

**TEPEDELENLI ALI PASHA AND THE WEST:
A HISTORY OF HIS RELATIONS WITH FRANCE AND GREAT BRITAIN
1798-1820**

A Master's Thesis

By

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

December 2007

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The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

In

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BILKENT UNIVERSITY
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December 2007

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ABSTRACT

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DEMİR, İLKER

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This thesis analyzes the relations of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha with the Western powers namely France and Great Britain in the light of the Ottoman archival materials and European Travelers' accounts. It scrutinizes the basic motives behind the conspicuous French and British interest towards the pasha and draws conclusions about his level of compliance with their policies regarding the Balkans. It also examines the traces of a possible connection between the Greek Independence movement and the very European policy of encouraging Ali Pasha for independence.

Keywords: Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, Ayans, Ioannina, Epirus, Tepelen, Delvino, Albania, Klefts, Suliots, Greece, Derbents, Armatoloi, Rumelia, Septinsular Republic, Greek Revolution, Philiki Hetairia

ÖZET

TEPEDELENLİ ALİ PAŞA VE BATI DÜNYASI:

PAŞANIN FRANSA VE İNGİLTEREYLE İLİŞKİLERİNİN TARİHÇESİ

1798-1820

DEMİR, İLKER
YÜKSEK LİSANS, TARİH BÖLÜMÜ
TEZ DANIŞMANI: EVGENYA KERMELİ

Aralık 2007

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Tepedelenli Ali Paşa, Ayanlar, Yanya, Epir, Tepedelen, Delvine, Arnavutluk, Kleptler, Sulyotlar, Yunanistan, Derbent, Armatol, Rumeli, Yedi Ada Cumhuriyeti, Yunan İsyanı, Filiki Eteryia

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZET.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II: AN OVERLOOK TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES	
2.1 Disintegration and the Rise of the Local Notables amidst the Reign of Anarchy.....	5
2.2 Greek Independence Movement on the Eve of the Revolt.....	19
CHAPTER III: THE EASTERN QUESTION AND THE GREAT POWERS 1774-1815.....	24
CHAPTER IV: THE BACKGROUND OF ALI PASHA	
4.1 Early Days of Brigandage and Tribal Warfare.....	30
4.2 Ali Pasha at The Porte's Service.....	38
4.3 The Suliot Affairs.....	42

CHAPTER V: ALI PASHA AND FRANCE

5.1 Relations until the Rupture by the Ottoman Campaign at Vidin.....	48
5.2 Madonna Di Montenegro Affair: French Slaves in Ioannina.....	55
5.3 Napoleon and Ali Pasha: Pouqueville's Mission in Ioannina.....	57
5.4 The Split: Napoleon Confronts Ali Pasha by the Albanian League.....	67

CHAPTER VI: ALI PASHA AND GREAT BRITAIN

6.1 The Prologue of Relations with The British: J.P Morier's Mission.....	77
6.2 The Question of Parga	79

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION.....91

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....103

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The rise of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha coincides with several extraordinary developments that could be labeled as milestones of both European and Ottoman history. This exclusive coincidence renders Ali Pasha's history a sort of historical crossroad where the growing tide of Ottoman decentralization, the roots of the *Tanzimat* reforms, the birth of nationalism and Philhellenism intersect with competing British, French and Russian imperialism. Therefore Ali Pasha's history could be seen as a prism that reflects the ramifications of these various crucial events and phenomena from the periphery. However the key aspect of his political history, the conspicuous western interest towards him that ended up with a complicated series of diplomatic relations needs further clarification. This work aims to contribute to the studies concerning Ali Pasha by scrutinizing the subtle details of his fluctuating relations with Britain and France in which he could play his respective part disproportionate to his real power.

In the light of the Ottoman and Western sources this work examines the political power and role of the pasha within the international conjuncture of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Unlike the existing biographical and economy-oriented works emphasizing his estates and the revolt of the pasha this thesis solely aims to

expose the history of his almost forgotten relations with the Great Powers in the form of an analytical diplomatic history narrative. Accordingly it tries to reach insightful conclusions about his real political objectives and unfolds his concrete gains and losses. On the other hand European designs regarding his independence is discussed thoroughly by establishing analogies with the Greek Independence Movement. In this manner it examines the existence of a possible connection between the two projects relying on some primary sources and also inconsistencies or contradictions detected in European diplomatic maneuvers. The relations between the Porte and Ali Pasha are also portrayed in order to evince the nature of the conducted diplomacy.

The majority of the primary sources that have been utilized in this work belong to the Western historiography. The accounts of the consuls, adventurer travelers and personal servants of the pasha constitute a relatively rich mass of literature when compared to the limited number of Ottoman archival documents illuminating the concerned issue. However Ottoman documents under the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* and *Cevdet* classifications provide more definite and clear information about the relations of the Porte and Ali Pasha in particular. The Ottoman chronicler Ahmet Cevdet Pasha's *Tarih-i Cevdet* and the accounts of Ali Pasha's grandson Ahmet Müfid can be listed as the other significant Ottoman sources used. Among the western primary sources, the accounts of F.C.H.L Pouqueville, S.T Hughes, William Martin Leake, John Cam Hobhouse and Guillaume Vaudoncourt adequately supply the necessary information to portray his background, political career and relations with the West. In fact most of the western literature about him was based on these principal works. Besides there are other useful accounts like Peter Oluf Brondsted's *Interviews with Ali Pasha*, Richard Clogg's *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents* and Napoleon's *Correspondance*. The first suffices to narrate the leading

