BORDERS OF *KAPEDANİ*: OTTOMAN ENCOUNTERS WITH GREEK BORDER CROSSER CAPTAINS AROUND THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Borders of Kapedani: Ottoman Encounters with Greek Border Crosser Captains Around the Mid-Nineteenth Century

This thesis deals with a group of prominent frontier captains of the Hellenic Kingdom who crossed the border and escaped to take refuge in the Ottoman Empire around the mid-nineteenth century. These captains represented a significant regional force for both states as leaders of bandits and irregulars in the border regions between newly founded Greece and the Ottoman Empire. As traditional military elements who had transformed into Greek nationals, they regulated the initial phases through which the Ottoman Empire engaged with independent Greece, the first state to break away from within the empire. How they resituated themselves in response to shifting political, military, and economic conditions, from the period before the independence of Greece through the mid-century, sheds light on the mutual circumstances involved in living in the Greco-Ottoman border. Thus, this research aims to explore the shifting functions of these captains following the Greek Revolution, the continuities of Ottoman dynamics in the borderlands, and the imperial responses to the "refuge" taken by Greek captains. The discussion will follow the captains' historical background, their existence as opposition within the kingdom, and their transregional and transnational networks, all of which influenced the attitudes, negotiations, and reactions of the empire towards the captains and their broader affiliations.

ÖZET

Kapedani'nin Sınırları: On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl Ortalarında Osmanlı'nın Sınır Aşan Yunan Kaptanlarla Karşılaşmaları

Bu tez, on dokuzuncu yüzyılın ortalarında Yunanistan Krallığı'ndan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na kaçarak iltica eden, sınır bölgelerinin önde gelen kaptanlarını incelemektedir. Bu kaptanlar, yeni kurulan Yunanistan ile Osmanlı İmparatorluğu arasındaki sınır bölgelerinde eşkıyanın ve düzensiz birliklerin önderleri olarak her iki devlet için de önemli bir bölgesel güç teşkil ediyordu. Geleneksel askeri unsurlardan Yunan yurttaşlara dönüşen bu kişiler, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun kendi bünyesinden ayrılan ilk devlet olan bağımsız Yunanistan ile kurduğu erken temasların şekillenmesinde belirleyici bir rol üstlenmişlerdi. Onların kendilerini değişen siyasi, askeri ve iktisadi koşullar karşısında nasıl yeniden konumlandırdıkları, Yunan-Osmanlı sınırında yaşamaya dair karşılıklı koşullara ışık tutmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu araştırma, Yunan Devrimi sonrasında söz konusu kaptanların değişen işlevlerini, sınır bölgelerindeki Osmanlı dinamiklerinin sürekliliğini ve Yunan kaptanlarının Osmanlı topraklarına sığınmasına cevaben imparatorluk makamlarının verdiği tepkileri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tartışma, kaptanların geldikleri tarihsel arka planı, krallık içindeki muhalif konumlarını ve bölge ve ulusötesi bağlantılarını takip edecektir; tüm bu unsurlar, imparatorluğun kaptanlara ve onların daha geniş ilişkiler ağına yönelik tutumu, müzakereleri ve tepkilerini etkilemiştir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an examination of the Greek frontier captains who had crossed borders by fleeing the Hellenic Kingdom and taking refuge in the Ottoman Empire during the late 1840s. Some of them would stay in the Ottoman Empire for several months or a few years, while others would spend the rest of their lives there. Among them were two of Greece's well-known generals, Theodoros Grivas and Nikolaos Kriezotis, and a varied number of other military and political figures such as Papakostas Tzamalas, Ioannis Velentzas, Sotiris Stratos, Evangelios and Athanasios Balatsos, and Ioannis and Evangelos Kontogiannis.

They were the Rumeliots, many of whom had an *armatoliki* heritage and all of whom played distinct parts during the Greek War of Independence. Belonging to the category of "military entrepreneurs" who historically materialized every insurrection, these captains functioned as the foundational source of revolutionary violence and institutionalized this violence as an enduring mode of existence.[1] They emerged as one of many examples within the pervasive phenomenon of banditry and bandit chieftaincy that was endemic across the Ottoman Balkans for centuries.

The presence of the bandit chiefs has significantly influenced Balkan political discourse, acting as a national symbol that personifies modern political objectives and national movements by justifying them with the historical context of the early nineteenth-century uprisings in the Ottoman Balkans. The Serbian uprisings, which occurred from 1804 to 1835 and culminated in the establishment of an autonomous principality of Serbia, primarily unfolded as a guerrilla warfare campaign

[1] Thomas Gallant, "Revolutions and Regimes of Violence", *Historein* 15, no. 2 (2015): 31.

spearheaded by *hajduks* (bandits).[2] Likewise, the Kırcalı period, between 1795 and 1810, saw local warlords and bandit networks erode Ottoman control in Bulgaria, while Pazvandoğlu's autonomous regime in Vidin further fragmented imperial power.[3] Meanwhile, Montenegro, which could be considered de facto autonomous during this period, had its borders defined in the latter half of the 19th century, largely based on the historical areas and activities of banditry from previous centuries.[4] Moreover, the viability of implementing the Tanzimât reforms and protecting the borders of Bosnia and Albania with Serbia or Montenegro rested severely on diplomatic efforts and bargaining with the powerful bandit chiefs.[5] Greece, also part of this environment, had a klephtic organizational background not dissimilar to its regional counterparts before it joined in its War of Independence. In all these places, whether they achieved greater autonomy or not, the bandit chiefs, based on their influence in the early 19th century, became either the commanders or leaders of their newly formed polities or of the regions still tied to the empire.

It was a common practice for Balkan bandit captains, each of whom became a powerful paramilitary force in their own regions, to extend their influence over a wide area beyond their immediate territories. They would occasionally seek refuge across each other's territories, and at times, their activities and relations extended to the borders of different empires. Serbs, for instance, migrated across Ottoman, Habsburg, and Venetian frontiers, serving as auxiliary troops like the *voynuks* and *martolos* for the Ottomans, or as *uskoks*, *morlacchi*, and *grenzers* for the Habsburgs

[2] Aleksander Petrović, "The Role of Banditry in the Creation of Nation States in the Central Balkans during the 19th Century" (Master's Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2003), p. 2.
[3] Mark Pinson, "Ottoman Bulgaria in the First Tanzimat Period: The Revolts in Nish (1841) and Vidin (1850)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 11, no. 2 (May 1975): 104.
[4] Zafer Gölen, "Karadağ Devleti'nin Doğuşu: Osmanlı-Karadağ Sınır Tespiti (1858-60)," *Belleten* 78, no. 282 (August 2014): 659-661.
[5] Fatma Sel Turhan, *The Ottoman Empire and the Bosnian Uprising: Janissaries, Modernisation and Rebellion in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: IB Tauris, 2014), 17-18.

and Venetians, in exchange for settlement and limited autonomy.[6] In semi-autonomous military communities like Senj, Žumberak, and Boka Kotorska, Serbs often blurred the line between soldier and bandit, with their mobility and experience as refugees, mercenaries, and members of units like the Austrian *Freikorps* proving vital for sustaining Serbian political agency across imperial borders.[7] Following the First Serbian Uprising, the Obrenović dynasty orchestrated the resettlement of Montenegrin migrants into the depopulated villages of Serbian hajduks, a political move designed to address the mass flight of approximately 35% of the population to Austria and Romania.[8] Moreover, as the Principality of Montenegro became increasingly autonomous, Ottoman and Montenegrin authorities had to contend with routine cross-border banditry with Bosnia, which emerged as a power struggle in a region with ambiguous borders.[9] In short, the bandit-led military and political cadres that surrounded Greece, along with their practice of seeking refuge, were characteristics shared with its neighbors in the wider area. Thus, this research investigates the implications of crossing the officially recognized border between the Ottoman Empire and a Greece that, for the first time, had achieved full and official independence within such a turbulent environment, as well as the specific distinctions, if any, this action generated.

In the aftermath of Greek independence, the limited presence of a regular army enabled Greek captains, whose bands had expanded to the size of a small army, to integrate the pre-independence regime of violence into the fragile structures of the

[6] Nicholas C. J. Pappas, "Between Two Empires: Serbian Survival in the Years After Kosovo," in *Serbia's Historical Heritage*, ed. Alex N. Dragnich (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1994), pp. 20-24.
[7] Pappas, *Between Two Empires: Serbian Survival in the Years After Kosovo*, 23.
[8] Petrović, *The Role of Banditry in the Creation of Nation States in the Central Balkans during the 19th Century*, 71.
[9] Hannes Granditsi, *The End of Ottoman Rule in Bosnia: Conflicting Agencies and Imperial Appropriations* (New York: Routledge, 2022), p. 89.

new political order.[10] As a result, they represented local power groups at the core of newly established Greece's state-building endeavor. When their military and political participation in the constantly shifting order designed by the policies of the kingdom was blatantly challenged, these captains would grow discontent with the new social order and rebel. In consequence, they would turn to the northern borderlands with the Ottoman Empire to reiterate their demands, where their operational area was already being increasingly redirected by the state. This thesis argues that the influx of prominent Greek captains into the newly formed Greek-Ottoman border as a mechanism of survival significantly reified, shaped, and reorganized the Ottoman Empire's perception of borders, local administrative responses, and inter-state relations. The movements of the captains, both as armed actors and political agents, marked the very early instance in which the Ottoman Empire's efforts to delineate a Greek 'insider' and 'outsider' became evident. It constituted a new reality that the captains, who were still technically Ottoman subjects, had never before confronted.

While the action of crossing a "border", which had only existed for less than two decades, represented a new form of survival for these captains, it was not so much a transition between two distinct sovereign authorities as it was an activation of the local networks they had built over the years in the broader region. However, it was not so easy for the Ottoman central government to manage the situation in the face of these military settlers. There was a border area to keep safer, a recognized neighboring state, a changing international context and indispensable irregular troops that had acquired an ambiguous character amid military reforms. Moreover, the ties of these captains to banditry, or the possibility of them turning into bandits themselves, were a known and accepted concern. All these presented the notion of

[10] Gallant, *Revolutions and Regimes of Violence*, 37-38.

how the empire could address these captains or how their local authorities ought to handle their refuge.

What ultimately transpired, rather than what ideally should have taken place, was inextricably linked to the legacy they had earned through past service to the Ottoman Empire and their prominent positions within the kingdom. It was also closely connected to their ties with the Albanian guards stationed along the border and their ability to mobilize soldiers from the Ottoman territory. Thus, even though they were considered as vestiges of the old regime, they were never dismissed entirely as an unwanted group of rebels.

Their potential to destabilize the Hellenic Kingdom was taken very seriously by the Ottoman Empire. The armed faction, which sought to depose the king and establish its own sphere of authority by effectively adopting the guise of political émigrés and advancing its demands, received implicit endorsement from the imperial administration. Moreover, they had created an area in the diplomatic field where for the first time in years the empire had the upper hand. It would develop a diplomatic rhetoric by assuming the role of a patron-protective hegemon. This study aims to analyze the underlying causes of these developments and to decipher the complex nature of the relationship between the group of captains and the Ottoman Empire. This will be done by explaining how the captains who cross the border and their spheres of authority were understood by both sides.

Debates on the western frontier of the Ottoman Empire often draw on responses to Rıfa'at Abou-el Haj's interpretation of the Treaty of Karlowitz. He argues that the Empire, by moving away from the distinction between *dar al-harb* and *dar al-Islam*, ended its expansion into Europe and established a dividing line

between East and West, or Muslim and Christian.[11] In response, an alternative view suggested that the Treaty of Karlowitz integrated the Ottoman western frontier into a system of administratively managed and militarized borders defined by garrisons, fiscal planning, and the movement of various actors.[12] Following these accounts, the border between the Ottoman Empire and Greece became the expression of an early nineteenth-century understanding of territorial frontiers, prompting questions about whether it introduced a new East–West division from an orientalist point of view or whether it reflected a development of border modernization.

The increasing relevance of the concept of a border, alongside that of a frontier in this study, can largely be attributed to the post-Napoleonic Restoration Europe, when a spatial order characterized by more tangible delineation, demarcation, and policing began to take form.[13] With the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire, elements of border policing such as passports, nationality laws, customs agencies, and security forces restricting movement began to spread even in areas not yet formally referred to as "borders".[14] Just like other post-1815 powers, the Ottoman Empire too would become an implementer of this new order, albeit with varying degrees of systemic adherence.

Although there is a considerable amount of research on the early modern and modern borders of the Ottoman Empire, there is a striking lack of scholarly works that focus specifically on its border with the newly established Kingdom of Greece. More generally, very little attention has been paid to how the relationship and

[11] Rıfa'at Abou-el-Haj, "The Formal Closure of the Ottoman Frontier in Europe: 1699-1703," *Journal of American Oriental Society* 89, no. 3 (1969): 467-475.
[12] Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), p. 28.
[13] Michael Rowe, "Borders, War, and Nation-Building in Napoleon's Europe," in *Borderlands in World History, 1700-1914* ed. Paul Readman, Cynthia Radding and Chad Bryant (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 143.
[14] Rowe, *Borders, War, and Nation-Building in Napoleon's Europe*, 161.

dynamics between the two sides evolved from the 1830s onward. Conventional Ottoman history writing tends to ignore the empire's organic and ongoing interactions with this small state in the southern Balkans that emerged right next to it and out of its own territorial dissolution. Despite being one of the empire's most dynamic spaces of human mobility, the interaction with Greece between 1821 and 1897 is often treated as a near-void, mentioned only intermittently, and primarily in the context of the Cretan conflicts. Largely understudied, the 1840s were a transitional period during which interstate relations between the Hellenic Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire began to take on a proto-diplomatic character. There was no mounting or open conflict. At the same time, the border started to transform local societies and adapt to a new administrative framework. Nonetheless, certain key studies can be mentioned as forming the basis upon which this thesis is constructed.

While it does not directly concentrate on the border, Giannis Koliopoulos's *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece, 1821–1912*, one of the monumental volumes of twentieth-century social history on revolution in Greece, examines the relationship between brigandage and the formation of the Greek nation. Challenging Eric Hobsbawm's then-recent conception of "social bandits" as marginal defenders of the oppressed peasants, Koliopoulos argues that the aforementioned captains were, in practice, collaborators of the elites, acting in pursuit of their interests and monopolizing violence in rural areas.[15]

However, when it comes to the question of the border, the actions of brigands and their chiefs along the Ottoman border are framed entirely within a nationalist irredentist narrative, relentlessly focused on reclaiming the "unredeemed lands" from Greek independence to the Balkan Wars, thus overlooking their deeper

[15] John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece 1821-1912* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 33.

entanglements with the Ottoman Empire and the complexities of the newly constituted border. Despite this, his monography, which meticulously traces a century of Greek nation-building through the lens of banditry and draws on an extensive range of sources, offers valuable insight into the world, motivations, and limits of the captains.

Another important scholar in this line of research is Dilek Özkan-Pantazis, whose invaluable and pertinent work directly engages with border issues while incorporating traditional local actors of the frontier. By placing her investigation of the Ottoman modernization attempts in the first Ottoman-Greek border in Thessaly, she revisits the center-periphery paradigm through the framework of reciprocity, critiquing rigid interpretations of centralization and imposed modernity.[16]

She approaches frontier actors not merely as passive recipients of imperial reforms, but as active participants situated within what she conceptualizes as the contested gray zones between the expanding reach of Ottoman central authority and the persistence of local autonomy. Rather than viewing Tanzimât modernization as a top-down, uniformly implemented process, she emphasizes the unevenness and mutual entanglement of center and periphery, particularly in border regions. Her comparative analysis situates the brigands, derbendat, governors, local communities, and intermediaries within a dynamic field shaped by both imperial directives and regional imperatives around the wider context of the "frontierization" of Thessaly and state centralization.[17]

[16] Dilek Özkan, "Ottoman Perception and Considerations on the First Ottoman and Greek Borderlands in Thessaly, 1832-1865," (PhD diss., National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 2016), p. 3.
[17] Özkan, *Ottoman Perception and Considerations on the First Ottoman and Greek Borderlands in Thessaly*, 1832-1865, p, 271.

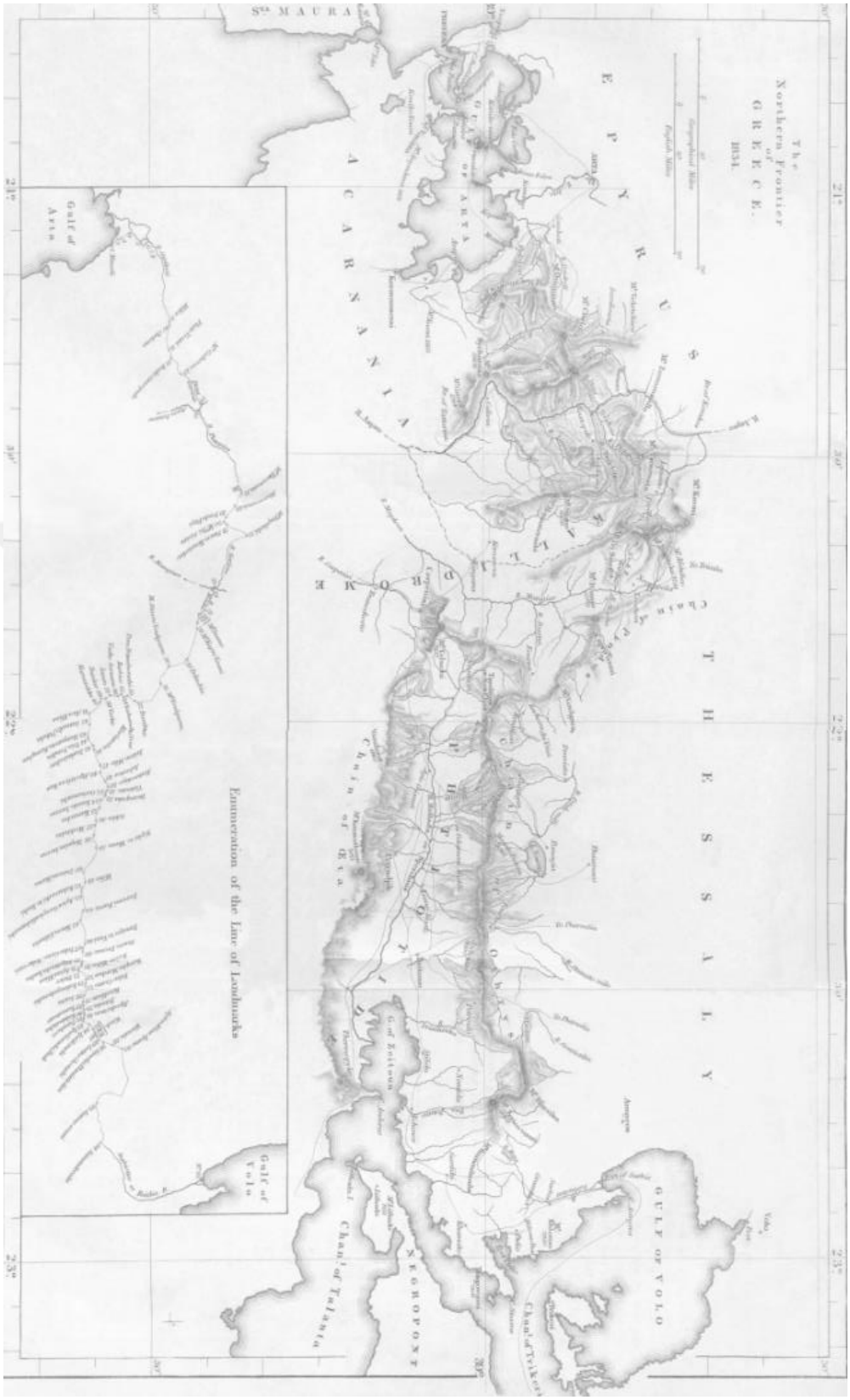

Figure 1. The map commissioned by the Royal Geographical Society showing the northern frontier of Greece in 1834 (From George Philip Baker, Memoir on the Northern Frontier of Greece, 1837).

Through this lens, the Greek and Ottoman border emerges not as a fixed line imposed from above, but as a space of continuous negotiation, adaptation, and power-brokering.[18] She traces this process from the initial delineation of the boundary with the participation of international guarantors to the administrative, legal, and security reforms in the Ottoman Empire. In doing so, she demonstrates how border-making is intersected with broader questions of imperial reform, state consolidation, and provincial governance, complicating simplified narratives of linear modernization or unilateral state-building.

Finally, the studies by George Gavrilis are of considerable significance. Gavrilis argues that until the 1850s, the Ottoman-Greek border functioned as a space of cooperation, governed by relatively autonomous border authorities with minimal interference from the central state.[19] In the following decades, however, the boundary gradually became militarized and evolved into a site of conflict.[20] He argues that the delegation of border management to local guards led to a more stable and institutionalized border but this does not entirely overlap with the findings of this thesis. The case of the captains who took refuge in the empire alone displays the extent of central state involvement in managing their settlement within the empire and highlights the serious potential for conflict their passage posed.

Nonetheless, his study still makes crucial contributions, particularly in its analysis of the shared objective of both states, which was the suppression of banditry, and the cooperative strategies developed toward this end.[21] His work illuminates by

[18] Özkan, p, 275.
[19] George Gavrilis, "The Greek-Ottoman Boundary as Institution, Locality and Process, 1832-1882," *American Behavioral Scientist* 51, no. 10 (June 2008): 1517-18.
[20] Gavrilis, *The Greek-Ottoman Boundary*, 1517-18.
[21] Gavrilis, 1522-1523.

which means such cooperation functioned on the ground and how it was supported by the practical needs of maintaining order in a volatile border area.

Moreover, the research stands out for offering a remarkably balanced perspective on the policies of both the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Greece. Such an approach is rarely encountered in the existing literature, where one side often dominates the narrative. Importantly, Gavrilis also provides significant insights into the refuge-taking practices of the captains who are central to this study, improving our understanding of the broader administrative and political frameworks within which their mobility was managed.[22] Accordingly, it has been necessary to give enough consideration to Gavrilis' work, given its relevance to the subject matter and its contribution to the broader scholarly discussion surrounding the administration and transformation of the Ottoman-Greek borderland.

The structure of this thesis follows a chronological and thematic progression that reflects both the transformation of the captains themselves and the shifting political landscapes they navigated. Each chapter addresses a distinct phase of this transformation, beginning with the captains' social and political origins and extending to their complex interactions with the emerging Hellenic Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire. By looking at their roles, from regional power holders to political actors, refugees, and perceived threats or assets, this study aims to contextualize their movements within broader imperial and national frameworks. The following outline presents the scope and focus of each chapter in detail.

Chapter 2 examines the concept of the captain, what it signified, the sources of power, and who they were. It traces their brief family history back to the eighteenth century, analyzing how they became recognized as armatoloi through

[22] Ibid. 1523.

cooperation and conflicts. It also explores their regional origins and networks in the early nineteenth century.

This period was profoundly transformative for the captains, shaped first by Ali Pasha's consolidation of power over his semi-autonomous domain and later by the Greek War of Independence beginning in 1821. Every decision they made during this era formed the background for their post-independence aspirations, whether securing political influence, military command, or social status in the emerging Greek state.

Chapter 3 examines the position of the captains within the new state apparatus following the recognition and establishment of the Hellenic Kingdom. It explores how they came to be regarded as far more than former armatoloi leaders, emerging instead as war heroes, political actors, or partisan collaborators. The chapter traces the expectations and disillusionments shaped by the legacy of the Greek Revolution, particularly through their opposition to a monarch appointed by the European powers.

From the perspective of the captains, it seeks to understand why they had to temporarily leave the Hellenic Kingdom and why the Ottoman Empire appeared as a choice of refuge. This chapter, thus, also offers insights into why these captains were perceived not merely as runaways but almost as political refugees.

Chapter 4 examines the Ottoman Empire's response to the captains who sought refuge within its territory. It investigates how the empire conceptualized Greek captains and analyzes the priorities of central and local authorities when addressing them.

It identifies perceived threats, potential benefits, and underlying motives in the decision-making process. In doing so, it highlights that the empire's policy

toward the captains was shaped not only by short-term concerns but also by broader political interests, displaying the complex set of factors the Ottoman authorities had to take into consideration.

Finally, chapter 5 provides an overview of the Ottoman Empire in the 1840s, shortly after Greek independence. It examines the Empire's relationship with the new Greek state through the lens of the *Tanzimât* reforms. The chapter discusses how this relationship affected the Empire's internal dynamics and the responses it generated.

A key focus is the border region that directly concerned the captains, particularly how the Empire sought to reshape this frontier in response to the Hellenic Kingdom's existence. This includes transformations in the derbend (border guard) organization and periodic border raids, which feature prominently in the analysis.

During this period, the Ottoman Empire's efforts to design its borders in response to the presence of the Hellenic Kingdom held significant implications for the captains. Central to this reconfiguration were the transformation of the *derbend* (border guard) organization deployed along the frontier and the recurrent cross-border incursions, both of which feature the region's contested character.

Since a significant part of this thesis focuses on the motivations behind the cross-border movements of captains, a considerable portion of the sources are related to the Greek Revolution and the formation of the Greek nation-state. This body of literature is both extensive and carries considerable weight, as it emerged immediately after independence and has continued to the present day. In Greece, there is a wide range of local documents, ranging from village to municipal level, available for every region that participated in the War of Independence. This is also true for captains, who are regarded as heroes both in their respective regions and in

the broader narrative of the nation's history. Moreover, all of this has been further entangled with folkloric elements becoming part of songs, poems, and even "invented traditions", which has turned it into a blurry mixture that makes it particularly difficult to historicize within the Ottoman context.

Nonetheless, these sources remain essential due to the relative scarcity of Ottoman material, which falls significantly short in both volume and variety compared to the Greek corpus. In Greek sources, ranging from memoirs and letters to newspapers and official documents, captains can be traced through multiple layers of narratives and documentation. In contrast, their presence in Ottoman sources is largely restricted to state archival records, particularly regarding border affairs. Despite this, materials from the Ottoman state archives help restore balance by enabling the integration of the stories of captains whose affiliations to the empire are often downplayed or only hinted at into Ottoman history.

Additionally, since European powers were deeply involved in the Greek War of Independence and the newly established country was to be ruled by a Bavarian king, a wide range of European sources have also been referenced. Travelogues, memoirs, newspapers, government reports and commissions, as well as volumes within the "world history" genre, hold considerable weight within the source material. The expansion of Philhellenism within European public discourse following Greece's independence catalyzed a significant increase in literature concerning Greece. Thus, European sources provide an important contribution to accessing the voices of contemporaries from the period examined in this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

AN INSIGHT INTO THE FAMILIES OF GREEK CAPTAINS DURING THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

2.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, some Greek captains and their families already had a considerable local influence in Ottoman Greece. This established power framework paved the way for their subsequent role in the Greek War of Independence. This chapter will deliberate on the following questions: Who were the captains' families whose lives were transformed before the revolution during the rule of Ali Pasha of Ioannina, or who rose to prominence thereafter? How were their experiences forged by the conditions of the constant state of regional wars in Ottoman Greece? What were their respective genealogical and historical backgrounds, and how did they adapt to the evolving circumstances of the above-mentioned period?

