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### Fortresses of the Peloponnese, Ottoman Defences and the Greek Revolution (1821–1828)

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# Fortresses of the Peloponnese, Ottoman Defences and the Greek Revolution (1821–1828)

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Ottoman resources have long been noted as critical in the quest for a deeper understanding of the 1821 Greek Revolution.<sup>1</sup> It is thus welcome that, over the last two decades, a tendency to include Ottoman perspectives and sources in the historiography of the revolution has emerged.<sup>2</sup> There is much to be discovered regarding the revolution, and it is apparent that the trend towards the increased utilisation of Ottoman documents will continue to reveal new insights and spur new discussions. This article, which is focused on the fortresses of the Peloponnese during the revolution, and its utilisation of Ottoman sources offers important insights regarding the nature of Ottoman defences before and during the revolution.<sup>3</sup>

The contribution herein promotes an understanding of the Peloponnese and its fortresses within the Ottoman world in the period leading up to and throughout the revolution.<sup>4</sup> As a geographical space, the Peloponnese, or Mora (Morea), was considered an island (*cezire*), given the lack of distinction between an island or peninsula in the Ottoman Turkish language. Following its conquest by the Ottomans in the second half of the fifteenth century, the Morea became part of the Ottoman Western frontier, and a location of significant strategic importance in the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>5</sup> The Cezire-i Mora represented a large province of the empire, covering approximately 21,480 square kilometres. After Crimea, it represented the largest geographically defined province of the empire.

The Peloponnese is a mountainous peninsula, where the tallest mountain, Profitis Ilias, reaches just over 2,400 metres.<sup>6</sup> Patras (Balya Badra in Ottoman Turkish) was a key port, connecting the region with the rest of the Balkans. The most distinctive geographical feature of the Peloponnese is the Isthmus of Corinth, the sole land connection with mainland Greece until the opening of the Corinth Canal in 1893.<sup>7</sup> Partway down the isthmus, the first fortress of the peninsula, Acrocorinth, is strategically situated atop a rocky hill, poised for those reaching the Peloponnese by land. To the east, the port of Nafplio and its fortress, Palamidi, controlled the Argolic Gulf. To the south, atop a singular peak on a small island, the Monemvasia fortress sits overlooking the Myrtoan Sea and is connected to the peninsula by a narrow land bridge. Further south, on the southeastern edge of the

peninsula, sits Mani, geographically separated from the rest of the peninsula by the Taygetos Mountains, its near total lack of accessibility rendering it an “island-like” region. The proliferation of towers and tower houses across the region is a testament to its defensive character, Mani was never completely incorporated into Ottoman rule.<sup>8</sup>

The ports of Navarino, Methoni and Koroni, with their well-situated fortresses positioned on the southwestern edge of the region, provided comprehensive control and safe haven for an entire fleet. The numerous coastal towns with ports (for example, Nafplio, Corinth, Patras, Navarino and Kalamata) contrasts with the relatively few inhabited locations within the region's inland area, owing to the inhospitable terrain and lack of workable land. Only Tripolitsa (Tripoliça in Ottoman Turkish) had a high population of Muslims, being the seat of the provincial governor in 1786. While medium-sized towns such as Nafplio, Patras, Kalamata and Corinth were important commercial hubs for European trade, the fortresses of the region were critical locations for the Ottomans. Evliya Çelebi, who travelled the region between 1667 and 1670, described the Morea as a “valley of castles”, reporting no less than 16 significant castles and fortresses.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the number was far greater than Evliya's estimation, though the majority likely lay in ruins. Notably, the Ottomans maintained garrisons in only some of the 16 fortresses of the peninsula.

Kahraman Şakul, based on Antonis Hadjikyriacou's Ottoman insularity conceptualisation, treats the Ottoman Morea as a “perceived island”, exploring pre-revolutionary conditions across three overlapping contexts: Mediterranean, Ottoman and local.<sup>10</sup> Şakul posits that Peloponnesian insularity was not a necessary condition for the outbreak of the revolution, rightfully calling attention to the political and ideological transformations which the Morea had passed through and which sowed the seeds of revolution. However, this article suggests a reconsideration of Peloponnesian insularity during the revolution, and its role in Ottoman attempts to quell it. It proposes that Peloponnesian insularity and its geographic implications played a significant role in both providing the Greeks a space conducive to accomplishing a large-scale rebellion in a short period of time. This was compounded by the ability to frustrate Ottoman attempts to adequately resupply their forces, nullifying their ability to suppress uprisings, by reducing their access to the province.

What impact did the geography of the region have on the development of the uprising, and on its later suppression by Ottoman forces? As Yonca Köksal postulates in her study of the Ankara and Edirne provinces, geographic distance from the capital, as well as accessibility, may play a role in mediating substantive levels of imperial control.<sup>11</sup> Antonis Anastasopoulos also emphasises the importance of geography for empires and the conduct of warfare.<sup>12</sup> Territorial expansion aside, geography has repeatedly constituted a critical issue for empires in organising their warfare. Command and control of territory is interminably linked with the capacity to sufficiently maintain supplies for forces in the face of

geographic and meteorological challenges. The ability to transfer troops, animals, guns and equipment were key determinant factors behind the successful Ottoman long-distance campaigns.<sup>13</sup> Such challenges were among the decisive factors in determining the outcome of the conflicts between Greek and Ottoman forces during the revolution, detailed in Ottoman documents. This is made apparent in the accounts of Ottoman commanders attempting to transfer troops, supplies and equipment to the Morea and, more specifically, to Muslims within besieged fortresses. Such supply issues were themselves compounded by the environmental embeddedness of those fortresses in relation to their actual defensive capacity. The following section focuses on the fortresses of the Morea, providing an overview of garrison sizes, troop allocations and repair works undertaken immediately prior to the outbreak of the revolution.

### *The fortresses of the Peloponnese*

The fortresses of the Peloponnese have been the subject of several studies, particularly those focusing on periods prior to the Ottoman conquest of the region.<sup>14</sup> The Ottoman forts and fortresses along the borders of the Habsburg Empire in eastern Europe, and more recently along the Black Sea, have been studied in great detail, mostly owing to the works of Hungarian historians. However, the fortifications within Ottoman Empire itself continue to be overlooked. It is this area of focus which the fortifications of the Peloponnese find themselves.<sup>15</sup>

From the second half of the seventeenth century, developments in tactical strategy, increasingly larger armed forces and advances in modern weaponry presented immediate challenges for the Ottoman Empire. Robust fortifications became critically important for the maintenance of Ottoman defensive capabilities. Advancements in artillery technology drove innovation in fortress design and layouts as well. With the majority of Ottoman fortresses constructed in *trace italienne* style, in accordance with the advancements in cannon and gun technology of the time, the bulk of Ottoman defences was on par with their European counterparts.<sup>16</sup> Lower walls, towers and more stable and larger bastions designed for more complex defences meant that more men and time were required to besiege a strong fortress.