developments in the rise of the Pasha and the last two are fruitful in depicting the diplomatic relations and the question of the connection with Greek Independence. On the other hand some French and Austrian archival material were also used to shed light on the major developments related with Ali Pasha. When it comes to using secondary sources the western works have a further dominance. The most comprehensive works narrating the history of the Pasha are biographical novels like William Plomer's *Lion Of Ioannina* and Marquis Diego Soria's *Ali Tebelen Pacha De Janina*. For the issues of international politics it is also possible to utilize the vast academic literature about the Napoleonic Wars, Balkan History and the Eastern Question. Nevertheless A. Boppe's *L'Albanie et Napoleon* and John W. Baggally's *Ali Pasha and Great Britain* can be listed as the most useful and well organized secondary sources based on original British and French documents about Ali Pasha. Ottoman historiography also offers valuable sources though less in number like Prof. Uzunçarşılı's Ottoman History series and his article on the Septinsular Republic.

The basic problem of using predominantly western sources on this issue is that they contain too much misinterpretations or false definitions due to language defects, ideological stereotypes like the constant reference to a mystified oriental despot image and exaggerated sanguine scenes. Firstly the narrators of them are not sufficiently familiar with the peculiarities of the Ottoman statecraft, traditions, language and terminology. It sometimes creates misinterpretations like the supposed appointment of a *şeyhlülislam* by the Pasha. Secondly the high frequency of the oriental despot stereotypes and the blatant subjectivity that constantly justifies the western cause, require additional caution and selectivity in reading. Moreover all western sources err in the chronological order of events. In fact no source follows a proper chronological order and they sometimes give completely different dates for the same events. Lastly

the majority of the western accounts are personal memoirs that gave the highest priority solely to personal impressions on the aspects of the pasha's daily life, topographical descriptions and archeological surveys. Under the influence of the orientalist zeal many of the western authors seem to have paid more attention to the details of his seraglio, harem and riches. Besides the archeological expedition reports full of sketches, maps and inventories constitute the rest of the content in these sources. Hence the deduction of some critical details about the political developments is confined to few sources though there is a massive literature regarding him.

The method followed in the redaction is basically as such: Primarily it produces a general socio-political sketch of the Ottoman decentralization and Greek independence movement both of which shaped the political career of the pasha. Consequently it portrays the 18th century Ottoman Albania and Greece while tracing the deeds of the pasha in his struggle to enter into Porte's service. The foreign entanglements of the Pasha are generally reflected with constant references to the European politics especially during the Napoleonic wars. The domestic ramifications of the rivalry between the great powers and the pasha's conduct of policy towards the Porte were also repeatedly emphasized since both were the integral parts of the Pasha's diplomacy. In the final analysis a conclusive balance of his foreign contacts is presented with a couple of general deductions from the history narrated in the text.

CHAPTER TWO

AN OVERLOOK TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE FROM THE LATE SIXTEENTH TO EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

2.1 DISINTEGRATION AND THE RISE OF THE LOCAL NOTABLES AMIDST THE REIGN OF ANARCHY

The continuous dissolution of the central authority in the Ottoman Empire had started roughly in the late sixteenth century and reached its apex in the eighteenth century.¹ So the traces of this transformation could be found even in the empire's golden age. The circumstances that led to the gradual collapse of the socio-economic order and central authority had its first major repercussions through the *Celali* rebellions in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.² By the outbreak of this extensive turmoil the political, economic and social infrastructure of the *Ayan* institution started to mature. In other words the developments after the *Celali* rebellions relatively donated the *ayans* the means to have their own military force, remarkable wealth and land tenure, namely the three basic pillars of their future political power in the empire.

Starting from the late 16th century, the quick population growth and the penetration of massive amounts of American gold and silver triggered an intolerable

¹ Jane Hathaway, *Problems of Periodization in Ottoman History: The Fifteenth through Eighteenth Centuries*, *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 20 (1996): pp. 25-31

² Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası, Celali İsyanları*, Ankara 1999, p:283

level of inflation in Europe which infested through the Ottoman Empire too.³ The boom in the population enlarged the existing masses that sought fortune and benefit at the Porte's service. This enormous potential turned to be a threat for the empire's social and economic order since the empire entered a phase of stagnation also in terms of military expansion as well as economic. As the war machine stopped there were no longer adequate opportunities in military sphere to channel this mass. As a result the financial crisis made it imperative to resort to constant devaluations of *akçe* during the late 16th and 17th century.⁴ Thus the minimization of the *timar* incomes due to devaluation inhibited the proper functioning of the system in terms of military provision and recruitment. Then the weakening of the *timar* system was to be balanced by the substitution of the *sipahi*, the traditional cavalry of the *timar* by Janissaries and *sekban*, the peasant mercenaries. Meanwhile peasants fled from their villages in excessively increasing numbers due to the destruction of the long-lasting wars, acute financial crisis and the lack of security. They either took refuge in the court of a local administrator or notable, serving as mercenaries or formed brigand groups. These peasant mercenaries together with the former *timar* holders who lost their status and wealth became protagonists of the *Celali* rebellions.⁵ In fact this extensive turmoil had several effects on the evolution of the *ayan* institution. Firstly the provincial governors gained a decisive power enjoying the dissolution of the central authority by the collapse of the *timar* system and the *Celali* rebellions. Supported by the peasant mercenaries the provincial governors levied illegal taxes and

³ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *XVI. Asrın İkinci Yarısında Türkiye'de Fiyat Hareketleri*, Belleten 34, 1970, p:25

⁴ There is almost a consensus among the historians about an extensive financial crisis in Europe and Asia in the 16th and 17th centuries though their views about the most influential factors that shaped the course of this crisis.

