicians in favor of Greek participation in the crisis. The military involvement of Greece would open up another front in the war, and perhaps relieve Egyptian war effort. It is also during this brief period that Kolettis is believed to have asked Otto to be given permission to return to Greece.⁷¹ Otto had found himself in a dilemma, between an aggressive foreign policy that would cut Greece's stable relationship with the concert of Europe, and the nationalist sentiments of the overwhelming majority of his country, because the conflict involved the future of Crete as well. Even Paikos, the foreign minister who has been known of pro-Russian inclinations, had been in talks with Kolettis, asking whether Greece would collude with France.⁷² The fact that the foreign minister asked such a question to Kolettis, the ambassador in

68 Ibid. 196.

69 B.O.A. HR.SYS 2922, 40 (22 September 1838).

70 Özavcı. *Dangerous Gifts*, 216.

71 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 358.

72 "Paikos to Kolettis" AA 75874 (18/30 August 1840).

Paris, reveals where the nucleus of Greek foreign policy was located in during the events of 1840.

In the meantime, certain preparations appear to have been made, outside formal channels. Many Pallikars stationed in Rumeli along the Ottoman frontier, had been long associated with Kolettis and his French party. The pro-French policy that involved an armed struggle on the other side of the frontier had material prospects for the irregular military element beyond nationalist aspirations. Towards the end of 1840, Velentzas, along with other familiar names, such as Makrygiannis, and Karatasos, had made preparations to cross the border and instigate a Greek revolt in Thessaly. It appears that they had been expecting the French to continue their support, and thus, made preparations for the spring of 1841.⁷³ However, after the destruction of the Egyptian war effort by the joint fleet of the quadruple alliance in September, King Louis Phillipe of France decided not to force war with the alliance, and forced Thiers to resign in October. These series of events led to the partial abandonment of a pro-French war policy in Athens, however, this was not the end of the story in Rumeli. In November, Velentzas had suddenly left the likes of Makrygiannis, and crossed the border with a few men of his own.⁷⁴ Leaving Makrygiannis, a political rival of Kolettis, despite his association with the French party behind, is an indication of the event as a distinct Kolettist affair, through his loyal client Velentzas. Despite the Egyptian defeat becoming imminent, if a military disturbance through an uprising could be created within Ottoman territories where the Greek speaking population was abundant such as Thessaly, an intervention of the European powers, as well as the Greek government might have been a possibility in the eyes of the instigators.⁷⁵ In early November 1840, Velentzas appeared in Thessaly along with his band consisting of Rumeliot fighters originally from Thessaly and Macedonia.⁷⁶ Throughout the month, Velentzas appears to have roamed the province, and ended up entering into negotiations with

73 Lidderdale, *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis*, 165.

74 Ibid. 165.

75 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*. 360.

76 AYE, F1840/100/2.

the Derbent ağa in the region, Vehis Vashari (Frasheri). Andronikos Paikos, foreign minister of Greece insisted that Greek authorities had been unaware of Velentzas's band crossing the border, and that there was no intention from the Greek side to disturb the piece in the neighboring Ottoman provinces.⁷⁷ Kostaki Musurus Pasha, Ottoman minister to Athens, in a dispatch to Mustafa Reşid Pasha, argued the opposite. He firmly believed that this foray had been directed by the Greek authorities, and insisted on the connection of the affair with the conflict with Mehmet Ali Pasha. In his letter, he wrote the following:

All of our considerations, together with other data, render Mr. Paikos' assertion devoid of foundation or even premature, and come to the support of the opinion generally accepted here, which states that Velenzas had the mission to pass with his band on Ottoman territory, to meet there other adherents, and stir up an insurrection which would, on the one hand, serve as a diversion for the cause of Mehemet Ali, and on the other hand, would be profitable to Greece. Whether due to the fall of Minister Thiers disconcerting the constituents of Velenzas, or whether the attempt had failed in the face of the energetic vigilance of his Excellency Namık Pasha, we have now succeeded in forcing Velenzas to give up his project. He then asked to submit to Vaiz aga and have a job from him.⁷⁸

It is plausible to believe that the dismissal of Thiers did not immediately give some French adherents in Greece the idea of a reversal in the nature of their Ottoman policies, which resulted in the Velentzas escape being carried out despite the upcoming change in French foreign policy. Velentzas probably had taken off with the expectation that he would receive support from Athens, and when the Greek government had renounced him after it became obvious that an aggressive foreign policy towards the Ottomans became untenable, Velentzas was left with no options, and negotiated with Vashari, who in return is argued to have

77 B.O.A. HR.SYS 1678, 6/54 (4 June 1831).

78 B.O.A. HR.SYS 1678, 6/59 (4 June 1831).

secretly welcomed Velentzas' presence there, because it reinforced the necessity of the irregular bands in the region like that of his for security.⁷⁹ Both men showed the Rumeliot pallikari character of constantly keeping their options open to preserve their irregular military life as a career. After the option of working with the Derbent ağa had failed, in December, Velentzas sent a letter to one of his friends, stating his intention to march to Athens with a large force,⁸⁰ further implying that he had been disappointed with lack of support from Athens that he probably was led to believe would arrive.