In these contexts, this chapter provides a retrospective analysis of both the rule of Ali Pasha of Ioannina and the Greek revolution that followed. The provincial ruler, Ali Pasha's revolt against the Ottoman central government, created a crucial strategic opening for the Greek Revolution, delaying Ottoman military action as he was perceived as the main threat to the sultanic rule, and leading Greek rebels to have enough time to organize in the early stages of their uprisings.[23] Henceforward, the main focus is on how Ali Pasha reshaped the regional power dynamics by weakening the high-end armatoliki families through a combination of multi-layered conflict and negotiation process. Both expansion and disruption within the power of

[23] Hamiyet Sezer Feyzioğlu, *Bir Osmanlı Valisinin Hazin Sonu: Tepedelenli Ali Paşa İsyanı* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2017), p. 153.

the established families during the early nineteenth century resulted in the pursuit of new opportunities when the Greek War of Independence commenced. It allowed established captains to regain influence and new leaders to emerge. This chapter, thus, aims to explore the historical circumstances surrounding their status as captains, including their spheres of influence, regions of origin, and lineage-based authority they commanded. It also delves into the actions of the armatoliki families, such as the Grivas, Kontogiannis, and Stratos, as well as individuals such as Nikolaos Kriezotis, Papakostas Tzamalas, and Ioannis Velentzas, who had diverse roles in this period of transformation. Those families or individuals were after preserving existing order and securing their positions as the world they once knew rapidly altered beyond recognition within a single generation. They had to capitalize on their existing legacy, if they possessed one, or build a new legacy shaped around the revolution.

2.2 The definition and legacy of captains in Ottoman Greece

The definition of a captain is inherently complex and subject to various ambiguities. It is essential to elucidate, in a broad manner, the relevance of their roles in pre-independence Greece, or within the context of the Ottoman Balkans. To elaborate, in Ottoman Greece, *klephts*, *armatoloi* (sing. *armatolos*), and *kapoi* constituted the three distinct irregular military types, in which captains served predominantly as chiefs of the *klepths-armatoloi*.[24] Each type supported and reinforced the others with its own militias while also fulfilling its unique responsibilities. The klephts were the outlaws who formed small bands and retreated to the mountains, turning to brigandage for reasons such as detaching from land or social obligations, seeking

[24] John Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 31.

adventure, or defending themselves from blood feuds.[25] They could number up to hundreds as units and were compounded by a common virile ethos and set of values, including bravery, honor, and defiance of authority.[26] They used to increase their influence among peasants and non-sedentary groups through violence and, true to their name, theft. This resulted in the formation of a distinct social position for these groups, which was granted informal protection and enabled them to subsequently assume leading roles or revert to their original status as armed protectors, the armatoloi.

The armatoloi were the former klephts who had been granted amnesty and employed by the Ottoman administration to serve as local militias responsible for maintaining order, securing mountain passes, and suppressing brigandage.[27] Officially permitted to bear arms, they were able to exercise a degree of autonomy, rule an administrative area called *armatolik*/*kapudanlık*, collect taxes and engage in commerce.[28] During the final phase of Ottoman rule in Greece, the armatoloi largely ceded their duty to the Albanian mercenaries, *derbend ağas*, who maintained their role in the border provinces following the independence.

A third group of irregulars, known as kapoi, were again former klephts, employed as private guards not by the Ottoman administration but by local wealthy Christian primates.[29] They were specifically located in Morea and had a lesser influence in northern and central Greece.

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[25] Vasilis Molos, "Forms of Resistance," in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides and Constantinos Tsoukalas (Boston: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2021), pp. 102-103.
[26] Molos, *Forms of Resistance*, 102.
[27] Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843*, 32.
[28] Gerassimos Karabelias, "From National Heroes to National Villains: Bandits, Pirates and the Formation of Modern Greece," in *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 265.
[29] Petropoulos, 34.

In time, klephts could become armatoloi and kapoi or vice versa, for they were immensely intermingled. Particularly, the lines separating klephts and armatoloi were frequently indistinct, as the two groups often switched roles in response to changing circumstances.[30] Armatoloi, generally recognized as guardsmen who upheld the authority and maintained order, could, at times, be presented as resistors of power.[31] Conversely, klephts, usually associated with banditry or lawlessness against the ruling forces, could be perceived as enforcers of order.[32] This fluidity in roles highlights the multifaceted social dynamics at play. In his *Modern Greece: A Narrative of a Residence and Travels in that Country* (1856), Henry M. Baird describes this situation: "This alternation from resistance to peace, and from peace again to rapine and plunder, was of continual recurrence in the western and northern portions of Greece, where the klefts were most numerous."[33] In such obscured networks of allegiances where the margins between instigators and mediators were indistinguishable, the prestigious title of "captain" by and large belonged to the circle of credibility, if not legitimacy, even though it was apparently sustained by brigandage.[34]

The term captain refers specifically to its usage in the Ottoman context, rather than its more common meanings related to sea captains or the Venetian *capitán* with the meaning of commander-in-chief of the navy, which was adopted into Ottoman Turkish.[35] The relevant Ottoman terms are *kapudân* or *kaptan*, which primarily pertained to the land captains scattered across the Balkan regions of the empire,

[30] Wayne S. Vucinich, *The Ottoman Empire: Its Record and Legacy* (Huntington, New York: R.E. Krieger Pub. Co, 1965), p. 155.
[31] Vucinich, *The Ottoman Empire: Its Record and Legacy*, 155.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Henry M. Baird, *Modern Greece: A Narrative of a Residence and Travels in that Country* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1856), p. 347.
[34] Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a* Cause, 33.
[35] Aybars Pamir, "Kaptan Paşa ve Hukukî Statüsü", *Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 53, no.3 (2004): 40.

particularly among Greek, Serbian, Albanian, and Bosnian territories. The defining feature that distinguished captains, whose numbers increased over time and who acted as the absolute rulers of their regions, from other powerful local classes was their ability to attain this title primarily through the military guardianship they performed, regardless of whether they appeared as landed elites or not.[36] In short, this title does not merely denote a "commander" but embodies a more specific representation with both geographical and professional dimensions in the Ottoman Empire.

Greek captains may be characterized as military contractors who were both highly esteemed and significantly feared by their subordinates, possessing the ability to grant amnesty, generate revenue, and whose commands were most readily obeyed among the klephts-armatoloi. Despite the common assumption that they were specifically armatoloi leaders, there is, in fact, no such clear-cut distinction. The Phanariot neo-Hellenist Iakovos Rhizos Nerulos emphasizes in his volume written during the Greek War of independence that there were officially unrecognized captains who attained all their power from the klephtic forces, as well as those who held *berât,* which allowed them to lead larger armed groups.[37] By this means, captains were distinguished by the state authorities in terms of their repute and the extent of authority.

Most captains, unlike the other local classes who generated their revenue from land, relied mostly on looting to finance their clans-cum-bands.[38] However, the officially recognized ones were more typically property owners. They were supposed

[36] Turhan, *The Ottoman Empire and the Bosnian Uprising: Janissaries, Modernisation and Rebellion in the Nineteenth Century*, 66.
37 Iakovos Rhizos Nerulos, *Histoire moderne de la Grèce depuis la chute de l'empire d'orient* (Geneva: Abraham Cherbuliez, 1828), p. 50.
[38] Mark Mazower, *The Greek Revolution: 1821 and the Making of Modern Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2021), p. 208.

to provide for their men through rather lawful sources[39], in contrast to the majority under their command, who had no other means of survival[40] and were only experienced in warfare or shepherding. This made the captains' utmost priority for their men to be employed as the irregular military forces by the state.

The presence of captains was exceptionally visible in central and northern Greece. Therefore, they were called the *Rumeliot*[41] (Ρουμελιώτες). Their spatial distribution would gain greater significance, especially as it will be witnessed once the Ottoman-Greek border is created. They operated in the rough, mountainous areas of mainland Greece, particularly in the steep ranges of Pindus, Olympus, and Pelion. Their main activities were centered in regions extending Macedonia, Epiro-Thessaly, Acarnania, and Aetolia. These were also the regions where the Ottoman local administration was profoundly entrenched, and the local structure maintained its closest ties even after independence. Although the Rumeliots were particularly prominent in their relations to the Ottoman army, Greek captains in general also served different armies depending on the regions they were in. For instance, they joined the British and French in the islands and the Russians further inland and in the north and acted as mercenaries.

Captains were also the local elites who expanded their networks through blood ties and kinships,[42] and therefore enabled hereditary transmission. By this means, they could forge alliances, mobilize men-at-arms, secure a safer escape in case of rebellion, maintain contact with those who would oversee their property[43],

[39] Koliopoulos, 30.
[40] Stathis, *From Klephts and Armatoloi to Revolutionaries*, 173.
[41] "Rumeli" here is specifically corresponding to the *Sterea Ellada* in continental Greece, and not to the broader Ottoman region and province of *Rumili*.
[42] Petropoulos, 74.
[43] "…gerçi bunlar külliyetli ademler bulundukları cihetle Yunanistan'da olan familyalarıyla emlak ve 'akarlarının emr ü idaresiçün bil-iş'ar mahallerinde birer mu'ted vekil ittihaz ettikleri zımnında…" BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.142.5 (May 27, 1847).

and get amnesty. The representation of captains was conveyed through oral tradition within their community, culminating in their acknowledgment as heroes in their regions over time. This process has also enabled the spread of their esteemed reputation into the literary sphere, most strongly emphasizing family ties. One of the folk songs that best reflects the importance of inheritance, and the duties of captains is as follows:

> Come, Fondilis, my brother and *protopallikari*,
> Come, sit upon my knees; come, sit beside me!
> I leave the child in your care, the little patted one;
> He is young and clueless, unfamiliar with weapons.
> Take care of the villages and the captaincy,
> For elders need gentle words, and lords demand silver (coin),
> And the captain must be skilled to govern them.[44]

As narrated in this folk song, written down in 1710, captains should also perform a mediating as well as violent role between local notables and the populace with whom they had kinship ties. Maintaining this balance was a primary condition for them to continue their roles as captains, depending on the administrative experience they have achieved.

Furthermore, the captains aimed to have a certain presence of armed men at all times while also seeking to expand. Despite mostly exaggerating the number of men under their command, they still constituted the backbone of the military force.[45] This has hardly changed, even after the regular armies were established. The number of men under the captains' command, regardless of their actual size, was a crucial resource, especially considering that the Greek army itself never exceeded 12,500 during the first fifty years of Greece's independence.[46] After all, it is possible to think

[44] "Ο Στουρνάρης," in Emile Legrand, *Recueil de Chansons Populaires Grecques/Συλλογή Ελληνικών Δημοτικών Τραγουδιών* (Paris: Maisonnueve et Cie, 1873), p. 82.
[45] Thanos Veremis, *The Military in Greek Politics: From Independence to Democracy* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), p. 20.
[46] Constantine Panos Danopoulos, "Soldiers in Politics: The Case of Contemporary Greece," (PhD diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 1980), p. 61.

of captains as the warlords within the larger body of local power holders who made up the foremost military presence in their respective territories.

2.3 Ali Pasha of Ioannina (Tepedelenli) and the *klephts-armatoloi*

Before the war of independence had begun in the territories of Ottoman Greece, the foremost authority in the region was the Tosk Albanian Ali Pasha of Ioannina, whose territorial control extended from southern Albania to Macedonia and as far south as Corinth for around forty years. From the late eighteenth century to the early 1800s, he was first appointed as the *derbendler başbuğu*, was later granted the *mutasarrıflık* (governorship) of Trikala and finally *pashalik* of Ioannina.[47] The post of derbendler başbuğu was established by the Ottoman Empire in 1761 and was more traditionally given to Albanians familiar with the regions, overseeing all local paramilitary forces in Rumeli, requiring cooperation with both the Greek *klephts-armatoloi* and the Albanian bands.[48] Ali Pasha's appointment as derbendler başbuğu enabled him to take control of local security forces, manage competing Albanian and Greek armed groups, accumulate wealth through both legitimate and illicit means, build a loyal patronage network, and expand his influence within the Ottoman administration, ultimately setting the stage for his later semi-autonomous rule.[49] It indicated that prior to becoming a pasha, he had already established strong personal and impersonal connections with the Greek armatoliki captain families, brought them into his inner circle, and gained an understanding of their internal dynamics and rivalries. Those who were part of his administrative and military retinue, commonly referred to by

[47] Katherine E. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 33.
[48] Dennis N. Skiotis, "From Bandit to Pasha: First Steps in the Rise to Power of Ali of Tepelen, 1750-1784," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2, no. 3 (1971): 232-234.
[49] Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece*, 118.

the Greeks as the *Alipashalides*, would become significant figures during the Greek "uprisings" and later in the foundation of the modern Greek state.[50]



Figure 2. Map showing the regions ruled by Ali Pasha of Ioannina and his sons (From Hamiyet Sezer Feyzioğlu's Bir Osmanlı Valisinin Hazin Sonu Tepedelenli Ali Paşa İsyanı, 2017)

[50] The best-known examples to it were figures such as Androutsos, Karaiskakis, Kolettis, Diakos, Tsansas, Bakolas Kitsos, and Botsaris.

The primary strategy of Ali Pasha was to bring all resisting forces to his rule, keep them in check, or attack them until he consolidated his power and took control of all the *pashaliks* in Rumeli. These forces consisted of the influential Albanian beys, Christian notables, powerful armatoloi, the semi-autonomous warlike Tsam tribes of Thesprotia, and the Souliots.[51] The general conditions of the Armatoloi before Ali Pasha's campaigns were depicted in Ahmed Midhat Efendi's *Arnavutlar Solyotlar-Demir Bey Yahut İnkişâf-ı Esrâr-Fennî Bir Roman Yahut Amerika Doktorları* published in 1887:

> Their greatest renown lies in their prowess as warriors. During that historical period, in Albania and Greece, *aghas* and captains were constantly engaged in conflicts, making martial skills indispensable for defending their regions. These men protected their territories so effectively that for no less than two hundred years, neither Albanians, Ottomans, Muslims, nor Greeks could set foot in their lands. Yet, they remained fully obedient to the Ottoman state, paying their taxes faithfully and never hesitating to respond to calls for military service, serving with loyalty and excellence. Moreover, in all circumstances, they were autonomously governed by their own will and lived in the manner of an autonomous land and nation.[52]

Although Ahmed Midhat specifically attributed these characteristics to the Souliots, these traits can be extended to the Greek armatoloi as well. From this standpoint, it is evident that Ali Pasha was confronted with armatoloi families who had gained considerable strength and privilege by the eighteenth century, making their incorporation into his service through allegiance a highly formidable endeavor.

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[51] Stathis, 170.

[52] "Kendilerinin en büyük şöhretleri silahşörlükten ibarettir. Zira o zamanlar gerek Arnavutluk'un ve gerek Yunanistan'ın her tarafındaki ağalar, kaptanlar birbirine taarruzdan hali olmadıkları cihetle nahiyelerinin muhâfaza-i emniyyetleri için cengâverliğe ihtiyaçları derkârdır. Bu adamlar nahiyelerini o kadar hüsn-i muhâfaza etmişlerdir ki iki yüz seneden ekall olmayan bir zamandan beri ne Arnavut ne Osmanlı ne Müslüman ne Rum ayağı bastırmayıp fakat Devlet-i Aliyye'ye itâat-ı kâmile ile haraçlarını vermişler ve her ne zaman bir hizmet-i askeriyyeye davet olunurlarsa icabetten ve sadakatla hüsn-i hizmetten geri durmamışlardır. Bundan maada kâffe-i ahvâlde alelıtlak müstakil olarak hükûmet-i ihtiyârânla idare olunur bir memleket ve millet-i müstakille suretinde yaşamışlardır." Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Arnavutlar Solyotlar-Demir Bey Yahut İnkişâf-ı Esrâr-Fennî Bir Roman Yahut Amerika Doktorları*, ed. Nuri Sağlam and M. Fatih Andı (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2002), pp. 30-31.

While aspiring to expand his territories further into the islands and already ruling a vast region, the Pasha was propelled to rely not only on his Albanian soldiers or Greek notables but also on the klephts-armatoloi, aiming to subjugate rather than destroy them.[53] His strategy was to remove or replace the strongest and oldest families while creating a new generation of Greek armatoloi from the less powerful or more loyal ones to secure their military support.[54] He also intervened in the hereditary structure within the armatoloi, beginning to make the appointments himself.[55] It is also worth noting that the service of Albanian *derbendcis* was also used alongside the Greek armatoloi. They were the Muslim counterpart to the armatoloi serving as guards tasked with protecting mountain passes, roads, bridges, and other important transit points in the Ottoman Empire. As a result of Ali Pasha's earlier policies toward the armatoloi, the majority of long-established armatoliki families had disappeared by 1821. The only ones that remained were either those who had escaped to the Ionian Islands and reverted to banditry in more distant areas, or those who had cooperated with the pasha and benefited from his support. Besides, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, persecutions began in Morea with a sultanic decree for the dissolution of all Moreot armatoloi, and these persecutions were intended to be enforced through a collaboration between the patriarchate and the regional primates.[56] It sheds light on the reason why the captains after 1821 could not be Moreots. The regional factors, specifically being a Rumeliot, played a significant role in shaping their future actions and alliances. As will be demonstrated, the Rumeliot captains attempted to avert the looming threat of annihilation by continually picking sides during the rise of Ali Pasha, in the Pasha's rebellion, and

[53] Stathis, 171.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Fleming, 42.
[56] Stathis, 171.

during the Greek War of Independence, then finally in the Greek kingdom. Given that this sequence of events was initiated during the period of Ali Pasha of Ioannina, it is imperative to scrutinize the future of these families by considering this period. The policies and power dynamics of this period had a profound impact on the trajectory of the Grivas, Kontogiannis, and Stratos families, influencing not only their survival but also the alliances they would form and the roles they would adopt in the years that followed.

2.4 Families of border crossing captains at the beginning of the nineteenth century

In Ottoman Greece, the families of armatoliki captains were bearers of a longstanding historical legacy and exercised considerable influence that extended beyond local boundaries, shaping interregional dynamics. The pre-independence background of the captains' families, along with the regions they represented at the outbreak of the war and their cooperation with one another, is key to understanding their mobilization during the war. These factors also help explain their potential reintegration into the post-war state apparatus, as well as what political opportunities or military positions they would ultimately be denied.

By being a major historical source of early nineteenth-century armatoliki families, *Military Memoirs of the Revolution of the Greeks 1821-1833* (Ενθυμήματα Στρατιωτικά Της Επαναστάσεως Των Ελλήνων 1821-1833) is a firsthand account by Nikolaos Kasomoulis. He participated in the Greek uprisings and later held various military positions, composed his memoirs in 1832 and completed in 1842. He provides detailed information about the lineage of different armatoloi clans, their relationships with each other, and momentous events that have influenced their heritage over generations.

Kasomoulis traces the lineage of the Grivas family of Arvanite[57] origin back to the early eighteenth century, starting with Christos Grivas, who married into the Kontogiannis, another armatoliki family.[58] Coming from the village of Lakka in Epirus, he became the captain of the armatoloi in a region where his primary stronghold was in Vonitsa and Preveza, with his power later expanding to the Ionian Islands.[59] Christos, as noted by Kasomoulis, protected the armatoloi from persecution during Kurd Ahmed Pasha's campaigns against the armatoloi, and following his death, his successor Drakos, Theodoros's father, assumed the same role under the rule of Ali Pasha of Ioannina.[60] In Kampouroglou's biography of Theodoros Grivas, a more detailed account of Drakos Grivas can be found. Drakos Grivas fought for years against his relatives, the Katsikogiannis, to regain his title as armatolos.[61] In 1790, he was recognized as the armatolos of Vonitsa and Xiromero but later fled to the Ionian Islands to escape Ali Pasha's oppression.[62] He went to the French-occupied Corfu and became one of the leaders of the Greek forces.[63] After serving under the French, Russian, and Austrian forces, he returned as the armatolos of Vonitsa at Ali Pasha's invitation.[64] When Ali Pasha called him to join the operation against the Gardikiotis, Drakos refused to obey and was killed as a result.[65] Theodoros Grivas[66] was born in Preveza in 1797 as the fourth son of Drakos out of

[57] Albanian speaking Christian Orthodox.
[58] Nikolaos Kasomoulis, *Ενθυμήματα Στρατιωτικά Της Επαναστάσεως Των Ελλήνων 1821-1833: Προτάσσεται Ιστορία Του Αρματωλισμού*, ed. Giannis Vlachogiannis, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Athens: Choregia Pangeiou Epitrepes, 1939), p. 13.
[59] Kasomoulis, *Ενθυμήματα Στρατιωτικά Της Επαναστάσεως Των Ελλήνων 1821-1833*, p. 36.
[60] Kasomoulis, 36.
[61] Demetrios Gregoriou Kampouroglous, *Θεόδωρος Γρίβας: Βιογραφικόν Σχεδίασμα Επί Τη Βάσει Ανεκδότων Εγγράφων Και Σημειωμάτων*, (Athens: Paraskeva Leoni, 1896), p. 11.
[62] Kampouroglous, *Θεόδωρος Γρίβας*, 11.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] He was a member of the National Assembly in 1843 and, between 1844 and 1847, a member of parliament, supporting the French party led by Kolettis. Yet in June 1847, he opposed him and launched an armed uprising in Vonitsa. Defeated by government forces, Grivas fled first to Lefkada

five.[67] He chose a rather isolated route from the rest of his family because of inner rivalries. Besides, the family's long-standing animosity was towards the Chasapaious family, which was effectively dispersed by the Grivas from western Greece.[68] The Grivas's dominant position would also impact Theodoros Grivas's military position during the Greek War of Independence. Before the war, he initially worked alongside his relatives, the Boukouvalas, serving as armatolos in his formative years, and later developed cooperation with Ömer Vryonis Pasha, who followed the command of Hurşid Pasha to subdue Ali Pasha.[69] However, when the uprisings in the western portions of Greece started, he decided to take part in the uprising against the Ottomans with his brothers Stavros, Floros and Gardikiotis. In short, by the 1820s, the Grivas family, based in Acarnania, had emerged as one of the leading captain families to join the Greek uprisings, influencing a large territory. Unlike other armatoloi on the verge of dissolution, they survived through numerous alliances with Ottoman officials, other armatoloi, and Europeans.

As for the Kontogiannis family from Valtos, he could trace their lineage back once again to the eighteenth century, starting with Ioannis/Gero (Elder) Kontogiannis, who had taken the armatolikia of Ypati (Patratziki).[70] Along with his two sons, Konstantis and Mitsos, he operated in a vast region that included Agrafa, Karpenisi, Valtos, and Arta, where they appointed their own *protopallikaria,*

under British protection, then to the Ottoman Empire, and was only able to return to Greece after the amnesty of 1849. Louis Thouvenel, *La Grèce du Roi Othon: Correspondance de M. Thouvenel avec sa famille et ses amis / recueillie et publiée avec notes et index biographique* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1890), p. 419.

[67] Kampouroglous, 13.

[68] Achilles Batalas, "The Nation Loves the Householder But Also Loves the Bandit: Nation-building and Myth-making, the Case of Modern Greece, 1750-1862," (PhD diss., The New School University for Social Research, 2011), p. 241.

[69] Kasomoulis, 37.

[70] Kasomoulis, 30.

consisting of their relatives as armatoloi.[71] Similar to the rivalry between the Grivas and the Chasapaious in the West, the Kontogiannis family had eradicated their rivals, the Chatziskos, from Eastern Rumelia.[72] In the conflict with Ali Pasha's men, Konstantis was killed, and his brother Mitsos and the rest of the family fled to Lefkada.[73] There, Mitsos became part of a unit organized by the Russian general Städler, which included other escapee captains such as Katsantonis, Botsaris, Tzavelas, Grivas, Daglis, and Stratos.[74] For such prominent captain families who shared similar roles, were bound by intermarriages or kinship relations, and confronted comparable risks, the practice of fleeing to certain locations or providing services in the places where they sought refuge was apparently a recurring experience they likely had multiple times. The ones who would years later seek refuge in the Ottoman Empire were Mitsos Kontogiannis's sons, Evangelos and Ioannis.

Prior to the Greek independence, or even before the rule of Ali Pasha of Ioannina, the Kontogiannis family had considerably greater influence and occupied a markedly exceptional standing among other families. According to Kasomoulis, the near-total suppression of the Kontogiannis family during Ali Pasha's rule was perceived as a precursor to a widespread campaign, signaling the impending targeting of other armatoloi families.[75] In 1812, the Kontogiannis family, which had previously exercised authority over strategically significant and challenging territories, successfully negotiated a reconciliation with Ali Pasha. Through the

[71] Dionysis Tzakis, "Αρματολισμός, Συγγενικά Δίκτυα Και Εθνικό Κράτος. Οι Ορεινές Επαρχίες Της Άρτας Στο Πρώτο Ήμισύ Του 19ου Αιώνα," (PhD diss., Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, 1997), p. 113.
[72] Batalas, *The Nation Loves the Householder but Also Loves the Bandit*, pp. 241-242.
[73] Kasomoulis, 33.
[74] Patroklos Kontogiannis, *Κοντογιανναίοι: Κλέφτες-Αρματωλοί-Αγωνιστές* (Athens: A. S. Raftani, 1924), http://pages.cs.aueb.gr/~yiannisk/Kontogiannaioi/biblio1924.htm.
[75] Kasomoulis, 33.

mediation of influential Albanian aghas and other Greek armatoloi, they managed to restore their status and reclaim their roles as armatoloi.[76] Together with his sons and nephews, Mitsos Kontogiannis would participate in uprisings in 1821 to suppress their rivals. As would be evident both during the Ottoman central government's campaign against Ali Pasha and subsequently throughout the independence war, the Kontogiannis family was widely recognized as one of the families that maintained the most collaborative relations with the Ottoman central authorities.

When it comes to another important armatoliki family, the Stratos, a detailed genealogy is not visible in Kasomoulis's account. Only their position, which led to them being labeled as "Turkolatris" (Turk admirer/worshipper) after the War of Independence, was narrated. To introduce the family, their origins trace back to Lala Stratos, who settled in Valtos and held the armatoliki of Makrynoros throughout the eighteenth century.[77] Dimitris, Apostolis, and Georgios were the three sons of Lala Stratos.[78] Although Georgios Stratos inherited the armatoliki, he was forced to flee from Valtos and later joined the resistance in Lefkada against Ali Pasha of Ioannina, just as the Kontogiannis and their cousins, the Grivas.[79] Georgio's sons, Ioannis, Nikolaos, and Sotiris Stratos, were those who actively fought in the war starting in 1821.[80] Essentially, the Stratos family, similar to other armatoliki families, was poised to enter the war scene in 1821, with its strong kinship ties, longstanding regional dominance, and authority shaken under the rule of Ali Pasha.