Please See:

Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, New York, 1972, V:I, P:398

Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Paranın Tarihi*, İstanbul, 1999, pp:150-155

⁵ Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası, Celali İsyanları*, Ankara 1999, pp:70-71

Karen Barkey, *Eşkıyalar ve Devlet Osmanlı Tarzı Devlet Merkezileşmesi*, İstanbul 1999, p:145

oppressed the *reaya*. Their growing challenge and autonomy forced the central government to take measures to prevent the loss of authority and income. As a result the responsibilities of the governors in the collection of taxes from the *miri mukataas* imperial revenues were given to *muhasıls* special tax collectors.⁶ In addition *has* revenues of the *sancakbeyis* and governors were assigned to the imperial treasury via the *muhasıls*. As the post of *muhasıl* was mostly given to *ayans* they found an advantageous opportunity to rise to power. Apart from these the central government had to revise the imperial checks and balances system to restore his authority in the provinces. The traditional checks and balances system of the empire was based on the *kadis*, local judges and *defterdars*, chief treasury officials who were the representatives of the central authority with immunity from the interference of the governors.⁷ Thus the sultan had the means to interfere directly to the affairs of the provinces via these two. But now the system was to be backed by an additional circle of power as it failed to curb the increasing autonomy of the governors. *Ayans* started to collaborate with the *kadis* and to counterbalance the abuses of the governors by handing over their taxation duties, sending representatives and petitions denouncing about their deeds. On the other hand the existing petty *ayans* gradually became indispensable tools for crushing the *Celalis*.⁸ The massive *levends*, vagrant peasant groups seeking fortune as mercenaries provided a great source of manpower to the *ayans* as well.⁹ They enabled *ayans* to establish deterrent armed forces of their own like the provincial governors. Thus the *ayans* were now responsible to defend their regions from the *Celali* attacks while enjoying the opportunities brought by them like

⁶ Halil İnalcık, *Centralization and Decentralization In Ottoman Administration*, p: 29

⁷ İnalcık, p:26-28

⁸ Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Ayanlık*, Ankara 1977, pp:75-76

⁹ Akdağ, pp:69-70

the immense manpower and the erosion of the central authority.¹⁰ These private militias were a strong leverage for gaining wealth which would be the second pillar of the *ayans*' future power and autonomy. Besides, the replacement of the *sipahis* by *sekbans* maximized the reliance of the central government on those local magnates for recruitment and provision services. In addition the need for cash to finance the new mercenary-based armies together with the extended Janissary corps required the elevation of the taxes on *reaya*.¹¹ Not only the quantity but also the method of taxation had to be revised to provide enough cash for the central treasury. Enjoying this conjuncture the local magnates took over the taxation duties of the former *sipahis*. Hence the second pillar, wealth, which the *ayans* relied on for consolidating their authority became much more solid as the traditional *timar* system was dissolved by the advance of the tax farming *iltizam* system.¹² By the 17th century extraordinary levies like the *avarız akçesi*, *imdad-ı seferiyye* and *imdad-ı hazeriyye* were also collected by the *ayans* in addition to the regular taxes.¹³ These tax collection rights granted a vast authority and a fruitful way of enrichment to the *ayans*.

Itizam was already an integrated part of the traditional Ottoman land regime since the early days of the empire.¹⁴ As a complementary to *timar*, revenues of the imperial domains, customs and state monopolies were collected and channeled to the central treasury through tax farming. The revenue sources were divided into predetermined units, *mukata'a* and the right to collect the revenue of these *mukataas* was sold to individuals by auction. Within the *iltizam* system there was also another form of tax collection that had revolutionary effects on the rise of the *ayans*. *Arpalıks*

¹⁰ Özkaya, pp:80-81

¹¹ Özkaya, p:20

¹² Halil İnalcık- Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of The Ottoman Empire 1600-1914*, V:2, pp:537-538, 661-662

¹³ Özkaya, p:23

¹⁴ Linda Darling, *Revenue Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Fiance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660*, New York, 1996, p:119

the lands assigned to high officials as pensions were generally administered by deputies called *voyvoda* or *mütesellim*.¹⁵ They were responsible for all administrative services including the tax collection and preparation of the tax registers in the corresponding *sancaks*. The holders of these *arpaliks* began to choose *mütesellims* among the local *ayans* starting from the 17th century.¹⁶ Having acquired these crucial posts, *ayans* established their influence in the provinces by employing their confidants, leasing their *iltizam* rights to other *ayans*, crushing the bandits and providing better administrative services than the appointed officials.