Although the Ottomans constructed their last fortresses in the early eighteenth century, notably along the frontier regions, areas such as the Peloponnese were typically outfitted with an abundance of fortresses passed on from the Venetian and Byzantine powers.<sup>17</sup> The inheritors of these fortresses opted for a strategy of alternation according to the needs of their garrison, or defence strategy, rather than wholesale renovation.<sup>18</sup> According to well-documented Ottoman archival sources, frequent fortress maintenance did occur, reflecting a continuous demand for upgrades in defensive capacity.<sup>19</sup> Such upkeep was not solely a localised undertaking, with the Ottoman centre in Istanbul often assigning engineers and architects to inspect the condition of fortresses, their equipment, supplies,

artillery situation, fortress walls and facilities within forts. Based on inspectors' reports, a *keşif defteri* (inspection registration) was prepared, which included possible costs and material needs. Also drafted were inventories of weapons, guns and cannons within fortress garrisons. Additionally, the fortress muster rolls (*yoklama defterleri*) and pay registers (*mevacib defterleri*) of the Janissaries serving in a fortress provide valuable information regarding the size of garrison and salaries.

The practical matter of fortresses was but one facet of their importance to their masters. Equally important were the symbols which these imposing structures represented, the physical manifestations of the power of the empire embedded in everyday life. They were testament to the resolve of the Ottomans to rule. Indeed, all empires have regarded castles as a state apparatus that diffused sovereignty and rule over vast and remote territories.<sup>20</sup> As such, these representations of perceived and actual power required attention to detail. Their condition had to be regularly maintained, repaired and reinforced; and their governance had to be overseen by reliable and capable commanders. Fortresses were spaces of representation of a sovereign, direct extensions of central rule, designating a sense of belonging for both insiders and outsiders. Fortresses were more than mere possessions; they were material and symbolic signs of imperial presence in places where they were erected.<sup>21</sup> As Anastasopoulos has emphasised, regardless of their distance from the core, the presence of an Ottoman garrison in the periphery was more than just a defensive infrastructure; it was a symbol of Ottoman rule.<sup>22</sup> This symbolic representation in the Ottoman sultan's mind meant that the loss of a fortress meant the public loss of his sovereignty, and was thus an explicit challenge to his power.

Based on this conceptualisation, neither the material state of the Peloponnesian fortresses nor the fact that nearly the entirety of the peninsula had been lost – including its capital town (Tripolitsa) as early as by the autumn of 1821 – dissuaded the zeal with which the sultan embarked on a campaign against the Greek rebellion. Rather, it was the symbolic representation which made it imperative to expel the Greek rebels from the peninsula and punish them at any cost, with the de facto scoreboard being the control of the physical manifestations of Ottoman authority.

Ottoman documents highlight nine Ottoman fortresses with a stable garrison prior to the revolution: Acrocorinth, Palamidi, Acronafplio (including Bourtzi), Monemvasia, Koroni, Methoni, Navarino, Rio and Patras. Fortress garrison sizes in the Morea give some indication of their defensive capabilities; they were noticeably smaller compared to those situated along the Ottoman–Habsburg borders during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Permanent garrison troops in the Morea ranged from a minimum of 85 to a maximum of 255 men, not including those troops stationed temporarily for transit or insurrection support. Table 1 shows the garrison size of each fortress from 1797 to 1819 based on various Ottoman archival documents. The available data indicates a decreasing

number of Janissaries in these fortresses prior to the 1821 revolt. With the exception of Acrocorinth and Monemvasia, which show stable troop numbers over the period, garrison sizes decreased by an average of 43 percent in the period leading up to the revolution, with an overall reduction of approximately 36 percent across the region.

**Table 1. Garrison size changes of fortresses of the Morea, 1797 to 1819**

|                            | 1797 | 1803      | 1806 | 1810      | 1819       |
|----------------------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Navarino</b>            | 180  | 95 (1804) |      | 85        | 89         |
| <b>Palamidi</b>            | 260  |           | 153  | 153       |            |
| <b>Nafplio and Bourtzi</b> | 200  |           | 110  |           | 100 (1818) |
| <b>Koroni</b>              | 207  | 159       | 153  |           |            |
| <b>Methoni</b>             | 286  |           | 188  | 228       | 164        |
| <b>Acrocorinth</b>         | 144  | 128       |      | 128       | 128        |
| <b>Rio</b>                 | 260  | 100       | 92   | 92 (1815) |            |
| <b>Patras</b>              | 150  |           | 107  | 107       | 107        |
| <b>Monemvasia</b>          | 255  |           | 254  | 254       | 254        |

Source: Prepared with information from the muster rolls of the fortresses of the Morea in Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Ottoman Archives, BOA), D.KKL.d. (Bab-ı Defter, Küçük Kale Kalemi Defterleri), 33078, 33076, 33085, 33083, 33087, 33090, 33007, 33002, 33008, 33009, 33014, 33010, 33011, 33012, 33013, dated H. 1212–1234 (1797–1819).

Why did garrison numbers drop during the first two decades of nineteenth century? Three factors are key to answering this question. First, fortress resources and troop allocations were closely connected to both their significance and strategic importance for the Ottoman Empire. Troop reductions in the Morea, and the reluctance of central authorities to allocate more funds for their upkeep and armament outlays for the region, may indicate a gradual decline in its importance within the overall Ottoman military strategy. The cost may have simply become more trouble than it was worth.<sup>23</sup> Second, troop reductions may also have been related to a trend among the Ottoman Janissary corps to opt for more lucrative activities, rather than rely on a daily income of 15–20 akçes that was rarely paid on time. However, this may have been a moot point for those stationed in the Morea, given the lack of readily available substitution activities in the region. That said,

archival sources do document that *tımar* holders were selling or abandoning their fiefs, and a number of Janissaries reportedly abandoned their posts, possibly searching out opportunities outside the Morea. Third, it is not unlikely that contagious diseases and epidemics may have played a part in troop attrition.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 2. Troop types, sizes and payments in Acrocorinth, Navarino, Monemvasia, Methoni and Patras fortresses, 1819**

|                    | Troop types   | Troop sizes | Payments (per day in akçe) |
|--------------------|---|-------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Acrocorinth</b> | Azaban-ı evvel (first azabans)                              | 15          | 300                        |
|                    | Cebeciyan (armorers)  | 15          | 300                        |
|                    | Topçuyan (artillerymen)                                     | 60          | 1,210                      |
|                    | Beşluyan <sup>25</sup> (service janissaries) and Argos Port | 38          | 820                        |
|                    | <b>Total</b>  | <b>128</b>  | <b>2,630</b>               |
| <b>Navarino</b>    | Azaban-ı evvel (first azabans)                              | 36          | 720                        |
|                    | Cebeciyan (armorers)  | 37          | 740                        |
|                    | Topçuyan (artillerymen)                                     | 16          | 320                        |
|                    | <b>Total</b>  | <b>89</b>   | <b>1,780</b>               |
| <b>Monemvasia</b>  | Müstahfazan (guardians)                                     | 99          | 1,404                      |
|                    | Azaban-ı evvel (first azabans)                              | 31          | 310                        |
|                    | Azaban-ı sani (second azabans)                              | 31          | 310                        |
|                    | Cebeciyan-ı evvel (first armorers)                          | 24          | 240                        |
|                    | Cebeciyan-ı sani (second armorers)                          | 23          | 230                        |
|                    | Topçuyan-ı evvel (first artillerymen)                       | 23          | 230                        |
|                    | Topçuyan-ı sani (second artillerymen)                       | 23          | 230                        |
|                    | <b>Total</b>  | <b>254</b>  | <b>2,954</b>               |
| <b>Methoni</b>     | Azaban-ı evvel (first azabans)                              | 60          | 1,200                      |