[76] Kasomoulis, 34.
[77] Dimitris Tsiamalos, "Κοινωνική και επαναστατική συνείδηση των ενόπλων της Ρούμελης στην επανάσταση του 1821," (PhD diss., Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, 2007), p. 79.
[78] Tsiamalos, *Κοινωνική και επαναστατική συνείδηση των ενόπλων της Ρούμελης στην επανάσταση του 1821*, 79.
[79] Tsiamalos, 79.
[80] Ibid.

Certainly, broad conclusions about Ali Pasha's relationship with the armatoloi cannot be drawn by focusing exclusively on these three families. Even though they primarily represented the segment that stood out as a resistance force, they were not immune to occasional cooperation with the pasha. Furthermore, Ali Pasha worked almost as extensively with Greek armatoloi as he did with Albanian soldiers, consolidating his power through their support. When he rebelled in 1820 against the Porte, the number of armatoloi families who sided with him was far from negligible.[81] The rebellion intensified the critical role of Greek armatoloi families, giving them a chance to decide between the Ottoman central government and Ali Pasha to ensure anew their standing. However, with the outbreak of the uprisings in 1821, a new opportunity arose, which allowed these captains to reposition themselves within the emerging order by supporting the Greek cause, often with their regional priorities at the forefront.

2.5 The armatoliki captains and newcomers during the Greek War of Independence

Over the course of a decade-long series of regional conflicts, which ultimately culminated in Greek independence, members of the Grivas, Kontogiannis, and Stratos families were present on various fronts. Their shifting alliances and motivations would shape how the leaders of these families operated on a larger scale in modern Greece. The war created opportunities both for those who served and moved between the Ottoman and the emerging Greek administrations to climb the ranks, achieving recognition as armatoloi leaders by the former and rising to the

[81] Panagiotis Stathis, "From Klephts and Armatoloi to Revolutionaries," in *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovos, (Rethymno: University of Crete, Department of History and Archaeology, 2007), p. 177.

position of chiliarch (major) or even general by the latter.[82] Many impoverished Rumeliot men, motivated by the opportunities brought by the Greek War of Independence, joined irregular bands as volunteers on a regional basis to gain wealth, power, and influence in times of turmoil and uncertainty. This laid the ground for the era of *listokrateia* (the reign of bandits), where captains with varying degrees of influence, or those beginning to earn it, were instrumental in shaping this new reality. However, even from the beginning of the war, captains were identified as unreliable, self-serving, and troublesome mercenary holders to be eliminated from the future military formation by the Greek nationals. They were unwanted for standing out as costly chiefs, inclined to the *kapakia* practice, acting exclusively within the local limits of the provinces they controlled, and not hesitating to withdraw from their military duties at their discretion.[83]

Moreover, they were indeed costly, and their cost was not only the direct result of their usual payment in exchange for their military service but also their instrumentalization in political camps. This can be observed as early as the power struggles between various rebellious factions from 1823 to 1825, later referred to as the first civil war of Greece. It was triggered by competing visions for political authority, with landowning elites, naval leaders, and klephts-armatoloi militias all vying for influence over the independence movement. In addition, it resulted in the quasi-occupation of Morea by the Rumeliot captains. Much of the foreign loan acquired in 1824 was allocated to commissioning Rumeliot leaders to collaborate with Kolokotronis, whose mission was to disperse the opposition posed by the

[82] Dionysis Tzakis, "From Locality to Nation State Loyalty: Georgios Karaiskakis During the Greek Revolution," in *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event*, ed. Petros Pizanias (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2011), p. 134.
[83] Stefanos Papageorgiou, "Η Στρατιωτική Πολιτική Του Καποδίστρια: Δομή, Οργάνωση Και Λειτουργία Του Στρατού Ξηράς Της Καποδιστριακής Περιόδου," (PhD diss., Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, 1983), 19.

Kondouriotis faction and other dissenting groups in Morea.[84] In other words, the captains' relationship was not fundamentally antagonistic toward any side from the outset, which was also evidently the most convenient scenario for the captains. Still, efforts of the rebelling Greek nationals persisted in creating a military arrangement that would engage the captains in the revolts.

In the end, all the captains had joined the Greek War of Independence, some due to their attachment to their regions and others because their primary means of livelihood and legitimacy were consistently tied to the execution of a military function. It was assumed that there were seventeen armatolikia on the eve of the Greek uprisings, ten of which were in eastern Greece and Thessaly, three in Macedonia, and four in Epirus, Aetolia, and Acarnania.[85] While some of the captains of armatoloi disappeared, others successfully re-established their positions during the conflict and extended their power. However, they were not alone in this experience. Whether driven by the desire to eliminate rivals, settle blood feuds, or regain lost regional power, they would encounter both numerous novel competitors and allies throughout the war.

By the mid-nineteenth century, individuals such as Nikolaos Kriezotis, Ioannis Velentzas, and Papakostas Tzamalas, who, along with the heads of the previously mentioned families, had crossed borders into the Ottoman Empire, were also part of this dynamic. They became known within the emerging hierarchy shaped in the 1820s. As such, it is significant to highlight not only the roles of captains belonging to prominent armatoliki families, including Theodoros Grivas, Ioannis

[84] Jon V. Kofas, *Financial Relations of Greece and the Great Powers, 1832-1862* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 11.
[85] Robert Anhegger, "Martoloslar Hakkında," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 7-8, no. 1 (1942): 298.

Kontogiannis, and Sotiris Stratos, but also of these new figures during the Greek War of Independence.

The Grivas family was one of the most notable families whose influence on future military and civilian life was rooted in their participation in the war. In 1821, Theodoros Grivas was called from Rumeli to Morea and organized military operations around Patras, then turned towards Makrynoros in 1822 and captured strategic positions around Kompoti.[86] In 1823, he joined in the siege of Missolonghi[87] against the Ottoman forces and later took on a defensive role in Aetolia-Acarnania the following year.[88] One of his most memorable moments during the war was his command of Palamidi between 1827 and 1828. Palamidi Castle, which held strategic importance and overlooked Nafplion, together with İç Kale, became the focal point of a power struggle among various commanders of the war. While Kolokotronis, as the renowned leader of the war, sought to seize Palamidi to weaken Grivas, Grivas emerged victorious.[89] Simultaneously, his brother Stavros Grivas clashed with Ioannis Stratos, who controlled İç Kale.[90] Eventually, Palamidi was handed over to Kapodistrias, whom Grivas sided with.[91] In short, having started on the path to stop Ali Pasha, Grivas participated in many battles of the Greek War of Independence and, by the end of the decade, found himself at a factional point where he had to make a choice between different leaders of the struggle. Throughout the

[86] Kampouroglous, 17-36.
[87] The sieges of Missolonghi (1822, 1823, 1825-1826) were major Ottoman efforts to capture the important Greek stronghold during the Greek War of Independence. The first two sieges were unsuccessful, while the third, led by Ottoman and Egyptian forces under Ibrahim Pasha, ended with the fall of the city after a year-long siege.
[88] Ibid., 37.
[89] Samuel G. Howe, *An Historical Sketch of the Greek Revolution* (New York: White, Gallagher & White, 1828), pp. 427-428.
[90] Apostolos E. Vakalopoulos, *Ιστορία Του Νέου Ελληνισμού: Η Μεγάλη Ελληνική Επανάσταση (1821-1829), Ο Αφρικανικός Σιμούν Ή Η Επιδρομή Του Ιμπραΐμ Στην Ελλάδα (1825-1828)*, vol. 7 (Thessaloniki: Idiotiki Ekdosi, 1988), p. 767.
[91] Kampouroglous, 47.

war, other members of the Grivas family also made their mark. Floros and Stavros joined the war from Acarnania, while Gardikiotis, who would, after the independence, become the king's aide-de-camp, distinguished himself in the Battle of Arachova in 1826 under the command of Karaiskakis.[92] Overall, the organizational capacity and regional/interregional influence of this entrenched family provide critical insights into the trajectory of the war, both in the face of imperial challenges and internal power struggles.

Another significant family was the Kontogiannis. Mitsos Kontogiannis and his sons, Ioannis, Evangelos, and Nikolaos, actively participated in the war, with Nikolaos dying in combat as a commander at the Battle of Kaliakouda in 1823.[93] Mitsos fought in the Siege of Ypati and the Battles of Vlahohoria in 1821, took part in the Battle of Ampliani in 1824, and was later appointed commander of the Siege of Patras in 1825 before joining the Siege of Missolonghi.[94] His son Evangelos fought again in the Ypati region in 1821, confronted Dervish Pasha near Moussonitza in 1824, and later aided the Missolonghi garrison from Arakynthos in 1826.[95] Between 1827 and 1830, he participated in the sieges of Athens and Naupactus.[96] His brother Ioannis fought in Attica at the start of the war and resisted the Ottoman siege of the Acropolis during 1825-26.[97] From 1828 to 1829, he took part in the battles of Naupactus, Levadia, and Petra.[98]

However, the Kontogiannis family differed from the Grivas in terms of their surrender to Reşid Mehmed Pasha in 1826 following the fall of Missolonghi, despite

[92] Thomas Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol 2. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 349.
[93] Kasomoulis, 128.
[94] Kontogiannis, *Κοντογιανναίοι: Κλέφτες-Αρματωλοί-Αγωνιστές*.
[95] Kontogiannis, *Κοντογιανναίοι*.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

years later joining forces with Kapodistrias. During this period of the Greek War of Independence, the majority of the eminent Rumeliot captains stayed in the Ottoman service to guard the roads and passes.[99] In 1827, the Rumeliot captains of Trikala, Ioannina, Acarnania, Lepanto, and Negroponte, some of whom would years later secure recognition by the empire during their time of shelter, joined with Reşid Mehmed Pasha, who was the commander-in-chief in Rumeli at the time. They declared their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and sent a letter to the Patriarchate requesting forgiveness.[100] This was part of a larger tradition of the above-mentioned "kapakia," which is an agreement made with the Ottoman administrators to ensure klephts-armatoloi's submission, who were unsure of the prospects presented by the alternatively emerging Greek administration. Such practices of *kapakia* left a persistent impression that neither the nascent Greek state nor the Ottoman Empire would forget in the years to come. For the captains who remained in Greece, their affinity with the empire always influenced the way they were perceived by the future Greek administration.

When the Kontogiannis family changed their side, they became able to retain their former armatolikia, alongside other families who had submitted to the pasha. Speaking of the Kontogiannis family and others who practiced kapakia during the

[99] William St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free: The Philhellenes in the War of Independence* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2008), p. 292.

100 "…in 1821, as divine punishment for our many sins, God allowed the plague of revolution, which had affected several Christian peoples, to reach us as well. Like a poisonous arrow, it caught us off guard and so clouded our judgment that, in our blindness, we dared to overstep the bounds of our condition as loyal subjects. We displayed ingratitude and rebellion against our common benefactor, our most gracious Sovereign, and at the same time, we disobeyed and transgressed the decrees and exhortations of Your Excellency. Yet, within barely a year, our deepest remorse brought us back to our original sentiments… The Serasker, with his usual clemency, granted amnesty to us… Now that the revolutionary fervor has been entirely extinguished in us, and we have come to understand with deep sorrow the gravity of our offenses against our Holy Church, we cast ourselves at Your feet. Through this petition, drenched in our tears, we implore You to grant us forgiveness, to accept us once more into the bosom of the Church, and to share with us, as a tender father, the blessings it bestows upon its children." Anton Prokesch von Osten, *Geschichte des Abfalls der Griechen Vom Türkischen Reiche Im Jahre 1821 und der Gründung Des Hellenischen Königreiches*, French eds., vol. 4 (Vienna: Gerold, 1867) pp. 113-115.

war, it was remarked: “They are Turks, and there is no hope for them”[101]. Those with pre-existing standings, such as the Kontogiannis, were particularly reluctant to forsake their long-standing alliances and partnerships. Regardless of whose forces they served, the Kontogiannis family remained actively and continuously engaged in the war throughout these years, adapting their loyalties to the changing dynamics of the conflict.

As with the Kontogiannis, the Stratos family was involved in various conflicts under the command of the Rumeliot leader Karaiskakis, while also showing military cooperation with the Ottoman Empire after reconciling with Reşid Mehmed Pasha. After the fall of Missolonghi, Ioannis Stratos moved to Nafplion and was appointed as the commander of İç Kale.[102] Together with his brother Nikolaos, they took over its defense, but they had to hand it over due to the clashes with Grivas. By the end of the decade, Ioannis had been appointed as a major by Ypsilantis and had participated in the Battle of Peta.[103] Their cousin Sotiris Stratos, who would later seek refuge in the Ottoman Empire, collaborated with the Pasha from Missolonghi.[104] Thus, he managed to take over the armatoliki of Vlochos.[105] Sotiris had in fact participated in many anti-Ottoman uprisings at the beginning of the war, including the siege of Arta.[106] After looking at how the war has unfolded, he likely decided that this option was best for his regional interests.

Old armatoliki families sought to consolidate their power against rivals during the war and aimed to reclaim lost territories of armatolikia that they

[101] Vakalopoulos, *Ιστορία Του Νέου Ελληνισμού*, 547.
[102] Kasomoulis, 327.
[103] Stefanos Papageorgiou, *Από Το Γένος Στο Έθνος, Η Θεμελίωση Του Ελληνικού Κράτους 1821-1862* (Athens: Papazisi, 2005), p. 254.
[104] Domna N. Dontas, *The Last Phase of the War of Independence in Western Greece December 1827 to May 1829* (Amsterdam: A. Hakkert, 1990), p. 79.
[105] Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence 1821-1833* (California: University of California Press, 2023) p. 235.
[106] Douglas Dakin, *The Unification of Greece, 1770-1923* (London: Benn, 1972), p. 83.

controlled. Similarly, they possessed a military presence, whether small or large, which they could demonstrate through their followers, creating a sphere of influence. These families also engaged with various regional leaderships outside their own territories, leading to separate agendas. All this was also true for the families under examination in this study, as it drove their multiple and ever-changing alliances over time.

There were also individuals who did not have to exercise the same level of caution, or rather, those who stood to lose far less by joining the major captains of Rumelia and Morea. Among them were Velentzas, Kriezotis, and Papakostas.

Ioannis Velentzas, from the town of Almyros in the Phthiotis region, participated in the war by joining the ranks of the renowned armatolos Tzamis Karatasos in 1822.[107] From 1823 onwards, he came under the patronage of Ioannis Kolettis through Makriyannis and remained tied to him until the end of the war as a Rumeliot.[108] His connection to Kolettis also signified his participation in the political divisions that escalated into the conflicts labeled a civil war between the Peloponnesian and Rumeliot factions between 1823 and 1825, ultimately distinguishing himself while rising to power. In 1825, he partook in the defense against the invasion of Morea led by Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Mehmed Ali Pasha of Kavala (Muhammad Ali of Egypt).[109] He continued to participate in the wars in Morea until 1827. It can be denoted that Velentzas's reputation as a captain was not founded on kinship and established regional affiliations. Rather, it was established on his military-strategic deeds during the war years and his adeptness in preserving his position within leadership networks and rivalries.

[107] Ahmet Talha Karapunar, "Patterns of Factional Strife in Greece and the Eastern Question: The Story of Ioannis Velentzas (1821-1840)" (Master's Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2023), p. 2.
[108] Karapunar, *Patterns of Factional Strife in Greece and the Eastern Question*, 4.
[109] Karapunar, 53.

The Arvanite captain Kriezotis from Karistas in Euboea, who was said to be a shepherd's son and who was to die in Smyrna, had risen in more or less similar circumstances, and perhaps even after the establishment of Greece, he became one of the most powerful among them. By the 1840s, all of Euboea would ostensibly come under his authority, functioning largely as his own territory.[110] In his early years, he worked as a shepherd in Bergama and even became a *kâhya* (steward) on one of the Karaosmanoğlu family's estates for a while.[111] In other words, even if he was not born in Western Anatolia, he had significant ties to the region, and years later, his path would lead him back to the same lands. He participated in uprisings through klephtism and first came to prominence during the first siege of Missolonghi in 1822, where he, bonding with Vassos and Mavromichalis, fought against Ömer Vryioni's troops.[112] Similar to other Rumeliots, he fought against the opposition from Morea.[113] Later, he served as a commander during the siege of the Acropolis and played an active military role in Athens under the leadership of Karaiskakis.[114] In 1826, at a time when the Greek uprisings seemed largely suppressed[115] by the Ottoman forces, he joined the rebellion in Mount Lebanon in response to a call for military alliance from the Druze Emir Bashir Shihab.[116] Besides cases of serving

[110] Evdoxios Doxiadis, "Neophotistoi and Apostates: Greece and Conversion in the Nineteenth Century," *Historein* 20(1), 2021: 13.
[111] İbrahim Alper Arısoy, *Türk-Yunan İlişkilerine Adalar Arasından Bakış: Kızılhisar Karystos (15.-19. Yüzyıllar)* (Istanbul: Efe Akademi Yayınları, 2023), p. 81.
[112] Dimitrios Dimitrakakis, *Απομνημονεύματα Ή Ενθυμήματα & Διηγήσεις Ενός Κοινοβουλευτικού Του 19ου Αιώνα* (Athens: Politistikos Syllogos Kastoreiou "O Polydeukis" N.P. Politismou kai Athlisis D. Spartis, 2012), p. 213.
[113] Dimitrakakis, *Απομνημονεύματα*, 213.
[114] Thomas Douglas Whitcombe, *Campaign of the Falieri and Piraeus in the Year 1827 or, Journal of a Volunteer, Being the Personal Account of Captain Thomas Douglas Whitcombe*, ed. Charles William James Eliot (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1992), p. 192.
[115] During this period, the Ottoman Empire benefited from the support it received in response to the demands of Mehmed Ali Pasha, the then governor of Egypt, who sought control over the governorships of Crete, Syria, and Tripoli. After the Battle of Navarino in 1827, he withdrew his forces, and as a result of the unfavorable outcome of the Greek War of Independence, the empire ultimately granted Mehmed Ali Pasha only the governorship of Crete.
[116] Pyrrhus J. Ruches, *Albanian Historical Folksongs, 1716-1943: A Survey of Oral Epic Poetry from Southern Albania, with Original Texts* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1967), p. 62.

different empires, it indicated that working for competing power centers within the Ottoman Empire had never been out of the question. This was parallel to being linked to Ali Pasha of Ioannina or, in later instances, to Mehmed Ali of Kavala. They could maintain alliances they were accustomed to while the uprisings were still ongoing. The case of Kriezotis revealed that the captains operated beyond fixed geographic boundaries and acted not out of loyalty to a single center of power, but in response to a number of semi-sovereignties within the empire. Kriezotis eventually returned and served in various military roles until independence, at which point he definitely earned the title of captain. However, for captains who were used to acting this way, the easiest way to cope with the new post-independence reality would be to continue operating within the broad areas of movement they had previously used in the empire.

Another figure who rose to military and political prominence during the war, despite coming from a completely different background beforehand, was Papakostas Tzamalas. Even if he were not a hereditary or land-based captain, he would earn enough respect for his wartime service to lead as a klephtic chieftain. Papakostas Tzamalas, a native of Phthiotis, was steered toward the clergy by his family to prevent him from becoming a warrior like his father and grandfathers.[117] Before the uprisings, he served as a priest at the Agios Taxiarchis Church in Dremissa, which is why he was known throughout his life as "Papa" Kostas.[118] However, when the uprisings began in 1821, he joined the volunteer forces. He fought in Amfissa, Aetos, Ypati, Distomo, Arachova, Gravia, Skarmitsa, Domokos, Neapolis, Velestino, Petra,

[117] Nikolaos Politis, *Λεξικον Εγκυκλοπαιδικον*, vol. 6 (Athens: Eleftheroudakis , 1889), p. 506.
[118] Politis, *Λεξικον Εγκυκλοπαιδικον*, 506.

Platanos, Almyros, and many other locations.[119] His leadership during the Acropolis siege marked him as a notable figure in the uprisings.

2.6 Conclusion

To understand the factors that enabled the captains to remain or emerge as significant actors before they integrated into the military and administrative structures following Greek independence, and subsequently became a source of opposition and rebellion, it is essential to examine the beginning of the century. Their future actions can be understood in relation to the common experiences of conflicts brought by these years, influencing how captains made decisions, commanded their irregular forces, and positioned themselves during crises. By examining them from the rise of Ali Pasha of Ioannina to the end of the Greek War of Independence, it can be followed that some of them had long-standing armatoliki backgrounds, adapting to changing circumstances, while others emerged for the first time under wartime conditions, shaping the era. Among them, some were bound by kinship ties, while others, hailing from nearby regions, had fought together in the same locations.

At last, all of them took part in the war, which contributed to their reputation during those times and led to their glorification for the future. This reputation was far from a hollow or merely honorific form of deference. It would represent years of bargaining behind heroism that became indispensable for the captains in confronting future challenges while maintaining their authority.

[119] Politis, 506.

CHAPTER 3

FROM INDEPENDENCE TO THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY GREECE: FACTORS DRIVING GREEK CAPTAINS TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

3.1 Introduction

The revolts that broke out in 1821 in Wallachia and Moldavia against the Ottoman central administration soon spread to Morea and sporadically flared up across mainland Greece, Rumelia, and the islands, unsettled the Ottoman government for a decade. These fragmented uprisings later came to be collectively known as the Greek Revolution. By the end of this tumultuous period, a sovereign state was recognized under the protection of Britain, France, and Russia. The Greek captains, whose historical representation has largely been rendered into a founding myth constructed on the Greek War of Independence, were among the most prominent actors of the Greek military machine during the mid-nineteenth century. However, their survival, whether by adjusting to or resisting the emerging structures of governance after Greece's official recognition as an independent state in 1832, has rarely been discussed. Soon after the Greek War of Independence, a monarchy was established under the Bavarian dynasty by the protectorate powers. This ushered in a modernization process akin to the Bavarian model, focusing on the rehabilitation of the captains and their militia that were perceived as impediments to this transformation. Nevertheless, the allegiance to the king or to functionaries in the new state apparatus was principally contingent upon the retroactive recognition of these captains, their glorification, and integration into the political sphere.[120] Thus, the course of rehabilitation of the captains coexisted with the state setting the parameters

[120] Basil Gounaris, *Ήρωες των Ελλήνων: Οι Καπετάνιοι, Τα Παλικάρια και η Αναγνώριση των Εθνικών Αγώνων 19ος-20ος Αιώνας* (Athens: Hellenic Parliament Foundation, 2014), pp. 20-21.

for the management of local issues and defining the terms of the new legality, which was not self-evident, especially in the regions where the captains dominated the regional military labor market. Captains and their armed groups emerged as both an extension and a burden of political leadership. It caused a cycle of reciprocal compromises between the emerging regime and captains. The issue was whether captains were willing to take on the new venial roles assigned to them within the frail "state-to-be" until they were virtually marginalized and forced out of the system. By expanding their locally supported actions to wider regions and building connections with interregional political networks, the captains were able to recast themselves as modern agents. This was distinctively reflected in prominent captains' propensity to cross the border and take refuge in the Ottoman Empire. The process, which takes captains beyond being mere *palikaria*[121] leaders and urges them to reconcile their wider expectations, responds to new order and material conditions. This chapter attempts to analyze the dynamics of opposition under the Bavarian rule and the altered power structures, which are substantial to reason out their ultimate shift across the border to seek refuge in Ottoman lands after the late 1840s.

3.2 Captains under the leadership of Ioannis Kapodistrias

Over the course of a decade-long war, the Greek Administration increasingly asserted its influence over the power dynamics among the irregular bands in Rumeli and partly arranged its own military and political structures in the provinces where captains thrived. Under Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first provisional governor of Greece, transitioning from irregular military formations to a more disciplined and organized army to provide internal stability and territorial sovereignty was

[121] Lads, brave, young men in its literal meaning in Greek, which refers to the irregular bandit-soldiers under captains' commands in the context of its use.

envisioned. Predicated upon Dimitrios Ypsilantis's earlier vision, Kapodistrias strived to reduce the autonomy of the klephts-armatoloi and their kapetanioi by integrating their forces into semi-regular units, such as *khiliarkhies* and *tagmata*, while offering symbolic titles and honorable retirements to amenable senior captains.[122] This gradual policy aimed to avoid the social and political upheavals that a sudden dissolution of irregular forces might provoke. Kapodistrias also made concessions and strategically appointed entrusted captains, such as Grivas, Pharmakis, Vlachopoulos, Veris, and Gardikiotis, to tie the irregular forces with his pursuit of forming a more joined military organization.[123] He was additionally of the opinion that former captains who had been dispossessed could be compensated by being provided with small plots of land and the necessary resources for cultivation.[124] That is, rather than eliminating the irregular forces straight away, various strategies were employed to increase their financial dependence on the government. However, there were not sufficient resources available to offer regular salaries or land, and most captains were not prone to getting into this order, even if banditry was the major option left.

Led by Petrobey Mavromichalis, the Maniots defied Kapodistrias by forming their own government and denying his authority.[125] Likewise, the Hydriots, angered by trade restrictions and economic losses, declared his rule illegitimate and revolted, despite briefly accepting a Russian-backed deal.[126] After Rumeliot troops failed to crush the Maniot uprising, Kapodistrias tried replacing them with Cretan refugees,

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[122] Douglas Dakin, "The Formation of the Greek State, 1821–33," in *The Struggle for Greek Independence: Essays to Mark the 150th Anniversary of the Greek War of Independence*, ed. Richard Clogg (London: The Palgrave Macmillan Press, 1973), p. 175.
[123] Karabelias, *From National Heroes to National Villains: Bandits, Pirates and the Formation of Modern Greece*, 270.
[124] Veremis, *The Military in Greek Politics: From Independence to Democracy*, 22.
[125] Hasan Demirhan, "İngiltere'nin Balkan Politikası ve Yunanistan," (PhD diss., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2013), pp. 498-499.
[126] Demirhan, *İngiltere'nin Balkan Politikası ve Yunanistan*, 499.

turning the Rumeliots against him as well.[127] All these culminated in Kapodistrias' assassination in 1831 by the Mavromichalis brothers, Maniot warlords, due to mounting political tensions from his authoritarian rule and centralization efforts.

3.3 Captains and the Hellenic Kingdom: Bavarian statecraft, military reorganization, and resistance

Following the assassination of Kapodistrias, klephts-armatoloi captains encountered a series of administrative, military, and legal regulations under the monarchy. The efforts to transition from revolutionary fervor to statehood were fraught with challenges, particularly regarding the captains who played the paramount role in the war. The approach to addressing the position of the captains during the king's three-decade reign first manifested itself as violent repression, followed by amnesty and reconciliation policies, and ultimately led to the consolidation of the regulatory role of the central state. After the London Conference, prince Otto of Wittelsbach was chosen as the first king of the Hellenic Kingdom in 1832, and a year later, the Bavarian Regency[128] was established. The territory in which he was enthroned to rule consisted of Morea, the Cyclades, central Greece, Arta and the mountainous regions of Volos.