As the *mukataas* expanded at the expense of the *timar* lands the authority of the governors was challenged since *mukataas* were immune from their interference. Hence the reduction in the tax revenues, the limitation of their area of control together with the frequent shifting of their posts undermined the power of the provincial governors in time. The constant shifting of posts minimized the duration of a governor in one location. However the limited area and time for tax collection encouraged the governors to resort to corruption, illegal heavy taxes and oppression of the *reaya*. Since the posts were literally sold to the individuals offering the highest bid, the governors who purchased the posts were preoccupied with exacting as much tax as possible to be able amortize their investment and even make profit.¹⁷ As a result the heavy tax burden forced the peasants to appeal to the *ribahors* the private creditors who used to give loans by mortgage with high interest rates.¹⁸ Then a serious number of peasants had to leave their lands to those usuries. Not surprisingly there were a large group of *ayans* among these *ribahors* and mortgage was a fruitful occasion to appropriate the former *timar* lands. Thus the land regime started to collapse in favor of

¹⁵ İncalcık, pp:32

¹⁶ İncalcık, p:29

¹⁷ İncalcık, pp:30-31

¹⁸ Akdağ, pp:62-63

the *ayans* opening the way for private land holdings. Now the *ayans* also resorted to illegitimate ways to appropriate vast lands of the former *timars*. They sometimes usurped those lands by force or purchased them by paying trivial prices.¹⁹

The basic hazard of the collapse of the *timar* system was twofold. Since the sipahis had administrative responsibilities like police duties, levying taxes, organizing irrigation and cultivation etc. apart from their military duties like providing troops and logistics almost the entire Ottoman state apparatus in the provinces suffered from serious debilitation. Then the corruption and tyranny of the officials sent from the capital gradually rendered the *ayans* as the protectors of the subjects the *reaya*.²⁰ During the eighteenth century these positions became hereditary and the Porte often recognized them by granting official ranks and honors to be able to check their power within the imperial government system.

Throughout the 18th century the economic and social chaos fostered by the collapse of the traditional *timar* system and the catastrophic results of the incessant wars increased the central government's inability to enforce authority in the provinces. Incompetent and tyrannical officials, lack of security together with the acute economic hardships due to huge losses of territory and treasure accelerated the erosion of the central authority especially in the Balkans.²¹ This erosion gave way to the advance of brigandage and countless local insurgences that ruined the social and economic structure. Then the reign of anarchy led to the emergence of the *ayans* as the *de facto* rulers of the provinces in time.

The Porte had already been relying on the influential individuals and families among the local communities as counselors or even mediators to manage the affairs

¹⁹ Özkaya, p:46

²⁰ Özkaya, p:53

²¹ Barbara Jelavich, *History Of The Balkans Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, New York, 1983, p:113

between the government and the subjects in the corresponding provinces. Primarily *ayans* used to function as representatives of their local communities using their local influence to affect the central governments conduct regarding their community. Moreover they were managing the economic affairs like organizing the supply of raw materials, determining the market prices, quality of the manufactured goods, and taking measures to prevent shortages in collaboration with the *kadıs* and guilds.²² They were also responsible for the regulation of public services and maintenance of public buildings. Through the mediation of these local notables namely *ayans* the Porte received better compliance to the imperial system from its subjects of diverse ethnicities and religions. However the mediator status of the *ayans* was to change drastically towards local administrators and gradually semi-independent rulers in the period after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768-1774 when the *timar* system completely lost its effectiveness in the Balkans.²³ In fact the necessity of quick supply of cash for the treasury drained by the war expenses and the new military organization forced the Porte to conclude the removal of the *timar* system.²⁴ Besides the structural transformation in the world economy from medieval characteristics to capitalism also made it inevitable to substitute the *timar* system with *mukataas* and *malikanes*.

Malikane system was installed to the Ottoman land regime in order to lessen the destructive effects of the short-term tax farming namely *iltizam*.²⁵ The high frequency of subcontracting and over-taxation ruined the tax sources forcing the *reaya* either to flee from their villages or went to bankruptcy by lending money from the *ribahors* to pay the high taxes.²⁶ The reduction in the agricultural production and tax

²² İncılık, p:44

²³ Sacit Kutlu, *Milliyetçilik ve Emperyalizm Yüzyılında Balkanlar ve Osmanlı Devleti*, İstanbul 2007, p: 39

²⁴ Erol Özvar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Malikane Uygulaması*, İstanbul 2003, pp:13-16

²⁵ EI, V:27, pp:516-517

²⁶ Özkaya, p:66

revenues together with the increasing budget deficit caused by the war expenses forced the central government to extend the application of the *malikane* system.²⁷ The contractor or the *malikane* holder was obliged to pay a specified annual payment to the treasury in cash in order to use the tax source for a lifetime. Thus the central government could find a more stable and secure cash source than *iltizam*. Unlike *timar* and *iltizam*, *malikane* system was quite close to private property ownership. The *malikane* rights could also be sold, bought and inherited to other individuals though on some conditions. In other words the the right to levy taxes was practically private property if not the land. The holders of the *malikanes* were mostly members of the *askeri* class and ulema.²⁸ However just like the *arpalık* and *has* lands the administration of these *malikanes* was realized by *mütesellims* most of whom were *ayans*. Besides the number of *ayans* holding *malikanes* grew in steady numbers as these *ayan-mütesellims* maximized their influence and wealth in the provinces enjoying the opportunities of *mütesellim* posts.²⁹ The rapid increase in the number of these *ayans* accelerated the transition from state-owned land regime to semi-private land holdings through the *malikane* system. But corruption and oppression was also frequent in the *malikane* affairs. Many *ayans* converted the former *timar* lands to their private farms, *çiftliks* either by usurpation or bribery and consolidated their wealth by illegal means. The spread of these private farms deprived the peasants from their *timar* lands where they used to enjoy a sort of immunity from the oppression of the officials and forced them to serve the *Bey* or *Ayan* in his *çiftlik* under unfavorable circumstances. The peasants were even forced to pay additional taxes for protection against the bandits. The resented masses of *reaya* boosted the brigandage and insecurity in the provincial regions. In sum *iltizam* and *malikane* systems installed the

²⁷ Özvar, pp:15-19

²⁸ Akdağ, p:64

²⁹ İnalçık, p:33-34

ayans into the state structure donating them with great opportunities for elevating their status by acquiring land, wealth and political power.