|               |  |            |              |
|---------------|--|------------|--------------|
|               | Azaban-ı sani (second azabans)   | 57         | 1,140        |
|               | Cebeciyan (armorers)   | 27         | 540          |
|               | Topçuyan (artillerymen)  | 20         | 400          |
|               | <b>Total</b>   | <b>164</b> | <b>3,280</b> |
| <b>Patras</b> | Müstahfızan (guardians)  | 30         | 535          |
|               | Azaban (Azabans)   | 20         | 375          |
|               | Azaban kule-i Sultan Süleyman Han<br>(azabans of tower of sultan Süleyman Han) | 13         | 270          |
|               | Cebeciyan (armorers)   | 15         | 300          |
|               | Topçuyan (artillerymen)  | 14         | 285          |
|               | Müstahfızan kule-i enderun (guardians of<br>inner tower)                       | 15         | 295          |
|               | <b>Total</b>   | <b>107</b> | <b>2,040</b> |

Source: Prepared with information from the muster rolls of the fortresses of the Morea in BOA, D.KKL.d. (Bab-ı Defter, Küçük Kale Kalemi Defterleri), 33078, 33076, 33085, 33083, 33087, 33090, 33007, 33002, 33008, 33009, 33014, 33010, 33011, 33012, 33013, dated H. 1212–1234 (1797–1819).

More specifically, we can see this trend clearly through the muster roll registries for 1819 of Methoni, Navarino, Patras, Acrocorinth and Monemvasia fortresses. Across these fortresses, the total number of garrison troops amounted to 742 men, of which 235 (31.6 percent) were replaced because the previous holders of Janissary *berats* either lost their *berats*, relocated, requested to relinquish their posts or died. Almost half of these new replacements took place in Monemvasia. Out of a total garrison size of 254 men there, 125 were recorded as replacements for those registering their desire to leave of their own accord or who had passed away.<sup>26</sup>

### *Fortress repairs prior to the revolution*

Following the Ottoman–Russian War of 1768–1774, and the Morea Rebellion of 1770, it became apparent to the Ottoman central authorities that, in order to reinforce their defensive position in the region, order would need to be re-established, and fortress infrastructure repair and renovation would be required, at any cost. The province was in

ruins, and its reconstruction would require considerable investments in both time and financial resources. As Birol Gündoğdu posits, numerous archival documents provide testimony of the decisiveness of Ottoman officers.<sup>27</sup> Archival documents, including repair registries, detail the numbers of workers employed, the duration of the reconstruction works to completion, the types of repair, the cost to the state, and the amounts paid from the imperial treasury or collected from the inhabitants of the region. Moreover, these resources provide valuable information regarding the materials used, types of workers and details of their actual activities.

Orders regarding repairs of the fortresses of the Morea, dating from 1803 to 1804, coincide closely with a possible French invasion of the peninsula. An inspector posted from the Ottoman capital reported his observations on the fortresses and approximate cost of required works. Most of the fortresses, according to these reports, required the construction of new cannon carriages, and needed repairs to several buildings inside the fortresses.<sup>28</sup> It is apparent that specific funds were allocated to pay for repair works, as local revenues were insufficient for the task at hand. However, it is difficult to estimate precisely when these repair works were completed. Identifying and employing skilled workmen, as well as the transfer of equipment and necessary materials, were time-consuming tasks. Local governors, who were responsible for funding repair works, reportedly procrastinated in negotiations with Ottoman central authorities with the aim to secure additional resources from the imperial treasury. In most cases, without completing the repair tasks in the Morea, they were assigned to other places.

The assignment of Veli Pasha, son of Ali Pasha of Ioannina, as the new governor of the Morea in 1807 led to a further deterioration in the state of the province given his conflicts with local Albanian and Muslim powerbrokers. Additionally, Veli's reliance on taxes from local inhabitants for soldier recruitment and provisioning increased the reaya's tax burden enormously, contributing to dissent among local rulers (that is, the *kocabaşı*).<sup>29</sup> Veli's plans to replace garrison troops within the fortresses with his own men was particularly unwelcome, notably among regional Turkish Muslims. Adding to the list of grievances, Veli's departure from the Morea to partake in the war against Russia (1810) provided his opponents with the opportunity to vocalise their dissent, preparing the way for his removal from the Morea.<sup>30</sup> Following Veli's dismissal, the Ottoman central authorities made several attempts to re-establish order (*nizam*) in the province. Reports from European travellers of the time underline the deplorable state of Ottoman fortresses.<sup>31</sup>

A substantive effort towards fortress repair and reinforcement, in terms of guns and ammunition, was undertaken only during the governorship of Ahmed Şakir Pasha (1814–1818).<sup>32</sup> Just two years before the outbreak of the 1821 Revolution, Şakir Pasha had documented the general state of the fortresses and Ottoman garrisons in the Morea. According to his accounts, both infrastructure and troops themselves, inclusive of their

commanding officers, were in dire need of “restoration”; the commander of Nafplio (Palamidi), Ragip Pasha, was the first to be dismissed, following numerous local criticisms of his command,<sup>33</sup> which included that he had, in the midst of a shortage of quarters for troops, renovated the fortress to enlarge his own residence. Adding insult to injury, the funding of the renovations proceeded with local funds earmarked for the construction of a school and the repair of a mosque. As if such transgressions were not enough, Ragip Pasha also faced accusations of profiting from the sale of fortress food rations to merchants. Şakir Pasha also suggested replacement of the commanders of the Methoni and Koroni fortresses on the grounds of misconduct and engaging in extortion, and plundering passing foreign merchant ships.<sup>34</sup>

Şakir Pasha also documented that the majority of garrison troops resided, against protocol, outside their respective fortresses and, according to the records, lacked the requisite artillery training. Remedial actions were taken, with the consultation of a provincial council, towards the resettlement of troops within fortress walls and expedited artillery training. The following year, new outlays for cannons and armaments arrived from the Porte’s imperial armoury for the Morean fortresses. Additionally, *sipahi* Ibrahim was reportedly assigned as inspector to report on the state of the ammunition and ongoing repair works.<sup>35</sup> Taken together, these documents demonstrate that, contrary to abandoning their defensive positions in the region, the central authorities had turned their focus to the repair and renovation of those positions, including the reestablishment of order and local political linkages, only a few years prior to the revolution. It would not, however, be sufficient to prevent the outbreak and spread of the Greek uprising. The impact of a variety of socioeconomic conditions, in conjunction with key developments of the time, had taken its toll and set the wheels of revolution in motion.