From the moment he arrived in 1833, the underage king came upon the issue of dealing with the captains, who found themselves confined within an artificially restricted environment, remarkably narrower than their accustomed domain of authority. For this reason, they were regarded as individuals who should be

[127] Ibid.

[128] The Regency period of King Otto's reign from 1833 to 1835 was crucial for establishing modern Greece, as it laid down the foundation for government administration, taxation, legal codes, and education, promoting a national identity post-independence. Despite its significant accomplishments, the short duration of the Regency was marred by rising foreign influences and the emergence of three political parties associated with various protective powers: Britain, France, and Russia.

maintained in a state of relative satisfaction within the new framework to avert any potential disruptions. Friedrich Wilhelm Thiersch, one of the best-known philhellenes of the Bavarian court, who arrived in Greece a year before the king, advised in his work *De l'État Actuel de la Grèce et des Moyens d'Arriver à sa Restauration*, published in 1833, that the king's highest priority upon his arrival should be to bind the captains to him by giving them their entitlements:

> Among the captains, there are about thirty who, because of their reputation and influence, should be immediately attached to the king. It is, therefore, necessary to make them aides-de-camp to His Majesty, military governors of the eparchies which have no important fortresses, and to assure them an honorable position in the new order of things. They are owed back pay, which must be done promptly; they also have claims already recognized by the national congress, which we are hastening to enter into an arrangement with them on their titles and rights. Their accounts, relating to the army corps, which they have set up and paid during the revolution, and to other expenses or arrears, will be exorbitant, but they will be found absolutely ready to repay their claims as soon as we act towards them with good faith, justice, and equity. A commission chosen by these captains themselves, to which members of the government should be added, will examine the details of their demands. The government will then make the final decision regarding the amount of compensation to be granted.[129]

Nevertheless, the first point of action taken in 1833 for the "Bavarization" of the state was the disbandment of all former military units of the war, who were replaced by troops from Bavaria under Major General Carl Wilhelm von Heideck.[130] The royal decree, which dissolved irregular forces and established a standing army, placed the Minister of War at the top of the military hierarchy, with all appointments being exclusively under the monarch's control, thereby reinforcing the central authority. The regents of the king replaced 5,000 irregular troops and 700 regular Greek soldiers with an equal number of Bavarian regulars.[131] Due to this change,

[129] Friedrich Wilhelm von Thiersch, *De l'état actuel de la Grèce et des moyens d'arriver à sa restauration, vol.1* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1833), pp. 248-249.
[130] Nikos Svornos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1988), p. 50.
[131] Thanos Veremis, "Στρατος και Πολιτική," in *Ένοπλες Δυνάμεις Και Εσωτερική Ασφάλεια (1830-2022)* ed. Evanthis Chatzivasileiou (Athens: Piraeus Bank and National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 2023) p., 29.

thousands of Greek soldiers were left unwaged, while only a symbolic number joined the new army and gendarmerie units.[132] An army in which the Bavarians held many key positions and constituted the majority was perceived as no different from occupation by the local militia.

The main reason for prioritizing the national army was not to defend internationally recognized external borders but to mitigate the local power structures of warlords and militias loyal strictly to their captains, in so doing, establishing the state's monopoly on the use of force.[133] To achieve this, initial regulations forbade the possession of weapons without authorization and mandated travel permits for movement between different districts.[134] As a result, even though captains' expectations of a fair share and increased involvement in the military and administrative realms after the war, they found themselves compelled to resort to banditry all the more.

As captains turned more and more into bandit leaders, the central authorities in the kingdom implemented various local interventions to better regulate banditry and, consequently, the captains. To illustrate, in addition to the regular army, local forces such as the National Guard (*ethnophylaki*), gendarmerie (*chorophylaki*), and border army (*orophylaki*) were assigned to work with central authorities in coordination with the newly formed local administrations to chase the bandits.[135] The National Guard, operating under the Ministry of the Interior as a local defense entity, comprised volunteer peasants. It was mobilized to support local municipalities during

[132] Svornos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, 50.
[133] Roderick Beaton, *Greece, Biography of a Modern Nation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), p. 117.
[134] William W. McGrew, *Land and Revolution in Modern Greece, 1800-1881: The Transition in the Exploitation of Land from Ottoman Rule to Independence* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1985), p. 98.
[135] Bülent Akyay, "Yunan Ordusunun Kuruluşu," in *Balkanlar'da Siyasi İlişkiler*, ed. Zafer Gölen and Abidin Temizer (Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı, 2018), pp. 52-55.

emergencies or extraordinary situations to chase the bandits. The ones who truly assumed this responsibility were the gendarmerie units. The gendarmerie, resembling the armatoloi forces, emerged as the most loyal mechanism of repression for the central government, tasked with the challenge of addressing banditry that contested the strength of state authority. It also played a crucial role in enforcing discipline within the military, functioning as a kind of military police. It was only with the help of the gendarmerie, made up of former irregulars familiar with the area, that the central government was able to apprehend bandit groups. Finally, the border guards were charged with the duty of securing the bordering regions, especially attempting to intercept bandits from crossing or entering their lands. The initiative to recruit irregular local soldiers into these troops particularly coincided with 1837, when the period of the enlistment of Bavarian mercenaries was terminating, and they were departing the kingdom.[136] It was also when mandatory military service was introduced.

In essence, what the captains in these gendarmerie units did was police the provinces through the attaining of rations and official credentials for the bandits they hired. However, it would seem that they had to clear their own men first since they would have to take responsibility for any crime or deny that their men were involved.[137] Naturally, participation in this structure, which was based on the cooperation of peasants, the transhumant population, and rival lesser bandits, was very low. The locals supported the bandits or remained neutral, but it can be argued that they seldom sided with the government troops. Acting as a sort of rural police force against banditry for the central authorities was not an action that any of these

[136] Nicholas C. J. Pappas, "Brigands and Brigadiers: The Problem of Banditry and the Military in Nineteenth-Century Greece," *Athens Journal of History* 4, no. 3 (June 30, 2018): 185.
[137] "From Grivas to Administrative Committee," AA 68743 (July 24, 1832).

groups could easily afford to take.[138] In one sense, this was a continuation of the Ottoman armatolikia, but in another, it was a new practice that was regulated by the security mechanisms of the state, and which stipulated a narrower sphere of local autonomy. Then again, the captains were not idle in the face of regular forces directly linked to the center. As Veremis expresses, "the hybrid result that emerged from the combination of Western institutions with local customs and traditions resembled more to its Greek mother than its foreign father"[139]. In addition to the network of violence, they were able to offer higher wages to their followers, even if it was through banditry, and they managed to gain support from local political parties that did not want to lose their capacity to influence the central government.[140] National party leaders, who rose to power during the war of independence, drew support from regional bases linked to former Ottoman-era elites and commanded militia forces led by captains, some closely tied to party leadership, others operating independently as local warlords sustained by peasant communities.[141] Over time, more outlaws and those in power, be they government officials or politicians, became intensely entwined.[142] This brought about the situation where captains and larger political circles tacitly approved armed robbery.

More direct measures were taken to prevent this. For instance, the local townships or municipalities (*demes*) were held accountable for the brigandage activities in their provinces.[143] Citizens were collectively[144] required to compensate victims of such crimes. In regions particularly affected by violence, military courts

[138] Koliopoulos, 111.
[139] Veremis, *Στρατος και Πολιτική*, 29.
[140] Batalas, 456.
[141] Franciscos Koutentakis, "The Making of a Developing Fiscal State: A New Historical Dataset and a Graphical Network Analysis for Greece, 1833- 1939," *Working Papers*, no. 2307 (2023): 4.
[142] Ioanna Papageorgiou, "The Mountain Bandits of the Hellenic Shadow Theatre of *Karaghiozis*: Criminals or Heroes?," *Popular Entertainment Studies* 5, (2014): 85.
[143] McGrew, *Land and Revolution in Modern Greece, 1800-1881*, 99.
[144] McGrew, 99.

were established to adjudicate cases involving brigands.[145] Additionally, in cases where relatives of bandits were suspected of being complicit, forced relocation orders were issued for these individuals.[146] Starting from the eighteenth century and increasingly intensifying in the early nineteenth century, security measures, mostly characterized by mobility restrictions had already been implemented in the Ottoman Empire. Population censuses, the registration of suspicious groups, surety practices, and the introduction of internal passports, along with many other measures, became more widespread in the empire following the abolition of the Janissaries and in response to the Greek uprisings in the 1820s.[147] Although most of these measures were primarily concerned with protecting Istanbul, they gradually spread to other parts of the empire or were implemented simultaneously in certain regions. However, the bandits and their captains, who played a central role during the war years, were initially protected due to the conditions created by regional conflicts. Afterwards, they managed to circumvent the impact of such measures for a while, effectively positioning themselves as partners of Kapodistrias and being celebrated as veterans of the emerging nation-state. When the Hellenic Kingdom was established, for the first time in a long period, captains' mobs became subjected to a series of significant restrictions and, while not entirely excluded from the new military structure, were gradually compelled by the state to transform into functional components of it. In light of all these, it can be argued that from the 1830s onwards, the military entrepreneurship and networks that captains kept with local armed forces and clans began to experience a striking dismantling. This process not only diminished the

[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Masayuki Ueno, "Purifying Istanbul: The Greek Revolution, Population Surveillance, and Non-Muslim Religious Authorities in the Early Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (2025): 3-4.

cohesion of their connections but also led to a gradual marginalization of the captains and their men.

This marginalization was reflected in the use of words and definitions as well. For instance, detached from its actual social relevance, the word klepht was reformulated to represent the "freedom fighters" who rebelled against the "Turkish yoke" and gradually replaced by the word *listis* to advert to the phenomenon of banditry.[148] Likewise, it was sought to differentiate between the captains cherished as war veterans and the newly emerging captains who gained power after the war. By designing a body that resembled a pension or rehabilitation program, the Royal Phalanx, the new leadership cadre, hoped to lessen reactions. It was for the fighters from the War of Independence who, for various reasons, were considered unsuitable for entry into military service. The main goal of the Phalanx was twofold: to diminish the number of former captains left without compensation who might oppose the regime and to build a reserve force that could be mobilized to address internal or external threats as needed.[149] Such attempts to marginalize and delegitimize the rule of captains did not expect to lead to their total suppression and eradication; instead, they were directed to transform these figures into a new security apparatus that would serve the kingdom's interests. Meanwhile, the captains who preferred to have a say in their own participation within this framework voiced their responses in a multitude of ways.

From 1833 through the 1840s, several uprisings occurred during which captains played an active part. In 1833, the abolition of Mani's long-standing special status and its integration into central administration sparked the first uprising. Soon

[148] Victor Roudometof, *Nationalism, Globalization, and Orthodoxy: The Social Origins of Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 108.
[149] Panagiotis Kouthouris, "Από τη Ληστεία στην Πολιτική Δίωξη: Οι Διοικητικοί Εκτοπισμοί στην Ελλάδα 1871-1929" (Master's Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2016), p. 14.

after, Kolokotronis's arrest triggered revolts in Messenia and Arkadia. In 1836, uprisings erupted in Acarnania, driven by Rumeliot influence, against the Armansperg regency. Meanwhile, Hydra, which had borne a heavy burden during the War of Independence, fell into poverty as it received no compensation. Its population declined, and from 1838 to 1839, it joined simultaneous uprisings alongside Messenia, Spetzes, and Mani. These revolts stemmed from the disbandment of irregular forces, harsh tax collection methods, the brief implementation of conscription laws, inadequate land distribution, and inconsistent amnesty policies. These periodic insurrections resulted in either amnesty or certain concessions due to the ineffectiveness of the royal forces to completely replace or transition into an alternative to the irregulars tied to the captains. The royal authority attempted to resolve this issue by appointing divisions specifically for the captains. For instance, captains such as Grivas, Tzavelas, Vasos, Mamouris, and Tsongas were designated to command five separate corps, each consisting of 400 soldiers predominantly and discernably from brigands.[150] These troops were also enlisted with a monthly salary as part of the National Guard.[151] The fact that they received a salaried position or amnesty did not signify they were altogether absorbed into the new "bureaucratizing" state mechanisms; quite in the reverse, it turned into a show of force. While in state service, a bandit group robbed the government funds in Vonitsa in 1837, but the captain left a "receipt" as an absurd gesture for the stolen amount of about 20,000 drachmae.[152] A similar incident occurred in Mani in 1839, and in both cases, the government compensated.[153] In other words, they carried out their unlawful act with

[150] Koliopoulos, 98-99.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Frederick Strong, *Greece as a Kingdom, or a Statistical Description of that Country, From the Arrival of King Otto, in 1833, Down to the Present Time* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1842), p. 89.
[153] Strong, *Greece as a Kingdom, or a Statistical Description of that Country*, 89.

an air of officialdom. These incidents were not isolated; they revealed a pattern of criminal involvement that extended all the way to the greater captains in charge. Figures such as Grivas, Tzavelas, Stratos, Roupakias, and Voulgaris stand out for their repeated cycle of participating in rebellions, being pardoned, rebelling again, being reassigned to command a battalion, and then being re-chased as criminals within these years. As a part of the broader responses, minor mobs during these revolts had already begun to cross the border to seek refuge in the empire years before the greater captains did in the Ottoman Empire. According to the Greek government report, a total of 148 former irregulars had already come to the Ottoman Empire in 1835 and taken employment in the military units.[154] Moreover, the existence of the kingdom had not reduced their involvement in the political factions they were associated with since the war years; rather, it had been further intensified. Advocating for their demands in the political arena became another crucial element of their response. They made agreements with villages to maintain peace in exchange for having their demands fulfilled by their political allies. However, when their expectations were not met, linked to political intrigues, they established means and networks of violence with peasants and migratory shepherds. During the lingering period of rebellions, they called for constitutional reform, the establishment of a national assembly, the removal of foreign influence, and the safeguarding of Orthodoxy.[155] Each point the insurgents brought up was propounded based on their established political alliances and allegiances. It was largely channeled through their connections with the pro-French and Russian factions. The conditions for rebellions, arising from problems such as irregular soldiers, taxation, pending land or military

[154] McGrew, 99.
[155] Ioannis Koliopoulos, "Ληστές και Ληστανταρτες στην Κεντρική Ελλάδα το 1835-1836," *Mnimon* 7 (January 1979): 123.

reforms, and increasing intensified regional violence, became an inherent part of party opposition, and the political direction of the rebellions took on an appearance that coincided with the views of the opposition parties. Although broader regional conflicts cannot be ascribed entirely to partisan loyalties or struggles, these affiliations kept captains in closer contact with each other and accelerated their joint decision-making. Accordingly, the biggest majority of Rumeliot captains were politically in favor of Ioannis Kolettis from the French party.

3.4 Transition to constitutional monarchy and the rise of the captains in politics

Kolettis, who had been in the entourage of ‘Ali Pasha of Ioannina and rose to prominence in the 1820s, became a significant patron among the Rumeliot captains and played a crucial role during the civil war midst of various rebel factions. He achieved significant success by employing Ali Pasha’s strategy of building political alliances with the irregular forces in Rumeli, which, in turn, solidified his own influence. He championed the interests of the captains, skillfully leveraging their power to advance his climb on the political ladder. After Otto became king, Kolettis was appointed Minister of the Navy and Defense and later became Chairman of the Council of Ministers. The competition he faced from Bavarian counselor Armansperg resulted in his removal from Greece in 1835 when he was appointed a diplomat in Paris; nevertheless, he retained influence over his political constituency through ongoing correspondence. In 1843, the first military coup took place as a reaction to the prevalent discontent with the Bavarian dominance, which resulted in calls for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. Given the prevailing circumstances, political unity emerged among the leaders, including Kolettis of the French party, Mavrokordatos of the English party, and Metaxas of the Russian party,

who, despite their past disputes, collaborated to initiate the drafting of Greece's first constitution in November 1843, with the parliamentary discussions beginning in January 1844. The first constitution of Greece allowed former elites, such as the captains of Rumeli, large landowners in Morea, and island notables who were excluded during Otto's first decade of rule, to regain influence and shape the institutions to serve their interests.

Kolettis won the 1844 elections but depended on strong military leaders who had considerable power in their own areas. The extent of this power was significant enough that local landed elites pledged their family-wide allegiances to the parties upon the advice of captains from whom they received military protection.[156] This dynamic resulted in a clientelist electoral system where political parties and their support networks were closely connected. One of the first actions Kolettis took upon becoming prime minister was to increase the number of irregular military units by releasing previously imprisoned brigands, all of whom were led by influential captains.[157] He also directed the militias northward towards the borderlands of the Ottoman Empire to appease them without burdening the state budget while signaling that irredentist aspirations remained intact, all while managing this military class.[158] In fact, on both sides of the border, captains and their men, for whom regular supplies and salaries were difficult to come by, were relatively tolerated to raid neighboring regions and seize commodities such as sheep and cattle. Kolettis, as well, was aware of the need for routine cross-border raids, as the increasing unemployment of captains due to the lack of campaigns since the 1830s could lead to a more turbulent situation. As a matter of fact, the notion of "unredeemed areas"

[156] Petropoulos, 138-139.
[157] Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 119.
[158] John S. Koliopoulos, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Yunan Topraklarında Eşkıyalık ve Ayaklanmalar," *Kebikeç* 33, (2012): 255.

developed under the political discourse of the *Megali Idea,* mostly during Kolettis's campaign.

Megali Idea was more of an ideological instrument than an actual external policy initiative, used to connect or mask the significant divides within a society that lacked strong integration.[159] Emphasizing the plight of "unliberated brothers beyond the state's borders" offered a way to channel the discontent stemming from the Rumeliot captains, redirecting their focus from domestic issues to external aspirations.[160] This was realized through the increase in the irredentist forays. Makriyannis, in a critical reflection on these forays, remarked, "We should not pretend to be marching against the Turks when all we really wanted was to rob our own brothers"[161]. In the kingdom's first three decades, warfare, indeed, was limited to bandit raids designed to apply pressure and gain recognition, without any serious efforts to gain territory or build a military capable of fighting the reorganizing Ottoman forces at the time.[162] Irregular armed bands in Ottoman territories also participated in such forays, which either led to their incorporation into the border guardianship system or, following the suppression of each foray, their escape as refugee guerrilla units to Greek territories. As both sides constantly accused one another and attempted to enforce preventive measures, the border captains became increasingly significant than their counterparts in the inner regions.

By the mid-1840s, a significant number of border captains had achieved prominent military ranks and become key official figures. Ranks and duties were

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[159] Ioannis Zelepos, "Griechenland," in *Handbuch der Europäischen Verfassungsgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert: Institutionen und Rechtspraxis im Gesellschaftlichen Wandel vol.3: 1848-1870*, ed. Werner Daum (Bonn: Dietz, 2020), p. 143.
[160] Zelepos, *Griechenland*, 143.
[161] Ioannis Makriyannis, *Memoirs*, ed. and trans. Vassilis P. Koukis (Athens: Narok Editions, 2001). p. 496.
[162] Kostas P. Kostis, "The Formation of the State in Greece, 1830–1914," in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, ed. Thalia Dragonas and Faruk Birtek (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 28.

usually linked to salaries and provisions, which captains used to attract and keep their armed men. Moreover, this did not solely concern the military field. From state officials to members of parliament, from the Inspector General of the Army to the Minister of War, several posts were staffed either by the captains or by individuals who had been supported by them. In *Travels in European Turkey* in 1850 by Edmund Spencer, this was referred to in passing with the following words: "… we do not exaggerate when we say that through the all-powerful influences of bribery and intimidation, fraudulent bankers, captains of banditti, and, in one instance, a convicted assassin were elected as members of the memorable Greek Parliament of 1847"[163]. In particular, the factions of the French and Russian parties brought the captains into play as natural partners because of their deep knowledge of their regions and people, compounded with the ties of shared experiences and mutual trust. This, in turn, encouraged the captains' elevation to the forefront of politics, materializing a reciprocal benefit. It additionally signaled that the captains became increasingly beholden to their positions within the abiding partisan conflicts, resulting in their activities being significantly impacted by the constraints enforced by the government, alongside the local dynamics upon which they had built a tradition.

The transition to a constitutional monarchy, coupled with the rise of electoral competition, put captains into an even more politicized position. They played a crucial role in the process of state-building in Greece, contributing not only to its security and military aspects but also highly influencing the political landscape as a source of power for the ruling elite. Overall, before escapes to the Ottoman Empire began at the end of the decade, it can be mentioned that captains who had

[163] Edmund Spencer, *Travels in European Turkey in 1850*, vol. II (London: Colburn and Co., 1851), p. 243.

enormously strengthened themselves, identifying as "Men of the Constitution,"[164] and whose potential to bring about political change far surpassed that of those who had sought shelter in similar ways before. Nevertheless, the passing of Prime Minister Kolettis in 1847 brought about a profound transformation in the prevailing dynamics. Beginning a year before his death and continuing over the ensuing years, escapes unfolded on a significant scale. During this period, the Ottoman Empire became the primary destination and the central actor in these movements.

The end of Kolettis's regime in 1847 marked the start of a turbulent period, as instability grew with discontented captains leading groups of irregular fighters, which added to the existing political turmoil. As Koliopoulos states, "what started as a game of measured and calculated use of band activity between 'ins' and 'outs' soon became transformed into a clash between conflicting ideological and political currents…"[165]. After Kolettis's death, the king assumed his patronage politics, attempting to endorse royal power through loyalty-based appointments of government officials, which somewhat undermined the newly established constitutional monarchy.[166] His vast resources, including public office appointments and tax-farming contracts, enabled him to maintain these patron networks more effectively than the rest.[167] These resources were used to eliminate captains who had gained strength during the Kolettis administration, favoring rival captains and drawing them to his side. As a result, he succeeded in diminishing the influence of the prominent captains, with whom he had been engaged since his ascension to the throne, and whose dominance had become unmanageable. Disillusioned by the

[164] Koliopoulos, 127.
[165] Martin Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis, ed., Modern Greece: Nationalism & Nationality (Athens: Sage-Eliamep, 1990), p. 79.
[166] Batalas, *The Nation Loves the Householder But Also Loves the Bandit*, 382.
[167] Batalas, 382.

election disputes and subsequent appointments of their rivals, some captains turned to armed resistance. Meanwhile, the loss of their longtime leader roused the spread of insurgent movements and resulted in the imprisonment of some powerful captains due to the prevailing political tensions.

3.5 Rebel captains taking refuge in the Ottoman Empire

Between 1847 and 1848, numerous major captains (μεγαλοκαπεταναίοι) and their bands were accused of various offenses, resulting in their dismissal from duty and succeeding calls for punitive measures. During Kolettis's lifetime, the uprisings led by Theodoros Grivas in Akarnania and Nikolaos Kriezotis in Euboea were suppressed in the final days of his prime ministry. However, under Tsavellas's administration, new unrest emerged, as Colonel Ioannis Pharmakis led a movement in Nafpaktia, while Lieutenant Colonels Papakostas Tzamalas and Velentzas initiated similar actions in Phthiotida. Hereafter, a chain of other revolts broke out in Gytheio, Nafpaktia, Euboea and Acarnania with captains gradually joining each other. Lord Palmerston said the following about these captains in a telegram he sent to the Greek foreign ministry:

> It is remarkable that the revolt was declared by men who were not political enemies of the Government, but who, and that even very recently, were its supporters, Ministerial favourites, and who had been employed by them as the instruments of a misgoverning power. Nevertheless, when these men began to feel the bitterness of the oppressive system which they had assisted the Government to impose on others, they took up arms to resist a tyranny which they found intolerable.[168]

This diplomatic observation indicates that some blame for the current conditions was attributed to the influential rebel captains regarded as responsible for creating them. Nonetheless, this did not stop the captains from securing considerable local backing.

[168] *The Spectator*, (January 22, 1848), p. 77.

On the one hand, the rebels were welcomed as liberators in many parts of Rumeli, with people providing them food or sheltering and joining their ranks, and even some guards from the government army joined the rebels; on the other hand, the government sought to tarnish the rebel captains' reputation by accusing them of being supported by foreign powers.[169] Despite expectations from the King to establish a strong government in collaboration with the parliament in such critical times, he opted to appoint Kitsos Tzavelas as prime minister to maintain the existing administration; however, Tzavelas, though a skilled warrior, lacked political and diplomatic expertise, making him ineffective in handling the widespread unrest.[170] This manifested itself in the inability to control the escape of rebels into the Ottoman Empire or the Ionian Islands, and all the amnesties that kept on getting declared, even though the rebellions were suppressed.

In March 1848, the Greek government offered an amnesty on Independence Day, but the Rumeliot rebels rejected it.[171] In April, they once again attacked the same regions with a large group of armed men.[172] The government suppressed it with difficulty as the captains were said to have gathered men from the Ottoman territory as well, since they left in hundreds and returned in thousands.[173] This practice of amassing soldiers largely based on bandit organizations across the borders signifies that the existing relationships, reinforced by the state control from both sides, were

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[169] Giannis K. Kordatos, *Μεγάλη Ιστορία της Ελλάδας, Ιστορία της Νεώτερης Ελλάδας, Vol. 11 (1834-1862)*, (Athens: Ekdoseis 20os Aionas, 1957), p. 486.
[170] Tryphonos Evangelidou, *Ιστορια του Οθωνος, Βασιλεως της Ελλαδος, 1832-1862: κατα τας νεωτατας πηγας ξενων τε και ημετερων ιστορικων* (Athens: Aristeides G. Galanos, 1893), pp. 371-372.
[171] "During the clashes that took place in September in Phtiotida between Antisyntagmatarhos (lieutenant colonel) Pappas Kostas and Antisyntagmatarhos Velentzas and the armed forces of the government under their command. On the proposal of our Council of Ministers, we have decided and order: We declare an amnesty to all those who participated in the situations listed above and who were involved in the criminal acts committed." *Official Gazette*/ Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως του Βασιλείου (March 25, 1848), p. 41.
[172] Koliopoulos, 126.
[173] "...ἐν ᾧ ἡ ἀμνηστεία ἀπέβλεπεν 120 μόνον στασιαστὰς, ἐπολλαπλασιάσθησαν ἐντὸς τοῦ ὀθωμανικοῦ κράτους καὶ ἐκεῖθεν εἰσέβαλον κατὰ τῶν ὁρίων οὐχὶ διπλάσιοι ἢ πλειότεροι, ἀλλὰ 1,200 στρατιῶται..." *Greek Parliamentary Records*, (June 12, 1848), p 409.

contested through the reactivation of local networks that had operated in these regions before the independence. Although such cross-border action coordination was cautioned during the amnesty process, it cannot be said to have significantly hindered it. Another amnesty was offered in September, excluding the main leaders and brigand chiefs.[174] Finally, a third and the last amnesty that same month authorized everyone involved in the rebellions to be pardoned. However, they did not immediately return to Greece.[175]

Those who had been amnestied emphasized that they were definitely apprehensive about returning to the kingdom because of the potential consequences of their previous unlawful actions.[176] This was the most compelling justification for the empire to not being obligated to hand over the captains to the Greek authorities when the amnesties were granted. Moreover, the unpredictable political climate and the existing power centers complicated their reintegration into the established system. Even more important was the demand for an order that might ensure that not only they but also all their men would not be penalized.[177] It means that for the captains, their justification went beyond merely avoiding immediate repatriation or gaining more time; it also aimed at creating an opportunity for further negotiation, thereby demonstrating how control over their return could influence broader political dynamics. Developing a mutual diplomatic discourse with the empire on their

[174] *Official Gazette* (September 17, 1848), p. 128.
[175] Ibid.
[176] "Mukaddema tarik-ı 'isyana süluk ve Mahruse-i Şahane'ye iltica ve istihma etmiş olan Yunan 'usatı bu def'a hükümetleri tarafından 'afv ve itlak olunmuşlar ise de sergerdelerinden çend nefer Yunanistan'a pa-nihade duhul ve diğer neferatları civar-ı hududa karib tecemmu' edib hükümetleri tarafından verilmiş olan te'minat ve 'afv ve itlakları matlubları vechle olmadığından 'amel ve i'tiyar itmeyüb hudud civarında bulundukları ve matlubları olan şu ki mecmu'-ı cenayih ve itham ve gasb-ı emval ve katl-i nüfus ve hukuk-ı sa'ire maddelerinin mecma'undan azade olmaları ve bu makule mukaddem ve mu'ahhar vuku' bulmuş olan cenayihin ve hukuk-ı sa'irenin bir vaktde iddi'a ve matlub olunmamak suretleriyle te'min olunurlar ise ol vakt itminan hasıl idüb Yunanistan'a duhul ederler…" BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.9 (May 29, 1850).
[177] Koliopoulos, 128.

precarious status contributed to the captains securing their long-term interests. On that account, the issuing dates of the amnesties in 1848 were not a sign of how long the captains stayed in the Ottoman Empire.