While many of the *ayans* owed their leadership and autonomous sovereignty to the religious or tribal prestige in their communities, a significant number of *ayans* ascended to power from banditry. Having no considerable position in the tribal hierarchy numerous bandit chiefs managed to transform to vassal princes by literally usurping the sovereignty of certain districts and provinces. As mentioned before, landless peasants fleeing from the insecurity or oppression, former *timar* holders, mountain dwellers and tribesman formed bandit armies enjoying the absence of effective central authority.³⁰ In fact a cyclical condition arose in which the vexed masses suffering from insecurity created a complete anarchy by joining the brigandage and causing severer destruction in the provinces. As the opposition to the settled authority was organized and utilized by some brigand chiefs called *derebeyi* new *ayans* emerged. But the lucrative opportunities of transformation to autonomous princes by banditry generated a stiff competition among them. Though the authority of the Porte was reduced to nominal by the autonomy of the *ayans* it was viewed as the leading source of legitimatization of power. The *ayans* sought the Porte's official acknowledgment regardless of their actual level of power and autonomy. Thus the Porte used their competition and tendency to have their status officially acknowledged. It kept the opportunities of acquiring imperial offices, titles and honors open for all competing bandits. But it also demonstrated sensitivity in preventing the excessive empowerment of a single one among them. The hostilities and jealousy between the *ayans* were promoted by the maneuvers of the Porte. Since *ayans* with more formidable rivals were more eager to remain loyal to the Porte a constant and

³⁰ Barkey, pp:12-13

equal level of challenge against them was to be maintained. However there were examples of failure in this policy like Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt and Tepedelenli Ali Pasha who established themselves solidly in their respective regions subduing all their rivals.³¹ On the other hand the Porte's policy towards the *ayans* was not usually that submissive. It also initiated attempts to eliminate them totally. In 1786 the *ayan* institution was dismantled by the *firman* of the sultan Abdulhamid I.³² However this challenge ended up with a drastic fall in the tax revenues that forced Selim III to restore the institution with additional privileges like the right to rent the *miri* lands to the peasants.³³

One of the most crucial dilemmas regarding the existence of the *ayans* and the dissolution of the central authority is that some of the *ayans* proved better administrators than the former Ottoman officials.³⁴ It is possible to assert that the situation in certain parts of the empire was indeed better off in terms of agricultural production, trade, security and taxation after the tide of anarchy soothed by the establishment of the potent *ayans*.³⁵ They provided basic governmental services by forming their own government system with jurisdiction, police protection and systematized taxation preventing the unjust exactions of the central government.³⁶ Thus in certain regions of the empire they could gain the support of the local inhabitants who suffered more from the tyranny of the former appointed officials. Apart from all these the inability of the disorganized *timar* system to fulfill military

³¹ Please see further on p:30

³² Kutlu, p:39

³³ Kutlu, pp: 39-40

³⁴ Better military provisions, rapid increases in the agricultural output, development of trade and small industries together with the relative security were the commonalities of the pashaliks under the control of prominent ayans.

Stanford Shaw, Between Old And New: the Ottoman Empire Under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807, pp:196

³⁵ Since many ayans had long- term projections for their sovereignty in a given region they used to consider the long-term interests of their lands better than the government officials or timar holders. Shaw, pp:213

³⁶ Jelavich, pp:123-124

functions like gathering troops, maintenance of the military facilities and supplying provisions were compensated by the local leaders. The regular tax payments and the effective military services of the *ayans* seeking official recognition created an indispensable interdependency for both sides. In addition some *ayans* also gained the support of the influential officials or political parties in the capital by bribe and consolidated this interdependency. Another dilemma was that the Porte rendered some bandits responsible for the security of the provinces and the mountain passes where they used to operate. For instance in Greece the *martalos* or *armatoloi* organization responsible for the security of the mountain passes was mainly staffed by the former bandits the *klefts*.³⁷ It was the traditional Greek militia commissioned by the Porte to enforce the sultan's orders in the inaccessible provinces where brigandage was at stake. Just as the *iltizam* institution these *armatoloi* were the key posts to rise to power as an *ayan* especially in Greece and Albania. This interconnection between the security organization and the bandits was the main feature of the *ayan* phenomenon. Thanks to this opportunity bandits could establish themselves as local rulers in proportion to their terror and capability to win the support of the political parties in the capital. Tepedelenli Ali Pasha would also follow this way and prove as the keenest among this sort of bandits.