### *The revolution and the fortresses of the Peloponnese*

Following the outbreak of the uprising across the Peloponnese by late March 1821, Muslims from the towns and surrounding villages moved to the nearest fortresses, abandoning their belongings and lands. Although, their exact numbers are unknown, we can assume that considerably large numbers of the peninsula’s Muslim population managed to take refuge within the major fortresses as well as with the Ottoman garrison of Nafplio, Tripolitsa, Corinth, Patras, Navarino, Methoni and Koroni. However, it is likely that many Muslims from other areas became targets for the rebelling Greeks and died before they could take refuge in the fortresses.<sup>36</sup> Those fortunate to find refuge escaped direct conflict with the rebels, but soon faced other dilemmas (for example, insufficient troop sizes or equipment to organise counter-attacks and defence, as well as famine).

## Nafplio, Acrocorinth and Patras

A significant source describing the development of the Greek rebellion in the Morea, and the situation of the Muslim population in the region, the history of Mir Yusuf Bey marks a unique window into the events of the day from an Ottoman perspective. Upon learning of the rebellion, and as a member of the Ottoman ruling elite in Nafplio, Mir Yusuf Bey took refuge at Nafplio fortress (Palamidi) with local Muslims. At the end of 1822, when the Nafplio fortress surrendered to the Greeks, Yusuf Bey was among those who managed to cross the Aegean Sea to Izmir.<sup>37</sup> Yusuf Bey devoted a lengthy section of his narration to the loss of Tripolitsa. It is extremely likely that his accounts were combined with what he had heard during his stay in the castle with information gained during his stay in Istanbul and Izmir.<sup>38</sup>

The most significant section regarding the time spent in the Nafplio fortress describes the negotiations with the Greek rebels regarding the delivery and evacuation of the fortress. Yusuf Bey's account of these discussions suggests that similar processes may have been followed in other fortresses. Unfortunately, no comparable sources to that of Yusuf Bey's memoirs exist for other castles. His memoirs do make mention of events during the arrival of Dramali Mustafa Pasha, whose short-lived campaign provided some belated and ultimately abortive hope, especially for those in the Nafplio fortresses. Having retaken numerous defensive positions, including Argos and Corinth, Dramali's army was defeated in the mountain pass of Dervenakia, between Argos and Corinth, after a month in the Peloponnese.<sup>39</sup> It was the first large-scale Ottoman campaign organised to quell the uprising in the Peloponnese. Yusuf Bey's account does not provide much information about those who took refuge in the castle, mentioning only the hunger and misery of limited supplies and the perpetual hope of assistance. His account also fails to detail the outcome for the Nafplio fortress after the defeat and retreat of Dramali's army.

By the end of 1822, in less than two years, the Greek revolt had spread across almost the entire peninsula. The Ottoman armies had been largely defeated and retreated to the fortresses on the northwest line of the peninsula. The capital town, Tripolitsa, with the largest Muslim population and garrison, fell to the Greeks in late September 1821. The town's geographic position, situated in the middle of the peninsula and lacking access to the sea, made material and troop resupplies all but impossible. In addition to difficulties in recruiting sufficient soldiers, the Ottoman forces' inability to suppress the rebellion was intimately, and unfortunately, intertwined with the restrictive geography of the peninsula. Ottoman historian Ahmed Cevdet Pasha highlights the geographical challenges of the peninsula as among the chief reasons for the Ottoman forces' failure to quell the rebellion. Cevdet suggests that the Morea was the ideal place for the Greeks to begin their rebellion, specifically because of the mountainous terrain and narrow passes, which restricted cavalry movements as well as the arrival of large troop deployments.<sup>40</sup> As the Isthmus deterred

troop movements, the only viable strategy for engagement remained approach from the sea. However, Ottoman ships were unable to win out against Greek rebel ships.

Another important factor regards the critical issue of food supplies for both troops entering the peninsula and those taking refuge within fortresses. Yusuf (Muhlis) Pasha from Serres (Serez), assigned as commander of Patras and Rio and responsible for supplies during the revolution, was undoubtedly one of the most essential figures in this regard. From an influential and financially powerful family, Yusuf Pasha was an ideal choice for such a critical mission, with Patras and Rio the main points of supply and troop distribution to the Peloponnese. Yusuf Pasha remained in continuous communication with the Ottoman centre regarding the challenges faced by Ottoman soldiers and Muslim civilians within the fortresses, notably the lack of adequate provisions.<sup>41</sup> In order to meet the troop supply needs, Yusuf Pasha purchased food supplies from British and Austrian merchant ships in Zakynthos using bills of exchange, which merchants could then redeem from the Ottoman centre in Istanbul. In his correspondence with the central authority, the pasha often mentioned difficulties in obtaining supplies from the merchants even after agreeing to pay five times their normal price.<sup>42</sup>

Yusuf Pasha preferred to reside at the Rio fortress instead of Patras, drawing criticism from other pashas (especially Hurşid Pasha), owing to the lack of sufficient forces to ensure his protection.<sup>43</sup> According to his account, the soldiers left by the governor of the Morea (Mehmed Pasha, who later became Kapudan Pasha following the successful defence of Patras against a rebel siege) amounted to 1,055 soldiers and 156 artillerymen. However, as most were injured or infirmed, the effective number of soldiers amounted to a mere 250.<sup>44</sup> Such a meagre force, by Yusuf Pasha's estimation, justified his tenure at Rio and the administration of the matters of other defensive positions from there. While it is evident from his letters that he spent a substantial amount of time on the matter, he was unable to deliver sufficient supplies to the Ottoman army in Corinth or to the Muslim refugees at Nafplio castle. As a result, the majority of the soldiers at Corinth moved towards Patras under the leadership of Ali and Hasan Pasha.<sup>45</sup> About 2,000 of these soldiers were injured or became infirm.<sup>46</sup> Those at the Nafplio fortress succumbed to their situation and surrendered.<sup>47</sup> Muslim civilians from Gastouni and Lalas were also among those who gathered at Patras and Rio castles. After the arrival of Mehmed Reşid Pasha's troops in Patras, following his unsuccessful siege of Messolongi, Yusuf Pasha found himself in even more dire straits as regards the capacity to provide for an increase of thousands of refugees and troops.<sup>48</sup> In a letter dated 1825, he describes a situation of incessant and volatile complaints and insults directed towards him from the gathered soldiers, the duress of which led to his own illness and resultant request for a transfer.<sup>49</sup> He was relieved of his position upon the arrival of Ibrahim Pasha in the spring of 1825.

The position of the Acrocorinth fortress was crucial, especially for the control of the Isthmus, overlooking as it did the only viable land access to the region. However, following Dramali's defeat, the majority of the forces that returned to Acrocorinth were wounded and

extremely ill, with many succumbing to their conditions, which were exacerbated by the inclement weather. Under the threat of mutiny, the commanders decided to march towards Rio, with a group of soldiers whose numbers are reported to have amounted to around 2,000 men.<sup>50</sup> However, they were soon attacked by the Greeks in a mountain pass near Akrata before reaching the port. Submitting to the terms of the Greeks, the retreating force was relieved of their arms and then allowed to proceed to Rio. Soon after, Abdullah (Kamil) Ağa – who had remained in Acrocorinth with a number of captains, some hundreds of soldiers, and three to four months of provisions – was attacked by the Greeks and forced to surrender.<sup>51</sup> Only around 600 people, mainly women and children, arrived in Thessaloniki under the command of Hasan Ağa with the help of a Russian ship.<sup>52</sup> After the capitulation of Acrocorinth to the Greeks, the ability of the Ottoman forces to access the region via land was no longer an option. Their greatest hope was now the forces of Mustafa Pasha (from Shkoder), which were first sent to Messolongi as a priority.