Although it is beyond doubt that their political influence was remarkable enough to be considered perhaps as that of "political refugees", captains still derived most of their authority from the armed men they had at their disposal. Therefore, being stripped of such a source when the unlawful character of their men was no longer excused seemed essentially the same as not receiving an amnesty at all. The future of the captains' irregulars, who were still awaiting clarity on their amnesty, was subject to the government's discretion. It depended on the shifting power dynamics among political groups and the interactions between outlaw groups and police mechanisms. Needless to say, the responsibility fell upon their captains to carefully conduct this delicate negotiation process.

In a sense, amnesties were a perpetuation of practices that marginalized captains and their mobs since only the "illegals" could be granted amnesty. The captains' initial rejection of their amnesty displays a certain resistance to the government's authority to define their legality and implement corresponding judicial-political procedures. Hence, the captains insistently pressured the government for their safety and reinstatement, a prolonged negotiation process that extended into the 1850s. Until then, they would continue to stay in the Ottoman Empire.

Among those seeking refuge in the Ottoman Empire were captains such as Theodoros Grivas, Papakostas Tzamalas, Sotiris Stratos, Ioannis Velentzas, Evangelos Balatsos, Athanasios Balatsos, Dimitrios Tarkatzikis, Nikolaos Kriezotis, and Ioannis Kontogiannis. Although not all of them may have fled solely due to the events of 1847, their roles inevitably placed them in close contact and

communication with one another. Especially the existence of those who had previously experienced the same paths was very important for those who would cross the border seeking refuge in the empire for the first time. Kontogiannis and Grivas, for instance, were not new to this experience; the former had previously fled to the empire due to an earlier offense, while the latter had sought refuge for a short time prior to Kolettis becoming prime minister. Their connections with the empire, however, stretch back much further, rooted in their belonging to well-known armatoliki families from pre-independence Greece.[178] Just as Sotiris Stratos[179], who was also one of the refuge-seeking captains, was linked to the same armatoliki networks.

All of these captains, who used to hold esteemed ranks, started to be denigrated as "apostates" or even referred to derogatorily as "Turkocaptains" for their desertion to the empire despite having been eventually granted amnesty.[180] Not so long ago, the role of soldiers who served under different paymasters in the Napoleonic, Tsarist, and Ottoman armies once functioned as sheer mercenary holders, transformed, with their actions increasingly being treated almost as treason in the context of post-independence internal political disputes. On the one hand, figures such as Grivas, Papakostas, and Kriezotis were experiencing years of national "heroification" as honorable soldiers of 1821, while on the other hand, they were charged with sedition at the same time. Yet what they represented was still much more than being "apostates". In his 1848 work *Politiki Epopsis Tis Ellados* (Political Overview of Greece), while these rebellions were still continuing, the Greek

[178] Stathis, 171.
[179] Tsiamalos, 49-50.
[180] Koliopoulos, *Ληστές και Λησταντάρτες στην Κεντρική Ελλάδα το 1835-1836*, 118.

Romantic poet Alexandros Soutsos called on the captains to turn back from their wrongdoings and to become united for the future of Greece:

> And you, Armatoloi of Olympus, of Kissavos! And you, generals of Epirus, unite with us! Hellas, Thessaly, and Epirus shall become one... The Turks were the first to declare war. And you, Theodore Grivas, behold the stage of glory! The *diploma*[181] of Major General is found in the tent of the Pasha of Larissa; the Great Cross medal is also there. And you, Papakostas, Velentzas, Kontogiannis, Balatsos, brave men but deceived, come to the baptismal pool of blood and sweat of Freedom to be cleansed from the plague of Ottoman complicity! Until when will we continue to kill each other, some for the Anglo-Turks, others for such a government?[182]

This passage by one of the leading figures in the Greek intelligentsia, which was articulated in conjunction with a critique of the government, presents, under a call for unity, the notion that provincial captains at the head of irregular military units acting semi-autonomously are essentially obstacles to the national formation. It also brings once again to the forefront how far-reaching the captains' functions and their capacity to exert influence were.

Before they fell to the state of fleeing to the empire, Grivas was once the general inspector of the army, Kriezotis was the governor's inspector of Euboea, Stratos was a member of parliament for Valtos and Papakostas was a lieutenant colonel, along with the remaining captains who had also risen to the rank of colonel. The essence of the matter was that when the Ottoman Empire accepted a group of captains as refugees in its territory, it was not simply dealing with a band of brigand chiefs but rather directly engaging with the most prominent and politically active leaders of the frontiers.[183] Simply put, these individuals can be considered a minority

[181] The Greek word "diploma/δίπλωμα" could be used interchangeably with the Ottoman "mürâsele/μουρασελέ" meaning an official appointment letter and in this context, closer to an official permission granting privilege to a certain group.
[182] Alexandros Soutsos, *Πολιτική Επόψεις της Ελλάδος/Politischer Überblick Griechenlands,* (Athens: Typois Christou A. Douka, 1848), pp. 9-10.
[183] "…mersumların tavır ve hareketlerine nazaran hayadid ve eşkıya makulesinden olmayub…" BOA, A.} MKT.MHM.16.68.6 (September 20, 1847).

that has managed to wriggle out as a dominant social stratum among dozens of lesser chiefs who have been displaced from one area to another, unable to gain the tolerance of the authorities in their provinces, forced into banditry, and unable to cover the necessary expenses to form larger armed groups.

In 1847, Theodoros Grivas, during his shelter, sent a confidential letter to the Sublime Porte requesting a return to Greece with a force of a thousand men to depose the king. In this letter, he stated that he aimed to get rid of the king who had broken the law, deceived and corrupted the people, and violated his oath to uphold the constitutional government.[184] He stresses that it is far from his personal ambitions to elect a king by the people's consent.[185] A similar statement can be observed in the joint letter sent by Kontogiannis, Papakostas, Balatsos, and Tarkatzikis to the Prefect of Lamia.[186] While rationalizing their revolt, they presented it as a demand for general reform within an invoked constitutional framework that had been flexible in their favor in the past. The core aspect is that they skillfully appropriated the language of political émigrés or dissenters with popular support and noble missions, crafting their appeal in a way that could extricate them from their unlawful status. By doing so, they also attempted to reshape and manipulate how they were perceived, adjusting to the era's needs.

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[184] "…maksud-ı 'acizânem vatan ve milletimi gaddar ve zalim bir kraldan tahlis ve azad etmekdir şöyle ki vatanıma ayak basdığım anda bi'l-cümle ahali meram-ı 'acizaneme vücuhla muvaffakat edecekleri meczum-ı 'abidanem olduğundan kanunu istihkar ve milleti iğfal ve halkı idlal ve hükümet-i meşrutaya vaki' olan yemin ve kısmeti hulf ve inkar etmiş olan şimdiki Yunan kralından ya'ni Yunanistan'ın zaliminden vatanımı tahlis…" A.}AMD.2.56.1 (October 21, 1847).

[185] "…milletin istediği ve hoşnud olacağı bir hakimi intihab ve tac-ı kraliye layık olmayan ve hulf-i yemini mürtekib olan böyle bir ademden vatanımı nez' ve istihlas edelim ve bu keyfiyyete fakat bu kulları arzu-keş ve mütemenni olmayıb belki bi'l-cümle milletin matlubu olduğundan…" A.}AMD.2.56.1 (October 21, 1847).

[186] "The failure to dissolve the illegitimate Assembly, the violation of the Constitution, the failure to purge the repugnant people in the palace and, in addition, the continuation in general of the catastrophic system of the former Ministry, have saddened the whole Nation and, us; these reasons lead us to mobilize to demand from His Majesty, our respectful King, the general reform of the Nation's affairs…" *Aion*, nr. 863 (April 16, 1848).

Besides, in the 1840s, during which the Ottoman Empire began establishing its first official commercial, diplomatic, and security relationships with the independent Hellenic Kingdom, Grivas positioned the Ottoman Empire as a guardian that recognized and oversaw the independence of the Greeks in the face of an occupying monarch.[187] This was the usual rhetoric for someone who had already been negotiating with the Greek central authorities for years and was no longer defined by the status of the inherited local armed forces but by the status of a national hero. Regardless of whether he genuinely deemed it that way or not, he managed to portray himself as a potential representative of a larger entity, that of a nation, rather than as a soldier from one specific region, unlike in the organic alliances that developed in the past.

However, the emphasis placed on the political face of the captains should still be more balanced. When contextualized within the historical framework of the period, the political undertones among captains in Greece during 1848 were not comparable to those that prevailed in Europe, particularly in terms of their ideological intensity. Even though both the insurrections in the Hellenic Kingdom and the European revolutions occurred within the same time period, the events in Greece were not driven by the same revolutionary ideals demanding broader social transformation. Yet there was one aspect that cannot be easily overlooked. No matter how different their motives, they were still part of the phenomenon of wider transnational mobility that characterized the era. Thus, to a certain degree, they had a

[187] "…bunca haza'in ve 'asakir sarfından sonra istiklal ve serbesti i'tiraf-kerde-i şahaneleri olan bir milletin hakkında merhamet-i tacdarilerini mebzul buyurulmakdan hali olmadıkları misillü millet-i mezkurenin dahi bir gaddardan tahlisine 'ulüvv-i himmet ve 'atıfet-i hümayun sezavar buyurulduğu halde millet-i merkume şevketme'ab padişah efendimizin kudret-i mülukanelerinden serbestiyyet ve istiklalini bileceği aşikardır…" A.}AMD.2.56.1 (October 21, 1847).

grasp of the "transnational communication and reflection"[188] processes surrounding the revolutions across Europe in 1848; however, it was not a political impact that established a direct causal link. Instead, they showed dismay with the existing governmental practices and the power-sharing dynamics within the newly formed state structures.[189] Last but not least, the main objective, in the long run, was not, in reality, political independence but official employment for the majority of the captains.[190] Throughout these rebellions, the abandonment of the monarchical system has never been an issue; rather, the target has been the king's advisors or policies that allowed their rivals to hold various political and military offices.[191]

Furthermore, it was still imperative for the captains to be identified as military chiefs who posed a serious threat on the border with growing numbers of armed men rather than key political figures, which worked to their advantage when seeking refuge in the Ottoman Empire. The primary concern was not the urgent need for hundreds of soldiers to flee the kingdom, nor the captains' high ranks and backgrounds in politics. Instead, it was their ability to rally supporters and stir up a rebellion that ultimately triggered a response from the administrations of nearby provinces, as this represented a serious security threat. Dimitrios Ainian, who was the secretary of Karaiskakis, accompanied the captains during the rebellions and went with them across the border, vividly recounted this in his memoirs. As Hacı Hüseyin Pasha, the pass keeper at the border (*derbendat muhafızı*), was waiting for directives from the Sublime Porte for the entry of the captains, he found himself in a

[188] Christopher Clark and Christos Aliprantis, "Greece and 1848: Direct Responses and Underlying Connectivities," in *The Greek Revolution in the Age of Revolutions (1776–1848) Reappraisals and Comparisons*, ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), p. 96.
[189] Catherine Aroni-Tsichli, "La Grèce de 1848: Modernité et résistances traditionnelles," *Journal of South-East European Studies* 37–38, no. 1–4 (1999-2000): 129-130.
[190] Batalas, 471.
[191] Ibid., 472.

predicament. He was caught between the Greek government's accusation of collaboration with insurgents and the center's cautious stance due to the potential risk of damaging diplomatic relations with Greece. The Pasha also bore the responsibility for controlling the moves of the captains who had gathered at the border, amassing considerable forces. Therefore, on behalf of the captains who needed to cross over to the Ottoman side as soon as possible, Ainian made a suggestion to the Pasha. He believed that stressing the potential for insurgents to turn to banditry and create a security threat to both their own country and the Ottoman Empire if denied passage across the border would facilitate the Pasha to expedite the acceptance of the captains by the Porte.[192] In this way, as Ainian pointed out, he could prove his competence to the Porte while "protecting his friends"[193]. It was a major strategic move during a period when both the Ottoman Empire and the Hellenic Kingdom were very prone to collaboration in border protection.

3.6 Dynamics surrounding captains' perspective in their refuge

Comprehending what truly awaited the captains when they crossed the border to seek refuge in the Ottoman territory is of great significance. The process of taking refuge in the empire, while propelled by a sense of urgency and geographical proximity, also reflects multiple other factors that made this process even more indispensable for the captains. The first stage for insurgent captains was to cover themselves financially so as not to fall into a dire condition and to carry out their transactional operations in the face of uncertainty. To start with, there were opportunities both for

[192] "…I prepared a report addressed to the Sublime Porte, which the Pasha promptly signed and sent to Constantinople. In the report, I emphasized that if the rebels were not permitted to enter Ottoman territory, they, along with their numerous followers, would be compelled to engage in banditry, inflicting considerable damage on the provinces on both sides of the border…", Dimitrios Ainian, *Apomnimonevmata* (Athens: Ekdotikos Oikos G. Tsoukala Vivliothiki, 1956), p. 95-96.
[193] Ainian, *Apomnimonevmata*, 95.

captains[194] and the men they brought along[195] to receive salaries and remain in employment in the Ottoman territory. In the context of the 1840s and 1850s, no other power in Europe offered as open and direct an incentive for the employment of military groups entering the system from the outside as the Ottoman Empire did.[196] Though those coming from Greece were not full-fledged professional units, they could hardly be counted as complete foreigners. As this possibility was open even for exiled soldiers from revolutionary Europe, it was only natural that the Greek captains could be incorporated into the system and thus kept under control. Therefore, their service was accepted as soon as they crossed the border, whether they were permanent or not. Captains knew that their basic needs, such as their accommodation, would be met in the initial phase, in order to prevent the exacerbation of crises due to a lack of money.[197] The Ottoman Empire was also where they could most easily manage the property they left behind. [198] In addition, it was safe in terms of retaining their attendants, sustaining their lives, and planning forthcoming actions due to the extensive lending and borrowing networks they had on both sides of the border.[199] By this means, they would never find themselves

[194] "… meşhur kapudanlar ifa-yı hüsn-i hıdmet eyledikleri takdirde kendülere Yunan devleti tarafından virilmekde olan ma'aşlaara mukabil taraf-ı eşref-i Devlet-i 'Aliyyeden ma'aşlar verilmek lazım geleceği…" BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.122.3 (October 27, 1847).
[195] "…kapudan-ı merkumenin ele geçüb hudud-ı mezkur civarında vak'i mevakı'de ırgatlık etmek hakkında istida'-yı ruhsat eyleyen kırk-elli nefer 'avanelerinin…" BOA, A.} MKT.137.14.3 (July 1, 1848).
[196] Heléna Tóth, *An Exiled Generation: German and Hungarian Refugees of Revolution, 1848–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 157-159.
[197] "…beş nefer kaptanın zarurete ve düçar oldukları beyanıyla saye-i mekarim vaye-i hazret-i şahanede merkumlara münasib mikdar 'atıyye-i seniyye 'itasıyla birer mikdar ta'yinat tahsisi ve ikametleri çün şehriye üç yüz guruşa istikra hane icarının…tesviye ve ifası…" BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).7.151.3 (December 7, 1848).
[198] "…hükümet-i Yunaniye'de düşmanlarımızın kesreti olmak hasebiyle emlak ve 'akaratımız ile familyalarımızın emr-i idaresine birer mu'temed vekiller nasb ve ta'yini…" BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.142.1 (January 16, 1849).
[199] "…mukteziyeleri tedarik çün öteye berüye deyn etmiş…" BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.142.6 (April 15, 1848).

completely helpless, even if the pensions or salaries they were entitled to were inadequate.

Apart from the financial aspect, it was an advantage to already have a long-standing relationship with the Ottoman provincial authorities, especially with the *derbendcis*, across the border, as most of them were border captains. In this way, they were able to reach and try to bring their families to their vicinity and have faster access to channels of communication.[200] They could utilize their connections with the authorities in the border provinces to move between districts or recruit men, though such actions would, needless to say, prompt intervention from the center.[201] It resembled a process of reconstructing the networks of the pre-revolutionary period; however, there were also new dynamics, marking a departure from earlier practices with the existence of the border. The captains' interactions with the relevant authorities were shaped by the unique dynamics of the border region. They could not be swiftly subdued or subjected to quick decisions, as any action had to be carefully calculated for its potential to disrupt the delicate order of this contested area. The border's strategic significance demanded caution, making it necessary to weigh each move by the provincial authorities towards the incoming captains.

The only authorities they could appeal to and had a long-standing relationship with were not only local or central, but also foreign ones. There were embassies and consulates of various European powers that they could reach in the Ottoman Empire, especially those of the guarantor states of Greece. This was particularly evident when they attempted to use their ties with Britain to try to pass from the kingdom or empire to the Ionian islands. At one point, King Otto accused Britain of "endeavoring

[200] Özkan, 273.
[201] "…casuslardan ahz olunan havadise göre bir tarafdan adem yazmakda…" BOA, HR.MKT.21.26.3 (July 19, 1848).

to throw Greece into a state of anarchy by allowing the British flag to protect an act of revolt and brigandage", as Finlay put it.[202] When they sought refuge in the Empire, they would continue to turn to this solution. The fact that captains who already had party ties in the kingdom were now appearing as refugees in the empire created a space where they could get a hold of the active involvement of the consulates. They were more likely to be contacted by captains whose passage from one place to another was strictly regulated or who encountered problems with local authorities for this reason.[203] It reflects that they were able to voice their demands around diplomatic ties as well as regional ones.

For the captains, the reception they would encounter upon entering the empire was a matter of great concern. They understood that despite their unlawful past, they would not be treated purely as bandit leaders or criminals. Their credibility in offering services was rooted both in the military reputation they held before their periodic rebellions and in the military assistance that some of their families had provided to the empire during the Greek War of Independence, as previously mentioned. This background not only validated their credibility but also served as a partial assurance for the captains, giving them a sense of security once they crossed the border. For instance, when Vangelis, the brother of a previous refugee, Ioannis Kontogiannis, sought asylum, he was received with the same consideration shown to his brother.[204] This favorable reception was influenced by their association with one

[202] George Finlay, *A History of Greece from Its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time: B.C. 146 to A.D. 1864. The Greek Revolution, Part II: Establishment of the Greek Kingdom*, ed. Henry Fanshawe Tozer, vol. VII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1877), p. 207.
[203] ...ἀλλὰ νομίζει ὅτι οὔτε δύναται οὔτε τολμᾷ ὁ πασᾶς νὰ τὰς ἐμποδίσῃ, ὅταν αὗται θέλωσι νὰ φύγωσι, διότι τοῦτο εἶναι δικαίωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀπαράβατον, καὶ συνάμα ἠδύναντο διά τινος προξένου τῶν φίλων δυνάμεων νὰ τὸ κατορ θώσωσιν." *Greek Parliamentary Records* (June 12, 1848), p. 415.
[204] "He (Hüseyin Pasha) said that he would request approval from his authorities and extend this favor to me as well as to Kontogiannis, whom he had known previously." Ainian, *Apomnimonevmata*, 95.

of the most prominent armatoliki[205] families. Sotiris Stratos, much like Kontogiannis, appeared to enjoy a comparatively secure position within the Ottoman domain due to his past military contributions to the Ottoman forces during the war.[206] Although it is inconclusive whether they acted as representatives for the other refugee captains, it is undeniable that they played a key role, especially for those captains who were viewed with more suspicion by the empire, as some had previously participated in irredentist forays such as Velentzas or had fought against the empire. No other place they could seek refuge could offer them the opportunity to use the prestige associated with their former positions to the extent that entering the empire could.

Eventually, several captains had to hastily cross the border into the Ottoman Empire to avoid the repercussions they would encounter due to the mutinies they had instigated in different areas, which had been suppressed multiple times. While this may appear to be an isolated incident, there were inner realities that the captains had to employ and handle to ameliorate their situation. Nevertheless, in the midst of all this, one facet should not be taken for granted. Even with kinship or traditional alliance ties, the captains have never been, neither in the past nor now, individuals who have fully united as one body or acted in complete harmony with each other, always complying with one another's will in every respect. The fact that they had similar experiences under similar circumstances and were conjoined at such a moment of crisis was not a framework that straightforwardly proves their unity. For example, Kontogiannis, Papakostas, Balatsos, and Tarkatzikis wanted to prevent

[205] "Bundan dört sene mukaddem mahruse-i şahaneden olan Yenişehir ve Manastır taraflarına iltica ve istihma iden kapudan Vangeli Kondoyani nam şahıs babası Miço Kondoyani ve dedesi Devlet-i 'Aliyye'nin hıdmetinde bulunub mersum kapudan Vangeli dahi sadr-ı esbak merhum Reşid Mehmed Paşa hazretlerine hıdmeti sebkat itmekle…" BOA, İ.MVL.198-6165.1 (October 20, 1850).
[206] "…müşarünileyhin tasdikine göre kaptan mumaileyh (Sotiris Stratos) sadr-ı esbak merhum Reşid Paşa'nın Rumili valiliği hengamında pek çok hüsn-i hıdmet ibraz eylediği gibi lede'l-hace yine işe yaraması me'mul idüğinden…" BOA, HR.MKT.447.82.3 (March 22, 1863).

Velentzas from acting more independently and aggressively from their directives during the rebellions.[207] It should also be noted that Gardikiotis Grivas, Theodoros Grivas' own brother and great rival, was the commander who was in charge of suppressing these rebellions. Furthermore, certain captains who fled, along with their families, chose to stay within the Ottoman Empire by acquiring Ottoman subjecthood[208] and were subsequently assigned to various official duties. Others, having received amnesty, returned to their homeland, where they achieved even higher ranks than previously held. Among them, Papakostas and Grivas would be witnessed joining Tzavelas in 1854, organizing raids on Epirus, Thessaly, and Macedonia, where they came into direct conflict with the Ottoman army.[209] All these convey that the captains did not operate with a shared agenda or coordinated strategy, nor did they forge the same level of proximity with the various power groups.

3.7 Conclusion

To sum up, Greece, which separated from the Ottoman Empire and continued its existence as a kingdom, appears to be an entity that, in its first decades of establishment, experienced power shifts shaped by intense crises with the transformation of captains. They were influential regional figures who extended their presence from pre-independence to independence and led officially recognized irregular units, which at times emerged as mountain brigands operating outside the law. Among the captains who have positioned themselves in the face of changing conditions since the war years and kept pace with or resisted these conditions, there

[207] Kordatos, *Μεγάλη Ιστορία της Ελλάδας, Ιστορία της Νεώτερης Ελλάδας*, 488.
[208] "Kabdan Vangeli Kondoyani Yunanistan'dan kat'-ı 'alaka iderek ra'iyyet-i saltanat-ı seniyyeye na'iliyyet istir'asında bulunduğuna dair…" BOA, İ.MVL.198-6165.4 (January 26, 1851).
[209] James J. Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire: Prelude to Collapse 1839-1878* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2000), p. 253.

have been those who strongly influenced or turned into decision-makers who have become inseparable from the administrative or political spheres. In the setting of fierce political rivalry and pressure, they fell back on the essentially traditional method of engaging the authorities of the Ottoman Empire. What is new, however, is that their positions and the extra-military structures that protected them when they took refuge in the Ottoman territory made their relationship with the empire more than an ordinary alliance. The movement of armed men from the area where they were part of local kinship and larger political networks to an area where they did not have such networks led them to head towards the realms within the empire, where establishing the strongest and most immediate connections became a strategic necessity for maintaining their influence and survival. By activating all the necessary mechanisms, they hoped to ensure their immediate goals and establish a future for themselves, whether it be upon their return to the Hellenic Kingdom or within the Ottoman Empire, in accordance with their expectations. The process that led the captains to seek refuge in the Ottoman Empire involved a series of interconnected and complex events and groups, allowing them not only to avoid their vulnerable situation but also to repose themselves as surviving politico-military enforcers.

CHAPTER 4

OTTOMAN REACTIONS TO THE GREEK BORDER CROSSER CAPTAINS TAKING REFUGE IN THE EMPIRE AROUND THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

4.1 Introduction

As the 1850s approached, the Ottoman Empire was encountering the most well-known of the land captains who were born in the empire, then became one of the founding actors of the newly formed Greek state after its independence, and in fact were still struggling to keep themselves in power as active players in the state-building process. These captains were in a state of rebellion due to their opposition to the Bavarian king, the restriction of their areas of profit-making through military operations, and their exclusion from the political arena in which they had been heavily involved in the 1840s. However, the existence of the border, their status as the military backbone of their homeland, and their traditional ties to the border regions increased their bargaining power in the face of the authorities of the two states.

In 1847, when the revolts they started and expanded from their regions were suppressed, they fled towards the Ottoman Empire with their proximity to the border regions and demanded refuge. In the Ottoman Empire, the ambiguous position of these captains and the period leading up to their amnesty gave rise to various possibilities, resulting in confusion over the appropriate course of action. These comprised captains such as Grivas, Kriezotis, Papakostas, Balatsos, Stratos and Kontogiannis, and they were also accompanied by lesser captains in a short period of time. They also had their retinues and families during their period of stay. In this

respect, being the people who were at the forefront of local and national politics in the Hellenic Kingdom, their movements could be deemed as a magnet for more general cross-border migrations which were likely to gain momentum during this period and mostly later. At the time, however, there were certainly other remarkable aspects to the captains' crossing of the border and taking refuge in the empire. In its approach to these captains, who had risen from an irregular military background to become central figures in independent Greece, the Ottoman Empire adopted a very engaged and prudent attitude towards them, even though most of these captains would reside in the empire for only a few years, if not less.