The events in late 1840, showed that Kolettis still had the ability to mobilize bands in Rumeli for his political ambitions, appropriating the political climate of any given time. The Velentzas foray was not an event that involved large numbers of fighters, but it is almost certain that, had Thiers not been dismissed from office, and the pro-French military option in Greece continued, a general mobilization of Rumeliot fighters on the Greek side of the border might have been an option. The foray of Velentzas might have been an experimental move, to see whether an attempt to create a Greek revolt could lead to a positive political outcome for Greece, at a time when the fate of Crete was at the table of European diplomacy. Naturally, to undergo such a risky business, Kolettis could only trust few men under his patronage, and Velentzas was unquestionably among them. The plot proved unsuccessful due to the king immediately changing his views on the pro-French foreign policy, and his government preventing further passages from the border. The outcome of the Eastern crisis, a British victory, had led him to decide on adapting a pro-English foreign policy, which brought the English party leader and Phanariot Mavrokordatos's appointment as prime minister for a brief period in 1841.

79 Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 117.

80 Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*, 360.

§ 4.6 Conclusion

The Kapodistrian period provided a glimpse of how resilient traditional social networks of the Ottoman provincial system had been against attempts to create a centralized bureaucratic state in Greece. Despite serious attempts to eliminate traditional leaders and their factions as a potential threat to central authority, in the end, they prevailed and the political circumstances immediately returned to its pre-Kapodistrian phase, almost as if the past four years had not happened at all. In the royal period, similar problems arose between the agents of the new regime, and the traditional political leaders. The attempts of the Bavarian regime to eliminate local political entrenchments in favor of a centralized civilian bureaucracy had failed, and Bavarians, too, had to come to terms with the political and social reality of Greece. This partial recognition proved expedient also due to the young regime's need to diplomatically get along with her guarantor powers. The patronage that the guarantor powers had been providing for the three political parties in Greece had created a political environment in which domestic politics in Greece could not be practiced disregarding the international balance of power in Europe. Throughout the 1830s, Velentzas continued to obtain opportunities through his association with Kolettis, and his French party. During the civil war after Kapodistrias' assassination, and the rebellion in Rumeli in 1835, Velentzas always dependent on the relationships and alliances that he created within the network of the Kolettis faction, and managed to find a place within the new regime as well with these networks. In Velentzas' irredentist foray in 1840, we can see how in the span of twenty years, a faction in revolutionary Greece that was built on top of pre-existing provincial power structures in Rumeli, evolved into a political party with the backing of a foreign power, and played an ambitious role within the framework of the Eastern Question.



5

Conclusion

The Greek war of independence has without doubt changed the course of history in many ways. It resulted in the carving out of a state out of former Ottoman provinces, and introduced new political agents who influenced the political life in Greece for the decades to follow. These men had been part of the regional networks within the Ottoman provincial system. Some of them had been associated with their administration prior to the war, and some had found the appropriate channels for political ascendancy thanks to the unstable circumstances provided by the war. In any case, despite being protagonists of what we retrospectively might see as a struggle for national liberation, they were in reality operating within their own regional struggle for power, and traditional networks of patronage. Starting with 1821, irregular fighters in Rumeli made use of the violent circumstances provided by the war in their target of acquiring public revenues through physical force. Ioannis Velentzas as well, a young Rumeliot pallikar at that time, struggled to find his place within this environment. After he managed to establish a patron-client relationship under Ioannis Kolettis, the former Ali Pasha protege, who utilized his relationship with Rumeliot fighters for his political purposes, most of whom had been associated with Ali Pasha as well, Velentzas started to find himself part of a regional faction, and

operated within its agenda. With the regional conflicts turning into civil wars, we see how the services of Rumeliots such as Velentzas had been used by Kolettis to guarantee his political authority.

We also saw how various factions during the war had become to be associated with European powers, and labelled with the name of that country. Despite the attempts of Kapodistrias to eliminate partisan strife, the association of these parties with European powers, in a period when the political future of Greece practically depended on the former's approval, gave them the chance to survive, and with the civil war that erupted after Kapodistrias had been assassinated, another civil war resulted in the return of partisan strife that enabled the ascendancy of Kolettis once again, and gave Velentzas another opportunity to offer his services.

The cooperation between Kolettis and Velentzas continued to appear in critical turning points in the following years. Despite the Bavarian regime's attempt to eliminate traditional powerhouses in the provinces to strengthen the centralized bureaucratic state machinery, whether former Ali Pasha captains, or Peloponnesian kocabaşıs, these networks proved to be more resilient than the Bavarians had imagined. Kolettis continued to mobilize the Rumeliot irregular military element for his political purposes. In almost every Kolettist scheme, Velentzas appears to be almost zealously involved in the service of his political patron who became the head of a political enterprise called the French party. The evolution of the Kolettis faction into the so called French party, and representing the objective to align Greek foreign policy more with French interests, has strongly shown itself during the Eastern crisis of 1840. In line with the French government's support to Mehmet Ali of Egypt against the Ottoman government, Velentzas, the Kolettist captain in Rumeli, attempted to organize an irredentist foray into Ottoman lands, to contribute to the pro-French inclinations in the Greek government. The initiative was utterly unsuccessful. Yet, it not only illustrated how provincial networks of power in Ottoman Rumeli had withstood vigorous attempts to transform the political and social fabric in Greece in the first half of the nineteenth century, but also showed the ways in which the involvement of these

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regional factions with European powers had shaped domestic as well as foreign policies of the Greek government.



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