### Navarino, Methoni and Koroni fortresses

Hasan Pasha, the commander of the Methoni fortress, was one of the rare Ottoman officers who managed to remain in the same position for some nine years, from the beginning of the rebellion until the handover of the fortress to French troops in 1828. The fortress was well maintained compared to other castles, with a settled population and an Ottoman garrison within it. These factors meant that this defensive position was the most difficult for the Greek forces to conquer. The network of relationships cultivated by the pasha enabled him to meet the needs of the fortress more easily than his regional counterparts.

Hasan Pasha also worked on strengthening the castle in the early days of the rebellion. Although he reported the desertion of (Greek) builders and blacksmiths at the outset of the rebellion, these were soon replaced. Reportedly, Sultan Mahmud II, confronted with a continuous flow of distressing news concerning the defence of the Morea, halted his expressions of sorrow when he received word of Hasan Pasha's successful defence of the Methoni fortress against rebel attacks. In recognition of this remarkable achievement, the sultan graciously bestowed upon Hasan Pasha a prestigious fur garment and a substantial sum of 25,000 gurus.<sup>53</sup>

It seems that the situation was little different in the neighbouring Koroni fortress. Although Hasan Pasha was the commander of both castles, he administered matters via his forces from his base at Methoni. Hasan Pasha's relations with Koroni fell into disarray following the seizure of his reward by his own forces at Koroni. The reward had been sent by the central authorities to Methoni and mistakenly anchored in front of the Koroni fortress. A group of people from Koroni received it and distributed it among themselves. Learning of this, the pasha sent his representative to retrieve his money only to be rebuffed by those at

Koroni. The altercation was likely the beginning of the animosity between both fortresses.<sup>54</sup>

As regards the Navarino fortresses, Ottoman documents are largely silent on the issue, owing to the fact that the fortress was taken by the Greeks in the earliest days of the uprising. There are only a few mentions of Navarino in Hasan Pasha's letters to the Ottoman capital, detailing his expedition to Mani to rescue Muslim civilians captured during the fall of the Navarino fortress. Accordingly, the pasha hired a European merchant boat to save the civilians, transporting 150 people (mostly women and children) to the Methoni fortress.<sup>55</sup>

It seems that the inhabitants of Methoni and Koroni castles had less trouble regarding provisions and ammunition than other fortresses. Thanks to their geographic location and proximity to the Ionian islands, they often stopped merchant ships passing within range of their fortresses to purchase supplies, signing bills of exchange to be paid in Istanbul. This strategy, on account of the inflated prices reaching the Porte, prompted the authorities to investigate the nature of these high costs. In 1824, the Methoni and Koroni castles bought wheat, flour, olive oil, rice, rusks and similar supplies, and also a number of captured Muslims, from Austrian and British merchant ships. The goods bought by the Koroni fortress corresponded to 496,295.5 guruş, Methoni registered 157,491 guruş. When called on by the Ottoman central authorities to explain the exorbitant costs, Hasan Pasha claimed that the people at the Koroni fortress colluded with merchants to drive up prices for their own gain.<sup>56</sup> Existing documentation on this subject in the Ottoman archives indicates that the expenditure of the Methoni and Koroni fortresses for their supplies and ammunition came under the close scrutiny of the Ottoman Porte, which demanded that Hasan Pasha prepare and deliver a list of expenditure for nine years when his work was complete.<sup>57</sup>

As the besieged fortresses could not be reached by land, all hopes of assistance relied on sea approaches. Herewith, the account of Ottoman navy commander Hüsrev Pasha proves informative.<sup>58</sup> In December 1822, Hüsrev was appointed to the Ottoman Navy. After five months' preparation, he sailed to the Eastern Mediterranean with 50 ships to provide supplies and support to the Morean fortresses.<sup>59</sup> After meeting the needs of Methoni and Koroni castles, the Ottoman fleet arrived in Patras by mid-June 1823. From there, the pasha reported his observations about the Morea. After witnessing the situation, he understood the difficulty of providing assistance to Acrocorinth given Greek control of the Isthmus (*bu taraflara gelmiş ve bu Gördes'in keyfiyetini anlamış oldum*). In his opinion, the Gulf of Lepanto was a key location, from where it was possible to reach the coasts of both Thiva and Livadia, as well as the Corinth and Morea coasts. Hüsrev Pasha, though criticised for his decision, anchored the Ottoman navy in the Gulf of Corinth and spent the summer of 1823 there.<sup>60</sup> In his estimation, the castles in this area – at Patras, Rio and Lepanto – were the key to the Morea: "*Balya Padra ve Kastel ve İnebahtı kaleleri Mora ceziresinin kapusu ve kulf-i metnidir.*"<sup>61</sup> In his letters, he advised that more attention should be paid to these fortresses, fearing otherwise that the Ottomans would lose the Morea completely.<sup>62</sup>

After returning to Constantinople by the autumn of 1823, Hüsrev Pasha met with the ministers of the *Meclis-i Vala* (Supreme Council) to discuss the “*Mora ahvalini*” (situation of Morea). After his return, the situation at the fortresses had worsened from the lack of supplies. However, he argued that sufficient supplies existed, especially in Methoni and Koroni, and that the fortresses were sufficiently able to repel 30,000 people. As such, he implied that Methoni and Koroni’s frequent letters to the Porte requesting additional supplies were unjustified. Regarding the soldiers who had left Acrocorinth, he argued it was “very improper to have such a large number of soldiers locked inside the fortress and fortunately they have left”. For him, Messolongi was more important. If the rebels were not stopped there, the Ottomans would lose their military forces in Patras, Lepanto and Rio.<sup>63</sup>

In 1824, the situation in the Morea stabilised as Ottoman forces consolidated into four fortresses of the peninsula (Methoni, Koroni, Rio and Patras). Mehmed Reşid Pasha, now the commander of the armies of Rumelia, concentrated his forces at Messolongi. Ibrahim Pasha and his Egyptian army were now the sole hope for ending the rebellion. By January 1825, Ibrahim Pasha sailed towards the Peloponnese; however his navy was caught in a storm en route and dispersed, delaying his arrival at the Port of Methoni with 25 ships at the end of February 1825. The situation began to turn around with the arrival of Ibrahim Pasha in the Peloponnese. The pasha’s soldiers faced little resistance across the region, taking control of the Navarino and Kalamata fortresses in the following months, thus securing Methoni and Koroni from possible Greek attacks.<sup>64</sup> His regular army, consisting largely of Arab peasant recruits, marched towards Tripolitsa, engaged in a scorched earth campaign, and routed the Greek forces. However, constrained by the limitations of their supply lines Ibrahim Pasha’s forces were unable to remain inland. Additionally, contagious diseases began to take their toll on his forces. Finally, the pasha retreated to Kalamata and participated in the Messolongi campaign, and thereafter returned to his base at Navarino. He and his forces remained until late August 1828, when the French military expedition began the evacuation of the remaining Ottomans in the Peloponnese.