In this chapter, the approach toward the Greek captains who crossed the border and took refuge in the Ottoman Empire is aimed to be explored through the lens of official discussions within the Ottoman state. From this perspective, the status of these captains within the Ottoman Empire or how they were officially defined by the imperial administration, will be examined. It can be contended that the ways in which the empire addressed this issue were particularly generated by considerations of border security, the protection or supervision of border crosser captains, and the impulse to look out for the empire's interests. The Ottoman Empire would seek to prevent any mobilization around the border, maintain control by providing the necessary conditions for the captains based on their urgent needs, and explore ways to turn the situation to its favor. Furthermore, the criteria by which the Ottoman Empire evaluated the potential advantages and disadvantages of harboring these captains will reveal the underlying logic of Ottoman decision-making around the mid-nineteenth century.

It is also essential to consider the circumstances under which these discussions took shape and the audience to whom they were directed. The concern

was not only how the empire decided to organize its relations with these captains, but also the degree to which it was anticipated to do so in relation to the Greek and European states. Particularly after the 1840s, a new diplomatic language became increasingly necessary due to the growing involvement of European powers. Behind the shared discourse palatable to Europe lay different motivations; the Ottoman Empire sought to destabilize the new Greek state, while the anti-king Greek captains hoped to be part of restored political turmoil. Overall, the Ottoman Empire's relationship with the Greek captains, rooted in historical ties, has been reshaped by the Greek independence, with new layers being added. Even though it can still mainly be perceived as local, it also became strongly imperial and trans-imperial by the mid-nineteenth century. As a result, the empire's response would encompass multi-faceted concerns, leading to the emergence of detailed directives on various aspects as to the Greek captains. These would range from where the captains should be stationed to how they should be treated.

4.2 The status of the Greek border crosser captains from the perspective of the Ottoman Empire

The identification of the major captains who crossed the border into Ottoman territories entailed much more than the usual categorization for the empire. A prerequisite for the authorization of the residence of these men and their soldiers in its territory was the establishment of a context in which they were not subject to complete criminalization. Even when they were criminalized, it had to be for the Ottoman Empire's own reasons, not those of the Hellenic Kingdom. The most commonly used expression by the empire when describing the situation of these captains is *mülteci* or *ilticacı*. Less so, they were also referred to as *eşkıya kaptanları*

or *eşkıya rü'esası*. These terms carried diverse meanings and were applied in different circumstances. No matter how they were referred, they were always recognized as *meşhur* and *nüfuzlu*.

These distinctions serve as indicators of the direction in which the Ottoman Empire would move forward, reflecting what it prioritized in its relations both with these captains and with the state to which these captains were subjects. The image of these men within the empire ranged from recognized bandit chiefs, historically seen as collaborators or rebels operating in the former Ottoman provinces, to figures who had reconstructed themselves as leading military entrepreneurs of now an independent state. What did all these categories correspond to and how were they used in official Ottoman parlance?

To begin with, the term most commonly used "mülteci" literally refers to a refugee, someone who takes refuge or seeks asylum in another state.[210] However, when considered within its historical context, its usage in this instance differs from both the refugee regime that would emerge within the empire, particularly after the Crimean War and the legal category of "refugee". The primary rationale behind the Ottoman Empire's designation of these captains as "mülteci" stemmed simply from its attempt to portray them as soldiers exercising their right to seek asylum in the empire due to the "oppression" they faced in the neighbor state. Accordingly, this framing allowed the empire to distance itself from any perception that it was collaborating with those who had been involved in unlawful actions. By classifying them as refugees, the empire not only acknowledges them as legitimate actors, thereby establishing the initial phase of their potential to destabilize Greece, but also illustrates, for the first time, how a policy of "asylum granting" could be

[210] *Redhouse's Turkish Dictionary in Two Parts, English and Turkish and Turkish and English*, 2nd ed. vols. (1880), s.v. "Multeji.", p. 811.

implemented regarding the mobility of a group perceived as "non-Ottoman Greeks" with whom authorities may eventually need to contend on a far more massive scale.

At this point, the depiction of these captains' conditions as they fled the kingdom, centered around desperation, stands out as an effort to maintain the notion of a sheltering imperial authority. For instance, in his report about the Kontogiannis brothers, Hacı Hüseyin Pasha, derbendat muhafızı (defender of the frontiers), describes the captains as being in a wretched state, with their soldiers completely scattered, fled, and hid in various locations.[211] In a joint official document, the captains' soldiers are further described as a group of starved and ragged men (*neferat aç ve çıplak fukara güruhundan olub*).[212] It is possible that this was, in the first place, the way Hüseyin Pasha presented the captains he had already accepted, or perhaps made an agreement with, to the center but a similar approach can also be observed on the part of higher authorities. Mehmed Emin Pasha, Rumeli *müşiri* (field marshal), also mentions that the captains were forced into destitution (*zarurete düçar*) when they sought refuge in the Ottoman Empire after their rebellions were suppressed for the second time.[213] The empire indicated its approval to allow these individuals to remain within its territory by consistently addressing their precarious status as mülteci. It was used as a means of defending itself against any potential complaints from the kingdom regarding the presence of the captains.

They have also been referred to as mülteci since they were *Yunani*, meaning the Greeks from the Hellenic Kingdom and not from the Ottoman Empire. There was already such a distinction being built during the Greek War of Independence.[214] It

[211] "…kapudanlar bu kere dahi dağılub perişan ve 'askerleri tarmar olmuş ve kendüleri üçer beşer adamlarıyla birer tarafa savuşub gizlenmiş oldukları…" BOA, A.} MKT.137.14.5 (June 27, 1848).
[212] BOA, A.} MKT.137.14.4 (June 27, 1848).
[213] BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).7.151.3 (December 6, 1848).
[214] Yusuf Ziya Karabıçak, "Ottoman Attempts to Define the Rebels During the Greek War of Independence," *Studia Islamica* 114, no. 3 (2019): 338-339.

was equally important to emphasize this differentiation in the context of the captains who fled to the Ottoman Empire, as it was signifying the Ottoman assurance for their refuge to be temporary. Although the truth of the matter might have different realities, the empire, prioritizing the concerns of the state to which these captains were subject, at least acknowledged that what took place was slightly different from a permanent settlement migration. This had encouraged the notion of being a guest (*misafir*), brought about by their status as a mülteci, to become apparent.[215] This was how the captains called themselves as well. Evidently, it was intended to demonstrate that these individuals were not being held captive and that they were guaranteed the possibility of return should they wish to do so (*bi-la-cebr mücerred kendü rızalarıyla*).[216] However, why there was an impulse for such assurance will be touched upon later.

The background to why mülteci was the main and most common term can also be contextualized in the mass influx of Central and Eastern European émigrés of the 1848 revolutions into the Ottoman Empire during the same time period. Russia suppressed the uprisings in Poland in 1830 and 1848, just as the Habsburg Empire did against the Hungarian revolutionaries, and Austria partially halted the revolutionary uprisings in Northern Italy.[217] This led thousands of Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, and Italian migrants to turn towards the Ottoman Empire.[218] As Strauss argues, they viewed the empire as "a safe haven whose leadership was determined to resist the pressure of extradition requests from the Austrian or the Russian

[215] "Saltanat-ı seniyye misafirleri olarak el-yevm bu tarafda bulunan mahrec kapudanların…" BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.142.1 (January 16, 1849).
[216] BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.12 (July 1, 1850).
[217] Johann Strauss, "East and West: Émigré Literature in the Ottoman Empire (18th–20th Century)," *Kün: Edebiyat ve Kültür Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1, no. 2 (2021): 58.
[218] Strauss, *East and West*, 54.

Empires"[219]. This also largely applied to Greek captains when they crossed the border. Despite it might be far-fetched to claim that the Ottoman Empire categorized Greek captains in the same group as the European émigrés, it undoubtedly included them in a more comprehensive mülteci mechanism it developed within such a framework. In seeking to redefine its interactions with these captains as an exercise in diplomatic strategy, the empire found itself compelled to characterize them not simply as itinerant bandit chiefs operating along the border, but as figures of greater political consequence. This shift in perception was essential to legitimizing their role within the empire's broader schemes of governance and frontier diplomacy.

The depiction of Greek captains as *eşkıya rü'esası* (bandit leaders) or *haydud kaptanı*, in addition to mülteci, was embedded in their immediate ties with the Ottoman Empire. For instance, in the same document, Papakostas was referred to as a mülteci, whereas Velentzas, with whom he crossed the border, was mentioned as an infamous bandit leader (*rü'esa-yı eşkıyadan ma'hud Valençe*).[220] It is a depiction that cannot be considered separately from Velentzas' violation of the Ottoman border at the beginning of the decade and the rebellion he planned to incite across the border. Moreover, referring not necessarily to the captains themselves but to their men, it was also stressed that they were long known for banditry. Even before independent Greece existed, the Ottoman Empire foremost acknowledged them as "eşkıya", who had been involved in brigandage since time immemorial. As such, it was assumed that the slightest negligence would push them "back into their old habits".[221] Throughout their refuge in the empire, a persistent compulsion arose to be cautious toward captains' soldiers, impelled by a dominant perception that the possibility of

[219] Strauss, 58.
[220] BOA, HR.SYS.1708.65.1 (December 21, 1849).
[221] "…te'minat verilmeyeceği derkar ve vermediği suretde bunların mecmu'u haydudluk turukuna süluk edecekleri aşikar olmağla…" BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.9 (May 29, 1850).

their engaging in unlawful acts was neither improbable nor distant.[222] This sense of forecasted risk shaped the preventive measures taken by the empire. The risk of resorting to banditry would come up more often, especially when it concerned border regions. However, it can be considered that this was a term never directed at captains, particularly those who came from the rank of general in Greece, such as Grivas and Kriezotis, and much less so at others, because these captains had to be presented, first and foremost, as more or less legitimate. Hence, the Ottoman Empire engaged with the Greek captains by oscillating between the rhetoric of bandit leaders and discontented soldier-statesmen based on its latest confrontations with them.

When explicitly mentioning the captains themselves, the most prevalent emphasis was on their power, wide-reaching influence, and capacity to pose a threat to both the kingdom and the empire; in other words, they seemed to have truly embodied what it means to be a frontier *kaptan*.[223] This, however, does not comply with the description of their dire situation once utilized while discussing their "refugee" status. In fact, one could even argue, on an entirely opposite line, that these captains' taking refuge in the Ottoman Empire could even be seen as a mark of prestige and a source of pride. Theodoros Grivas, for instance, was discussed in precisely such terms.[224] These captains were not the first bandit leaders to cross the border and reside in the Ottoman Empire, and the empire had been accustomed to bandits fleeing to its side since the borders were established.[225] Nevertheless, some of these men not only remained in Greece but also acquired formally recognized

[222] "…'adet-i red'iyeleri üzere haydudluk etmeleri mülahazadan gayr-ı ba'id olduğundan…" BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.11 (May 29, 1850).
[223] "…bu tarafa gelen Yunanistanca şöhretli ve nüfuzlu kaptanlar…" BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.129.4 (May 13, 1847).
[224] "…zir-i cenah-ı ma'delet-i seniyye-i padişahiye iltica eylemeleri Devlet-i 'Aliyyece doğrusu 'azim teşekkür ve iftihar edecek bir şey olacağına…" BOA, A.}AMD.2.56.2 (November 16, 1847).
[225] Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, "Nationalism in Function: 'Rebellions' in the Ottoman Empire and Narratives in Its Absence," in *War and Collapse: World War and the Ottoman State*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz and Feroz Ahmad (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2016), p. 166.

prerogatives.[226] The captains in question numbered among the most conspicuous beneficiaries of this system. The fact that they were recognized and honored as national heroes of the newly established Greece also appeared as an aspect fairly acknowledged by the imperial authorities. It could be observed that these captains were called *rü'esa-yı millet* (the leaders of the nation).[227] A similar case in point could be followed when the Ottoman officials addressed the captains, who had rebelled and been removed from office, as holders of honorific titles to which they were no longer entitled. Kriezotis and Grivas, for instance, continued to be called generals. There was also a strong perception that mighty captains like them would conceivably be able to overthrow the Bavarian king. Even if the captains failed in their target, they would still be in a leading position when they returned to Greece.[228] The fact that they were constantly trying to gather and connect to their men from both Greece, the Ionian Islands and the Ottoman Empire after being forced out of their homelands enormously supported this idea.

In one instance, Grivas aimed to connect with fugitives who had escaped from Greece to British-ruled Malta, in the Ottoman-ruled region of Preveza.[229] There were communications between the Ottoman Empire and Greece regarding the rejection of permission for a ship arriving by sea to dock at Preveza under Ottoman rule.[230] Despite being surrounded by representatives from British, Greek, and Ottoman diplomatic, political, and military authorities, he was still attempting to use his pre-existing connections and maintain his local influence in a place where he

[226] Öztan, *Nationalism in Function*, 166.
[227] BOA, A.}AMD.2.56.2 (November 16, 1847).
[228] BOA, A.} AMD.2.56.2 (November 16, 1847).
[229] BOA, HR.MKT.21.26.1 (July 11, 1848).
[230] BOA, HR.MKT.21.26.1 (July 11, 1848).

could not be fully located after independence. This was precisely what mobilized all the representatives against him and, more broadly, against the captains.

Given that the Ottoman Empire or most of the other contemporary states had relatively small professional or regular armies and conscription faced enormous challenges, the movement of people capable of gathering armed men, even in small numbers, was a highly sensitive issue. Thus, the empire's approach toward the Greek captains would aim both to secure their allegiance as much as possible and to impose a degree of restraint on their actions.

4.3 Greek captains as menaces on the Greco-Ottoman border

One of the most important reasons why the Ottoman Empire accepted Greek captains into its territory was that these men were congregated in the border regions of the empire after their rebellions were suppressed. The imperial policy was specifically built around the apprehension that rejection of the refuge of these already mutinous captains would give rise to further uprisings along the border. It was believed that they had the potential to incite unrest amongst the subjects of the Ottoman Empire, and that would exacerbate banditry and irregular recruitment in the empire's frontier regions. The trust in the captains was already very low because of their earlier movements along the border. Papakostas and Velentzas, in particular, were characterized in the following expressions:

> And as is known to Your Excellency, most of the captains who have arrived at the border region, especially *Papakosta* and *Velença*, are agitators and seditious men. In the past, they caused great trouble and committed acts such as the killing of people against the inhabitants of the villages of the Sublime State located on the border. Therefore, their current words should not be trusted, and caution must be exercised. As long as they remain in the area, they should be settled in places far from the Greek border to prevent them

from gathering soldiers within the imperial domains and openly launching attacks. Under no circumstances should they be permitted to do so.[231]

Similarly, even though the opportunity for captains to offer their services in the empire was given consideration and expected, it was not preferred that they work in the derbend organization. Captains such as Grivas, Kriezotis, Papakostas, and Velentzas, who commanded the border guards in the kingdom before their rebellion, were still regarded by those accompanying them as the ones responsible for carrying out this task. An example of this can be seen in the immediate action taken by Musurus in response to the information he received from the Greek government. This information pertains to soldiers who, having become unemployed, had meetings with their captains to request to be employed at the Ottoman border.[232] Needless to say, this would be rejected even before it was asked for, as it was the border region.[233] It was a priority for the empire not to further expand the existing authorities of these captains on its borders with Greece.

The concerns shared by the empire extended beyond its own internal matters; it was also cautious not to act in opposition to the interests of the Hellenic Kingdom, even for its own sake. It was to be arranged through joint action by the Greek and Ottoman authorities, and a high level of seamless communication dynamics. This can be seen when the Greek side reported which captains from Greece were arriving in the Ottoman Empire and by what routes they were heading, and the Ottoman side continuously made sure that these captains did not escape from the regions they

[231] "…ve bir de ma'lum-ı şerifleri olduğu üzere re's-i hududa gelmiş olan salifü'z-zikr kapudanların ekseri ve hususiyle Papa Kosta ve Velença zaten muharrik ve müfsid ademler olduklarından mukaddema serhadde bulunan kura-i Devlet-i 'Aliyye ahalisi 'aleyhinde pek çok sıkıntı ve katl-i nüfus misillü hareketleri vuku' bulmuş olmasıyla pek de şimdiki kullandıkları lisana emniyyet olunmayıb basiret üzere bulunması ve bir tarafda bulundukları müddetce Yunan hududundan uzakca yerlere ikame olunarak öte canib 'aleyhine memalik-i hazret-i şahanede 'asker tedarik etmelerine ve 'alenen hücum etmelerine zinhar ve zinhar müsa'ade olunmayıb…" BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.5 (May 9, 1847).
[232] BOA, HR.MKT.21.26.16 (September 3, 1848).
[233] BOA, HR.MKT.21.26.16 (September 3, 1848).

controlled and did not approach the kingdom. The suspicions raised by the Greek side were being thoroughly investigated and were generally challenged through local administrative channels, with the allegations frequently being proved false. Moreover, there was a diplomatic reservation vis-à-vis the European protectorates, and it was presumed that it would cause a rift.[234] The atmosphere of change that could be brought about by an even larger and more successful rebellion was undoubtedly an undesirable scenario for the Ottoman Empire. Making sure that these captains were kept inside imperial boundaries and under direct imperial authority was therefore the most important course of action.

In order to gain control over the situation, the Ottoman Empire first sought to ensure that the captains, upon fleeing to border regions, would be received without hostility by the imperial border security forces. It was imperative that they be welcomed and made to feel that they would be perfectly secure within Ottoman territory.[235] This initial reassurance was a practical gesture aimed at preventing further conflict while subtly asserting imperial dominance.

Following this, it was intended to keep their stay in the regions neighboring the Hellenic Kingdom as briefly as possible, gradually relocating them further into the interior regions of the Ottoman Empire.[236] This spatial distancing served to reduce the likelihood of renewed tensions along the border and make it more difficult for the captains to maintain connections with their former networks. These captains

[234] "...eğerçi hükûmet-i Yunâniyye 'aleyhine böyle kendü içlerinden muhâlefet zuhûruyla meşhûd olan hâl-i şevreşin devâmı ve tezâyüdü Saltanat-ı Seniyye'nin politikasına muvâfık ise de bunu fi'len tervîc-i Devlet-i 'Aliyye'nin ne şân-ı istikâmet-i 'aliyyesine ve ne de Avrupa devletleriyle olan münâsebât politikasına tevâfuk etmeyeceğine..." BOA, İ.MSM.31.878.1 (May 23, 1848).
[235] "… memalik-i Devlet-i 'Aliyye'de bulunduğunuz müddetce her gune mazhar-ı emniyyet ve ri'ayet olacağınız ve sergerde muktedir olub da devlet-i metbu'anız ile yalnız bulunarak 'avdetiniz takdirde şerri hasıl olan ülfeti feramuş etmeyerek bu tarafla da'ima mu'amelat-ı dostide bulunacağınız me'mul olunur…" BOA, A.}AMD.2.56.2 (November 16, 1847).
[236] "…hududa yakın mahallerde tevkif itdirilmeyüb derhal Tırhala'dan berülere celb ü nakilleriyle…" BOA, A.} MKT.137.14.7

were not so deprived of resources that they would turn to banditry out of necessity; however, from the empire's perspective, any banditry that might arise through collaboration between them and local border authorities was not beyond the realm of possibility, hence the need to keep them at a distance from the border. The removal of the captains from the provinces adjacent to the border would soon turn into one of the most severe and recurring points of contention between the captains and imperial authorities. Few captains would actually go to places designated by the empire, or if they did, few would stay.

When the captains crossed the border and hastily arrived in Trikala, Governor Mehmed Münib Pasha had already undertaken measures to prevent them from remaining near the border. In response, Papakostas, Velentzas, Tarkatzikis, Balatsos, Ioannis, and Evangelos Kontogiannis submitted a request to be relocated to İzmir.[237] This move would help maintain control over their activities in line with the empire's plans while enabling them to communicate with their families and soldiers. Although the Porte at first eagerly appeared to accommodate this request, it was ultimately decided that the captains would be resettled in Manastır (Bitola).[238] A more successful implementation of this desired arrangement can be seen in Kriezotis's relocation. General Kriezotis had first fled to Chios and was then transferred to Bursa, with his soldiers brought from Yanya.[239] Afterwards, he was moved to Izmir, where he had spent his youth, and had his family brought there as well.[240] There, he was not allowed to leave Izmir under any circumstances.[241]

[237] BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.1421 (January 16, 1849).
[238] BOA, A.} MKT.176.82.2 (February 21, 1849).
[239] BOA, A.} AMD.2.33.1 (October 13, 1847).
[240] BOA, HR.MKT.29.40.1 (April 12, 1850).
[241] BOA, HR.MKT.29.70.1 (February 1, 1850).

To exemplify a resistance to relocation, Grivas fled to Agia Mavra in Lefkada in his first rebellion; however, when rumors spread that he might arrive in the empire from there, the authorities demanded his transfer to Edirne, yet he refused.[242] In his second rebellion, he escaped to Yanya. This time, officials tried to send him to Manastır, where other rebel captains had been relocated; he stubbornly resisted and never left Yanya.[243] The Kontogiannis brothers, too, were to be sent to Edirne at the Ottoman governor's insistence during the previous rebellion, but they insisted on going to Cezayir-i Seb'a instead.[244] Nonetheless, during their second refuge within imperial territory, they consented to stay in Manastır.

All these relocations were intended not only to prevent the Greek captains from potentially inciting rebellion in the border region or fleeing back to Greece but also to stop them from staying in one place for too long and establishing much closer ties with local Ottoman officials, with whom they already had existing connections. Nevertheless, it is difficult to state clearly to what extent this could be achieved. However, the step taken to restrict these captains' operational areas was not limited to their relocation.

Without giving the impression of detaining or imprisoning them, the Empire would follow the method of unobtrusively restricting the captains' movements and means of communication. Moreover, it was acknowledged that any attempt to stop these men completely would be futile because they were widely recognized as powerful individuals with extensive networks.[245] Consequently, rather than openly resorting to keep them under control, it was opted for a more subtle form of

[242] BOA, İ.MSM.31.873.2 (July 22, 1847).
[243] BOA, HR.MKT.21.26.1 (July 11, 1848).
[244] BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.20 (1847).
[245] "…merkumlar etraflu ademler olduklarından kendülerinin şu aralık elde bulunmaları fa'ideden hali olduğundan…" BOA, A.} MKT.MHM.16.86.1 (September 26, 1847).

surveillance, which enabled the Empire to monitor and limit the captains' influence while avoiding actions that might be seen as aggressive. These kinds of arrangements were of equal importance to the task of keeping the captains away from the border zone.

The housing arrangements of the captains emerged as a distinct logistical challenge to be formally addressed in such control. Their residences were heavily secured with gates.[246] Besides, they were not located near each other or the men they accompanied, and their residences were situated at varying distances.[247] This led the captains to express that, instead of living separately in distant and small houses, they wished to live side by side with their men and fellow captains in a single large house; however, this request was turned down, with the high cost used as an excuse.[248] What lay beneath was that the Ottoman central authorities were deeply concerned about the possibility that captains residing temporarily in the Ottoman Empire would join forces to orchestrate another uprising or improve their coordination. In addition to the concern that the captains might return to Greece and incite a rebellion, the central authorities also worried that the captains might encourage disturbances among their co-religionists in the empire. For this reason, even though they were allowed to roam the streets, their interactions with the public were completely restricted.[249]

Moreover, even in areas where the Empire could not exercise direct or indirect control, such as the consulates of foreign states, a formal warning was considered necessary to ensure that, as long as these captains remained within Ottoman borders, they would in no way be allowed to cross into Greece. For instance, when it was heard that Grivas was considering taking up residence in the

[246] BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.4 (September 27, 1847).
[247] BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.6 (April 20, 1849).
[248] BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.6 (April 20, 1849).
[249] BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.4 (September 27, 1847).

British consul's house in Preveza, it was emphasized that, since the Empire could not deploy its guards within that location, measures had to be taken to prevent him from leaving the area and entering Greek territory.[250] The Ottoman Empire's policy of controlling Greek captains was a tangible manifestation of its efforts to maintain broader regional security while balancing diplomatic sensitivity.

Considering these factors, it becomes clear that the Ottoman Empire's concern over the potential for new turbulence at the border due to the presence of individuals who had fled to the Empire after their rebellions were suppressed in Greece compelled the Empire to adopt a nuanced policy reconciling the internal security imperatives with its diplomatic obligations toward Greece. The Ottoman authorities exercised strict supervision over multiple aspects of the captains' presence in the imperial territory, involving their allocated residences, freedom of movement, public contacts, and even potential communication among themselves. Despite the outward appearance of an amicable reception of these captains, the empire instigated a policy of containment designed to negate their political and military influence and prevent the reemergence of insurgency around the border regions. By employing a combination of diplomatic, spatial, and social control mechanisms, the Ottoman Empire also consistently preferred to act in coordination with the Hellenic Kingdom whenever possible. However, the provision for refuge or the confinement of captains to a constrained area, even for the short term, required a serious budget and preparation of needs. It was admitted that unless certain needs of the captains and

[250] "Bunlar şayed el-yevm İngiltere konsolosunun konağında oldukları takdirde onun kapusına kavas vaz'ı münasib olmayacağından uzakdan nezaret etdirilmeyüb konsolos-ı mümaileyhin himayesiyle dahi Yunanistan'a duhülüne fırsat verilmemesi ve şayed konsolos-ı mümaileyh bunlar İngiltere devleti himayeti tahtındadır siz karışmayınız gibi ta'rizata kalkışacak olur ise Preveze memalik-i mahruse-i hazret-i mülükaneden olmasıyla Ceneral Griva'nın oraya gelmesi Devlet-i 'Aliyye'ye dehalet demek olduğundan her kangi himayede bulunur ise bulunsun memleket-i şahanede bir hem-civar devlet 'aleyhine hareket etmesine ve Yunanistan'a gitmesine ruhsat verilemeyeceği…" BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.4 (September 27, 1847)

their retinues were met to some extent, the implementation of such supervision would not have been viable.