Osman Pasbandoglu of Vidin was another crucial example of the ayans who followed this way of ascendance to power from banditry. He was born in Vidin in 1758 as a son of a Bosniac Janissary guard *pasband* and also a brigand chieftain Omer Aga whose brigands' terror infested the entire territories of Serbia and Little Walachia.³⁸ Omer Aga had joined the Ottoman campaign against Austria in 1738 with its mercenaries and following his services in the war he had been granted a couple of

³⁷ Kleft is the Greek word for bandit and it was mainly used for denominating the bandits in Greece and Albania.

³⁸ Archives De France R.F, Affaires Etrangeres, C.P Turquie 216/1808 p:306

villages around Vidin. Soon after Omer Aga was killed by his rivals, Osman Pasvandoglu handed over the domains and the leadership of his father's brigand militias. As he became a formidable brigand chief he expanded his area of control around Vidin and gradually usurped the control of nearly 200 villages.³⁹ In 1788 he entered the service of Walachian Hospodar Mavroyenis with his forces and fought against Austria on the Ottoman side.⁴⁰ But he owed his ultimate rise to power to the repercussions of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* reforms in Rumelia. In 1791 Sultan Selim III released a firman that dismembered the Janissary garrison in Belgrade with all of its dependencies expelling its troops from service as a penalty for the continuous defeats at the Austrian front.⁴¹ In fact it was one of the first steps of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* reformation in Rumelia and Selim also attempted to reestablish his authority in the region after the Zcsytovy Treaty. Then the reaction of the dismissed Janissaries would have greater affects than expected. After their vain attempts of intrigue with the Austrian authorities for their intervention to their dispute 8 to 10 thousand men some of whom allied with the local mountaineer bandits the *kırcalis* initiated an extensive brigand terror in the region.⁴² Consequently Pasbandoglu managed to organize most of these rebel janissaries under his command and formed a large mercenary army. He captured the city of Vidin with ease by the year 1794 receiving the support of the locals. Relying on this formidable force he secured his domains from the brigand mountaineers and secured the passage of the caravans.⁴³ Making great use the vexations of the *reaya* resulting from the permanent insecurity and additional taxes for the *Nizam- i Cedid* troops Pasbandoglu pretended to be a benevolent ruler. He

³⁹ *Precis Sur Les Affaires de Passwanoglou*, Haus Hof U.Staat Archiv, Wien, Turkei V, K:23/7, p:2

⁴⁰ A.D.F, p:307

⁴¹ P.S.L.A.P, p:1

⁴² The representatives of the expelled Janissaries established contacts with the Austrian authorities demanding the intervention of Austria to their dispute with the Porte.

A.D.E, p:309

⁴³ P.S.L.A.P, p:17

imposed the lowest level of poll tax when compared to his neighbor *beys*.⁴⁴ He also abolished all sorts of emergency taxes and additional levies for the *Irada-i Cedid*, the new treasury for the *Nizam-i Cedid* reforms.⁴⁵ However the Porte did not recognize his usurpation and launched serial campaigns against him between 1795 and 1798. But all imperial campaigns were doomed to failure. His subsequent victories against the imperial forces spread his fame throughout the Balkans increasing the adhesion of the *reaya* to him and also adding new resented Janissary brigands to his retinue. His military capabilities were also boosted by the capture of weaponry from the imperial armies in serious quantities. Pasbandoglu even intimidated his ex-sovereign the Hospodar or vassal king of Walachia and forced him not to contribute to the Ottoman campaigns against Vidin by besieging his palace.⁴⁶ Then the last great campaign against Pasbandoglu was undertaken in 1798. The new *Nizam-i Cedid* troops supported by the mercenaries of several *ayans* including Tepedelenli Ali Pasha besieged Vidin. But it resulted to a severe defeat of the imperial forces. Then the Porte admitted Pasbandoglu's seizure of power and appointed him as the pasha of Vidin by 1799.⁴⁷ Having offered his so-called loyalty to the Sultan Pasbandoglu received the title of vizier with three tails.

The backgrounds and the ways of ascending to power in the cases of Pasbandoglu and Tepedelenli have some identical features. Both rose to power from banditry usurping the old *timar* lands and converting them to their own private *çiftlik*s. Both relied on the local brigands namely *kırcalis* in Bulgaria and *klefts* in Greece at the same time fought against them at the service of the Porte. The outbreak of two major revolts namely the Serbian in 1804 and the Greek in 1820 gave them almost the

⁴⁴ P.S.L.A.P, K:37/34

⁴⁵ P.S.L.A.P, p:16

⁴⁶ A.D.E, p:305-306

⁴⁷ Hat, 1212, No:12761

same role or capability which was to fill the gap of the Porte's eroded authority and either to check the power of the nationalist movements or to use them. Accordingly none of them overtly opposed to the revolutionaries on the contrary they established links with them as a leverage against the Porte. The major distinction between the histories of these two ayans lies in the course of their career. Pasbandoglu rose to power after a revolt that lasted 10 years then attached to the imperial system receiving the pardon of the sultan. He remained as a renegade during most of his career and he could not be removed from the historical scene until his natural death in 1807. But Tepedelenli had never been such a manifest foe of the Porte until the last two years of his life. After series of achievements in local banditry he entered the Port's service and made most of his riches as well as political power during his imperial service. On the other hand Pasbandoglu's power was not only derived from banditry. He relied on the Janissaries and the local people that constituted a stiff opposition to the *Nizam-i Cedid* reforms. They gave him a solid military and political power to back his autonomous existence. The Porte's inability to eliminate Pasbandoglu was most probably due to this conglomeration of many fragments of opposition on his side. As far as Tepedelenli is concerned such a massive opposition or power base was nonexistent in Albania and Greece. The most organized circle of opposition was the Greek revolutionaries who never viewed the pasha as an ally. Therefore Tepedelenli sought an additional pillar for his existence in close contacts with the great powers. His rapid fall after the cease of these relations with Britain and France give some hints about how affective were these relations for the continuity of the pasha's existence.