It was after the destruction of the combined Ottoman–Egyptian navy at Navarino in 1827 that Ibrahim Pasha began to draw down his forces and retreat from the Peloponnese. His retreat was made all the more challenging under the duress of grossly insufficient provisions and contagious disease among his troops. The pasha surrendered the Navarino fortresses to French forces, on condition of his army’s safe return to Egypt. In less than a month, all remaining fortresses had been transferred to the French without major conflict.<sup>65</sup> Following the evacuation of the fortresses, Ottoman soldiers and Muslim civilians were transferred, by and large, to Izmir. The sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire in the Morea was thus de facto ended with the evacuation of the last Ottoman fortresses. Legally, it would take the 1832 Treaty of Constantinople to definitively determine the Ottoman–Greek border. Of the region’s Muslim population, only a few thousand managed to flee to the



Anatolian shore in the first two years of the uprising. Following the handover of the fortresses to French forces, around a thousand people were also transported to Izmir. According to the available sources, the majority of these refugees were women with children.

## Conclusion

The Ottoman fortresses of the Morea were inadequately equipped prior to the outbreak of the Greek revolt. Though Ottoman forces had, two years before the uprising, managed to repair and reinforce some of the fortresses, their garrisons lacked the experienced forces to conduct a defensive or offensive strategy to turn the direction of the uprising. The Greeks, on the other hand, were unable to make use of captured artillery and armaments in order to take over Ottoman fortifications. Specifically, they failed to bring artillery within striking distance of the Ottoman positions. Moreover, the Greeks lacked a regular army prior to arrival of Dimitris Ypsilantis in the Peloponnese (June 1821). This was despite the existence of bands of irregular troops and volunteers organised around Greek *armatole* captains; previously assigned as Ottoman *derbend* forces, they were also known as *armotoliki*.<sup>66</sup> While most of these men were sufficiently armed to engage in battle, they were ineffective in the face of the Ottoman cavalry. To their advantage, the Greeks had first-hand knowledge of the Peloponnesian geography, enabling them to establish a much better strategy. Dividing supply routes and blocking the Isthmus of Corinth prevented the Ottoman armies from accessing the peninsula by land. This strategy, arguably, proved more effective than a strategy based on artillery power. Corroborating other well-documented contemporary sources, most of the besieged fortresses of the Peloponnese fell to the Greek forces due to the problems of inadequate supplies. As a result, Muslims who took refuge in the fortresses, together with the Ottoman garrison, arrived on the brink of starvation and fatigue. These factors contributed to the negotiations with the Greeks for their surrender, as in the cases of Monemvasia, Nafplio (Palamidi), Navarino, Tripolitsa and Acrocorinth, all of which had capitulated to the Greeks by early 1823.

This article has explored the conditions of the fortresses of the Peloponnese and Ottoman garrisons situated in them before the Greek Revolution, both as centres of the Ottoman defence against the rebels, and as places of shelter for Muslim civilians of the region. It has demonstrated that the Ottoman fortresses in the Peloponnese, together with their garrisons, were in a state of decay prior to the outbreak of the revolution. While efforts were made to repair and reinforce them before the uprising, the lack of skilled forces, equipment and supplies hampered Ottoman defensive capabilities against the Greek rebels. It provides a general state of affairs of the peninsula prior to the uprising, brought to the fore by earlier studies that addressed the conflicts between various local powerbrokers, and their growing pressure on the inhabitants of the region.

- <sup>1</sup> Christos Loukos, “Η Επανάσταση του 1821: Από κυρίαρχο αντικείμενο έρευνας και διδασκαλίας, στην υποβάθμιση και σιωπή” [The 1821 Revolution of 1821: From a dominant subject of research and teaching to degradation and silence], in *Ιστοριογραφία της νεότερης και σύγχρονης Ελλάδας 1833–2002*, vol. 1, ed. Paschalis Kitromilides and Triantafillos Sklavenitis (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2004), 579–93.
- <sup>2</sup> It is worth mentioning some of these recent studies: H. Şükrü Ilicak, “A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821–1826” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2011); Y. Hakan Erdem, “Do Not Think of the Greeks as Agricultural Laborers’: Ottoman Responses to the Greek War of Independence,” in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, ed. Faruk Birttek and Thalia Dragonas (London: Routledge, 2005), 67–84; Erdem, “The Greek Revolt and the End of the Old Ottoman Order,” in *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event*, ed. Petros Pizaniias (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2011), 281–88.
- <sup>3</sup> For a recent work discussing the situation at the fortress of Patras during the first years of the revolution, the period when Sirozlu Yusuf Pasha was its commander, see Eirini Kalogeropoulou, “Ζητήματα ανεφοδιασμού και πειθαρχίας στο πολιορκούμενο φρούριο της Πάτρας (1821–1825): Η μαρτυρία του στρατιωτικού διοικητή Γιουσούφ Μουχλίζ Πασά” [Issues of supply and discipline in the besieged fortress of Patras (1821–1825): The testimony of the military commander Yusuf Muhlis Pasha], in *Όψεις της Επανάστασης του 1821* [Aspects of the 1821 Revolution], ed. Dimitris Dimitropoulos (Athens: Society for the Study of Modern Hellenism–Mnimon, 2018), 45–58.
- <sup>4</sup> The social, political and economic conditions of the Morea during the second period of Ottoman rule, and thus the pre-revolutionary context, have been largely studied by the Greek scholars. For instance: Anastasia Kyrkini-Koutoula, *Η οθωμανική διοίκηση στην Ελλάδα: Η περίπτωση της Πελοποννήσου (1715–1821)* [The Ottoman administration in Greece: The case of the Peloponnese (1715–1821)] (Athens: Arsenidis, 1996); John Alexander, *Brigandage and Public Order in the Morea, 1685–1806* (Athens: s.n., 1985); Vassilis Kremmydas, *Το εμπόριο της Πελοποννήσου στο 18ο αιώνα (1715–1792): Με βάση τα γαλλικά αρχεία* [The trade of the Peloponnese in the 18th century (1715–1792): Based on French records] (Athens: s.n., 1972); Michail Sakellariou, *Η Πελοπόννησος κατά την δεύτεραν Τουρκοκρατίαν (1715–1821)* [The Peloponnese during the second period of Turkish rule (1715–1821)] (Athens: Irodotos, 2012).
- <sup>5</sup> In the Ottoman archival documents, the Peloponnese appears mostly as *cezire-i Mora* or *Mora ceziresi*. For a discussion on the strategic location of the Morea, see Birol Gündoğdu, “Ottoman Constructions of Morea Rebellion, 1770s: A Comprehensive Study for Attitudes to the Greek Uprising” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2012).
- <sup>6</sup> There are seven medium-scale high mountains. Taygetus is the highest (2,400m), followed by Kyllini (Ziria) (2,376m), Aroania (2,355m), Erymanthos (2,224m), Panachaiko (Vodias) (1,926m), Mainalo (1,981m) and Parnonas (Malevos) (1,935m).
- <sup>7</sup> The isthmus is the narrowest part of the land connecting the peninsula; the construction of the canal meant it became an island in practice.
- <sup>8</sup> For an outstanding study on Mani, see Rebecca M. Seifried, “Community Organization and Imperial Expansion in a Rural Landscape: The Mani Peninsula (AD 1000–1821)” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2016), <https://hdl.handle.net/10027/21274>.
- <sup>9</sup> Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı and Robert Dankoff, eds., *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. 8 (Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, 2003).
- <sup>10</sup> Antonis Hadjikyriacou, “Society and Economy on an Ottoman Island: Cyprus in the Eighteenth Century” (PhD diss., SOAS, University of London, 2011); Kahraman Şakul, “The Ottoman Peloponnese before the Greek Revolution: ‘A Republic of Ayan, Hakim, and Kocabaşı’ in ‘the Sea of Humans and Valley of Castles’,” in “Insularity in the Ottoman World,” ed. Antonis Hadjikyriacou, special issue, *Princeton Papers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 18 (2017): 122.