4.4 Between sheltering and patronage: The Ottoman Empire's assumption of rebel captains' needs

Removing the Greek captains who took refuge in the Ottoman Empire from the regions bordering the Hellenic Kingdom and placing them further inland and simultaneously restricting the field of activity of the captains as much as possible, certainly required the captains not to be in need. More significantly, however, was the question of what it implied for the Empire to receive into its territory a group of Greece's most prestigious and still-active political and military leaders who had managed to survive and even expand their influence. Despite attempts to reduce reliance on such military elements even further, it was undeniable that a state of patronage for such warlords still existed on both sides of the border in the mid-nineteenth century. For these captains, too, the issue was more than simply seeking refuge. Between the scenarios in which these captains might remain in the Ottoman Empire and enter into its service or return to Greece to reinstate their power following possible concessions from the Hellenic Kingdom, the issue of meeting their basic needs was not the only point of concern. Equally significant was whether the Ottoman authorities deliberately pursued a policy in order to entice these figures into imperial service. On the one hand, the captains were regarded favorably for their potential to provide much-needed military force in rural areas, to enhance the Ottoman Empire's position in foreign affairs, and to serve as a counterbalance to the enduring dominance of the Albanian notables in the region. On the other hand, however, the captains' uncertain political affiliations and their potential to stir unrest

along the border made the state more reluctant to fully integrate them into its service. What is more, the central Ottoman government was envisioning the gradual removal or restructuring of its own traditional military elements into units more directly tied to central authority. Thus, there appeared to be no common and clear stance in the empire with respect to whether to reject or accept the Greek captains into imperial service, and their continued presence remained a source of ambiguity.

Despite being perceived as a threat in the border regions, these captains were also experienced and highly influential figures whose military capabilities the empire could not easily dismiss. As a result, the act of addressing their basic needs was not merely an accustomed gesture but rather a political signal. Moreover, from the perspective of the derbend institution and provincial administrators in the border regions, the captains' relationship with the Ottoman Empire constituted a political-economic framework that facilitated monetary transactions, moneylending, and the deployment of captains' bands as a labor force.

The captains also faced immense uncertainty. Their ability to determine and sustain their place depended mostly on the Ottoman Empire's willingness to accommodate them both materially and politically in its shifting military and administrative framework, shaped around the border. Their future upon returning to Greece remained unclear, as did whether staying in the Ottoman Empire would yield any meaningful gains beyond mere survival. Furthermore, they had no way of knowing whether their families, followers, and properties back home could withstand the rupture of such a choice or be evacuated. However, they were explicitly articulating their demands, knowing that they had a strong hand in negotiations and could present those in exchange for services within the empire. For this reason, the captains often broached the chance of being able to serve in the empire.

Initially, in order to meet all the immediate needs of the captains, the Ottoman Empire allocated them with *'atıyye-i seniyye* (pensions/gifts from the sultan) and *ta'yinat* (allowances), which were usual disbursements in cases of such refuge or sojournment.[251] Additionally, it was decided that a monthly payment of 300 *gurush* would be made for the rents.[252] The amount of 'atıyye and ta'yinat given to these captains seems to have been deliberately set apart from that granted to those who had sought refuge in the Ottoman Empire years earlier, as the earlier arrivals were seen as shifting their loyalties, while the later captains were known to have fled more out of compulsion (*mukaddem gelenler raddesinde olmadıklarından*).[253] In other words, official emphasis continued to be placed on the fact that these captains held the status of guests.

Nevertheless, it was not entirely implausible nor without precedent for these "guests" to offer their services to the Ottoman Empire. Several frontier captains had done precisely that in the aftermath of the border demarcation, and many among this group belonged to armatoliki families with a long-standing history of service within the Ottoman Empire. This pattern continued into the period in question. For instance, Evangelos Kontogiannis had been placed on a monthly salary of 1,500 *gurush* to continue to operate in the Ottoman Empire just prior to these rebellions, although he would later return to his homeland.[254] Mehmed Münib Pasha, the governor of Trikala, seemed to have expected that the same course would be followed for the captains who arrived all together after their rebellion. He pleaded, on their arrival within the Ottoman Empire, that in case they wished to enter Ottoman service, they

[251] BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).7.151.3 (February 3, 1849).
[252] BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).7.151.3 (February 3, 1849).
[253] BOA, İ.HR.60/2878.4 (December 1, 1849).
[254] BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.20 (1847).

were to be granted salaries equivalent to those they had received in Greece.[255] The idea of keeping the amount on par with what they received in the Hellenic Kingdom reflected the in-betweenness that neither fully encouraged the captains to enter imperial service nor completely disincentivized them.

If this development were to materialize, it could prove beneficial, or at least be perceived as such, by a wide range of regional authorities, spanning from border guards to provincial governors. The transformation of the border into a haven for insurgent elements planted the seeds of a distinct credit-debt system along the frontier, making rural indebtedness reach the border zones as well. Initially crossing the border with 168 soldiers, the captains consequently requested additional money from the deputy superintendent of the *derbendat*, in addition to the 'atıyye and ta'yinat they had obtained.[256] Due to their "considerable reputation and influence" in Greece, not only was the securing of the debt ensured, but the question of their salaries also came to the forefront, prompting discussions about how much could be allocated from the treasury of Rumeli.[257] On another occasion, it was observed that the captain had incurred significant debt due to the monthly wages and essential needs of their men, and as a result, they found themselves in need of money, asking for 30,000 gurush.[258] Taking refuge in a territory across the border already makes maintaining control over mercenaries difficult and expensive. It was only to be expected that captains, when pushed even farther from their usual domain, would need alternative sources to keep their forces intact. In this regard, the Ottoman border

[255] "…ifa-yı hüsn-i hıdmet eyledikleri takdirde kendülere Yunan devleti tarafından virilmekde olan ma'aşlara mukabil taraf-ı eşref-i Devlet-i 'Aliyye'den ma'aşlar virilmek lazım geleceği…" BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.122.3 (October 27, 1847).
[256] "…derbendat muhafızı vekili kullarına sekiz bin guruş istikraz eylediklerinden…" BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.126.4 (May 13, 1847).
[257] BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.126.4 (May 13, 1847).
[258] BOA, İ.MTZ.(01).6.142.6 (April 15, 1848).

authorities were presented with opportunities to receive a monetary sum from the local treasury and to assess their ability to recruit irregular soldiers by binding the Greek captains to themselves. To give an example, derbend ağa Hüseyin Pasha withheld, for six months, the salary allocated to captain Sotiris Stratos, who fled to Trikala and entered into Ottoman service.[259] He expressed that he spent all his personal funds on bringing over his family and subsequently requested money to pay the monthly wages of fifty soldiers.[260] Later, it was mentioned that the captain had explicitly stated he would resort to banditry out of desperation if his demands were not satisfied.[261] It demonstrated that both the Ottoman derbendat and the Greek captains actively turned the persistent danger of insecurity into a means of profit. This mutual instrumentalization of disorder was one of the key reasons behind the central Ottoman authorities' insistence on removing the captains from its borders with Greece.

The Greek captains' refuge in the empire further put into question whether the border authorities could utilize their dependencies as a human resource and labor force that was not restricted only to the military. For instance, the derbend ağa Hüseyin Pasha asked whether he could employ around fifty irregular soldiers of the captains who wanted to work as *ırgat*[262] at the border to meet their needs.[263] In this way, the soldiers would be satisfied by not detaching too far from the borders, while the pasha would also benefit from their presence. Mehmed Münib Pasha, the governor of Trikala, ultimately turned down the suggestion on the grounds that men

[259] BOA, A.} MKT.141.35.2 (1848).
[260] BOA, A.} MKT.141.35.2 (1848).
[261] "…birtakım fakir fukaranın günahına girmek lazım gelecekdir…" BOA, A.} MKT.141.35.2 (1848).
[262] While it more frequently refers to landless agricultural laborers employed for corvée, in this context it corresponds broadly to "worker".
[263] "…ırgatlık işlemek içün istirca-yı ruhsat itmekde olduklarından küfelaya rabtla ruhsat mı vereyim yohsa ol canebe mi göndereyim?" BOA, A.} MKT.137.14.4 (August 25, 1848).

of this sort were always inappropriate near the border zone and decided that they needed to be sent into interior regions.[264] However, a report sent from the Greek foreign minister Kolokotronis to the Ottoman embassy in Athens reveals that the derbend ağa Hüseyin Pasha was already exploiting and mistreating the families of the captains who had fled from the province of Phthiotis after the rebellions. According to the report, the pasha regarded these people as "slaves" for having taken refuge in the Ottoman Empire, forced them to work either in the construction of a border fortress or on land like captive serfs, and held the captains' wives and children hostage, demanding a ransom for each.[265] Governor Mehmed Münib Pasha of Trikala, concerned over these matters, discussed with the commander of armies, Sami Pasha, and the derbend ağa, Hüseyin Pasha, the importance of preventing such "rumors" emerging from Greece.[266] It was difficult to know whether some of this had been exaggerated or was purely a joint agreement between the pasha and the captains meant to accelerate the empire's accommodation of them, or whether it was true. The repeated instructions from the Sublime Porte to provincial authorities, urging them to treat the captains with mercy and respect, denoted that tensions or coercion during captains' movements were not unusual or unexpected. On another occasion, Hüseyin Pasha appears to have seized the captains' arms and equipment during their stay in Larissa and only returned them at the request of the general commander, Mehmed Emin Pasha.[267] Thus, the implication that the derbend ağa considered the captains nearly as captives was not unwarranted. In other words, even if the reported abuses

[264] A.} MKT.137.14.3 (August 19, 1848).
[265] BOA, HR.SYS.1708.49.1 (July 29, 1848).
[266] "…Yunanlu tarafından kıl u kal zuhuruna sebeb verilmemesine bi'l-itina…" BOA, A.} MKT.137.14.7 (August 29, 1848).
[267] Özkan, 145.

were not as severe as claimed, the economic uses of violence and pressure for profit-making persisted at the Greco-Ottoman border.

In the main, the Ottoman Empire's provision of essential needs, such as shelter, food, and clothing, to the Greek captains raised the problem of whether these men should serve the empire. Apart from these provisions, issues such as whether they ought to receive a salary, how they could retain their men, and how their state of need was both alleviated through 'atıyye and ta'yinat and simultaneously exploited within the border economy reflected different stances towards the captains by the imperial authorities. Such were the contradictory political signals conveyed to the captains, further complicated by their indeterminate status. This ultimately led most of these captains to leave the empire as their final disposition. Unsatisfied with the first amnesties they received from the Hellenic Kingdom, and having spent a number of years in the Ottoman Empire, most of the captains eventually returned to their homeland when the conditions they wanted were met and they were safe enough to turn back. Even though many of them were reinstated to official posts, they sustained their opposition to King Otto and also continued cross-border raids into Epirus and Thessaly.

Notwithstanding the period's complex political dynamics, there were those who, once granted the empire's protection and fragmented patronage during their stay, continued to reside in the empire. To illustrate, General Kriezotis decided to remain in Izmir, was given a salary, and died there in 1853.[268] Evangelos Kontogiannis became a subject of the Ottoman Empire in 1851.[269] Similarly, Sotiris Stratos would once again seek refuge in the empire years later, in 1863, when the king would be enthroned, this time under the distinct category of a "political

[268] BOA, İ.HR.54/2521 (May 15, 1849).
[269] BOA, İ.MVL.198/6164.4 (January 26, 1851).

refugee".[270] That is, some chose to continue their service in the Ottoman Empire, as well as others who, even if they did not, eventually found themselves once again in need of engagement with it.

4.5 Conclusion

When the Greek and, more specifically, the Rumeliot land captains took refuge in the Ottoman Empire from 1847 to the 1850s, they encountered an imperial order that, although familiar in many respects, had undergone significant transformations after the Greek independence. They were now entering an empire bound by new obligations, those imposed by the presence of a neighboring state and the demands of maintaining a regulated border with it. The enforcement of this new administrative order became a new basis for the Ottoman authorities, and its practical execution largely depended on the integration of local intermediaries into the mechanisms of Tanzimât modernization. At the same time, a growing wave of oppositional and insurgent movements on a global scale was beginning to reshape the language and policies adopted by various sovereign states.

In the case of both the Ottoman Empire and the Hellenic Kingdom, the borderlands in question were not just lines of separation but long-standing zones of interaction where conflict and cooperation had historically coexisted, mediated by regional power brokers who often played roles on both sides of the border. This context was relevant when the captains, following their rebellions, began to flee to the empire. As a result, the Ottoman Empire moved to neutralize these border crosser captains by removing them from the border regions, limiting their capacity to grow

[270] "…Yunan 'asakir-i gayr-ı muntazaması zabıtanından ka'imakam Esratos nam bir şahs hududu tecavüz ederek politika mültecisi suretiyle Ahmed Paşa nezdine iltica…" BOA, HR.MKT.447.82.4 (April 9, 1863).

influence within the empire, and asserting itself as the captains' sole legitimate interlocutor other than the Hellenic Kingdom.

For the Ottoman state, too, these captains were no longer simply the armatoloi they knew from the past. From how they were categorized to how they were treated, almost every aspect of their presence followed new patterns. Naturally, this brought a certain degree of confusion. Nevertheless, the empire's high demand for irregular military actors in rural areas remained firmly in place. This reality made captains find themselves not only welcomed under imperial protection but also well-positioned to penetrate the political, military, and economic structures of the places they went, as they arrived accompanied by armed men, extended families, and longstanding regional ties.

As a result, Greek captains entered into a reciprocal power relationship with the central Ottoman government. However, this was the kind of relationship that could at any moment shift the empire's relations both with the new Greek state and with the European powers. Yet still, it largely operated within the inherited frameworks of a long-standing, localized administrative system that continued to shape imperial governance into the 1850s.

CHAPTER 5

AN OVERVIEW OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AFTER THE GREEK INDEPENDENCE AND RELATIONS WITH THE HELLENIC KINGDOM

5.1 Introduction

From the moment Greek independence was recognized by the Ottoman Empire, the bilateral relationship between the empire and the kingdom was shaped for decades around the problem of subjecthood, the issue of land or trade, and the institutionalization of borders. These three elements were utterly critical both for the empire during the *Tanzimât* era and for the reinforcement of the emerging Greek state mechanisms, which experienced a common and dynamically linked historical process. Tanzimât refers to the period as part of the Ottoman modernization following the promulgation of the Gülhane Edict of 1839, which essentially includes a series of legal regulations pertaining to taxation, conscription, and the relationship between the individual and the state. The Greek uprisings set the stage for the Tanzimât reforms by encouraging the abolition of the Janissaries and stimulating the Ottoman elite to reorganize governance. It was also a response to a series of major developments, including the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-9, French occupation of Algeria in 1830, and semi-autonomy granted to Samos, Wallachia, Moldovia and Serbia during the 1830s.[271] Most critically, the challenge posed by the revolt of Mehmed Ali Pasha and his administrative, military and fiscal reforms pushed the empire to adopt a new and more dynamic strategy.[272] This transformation in the Ottoman Empire has likely had a ripple effect on the regulations within the Greek

[271] Ozan Özavcı, *Dangerous Gifts: Imperialism, Security, and Civil Wars in the Levant, 1798-1864* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 357.
[272] Özavcı, *Dangerous Gifts*, 357.

Kingdom and its state-making processes as well. What is unmistakable is that reciprocal relations were maintained within this framework for a long time.

Considering the legal, fiscal, and military exigencies of the Tanzimât, it was essential to maintain Greeks within Ottoman borders as taxable subjects, negotiate the status of former Muslim properties and trade relations in post-independence Greece, and establish border management tied more to an administrative structure through the use of former irregular units. These faced serious practical challenges in implementation. Despite restrictions, Ottoman Greeks held dual nationality or accessed its benefits without official status, while Greeks from outside were able to reside within Ottoman territory for years.[273]

Another major issue was the dispute between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of Greece, which had been uncanonically established by the Bavarian-led Greek state in 1833 and would only be officially recognized and accepted as autocephalous by the Patriarchate in 1850.[274] While a massive wave of migration was taking place from the empire to the kingdom, the existence of a "state church" legitimizing another sovereignty had direct and indirect impacts on the Greek Orthodox still living within the empire. All this became a catalyst for reorganizing and redefining the relationships between the Greek Orthodox community of the empire, the Patriarchate, and the Porte.

Additionally, the issue of properties remaining in the kingdom remained unresolved for years due to expropriations and unpaid indemnities, although a compensation-based agreement was reached in 1837.[275] Though the Ottoman Empire

[273] Ayşe Ozil, *Orthodox Christians in the Late Ottoman Empire: A Study of Communal Relations in Anatolia* (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 98-106.
[274] Victor Roudometof, "Greek Orthodoxy, Territoriality, and Globality: Religious Responses and Institutional Disputes," *Sociology of Religion* 69, no. 1 (2008): 71-72.
[275] Paraskevi Brousta, "Greece and the Great Powers (1833–1862): The Diplomacy of National Integration" (Master's Thesis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 2006), p. 53.

repeatedly brought up post-independence disputes over Greek property sales and waqf liquidations until the 1850s, no lasting settlement was achieved. Due to the difficulty in finding common ground on this matter, official trade and maritime relations would also be hindered reciprocally.[276]

As for the borders, it can be argued that the *derbendat nazırı* (superintendent), deriving power from irregular forces, emerged as a figure just as predominant as the governors in the Ottoman provinces adjacent to the Hellenic Kingdom. It closely mirrored the administrative and military intrigues of the Tanzimât-era Ottoman Empire within the microcosm of its border with Greece.

In short, these dynamics maintained active engagement between the kingdom and the empire, while from the 1840s onward, both sides began adopting a closer interaction, marked by a departure from past volatility. When the Ottoman Empire recognized the establishment of a fully independent state for the first time, emerging from its territories, it was bereft of a definite and consistent policy on how to approach such ambiguous issues. As a result, such issues did not encounter strict restrictions, especially during this period. The most fundamental enabler of this process was diplomacy. In 1834, the Kingdom dispatched Zografos to Istanbul as the Greek ambassador, followed by the Ottoman Empire appointing the Phanariot Kostaki Musurus to Athens in 1840. They played an enormous part in the initial interactions between the Ottoman Empire and the Hellenic Kingdom, which occurred during the period when the Ottoman Empire was undergoing reforms, and the Hellenic Kingdom was endeavoring to establish the necessary conditions for state-building.

[276] Édouard Driault and Michel L'Héritier, *Histoire diplomatique de la Grèce de 1821 à nos jours* vol. 2 (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France,1925), p. 113.

This chapter examines the specific circumstances within the Ottoman Empire following Greek independence that influenced how the empire perceived and responded to the rebellious border crossing captains from the newly established Hellenic Kingdom. From this perspective, several entangled developments during this period come into focus: the demarcation and administration of the border, which redefined territorial control; the restructuring of the derbend organization, which took on a new form and function in response to shifting political and military demands; and the repeated forays between the two territories, reflecting ongoing tensions and rivalries. These factors establish an important context that will shape the empire's policies in multiple ways, including how it identifies the captains it accommodates and the manners in which it engages with them in the future. Furthermore, these were not just significant for captains but also represented the most dynamic spaces of interaction between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Greece, where relations were constantly defined through both cooperation and contestation.

5.2 The first Greco-Ottoman border

The process of demarcating the border between the Ottoman Empire and Greece represented a significant departure from the empire's earlier territorial delineations. It involved the direct involvement of several international actors with competing agendas, extensive on-the-ground observation, the need for more enhanced cartographic knowledge, and formalized boundary commission arbitration.[277] From the wartime period until the formal border settlement of 1832 with the Conference of Constantinople, and even thereafter, the recurring negotiations over the border

[277] Dilek Özkan, "Final Phase of the Greek Revolution: Delimitation, Determination and Demarcation of the First Greek Borders in Ottoman Sources," in *European Revolutions and the Ottoman Balkans: Nationalism, Violence and Empire in the Long Nineteenth Century* ed. Dimitris Stamatopoulos, (London: I.B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2019), pp. 116-121.

reflected the anticipations of Great Britain, Russia, France and the Ottoman Empire far more than those of the warring Greeks whose territorial ambitions were uncertain.[278] In 1829, alarmed by Russia's advances in the Ottoman-Russian War, Britain and France arranged a sequence of meetings to stop Russia from settling the Greek issue to its own advantage.[279] Furthermore, the decision-making process continued to drag on since the Ottoman Empire sought to minimize territorial losses and assert stronger demands in the delineation of its borders with Greece. Ultimately, the border running from the Gulf of Arta to Volos and excluding Thessaly, Epirus, Crete and the Ionian Islands, which the British, Russian, and French ambassadors had insisted upon as a "natural frontier" and had previously been accepted, was agreed upon.[280]

Even the authorities responsible for establishing the border have repeatedly struggled to agree on its exact definition or location, resulting in countless protocols being drawn up. For the local communities living or moving around the border, the situation was even more ambiguous and unstable. The bordering process was a transformative experience, as Ateş discusses, that "foregrounds the voices of the borderlanders and their territorial strategies and rationalities"[281]. Nomadic migration routes, transboundary village farmlands, shared wetlands and pastures, and impenetrable bandit-controlled zones collectively constituted a contested borderland setting that persistently evaded state demarcation efforts. Moreover, it would continually be reshaped by migrations, as both non-Greek refugees would enter the kingdom and, since two-thirds of the Greeks lived outside these borders, a highly

[278] Malcolm Wagstaff, "Independent Greece: The Search for a Frontier, 1822–35," *Kambos: Cambridge Papers in Modern Greek*, 7 (1999): 60.
[279] Demirhan, 454.
[280] Özkan, *Final Phase of the Greek Revolution*, 118.
[281] Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary 1843-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 6.

fluid and dynamic mobility would emerge for the Greeks as well. In a context of daily insecurity, restricted resources, and immense human mobility, borderlanders developed their own systems of conflict resolution and governance, but the same conditions that enabled their autonomy also constrained alternative power structures, gradually making state authority appear more viable or even preferable.[282] As a result, after the creation of a borderline, issues of border violations, security, or cross-border settlements devolved jointly upon the Hellenic Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire, a development that functionally required their simultaneous security measures, if not real cooperation. To be precise, bordering was not a process that would conclude with the determination of lines but rather one that was yet to begin. As Gavrilis puts forward, both states shared "an understanding of the boundary as an interdependent security zone, an obligation to absorb certain costs domestically to assist the security of the other side, and a forecast that such interactions would continue"[283]. To an extent, it was true that both sides had made efforts so that any incident would not escalate.[284] Apparently, it was maintained through nearby guardhouses on either side of the border, a reciprocal network for interrogating and sharing information about suspects, and the ease of communication provided by the multilingualism of those living or working in the border area.[285] The most significant common ground in border management between the Ottoman Empire and the Hellenic Kingdom surely lay in their need to suppress bandits, fugitives, arms smugglers, or cross-border raids targeting their territories. The border had turned into

[282] Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands*, 5.
[283] Gavrilis, *The Greek-Ottoman Boundary as Institution*, 1524.
[284] George Gavrilis "Conflict and Control on the Ottoman-Greek Border," in *Understanding Life in the Borderlands: Boundaries in Depth and in Motion* ed. William Zartman (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2010), p. 44.
[285] George Gavrilis, "Border Guards and High States: Toward a Theory of Boundary Regimes," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2004), pp. 67-70.

an exceptional zone where captains coming from both sides, along with their groups of armed irregulars, could operate rather freely during peacetime, leading to an influx of people in the region.

What complicated these new, simultaneous and coordinated security measures was that the actors to be mobilized were traditional irregular units. When the Hellenic Kingdom relied on border captains and their irregular units as border guards, the Ottoman Empire employed their equivalents, the Albanian *derbendcis*, made up of irregulars/*başıbozuk* and their chieftains. They operated in a competitive framework rather than a thoroughly cooperative one.[286] They routinely collaborated with the very traditional armed groups that either they themselves or their opponents were expected to suppress. They also promptly reported even the slightest security lapses observed on the opposing side directly to the highest authorities, although they were able to resolve disputes locally. From the perspective of the Empire, the frequency of communication between governors of the border-adjacent regions and the border guards was intense. The existence of the border further elevated the administrative significance of Yanya, which then encompassed Thessaly and Epirus, as well as Ottoman Rumelia, especially through Thessaloniki and Manastır. In addition to all other transformations it brought, the border has become a distinct arena in which former paramilitary groups have adapted to the emerging border regime. These groups responded to the new conditions by recontextualizing and rebranding their traditional services by the first half of the nineteenth century. The derbend organization in the Ottoman Empire was one of the unique examples of it.

[286] Özkan, *Ottoman Perception and Considerations on the First Ottoman and Greek Borderlands in Thessaly, 1832-1865*, 115.

5.3 The changing face of derbend organization in the Ottoman Empire

While the derbend, a historical organization that had produced prominent figures such as Ali Pasha of Ioannina, was increasingly perceived as a disruptive element in the face of centralization, its role had effectively been narrowed to regulating relations between Albanian notables and the Porte on the local level. The Greek-Ottoman border gave it a new function and contributed to its longevity. Even before the formal delineation of the border, the derbend forces operating in the frontier regions, especially in Epiro-Thessaly, had been acting sort of as a rural police force or mountain guardsmen, characterized by their immense knowledge of the region and the Greek armatoloi who were their equivalents.[287] Following the establishment of the border, these same units persisted in their responsibilities, adapting their functions to serve as border guards. No regular troops were sent to the border unless there was a serious violation, and the ongoing Ottoman military reforms did not have the infrastructure or need to take such an action.[288] It created a relatively autonomous space, yet it was certainly no less attached to the central authorities than before. During the 1830s, the Albanian rebellions led to a common practice of employing individuals from former Albanian rebel households as a means of rehabilitation.[289] It can thus be suggested that the existence of the derbend organization facilitated the network of relationships between the central government and local authorities. In one of his letters, British Consul Charles Blunt mentions that, with his appointment to the sanjak of Trikala in 1837, Mustafa Nuri Pasha assumed judicial authority over all the derbends and gave the impression that the arbitrariness of the derbend authorities

[287] Gavrilis, *The Greek-Ottoman Boundary as Institution, Locality and Process*, 1832-1882, 1521.
[288] Basil Gounaris, "Blood Brothers in Despair: Greek Brigands, Albanian Rebels and the Greek-Ottoman Frontier, 1829-1831," *Cahiers Balkaniques*, no. 45 (2018): 16.
[289] Uğur Bayraktar, "Reconsidering Local Versus Central: Empire, Notables, and Employment in Ottoman Albania and Kurdistan, 1835–1878," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 52, no. 4 (2020): 693.

would be brought to an end.[290] In another letter, he adds that even those who initially rejected his authority gradually became more tied to him over time.[291] Moreover, the derbend superintendents were appointed through close coordination with pashas and governors, often upon their recommendation, remaining subordinate to district governors (mutasarrıf) who were also involved in the deep-seated factionalism of the region.[292] The Derbendcis were already operating under strong local leaders in their regions. The post of *derbend ağalığı* was typically auctioned off to the highest bidder.[293] Therefore, what mainly changed for Albanian aghas and their irregular troops was the reconfiguration of their living and operational spaces within an inter-state and inter-imperial administrative system. In the long run, the border's existence so vitalized their position that provincial higher authorities became gradually bypassed, with derbend superintendents corresponding directly with the center.