2.2 THE GREEK INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLT

The 18th century can be considered as the age of a Greek revival by which the Greek elements in the Ottoman Empire experienced a series of economic, political and cultural transformation. The existing merchant networks of the Ottoman Greeks found lucrative opportunities to expand thanks to the developments in international politics.⁴⁸ The decline of Venice and the disrupted operations of the western merchants in the Ottoman Ports due to continuous wars enabled the Greeks to increase their share in the transportation of Balkan raw materials to Europe.⁴⁹ They also imported manufactured goods of the west to the empire establishing new trade communities in the European ports and capitals. On the other hand the treaties of Kuchuk Kainarja 1774 and Jassy 1792 had opened the Black Sea and Straits to Russian and Austrian commerce. As the Ottoman Greeks were allowed to operate carrying the Russian flag they gained immunity from the imperial regulations and restrictions. Moreover the vast open market of the Southern Russia together with the highly profitable grain trade between the Ottoman Empire and Russia entailed additional means of enrichment for the Greek merchant. Just as in the Mediterranean, Black Sea ports were infested with the Greek merchant communities. The destruction of the French and British commercial fleets in the Mediterranean by the Napoleonic Wars almost monopolized the Greeks in the Mediterranean trade. The successes in the marine trade influenced the Greek handicraft industries too. The petty Greek craftsmen started to export their goods to European countries in greater quantities. The growth of Greek economic power also led to the growth of their influence on domestic politics. Thus Selim III granted the Greek community the right to form their own guild and all the privileges

⁴⁸ Stoianovich, *Between East and West, The Balkan and Mediterranean Worlds Economies and Societies*, V:2, p:35

⁴⁹ L.S Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, p:275

given to the European merchants.⁵⁰ The influence of the Greeks in the banking and finance activities expanded following this political gain. As a result the boosted Greek capital was channeled to usury and foreign funds in the European banks.⁵¹ Besides, a serious amount of Greek capital was invested in the legitimate banking system of the empire. Thus the Jewish and Armenian monopoly in the Ottoman credit market was challenged by the advent of an increasing number of Greek bankers.⁵²

The most remarkable outcome of these economic developments was the rise of a new Greek middle class spread throughout Europe. The Greeks in the Ottoman Empire acquired means of interaction with the west since they retained their ties with the Greek merchant Diaspora.⁵³ The interaction and familiarity with the western world would soon reveal the contrasts between the conditions of the Ottoman Greeks and the Diaspora in Europe. Thus the ideal of liberation and ending the Ottoman rule would find the most suitable ground to blossom among this middle class. It was not a coincidence that the Greek Revolutionary Society *Philiki Hetairia* was founded by these merchants. However the decisive stimulation was to come from the French Revolution that would unite the large fragments of the Greek peasant world with the revolutionary circles from the middle class. The advent of the revolutionary ideas would soon generate a cadre of Greek revolutionary intelligentsia that would prepare the ideological framework to be followed. Adamantis Korais and Rhigas Pheraios were two of the most eminent figures among this cadre. Korais published the Greek classics in simple vernacular with lengthy introductions loaded with revolutionary messages.⁵⁴ In addition to the propaganda it served his linguistic reform attempts. He

⁵⁰ Traian Stoianovich, *Between East and West, The Balkan and Mediterranean Worlds, Economics and Societies, Traders, Towns and Households*, vol:2, p:35

⁵¹ Sonyel, p:161

⁵² Stoianovich, p:57

⁵³ Stoianovich, pp: 52-53

⁵⁴ Stavrianos, p:278

aimed to eliminate the widespread illiteracy among the peasants and to facilitate the access to the Greek cultural heritage to be able to form some degree of national identity.⁵⁵ Unlike Korais, Pheraios was both an activist revolutionary and a man of thought. After years of service to Alexander Ipsilanti the dragoman of the Porte at that time, and Walachian Hospodar Mavroyenis he fled to Vienna where he pursued his liberal activities.⁵⁶ He established his own secret revolutionary organization *Hetairia*, wrote newspaper articles to arouse a Greek patriotic zeal by using French revolutionary ideas.⁵⁷ In 1797 he released his revolutionary manifesto and had it published in 3000 copies to be distributed among the Greeks.⁵⁸ It included a proclamation, a declaration of the rights of man, the constitution of the New Greek state to be established after the revolution and a martial hymn calling the Balkan Christians to fight against the Ottomans.⁵⁹ But the efforts of Pheraios would not be long-lived since he was arrested by the Austrians just after the release of the manifesto and extradited to the Ottoman Empire where he would be executed. Pheraios had envisaged a democratic Hellenic state inspired by the imperial heritage of the Byzantine ages with diverse religions and ethnicities unified by the adoption of a common Greek culture and values. Since his counsels and projects were not followed totally, he well propagated the idea of an independent Greek state to the masses and became a heroic vanguard figure. Meanwhile the intellectual revival was coupled with a rapid schooling throughout Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Greek schools, most of which were opened by the donations of the wealthy merchants created generations