- <sup>11</sup> Yonca Köksal, *The Ottoman Empire in the Tanzimat Era: Perspectives from Ankara and Edirne* (London: Routledge, 2019).
- <sup>12</sup> Antonis Anastasopoulos, "Imperial Geography and War: The Ottoman Case," in *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space*, ed. Sahar Bazzaz, Yota Batsaki and Dimiter Angelov (Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University, 2013), 111–32.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> The fortresses of the Peloponnese were first studied in detail by Kevin Andrews, based on his own visits and plans and maps prepared by Venice during their second conquest. Although it is very comprehensive research into distinguishing the construction period of the fortresses, and what repairs and additions they underwent, his study does not provide any information about the social, economic and political role of the fortresses. Andrews also had a tendency to neglect any Ottoman contribution to these castles. This means that other works about the fortress in Peloponnese referring to Andrews repeat that the Ottoman work was insignificant and careless. Kevin Andrews, *Castles of the Morea* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1953).
- <sup>15</sup> In their study Zarinebaf, Bennet and Davis focus on Navarino during the Ottoman period, elaborating both sources from Venetian and Ottoman archives. Fariba Zarinebaf, John Bennet and Jack L. Davis, eds., *An Historical and Economic Geography of Ottoman Greece: The Southwestern Morea in the 18th Century* (Athens: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2005). Nonetheless, Machiel Kiel has made the biggest contribution regarding the Ottoman past of the province with his articles on Methoni, Koroni, Corinth, Patras, Tripolitsa, Monemvasia and his article on Morea (with John Alexander) in the *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*.
- <sup>16</sup> Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- <sup>17</sup> Since the primary focus of this article is to investigate defensive aspects of Ottoman fortresses in the Morea, aspects pertaining to their construction process, architectural style, etc., are not included, unless they are related to their maintenance during the Ottoman period. Suffice it to say that most of the fortresses in the Peloponnese were constructed during the Byzantine period, that is, Acrocorinth, Argos, Kyparissia, Nafplio, Kalamata, Monemvasia and Patras. The Crusaders often used existing castles during their rule, but they built new ones, such as Veligosti, Geraki, Kalavryta, Karytaina, the lower peaks of Corinth, Mistra, Chlemoutsi, Old Navarino and Lefktra. Also the Ottomans built the fortress of New Navarino and Rio following their conquest of Peloponnese in second half of the fifteenth century. David Nicolle, *Crusader Castles in Cyprus, Greece and the Aegean, 1191–1571* (Oxford: Osprey, 2007), 10–11.
- <sup>18</sup> They also constructed either a mosque or a masjid which was generally named after the town's conqueror. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri, *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Osmanlı Kaleleri* (İstanbul: Osmanlı Arşiv Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, Yayın, 2016).
- <sup>19</sup> As it concerns the Peloponnese, major repair works were undertaken following their conquest the region from Venetians in 1715, and after the Greek Rebellion of 1770. There were fortress repairs, as a result of damage by earthquakes or lightning. For instance, the earthquake that took place on 10 February 1744 destroyed the fortress walls and some buildings in Corinth Castle. Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Ottoman Archives, BOA), C.DH, 69-3406.
- <sup>20</sup> Mark L. Stein, *Guarding the Frontier: Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007).
- <sup>21</sup> Palmira Brummet, "The Fortress: Defining and Mapping the Ottoman Frontier in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 31–55.
- <sup>22</sup> Anastasopoulos, "Imperial Geography and War."
- <sup>23</sup> Mark Stein observed the same trend in his study of the frontier forts of Kanije and Uyvar in the late seventeenth century. Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 71–72.

- <sup>24</sup> The reduction of troops in the Ottoman Empire during the late eighteenth century was not limited to the Peloponnese region alone; similar circumstances unfolded in various parts of the empire. This phenomenon can be attributed to a broader decline of the Janissary troops, which held crucial positions within the garrisons of the Ottoman fortresses. The Janissaries faced prolonged periods without receiving their salaries, which prompted many of them to abandon their posts. For instance, for similar situation in the fortress of Niš, see Ömer Gezer, "Pasarofça Antlaşması'ndan Sonra Habsburg Sınırında Osmanlı Askerî Gücü: Niş Kalesi ve Garnizonu Örneği," in *Harp ve Sulh 300: Yılında Pasarofça Antlaşması Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, ed. Gültekin Yıldız (Istanbul: Milli Savunma University Publishing, 2019), 182. For a detailed study of the Janissaries and their unpaid salaries, see Abdulkasim Gül, "18. Yüzyılda Yeniçeri Teşkilatı" (PhD diss., Atatürk University, 2020), 637–45, 691. For the situation of the garrison troops in the Navarino fortress during the Ottoman–Russian War of 1768–1774, see Göktürk Altındış, "1768–1774 Osmanlı Rus Harbinde Navarin Kalesi" (MA diss., Hacettepe University, 2021), 44–46.
- <sup>25</sup> A *besluyan* is a type of a Janissary group with daily allowance of 5 akçes (aspers), employed in accessory services of the army. James Redhouse, *Turkish/Ottoman–English Dictionary* (Istanbul: Sev, 1999), 163.
- <sup>26</sup> BOA, D.KKL.d, 33007 (1819).
- <sup>27</sup> Gündoğdu, "Ottoman Constructions of Morea Rebellion," 292–94.
- <sup>28</sup> BOA, C.AS, 293-12169, H. 23.11.1219 (20 February 1805).
- <sup>29</sup> During the governorship of Veli, the conflict of interests among Muslim and non-Muslim notables of the province came to the surface. Veli had formed alliances with prominent Greek kocabaşıs and tercüman, as most of them were anxious about loosing their privileges after the new governor's arrival. Dimitris Stamatopoulos, "Κομματικές φατρίες στην προεπαναστατική Πελοπόννησο (1807–1816): Ο ρόλος των 'Τουρκαλβανών' του Λάλα ως παράγοντας πολιτικής διαφοροποίησης" [Party factions in the pre-revolutionary Peloponnese (1807–1816): The Role of the Muslim Albanians of Lalas as a factor of political differentiation], *Istor* 10 (1997): 185–233.
- <sup>30</sup> Inhabitants of the region, both Muslims and non-Muslims along with local notables, dispatched petitions and sent their representatives to Istanbul to voice their grievances against the pasha, requesting for his expulsion from the region.
- <sup>31</sup> William Martin Leake, in the beginning of nineteenth century, depicted the fortresses as in semi-ruinous state, W.M. Leake, *Travels in the Morea* (London: J. Murray, 1830), 1:400. In addition, Gell describes general state of New Navarino as a mass of ruins in 1810. William Gell, *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1823), 19–20.
- <sup>32</sup> For the repair activities of the fortresses of Patras, Rio, Methoni, Koroni, Navarino and Monemvasia, see BOA, C.AS, 963-41922, H. 03.11.1234 (24 August 1819); BOA, HAT, 594/29122, H. 29.12.1233 (18 October 1818). For the renovations of Lepanto (İnebahtı) and Rio, see BOA, D.BŞM.d. 41822, H. 21.06.1231 (19 May 1816). For the repairs of Nafplio, Palamidi, Bourtsi (Kastel-i Bahri), see BOA, HAT, 638/31431, H. 25.07.1232 (10 June 1817). Şakir Pasha's activities towards the elimination of a faction led by the famous kocabaşı I. Deligiannis are well-documented in Stamatopoulos, "Κομματικές φατρίες στην προεπαναστατική Πελοπόννησο," 224–25.
- <sup>33</sup> BOA, HAT, 765/36092, H. 1231 (1816).
- <sup>34</sup> BOA, HAT, 1154/45791, H. 1232 (1817).
- <sup>35</sup> BOA, HAT, 574/24162, H. 1232 (1817); BOA, HAT, 935/40472, H. 1236 (1821).
- <sup>36</sup> BOA, HAT, 917-39966-B, H. 07.06.1238 (19 February 1823).
- <sup>37</sup> Sophia Laiou and Marinos Sariyannis, *Οθωμανικές αφηγήσεις για την Ελληνική Επανάσταση από τον Γιουσούφ Μπέη στον Αχμέτ Τζεβνέτ Πασά* [Ottoman narratives of the Greek Revolution from Yusuf Bey to