With the establishment of the border, certain routine practices became more pronounced, flooding the diplomatic arena with ongoing complaints from the Greek authorities. Plundering persisted intermittently and was, at times, even carried out in collaboration with Greek captains.[294] In doing so, they not only accumulated illicit profits but also rebuilt their position through the perpetuation of security threats, which makes the cost of the derbend organization more and more unsustainable. The Greek government, thus, often alleged the involvement of Ottoman border

[290] "All the Derbents, being by the late changes, subject to the jurisdiction of Mustapha Nourie Pacha, would justify the supposition of the Porte's having felt the necessity of establishing some more efficient authority, and thereby clearing the country, between this and the confines of Greece of the bandits, which infest all the forests and passes . . . from the nomination of Mustapha Nourie Pacha, and foresee, it would appear, that it will lead to the abolition of the arbitrary powers of the Beys, who now, to satisfy their unbounded expenses, do very great injury to the country." Quoted in Apostolos Vakalopoulos, "Το Εμπόριο Της Θεσσαλονίκης 1796–1840: (Σύμφωνα Με Ανέκδοτες Εκθέσεις Ευρωπαίων Προξένων)," *Makedonika* 16, no. 1 (1976): 136.
[291] Vakalopoulos, *Το Εμπόριο Της Θεσσαλονίκης 1796–1840*, 140-141.
[292] Özkan, 182-186.
[293] Vakalopoulos, 136.
[294] Ibid., 111.

authorities. Remarking on the captains' collusion with the derbendcis, it was proposed in a complaint letter sent by the Greek side to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Albanian *derbend ağas* should be removed from their posts and replaced with guards whose loyalty can be more reliably assured.[295]

Moreover, the practice of recruitment from the irregular elements continued, with the border region providing an added advantage that it now served also as a refuge for potential recruits entering the derbend organization.[296] Bandits and captains who fled the kingdom by crossing the border often encountered the derbendcis first and, on occasion, entered the service of the derbend superintendents. Their new positions, often secured through networks of violence, came to associate their names with acts of brutality and willful misconduct. This situation led to it being described, at the time, with the saying "confier la garde du troupeau à des loups" (letting the fox guard the henhouse).[297] These often appeared as complaints in official documents between the empire and the kingdom, sometimes involving guarantor states as well. In effect, practices carried over from the past had, in the context of the newly drawn border, become criminal acts that now required reckoning.

While the system of derbend practically disappeared in most parts of the empire and was replaced by new paramilitary structures, it is clear that the most dynamic area where derbend did not disappear but was transformed in response to new conditions was the Greek-Ottoman border. One might suggest that the derbendcis positioned on this border, the closest to the Ottoman heartland,

[295] "…şimdiki Arnabud derbend ağaları yerine sadakatkaran ve nikhahan zabıtlar ta'yin ve istihdam buyurmak devletinizin muktezay-ı maslahatından olur…" BOA, HR.SYS.1680.5.2 (August 31, 1846).
[296] Vakalopoulos, 121.
[297] "Nouvelles diverses," *Le Spectateur de l'Orient*, vol. 8 (June 25, 1857): 387, Athens: Imprimerie de Lazare Vilaras.

experienced a strong push for centralization. This was also a natural consequence of the fact that the Greek-Ottoman border was the first significant inter-imperial issue the Ottoman Empire was involved in during the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the derbendcis emerged as active agents of the border design, especially due to the highly visible local ties they had maintained on both sides of the border. The formalization of these individuals' long-held positions of power through a novel border guard post did not conclusively eliminate their room for maneuver but rather created new avenues for it. In addition to all the existing missions of the derbendcis, another element emerged that required the empire to always be on alert. The empire strived to reduce the interaction between its Greek Orthodox subjects and those on the kingdom's side of the border. Although this was nearly impossible to manage, the real concern was the border incursions coming from the Greek side.

5.4 Cross-border incursions and local uprisings from the 1830s to 1850s

Cross-border incursions along the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire, which for centuries cut through Tsarist Russia, Iran, and the Habsburg Empire, were a common practice that characterized the peacetime. The Ottoman Empire and its historical neighbors had to regard a certain degree of border raiding as tolerable.[298] This would remain fairly valid even in cases where it bordered a new state that had once constituted part of its former territories. Nonetheless, the intersection of Greece's specific political trajectory and the broader dynamics of the mid-nineteenth century brought distinct contextual variables. Border regions that remained under Ottoman rule could be the former regions of captains serving in Greece, or, if not, kinship and partnership ties could still exist. Other than the captains, their irregular troops were

[298] Mark L. Stein, *Guarding the Frontier: Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), p. 2.

similarly filled with people who had migrated to the kingdom (heterochthon) after independence but were originally from the Epiro-Thessaly or Macedonia.[299] The same applies to the cases of Greeks crossing into Ottoman territory to enter the service of a derbend ağa and being accepted into such positions, which resulted in the escalation of mutual accusations between the two states. In response to the Porte's accusations of state involvement in cross-border forays, the Greek government claimed that such actions stemmed not from official support but from the protection offered by the Ottoman derbendcis.

Even in the absence of such connections, the fact that the Greco-Ottoman border regions were predominantly Greek Orthodox allowed captains in the kingdom whose military roles were gradually losing relevance to frame their operations as a political mission; the liberation of "unredeemed" territories. Although forays mostly served to redirect the focus of discontented captains, incorporating Greek-speaking territories outside Greece's borders appeared as a prevailing theme in the kingdom's political agenda, shaping public discourse and press narratives around irredentism peculiar to this period.[300] However, it clashed with Ottoman efforts to "maintain order" and territoriality. Therefore, in addition to routine security measures taken by the empire, passport control at the border was closely monitored during this period, particularly following directives from Musurus, due to the notable rise in border incidents and the increased activity of secret societies associated with captains' forays.[301] The purpose was to identify individuals related to these societies and

[299] Irmgard Wilharm, *Die Anfänge des griechischen Nationalstaates 1833-1843* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1973), p. 198.
[300] Leonidas Moiras, "Osmanlı Devleti ve Yunanistan Krallığı Arasında İlk Diplomatik İlişkiler (1839-1848)" in *Tarih ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Perspektifinden Türk-Yunan İlişkileri 1821*-2021 ed. Esra Özsüer (Istanbul: Boyut Yayıncılık, 2022), pp. 18-19.
[301] Moiras, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Yunanistan Krallığı Arasında İlk Diplomatik İlişkiler (1839-1848)*, 21-24.

prevent them from crossing the border. Captains in the Ottoman Rumeli could likewise conduct raids across the Greek border for similar reasons. However, neither state's authorities possessed the capability or determination to confine irregular military elements under captains within their own territories.[302] The most viable measure to deter such activities was employing raiders within the newly emerging constabulary forces or border security units, which remained an insufficient solution. Yet, compared to the Hellenic Kingdom, one might also argue that the Ottoman Empire was, to some extent, more cautious and on guard.[303] The implementation of a rigorous monitoring, reporting, and surveillance system through intermediaries such as ambassadors, derbend superintendents, and district governors in the border regions aimed to curtail these activities.

In the early interactions between the Ottoman Empire and the Hellenic Kingdom, two significant incidents involving Greek captains created tension: Ioannis Velentzas' incursions into Thessaly in 1840 and the Cretan uprising in 1841. These events occurred during the "Eastern Question," a period marked by the conflict between Mehmed Ali Pasha, governor of Egypt, and the Ottoman government. The dominant French faction, led by Kolettis, which had strong support among the captains, naturally adopted a pro-French foreign policy. With France's open support for Mehmed Ali, many border captains in Greece who identified with the French party felt encouraged to take action.[304] When he invaded Thessaly with a band of armed men, he seemed to aim at inciting a Christian uprising against Ottoman governance and expanding into the territory. In reality, however, his actions were primarily about pushing the limits of the border power structure while the empire

[302] Petropoulos, 359.
[303] Koliopoulos, 122.
[304] Karapunar, 88-90.

was preoccupied with more pressing concerns, a move that, given the conditions of the time, eventually positioned Greece within the broader framework of the Eastern Question. A similar dynamic was at play during the Cretan uprising, in the sense that, from the captains' perspective, the question was how much they could take advantage of the situation, while for the Greek government, it was about redirecting the captains' activities outward. As a result, the Ottoman Empire had to act particularly cautiously regarding Greece during this period.

Before organizing forays into Thesally, Velentzas had been in contact with Makriyannis and Karatasos since 1835 and organized his foray following his expulsion from the gendarmerie units around the border regions.[305] Makriyannis remarked in his *Memoirs,* "then some of us agreed together to lay down our money, our efforts so that, hopefully, there should be an uprising in Thessaly and Macedonia"[306]. He added, "we made a host of preparations and came to an understanding with those outside, and we made new initiates everywhere"[307]. Indeed, connections were soon established across the region, linking sympathizers and rebel captains within and beyond Greece's borders. For instance, Karatasos, though he would later be imprisoned by the Ottomans, was a captain operating in the empire's territory who had allied with Velentzas and raised suspicions by meeting with the Greek consul Theodoros Vallianos in Thessaloniki.[308] Theodoros. He also had contact with other high-ranking officers and captains on the Greek border, such as Vasos and Klinakas.[309] More remarkably, Velentzas was also cooperating with Vehis Vashari, a

[305] Ioannis Koliopoulos, "Liberation Movements in Macedonia, 1830-1870," in *Modern and Contemporary Macedonia: History, Economy, Society, Culture, Macedonia under Ottoman Rule* ed. Ioannis S. Koliopoulos and Ioannis K. Hassiotis, vol. 1 (Thessaloniki: Papazissis: Paratiritis, 1994), p. 482.
[306] Makriyannis, "Memoirs (in Greek)," edited by Vlachogiannis vol. 2, (Athens: 1907): 116, quoted in Ioannis Koliopoulos, *Liberation Movements in Macedonia, 1830-1870*, 483.
[307] Koliopoulos, 483.
[308] Ibid., 485.
[309] Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 117.

former member of Ali Pasha's court who now held the position of derbend ağa in the Ottoman Empire.[310] Velentzas received his help to cross the border to organize a foray into Thesally. The Albanian border captains, much like their Greek counterparts, saw Velentzas' initiative as a chance to recruit irregular fighters and expand their influence, which is why they supported it.[311] While the Ottoman authorities had managed to suppress Velentzas's forays, the broader situation remained deeply concerning. Locally, the pre-independence power dynamics persisted, leaving the central government with limited options. From the Ottoman government's perspective, there was also a tendency to view these developments as part of a conspiracy of Mehmed Ali Pasha.[312] To confront all these, the only recourse was to keep European higher authorities informed of the border violations, aside from periodic military crackdowns. The Hellenic government only intensified border controls when compelled by diplomatic pressures.[313] In the end, Velentzas failed to attain the level of support he had sought. Meanwhile, the Ottoman higher authorities had preemptively established a vigorous informant network and used diplomatic channels, prompting the Greek government to take action. These developments, nevertheless, revealed key realities. The paramilitary formation in the region was too deeply entrenched to be contained by the border itself; local networks remained sufficiently delicate to destabilize the security frameworks both states pursued to impose; and the competitive dynamics among local captains perpetuated customary patterns of alliance-building.

Similarly, one of the factors that would fuel the rebellion in 1841, following Mehmed Ali Pasha's retreat from Crete, was the arrival of Cretan bandits and

[310] Koliopoulos, 117.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Karapunar, 92.
[313] Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 116.

captains, who had been traversing between Crete and the Morea since the Greek War of Independence, or were Rumeliots, who had no direct connection to Crete. The issue of Crete's annexation to the kingdom had been a matter of ongoing concern and would intensify in the following years. At this stage, however, the arrival of the captains was unsettling enough for the Ottoman Empire, which considered Crete its top priority. When Mustafa Naili Pasha attempted to persuade the consuls of Britain, Russia, Austria, and France in Chania to convince around five hundred armed rebels who had come from Greece to return, it was claimed that among these brigands were fellow countrymen wishing to come back to Crete from the kingdom.[314] The local islanders were receiving military and ammunition support from the Hellenic Kingdom, and thus, brigands, whether originally Cretan or not, who had been recruited in mainland Greece by captains for various reasons but were suppressed or lacked an operational area, found an opportunity by joining them. In response to these helps, the impression among some of the Ottoman Greeks was that the troops, military equipment and money they knew were being sent from Greece were not enough and that Greece had no actual power.[315] No matter what, the empire had taken action and increased precautions to prevent this rebellion from growing too large and to restore order on the island after defeating Mehmed Ali Pasha. The rebellion spread over five months and was finally suppressed.

In general, even though ideological affinities and foreign policy are indisputable realities that should not be dismissed in shaping the perception of Crete, the participation of volunteers from Greece in these uprisings must be scrutinized

[314] Kevser Değirmenci, "1841 Girit İsyanı Öncesi Girit Valisi Mustafa Naili Paşa'nın Adada Aldığı Önlemler," *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 62 (2019): 51-52.
[315] Cengiz Kırlı, "Balkan Nationalisms and the Ottoman Empire: Views from the Streets of Istanbul," in *The Ottoman Empire and the Rise of Balkan Nationalisms, 1789-1832: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovos (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2006), p. 256.

within a broader contextual and temporal framework without dissociating it from their shifting function in Greece. Just as in the case of Velentzas, even before the question of whether the island would actually be annexed to the kingdom, the primary concern for these captains was how changing conditions, such as a potential restoration of Ottoman rule in Crete after Mehmed Ali, or increased foreign interventions, would affect their survival strategies. Issues such as amnesty, returning to the island, or gaining power through open negotiations were far more critical to their deeds than the island's ultimate political disposition.

5.5 Conclusion

The Ottoman Empire demonstrated the repercussions of Greek independence and its extensive association with the Tanzimât reforms in the initial interactions it engaged in with Greece. In the 1830s, a process of recognition intertwined with various agreements gradually transitioned, from the 1840s onward, into a more diplomatic and infrastructure-based framework. For the Empire, the existence of the Hellenic Kingdom was not only relevant in terms of how it would proceed with its relations with this new state but also closely linked to a process of introspection regarding how it would reconfigure its interplay with different power centers within itself, how it would position itself in European diplomacy, and what criteria it would adopt in its military and administrative mechanisms. This framework was situated within the context of how state-building, inter-imperial diplomacy and local power structures coexisted and contradicted during the early stages of the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Hellenic Kingdom. The dynamic of the relationship was fundamentally constructed around the notion of the border, encompassing the systematic organization of semi-official personnel (derbendcis) tasked with its

policing or security. This framework was further complicated by acts of defiance or "violations" that gained significance directly from the very existence of the border. The Greco-Ottoman border was established following lengthy negotiations, during which the traditional military elements of the border regions were recognized as legitimate border authorities. It was not a fixed territorial line but a dynamic and contested space of interaction, where old military hierarchies were reconstituted in new ways, and shifting administrative practices were tested and negotiated. Those who had not sufficiently profited from the shifts in power structures or were seeking alternatives reactivated their old ties as a reaction to the changing face of the region, either by attacking the other side or by joining the personnel stationed there. Although these developments certainly heightened the tension between the kingdom and the empire, they arose from a connection that was both organic to their local context and one that would have demanded significant effort to restrain.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Beginning under the rule of Ali Pasha of Ioannina and continuing through the final stages of the Greek War of Independence, the Greek captains had demonstrated shifting loyalties in their relationship with the Ottoman central authority. Following independence, as irregular military units were disbanded, these captains, much like the Albanian derbendcis, were compelled to resort to banditry or continue their roles as regional warlords along the new border, either in official or semi-official capacities.

However, by the late 1830s, they had entered into a state of rebellion and had already begun organizing cross-border raids. Their fortunes briefly improved when their patron Kolettis came to power, granting them a measure of state recognition and authority. Yet this support was short-lived, and with the decline of their political backing, they ultimately had to flee and seek refuge within the Ottoman Empire.

The refuge sought by major Greek captains such as Grivas, Kriezotis, Papakostas, Velentzas, Kontogiannis, Stratos, and Balatsos in the Ottoman Empire displayed what kind of considerations affected the emerging border regime between the Ottoman Empire and the Hellenic Kingdom in the late 1840s. The first border demarcated between the Hellenic Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire was the product of prolonged disputes and imprecise surveys, resulting in an artificial line that neither followed natural topographical contours nor reflected real cultural or social divisions, frequently cutting through villages, lands, and water sources, and separating families.[316] Far from resolving territorial questions, this boundary transformed the

[316] Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece: From the War of Independence to the Present* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 101.

region into a site of persistent contestation rather than a clear point of division.[317] Therefore, this region emerged as a politically volatile zone that drew heightened attention and more frequent state intervention, aiming to assert control.

For both states, and especially for the Ottoman Empire, the captains' practice of using the border zone as a space to regroup and regain strength whenever they found themselves in jeopardy has increasingly been viewed as a matter of growing concern. However, neither the Hellenic Kingdom had fully succeeded in suppressing the rebellious captains, many of whom held various military ranks and had begun revolting towards the end of Kolettis's prime ministry, nor had the Ottoman Empire ever truly ceased to perceive them as a genuine threat.

The Greek state had consistently made concessions through official pardons and appointments to office. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire chose to give the captains the implicit impression that they could continue to serve within the empire or, at the very least, remain under its protection. Hence, both sides actively avoided direct confrontation while simultaneously taking precautionary measures.

Despite the shifting dynamics brought about by the so-called "Bavarization" of state structures, the Kingdom lacked both a viable military alternative and local infrastructure to replace the captains, especially in central and northern Greece, leading captains' bands to be considered as the "army of the nation".[318] Likewise, the Ottoman Empire was not equipped to professionalize or redesign its border from scratch to counter the incursions or flights of these captains. Instead, it adapted the traditional derbend system to border governance, cultivated close relationships with the captains, and developed diplomatic mechanisms.

[317] Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 101.
[318] Karabelias, 274.

Such figures served as auxiliaries frequently needed by different state authorities, who relied on them to maintain state-sanctioned vigilantism on the frontiers.[319] It was demonstrated that it also applied to the Ottoman Empire, which attached critical importance to a group of Greek captains seeking refuge with their irregular forces. Their relationship derived its foundation from the tradition of armatolism.

The relationship they rebuilt after independence was, on the one hand, shaped by the existence of a border, an independent state, and surrounding European powers, while on the other hand, it advanced within a context where traces of this tradition still persisted. Captains had a regional sphere of influence that transcended borders, strengthened by their complex relationship with paramilitary forces both in and beyond Ottoman borders.

Moreover, they were in direct ties with the Greek political elite and even actively sought to integrate themselves into its ranks. In this sense, they were increasingly framed in the modern state vocabulary as "refugees" or "victims of oppression". However, they were never entirely helpless; rather, they were entrepreneurs in their own right. All of this underscores the rationale behind the Ottoman Empire's concerns about whether to reject their residence or employment near the border, grant them salaries, allow them to move beyond their designated locations, or tolerate their organization.

Placing the escape of the Greek captains in its proper historical framework indicates a multilayered formation of borderland agency and state sovereignty. The movement of refuge of these captains was not merely episodic border crossings but

[319] Alp Yenen and Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, "Age of Rouges: Transgressive Politics at the Frontiers of the Ottoman Empire," in *Age of Rouges: Rebels, Revolutionaries and Racketeers at the Frontiers of Empires*, ed. Ramazan Hakkı Öztan and Alp Yenen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021) ,p. 33.

rather symptomatic of the contentious nature of the Greco-Ottoman border, where competing claims of territoriality, identity, and political legitimacy remained mostly unresolved throughout the nineteenth century.

These liminal actors strategically leveraged interstices and opportunities created by the simultaneous transformations occurring in both states for survival and mobility, becoming active participants in their modernization processes. The captains' turn toward the Ottoman Empire during such a crisis was not simply an act of desperation or urgency but rather a deliberate, pragmatic choice. In parallel to this, the Ottoman state's reception of these figures was itself deeply meaningful, reflecting both its sovereign interests and its evolving political positioning at that time. All in all, this thesis has aimed to present, evaluate, and historicize these diverse and intersecting agendas of the actors between post-independence Greece and the Ottoman Empire.

APPENDIX A

A GLOSSARY OF GREEK PLACE NAMES AND THEIR PROXIMATE REGIONS

Aetolia-Acarnania (Akarnanya maa Etolya): A region corresponding to modern-day West Central Greece, which, during the mid-19th century, was regarded as northwestern Greece.

Agrafa: A mountainous area in central Greece (Evrytania/Karditsa), part of the Pindus range, historically split into Thessalian and Evrytanian zones.

Almyros (Ermiye): A town and municipality in Magnesia, Thessaly, Greece, positioned at the western end of the Pagasetic Gulf, southwest of Volos.

Arta (Narda): A regional unit in northwestern Greece, located in the Epirus region near the Arachthos River, close to the Ambracian Gulf, and bordering the then Ottoman-Thessaly.

Euboea (Eğriboz): The second-largest island lies in the Aegean Sea parallel to the eastern coast of mainland Greece, divided between the Central Greece and Attica regions.

Hydra (Çamlıca): A small, mountainous island in the Aegean Sea, part of the Saronic Islands group, located off the eastern coast of the Peloponnese, southwest of Athens.

Ioannina (Yanya): A fortified provincial capital in Epirus, a significant Ottoman province of Eyalet-i Yanya, strategically located on the western shore of Lake Pamvotida amidst the Pindus Mountains, included parts of present-day southern Albania and northwestern Greece.

Karpenisi (Kerbeneş): A mountainous settlement Located in Evrytania, Central Greece, nestled in the Agrapha Mountains at the southern end of the Pindus range, near the border of the newly established Kingdom of Greece.

Lamia (İzdin): A town in Ottoman Phthiotis, situated at the foot of Mount Othrys near the Maliac Gulf, overseeing the Thermopylae pass and serving as a key geographical link between central and northern Greece.

Larissa (Yenişehir): An Ottoman provincial capital situated in the Thessalian plain of central Greece, positioned along the Pineios River and bordered by the Pindus Mountains to the west and Mount Olympus to the northeast.

Patras (Balyabadra/Badra): A major port city in northwestern Peloponnese, located on the southern shore of the Gulf of Patras, across from central Greece, with

overland connections to Corinth in the east and maritime links to the Ionian Islands and Europe.

Phthiotis (Fityotida): A key border region in central Greece, located between Mount Othrys to the north and the Maliac Gulf to the south, controlling access to the historic Thermopylae pass.

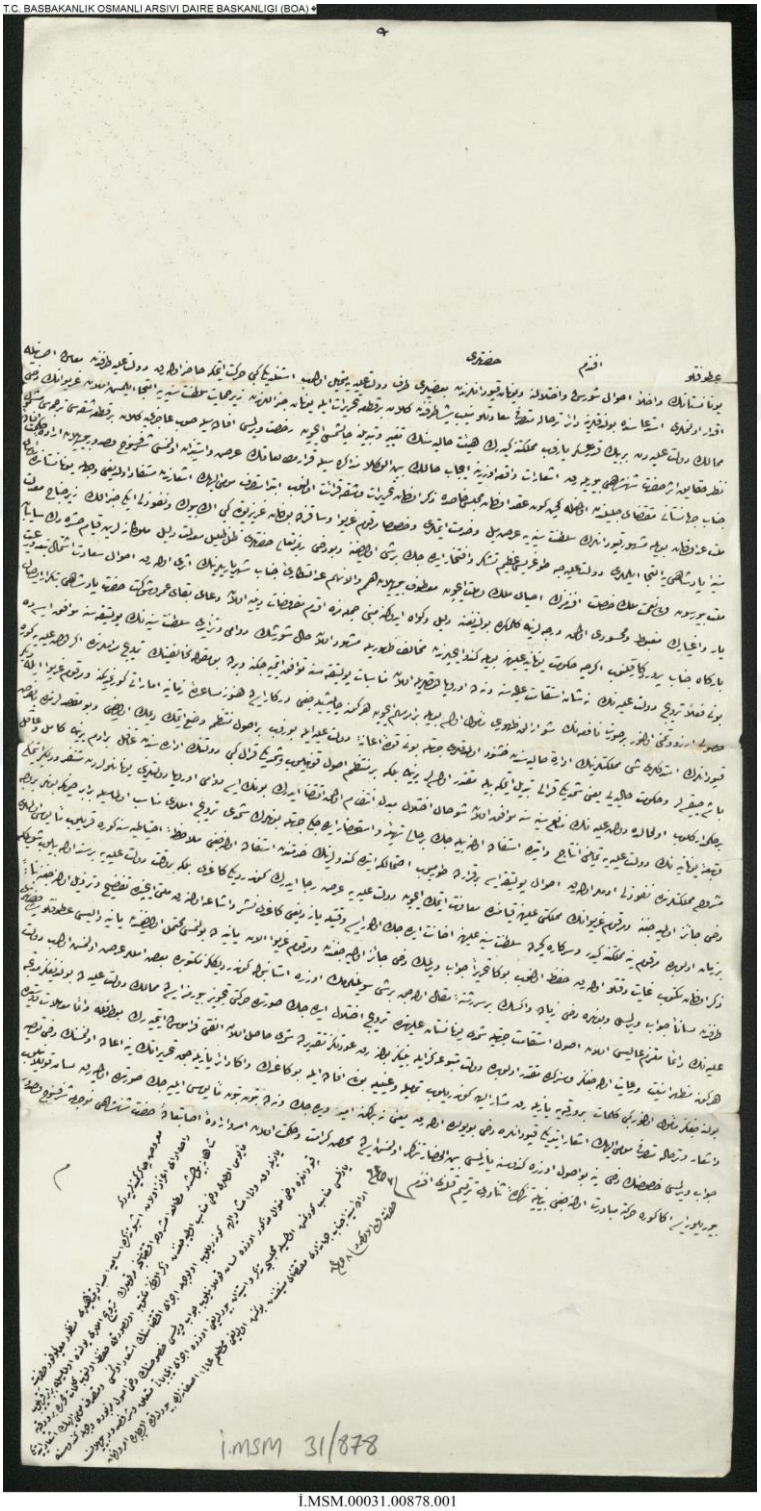
Valtos: A mountainous and partly marshy region in western Central Greece, located north of the Achelous River and east of the Ionian Sea, situated near the border between the regions of Acarnania and Epirus within the Ottoman Empire.

Vonitsa (Voniçe/Vaniçe): A small coastal town in western Central Greece, located on the southern shore of the Ambracian Gulf, near the mouth of the Louros River, within the region of Acarnania, and facing the Ionian Sea.

Ypati (Badracık): Located in Phthiotis, central Greece, it was situated in the Spercheios River valley at the foot of Mount Oeta, serving as a border town facing Ottoman-held Thessaly.

APPENDIX B

GENERAL GRIVAS'S PETITION AND THE DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE



The content of General Grivas's petition and the recommended diplomatic response. BOA, İ.MSM.31.878.1 8 Zilhicce 1263, November 17, 1847.

APPENDIX C

NIKOLAOS KRIEZOTIS



E.L.I.A photographic archive's painting copy of Nikolaos Kriezotis (1E23.051) provided by Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive, Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece.

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Sadaret Amedi Kalemi Evrakı (A.} AMD)

Sadaret Mektubi Kalemi Evrakı(A.} MKT)

Sadaret Mektubi Kalemi Mühimme Evrakı (A.} MKT.MHM)

Hellenic Parliament (Vouli ton Ellinon)

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