Ahmed Cevdet Pasha (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2019), 51; Ahmet Aydın, “Mir Yusuf Tarihi (Metin ve Tahlil)” (MA diss., Marmara University, 2002).

<sup>38</sup> It also gives the impression that he based his narrative on Esad Tarihi, especially the events at the beginning of the rebellion and the Tripolitsa case.

<sup>39</sup> Although different sources mention that Dramali had an army of 30,000, an Ottoman archival document numbers of his army at 18,000.

<sup>40</sup> Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, *Tarihi Cevdet* (Istanbul: Üçdal, 1966), 11:133.

<sup>41</sup> Kalogeropoulou, “Ζητήματα ανεφοδιασμού,” 45–46.

<sup>42</sup> BOA, HAT, 915-39917; BOA, HAT, 910-39838, H. 21.01.1238 (8 October 1822).

<sup>43</sup> BOA, HAT, 913-39900, H. 19.01.1238 (5 October 1822); BOA, HAT, 915-39917, H. 25.11.1237 (13 August 1822).

<sup>44</sup> BOA, HAT, 914-39907, H. 19.01.1238 (5 October 1822); BOA, HAT, 915-39917, H. 07.12.1237 (25 August 1822).

<sup>45</sup> BOA, HAT, 937-40533, H. 01.07.1238 (14 March 1823).

<sup>46</sup> BOA, HAT, 917-29966, H. 17.05.1238 (30 January 1823).

<sup>47</sup> Yusuf Pasha had informed the Porte that the Nafplio fortress surrendered to the Greeks: BOA, HAT, 917-39966, H. 07.06.1238 (19 February 1823).

<sup>48</sup> BOA, HAT, 938-40521, H. 29.08.1238 (11 May 1823).

<sup>49</sup> BOA, HAT, 938-39492, H. 27.01.1241 (11 September 1825).

<sup>50</sup> BOA, HAT, 917-39966, H. 07.06.1238 (19 February 1823); BOA, HAT, 917-39966, H. 07.06.1238 (19 February 1823). We can estimate their number as no more than 4,000. If we recall that “the derbend case” was in mid-July, it would have been very hot for the remaining 2–3 months until autumn. That would have brought with it mosquitoes and malaria, the nature and causes of which were not yet well known at that time.

<sup>51</sup> Abdullah Kamil Aga was one of the Muslim notables of the Corinth district, whose atrocities against the reayas were well known to the Greeks. This is probably why the Greek rebels killed him and let another group to leave alive the fortress.

<sup>52</sup> BOA, HAT, 880-38974, H. 29.12.1237 (16 September 1822).

<sup>53</sup> BOA, HAT, 939-40543, H. 13.12.1236 (11 September 1821).

<sup>54</sup> The animosity between Koroni and Methoni fortresses was reflected in their written complaints to the Porte. BOA, HAT, 842-37884, H. 1239 (1824).

<sup>55</sup> Upon receipt of this good news – saving the captured Muslims – the sultan bestowed 5,000 gurus to a *tatar* (a courier assigned by the Ottoman Palace) who delivered the letter. BOA, HAT, 892-39370, H. 03.05.1237 (26 January 1822). It is also mentioned that there were other captures in the Mani. This is contrary to what the Ottoman sources claimed. See Laiou and Sariyannis, *Οθωμανικές αφηγήσεις*, 116.

<sup>56</sup> BOA, HAT, 916-39939, H. 29.12.1239 (25 August 1824).

<sup>57</sup> BOA, C.AS, 544-22808, H. 29.12.1245 (21 June 1830).

<sup>58</sup> It is worth mentioning that Hüsrev Pasha was one of the most influential men in the capital, thanks to his adopted and trained sons who held important positions in the Ottoman central bureaucracy. Mehmed Reşid Pasha, commander of the army in Rumelia, was one of them.

- <sup>59</sup> Yüksel Çelik, “Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa, Siyasi Hayatı, ve Askeri Faaliyetleri (1756–1853)” (PhD diss., Istanbul University, 2005).
- <sup>60</sup> BOA, HAT, 916-39964-C, H. 07.06.1238 (19 February 1823).
- <sup>61</sup> BOA, HAT, 916-39964-D, H. 07.06.1238 (19 February 1823).
- <sup>62</sup> He also addressed the problem of the Albanian soldiers, and as other Ottoman pashas often did during the Greek uprisings. BOA, HAT, 916-39964-D, H. 29.12.1238 (6 September 1823).
- <sup>63</sup> BOA, HAT, 884-39086.
- <sup>64</sup> BOA, HAT, 923-40097, H. 26.09.1240 (14 May 1825); BOA, HAT, 904-39698, H. 19.03.1241 (1 December 1825).
- <sup>65</sup> Except for the fortress of Rio and Koroni, the fortresses of Methoni, Navarino and Patras surrendered to the French forces without a counterattack.
- <sup>66</sup> According to Christos Vyzantios, the lack of regular armies was closely connected with the massacre of Muslims when the Greeks captured Tripolitsa town even though they were ready to surrender. As lack of a regular army meant there was a lack of discipline and order and fully armed men were ready to commit violent acts against their previous rulers renowned for their “barbaric” behaviour. Christos Vyzantios, *Ιστορία του τακτικού στρατού 1821–1833*, intro. Nikos Theotokas and Dionysis Tzakis (Athens: Hellenic Parliament Foundation for Parliamentarism and Democracy, 2020).