⁵⁵ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment Nationalism Orthodoxy, Jeremy Bentham and Adamantios Korais*, Norfolk, 1994, Ch. VIII, pp:1-5

⁵⁶ Kitromilides, Ch. VIII, pp:12-17

⁵⁷ Stoianovich, *Balkan Worlds The First and Last Europe*, New York, 1994, pp:171-173

⁵⁸ For an English translation of his revolutionary proclamation please see: Richard Clogg, *The Movement For Greek Independance 1770-1821*, London 1976 pp:149-163

⁵⁹ Dakin, p:28

with European values and revolutionary ideas.⁶⁰ A serious number of the graduated Greek students were sent to European universities and their continuous contact with Europe expanded the newly rising Greek revolutionary intelligentsia's range of action.⁶¹ In addition to the search for Russian patronage and protection, the Greek revolutionaries also sought European support though to a lesser degree. Thus the economic revival now transformed to an educational one paving the way for the ultimate revival the Independence.

Among the various revolutionary organizations founded by the Greek merchant Diaspora following Pheraios's example, *Philiki Hetairia* proved the most effective. Three Greek merchants Athanasius Tsakalov, Nikolaos Skoufas and Emmanuil Xanthos founded it in Odessa in 1814.⁶² Xanthos was a member of the Masonic lodge of the Ionian Islands and the other two were already members of different revolutionary organizations.⁶³ They followed the model of the freemason hierarchy in which operations of propaganda and recruitment of volunteers were carried out by separate cells. Thus they achieved a swift but secure growth in the organization. After the death of Skoufas, Alexander Ipsilanti took over the leadership. This would be a milestone in the history of the Greek Independence movement. The radicals in the organization astutely exploited the Russian connection of Ipsilanti and by their overwhelming propaganda they convinced the masses about the illusionary Russian support for the outbreak of the revolt.⁶⁴ Though unjustified it sufficed to overcome the vacillations of the primates in the Morea to start the revolt.

⁶⁰ K.W.Arafat, *A Legacy of Islam in Greece: Ali Pasha and Ioannina*, *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)*, Vol:14, No:2, 1987, pp-172-182

⁶¹ K.E Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece*, Princeton 1999, pp:64

⁶² Miller, p:65

⁶³ Dakin, p:41

⁶⁴ In fact the Russian policy to back the revolutionary movements in the Balkans was not illusionary. The Hetairists also had contacts with the Russians starting from their leader who was an admiral in the

In such a conjuncture Tepedelenli Ali Pasha stepped in to the historical scene. He benefited from the opportunities of the chaotic atmosphere in the Balkans where the central authority ceased to be effective. He ascended to power as a brigand chief and then legitimized himself within the imperial system by being a part of the *ayan* institution. Then his violence, oppression and political intrigues together with the availability of the international conjuncture gained him the position of the most powerful *ayan* in the Balkans. This position enabled him to take part in foreign entanglements that would soon put him in the middle of the Greek Independence question.

Russian navy but at that time no concrete offer of support was valid for an immediate action to start the revolt.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EASTERN QUESTION AND THE GREAT POWERS

1774-1815

The Eastern Question can be denominated simply as the conglomeration of political problems posed by the struggle among the Great Powers to fill up the vacuum of the Ottoman Empire's gradual decay starting from the late 17th century according to some historians. The major conflicts rallied around the political and economic domination on the Levant, the seizure of the Straits and the future of the Balkans. This struggle gained momentum after the subsequent defeats of the Ottomans against the Russians in the 18th century. However it would dominate the European agenda only after the Napoleonic wars. In fact the period between 1774 and 1815 could be labeled as the preliminary phase of the Eastern Question which had a tertiary significance in the international politics of that time.

As the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji or *Küçük Kaynarca* rendered Russia a Black Sea power and the protector of the Slavic peoples under Ottoman rule, Russia found suitable grounds for its designs on the Straits, Balkans and the Mediterranean. Besides it started to get a greater share from the Mediterranean and Black Sea trade acquiring commercial privileges from the Sultan. The annexation of Crimea in 1783

which was followed by further annexations in the Caucasus consolidated Russian influence in and pressure on the Ottoman territories.

The Porte had a manifest reluctance for applying the terms of the Kutchuk Kainardji Treaty and France was in favor of this procrastination policy.¹ Until Napoleon's elevation to power France used to view the Ottoman Empire as a protectorate to be sustained, just like Poland and Sweden. These three periphery powers were utilized to check the Habsburg and Russian expansion. Accordingly the continuous Russian victories against them that ended with the partition of Poland, and the Russian acquisition of secure access to Baltic and Black Seas deepened the French antagonism towards the Russians. Among these traditional allies or protectorates the Ottoman Empire had a privileged position since it was a far larger market and a great source of raw materials for the French industries.² In addition the French foreign policy regarding the Eastern question was influenced by the scenario of a possible Russian occupation of the Ottoman capital. Hence the French perceived the Russian advance in the Balkans and the Caucasus as a severe threat which made it the single European power that was eager to support the Ottomans against the menace of the Russians. But the exhausting colonial wars between France and Britain impeded a proper French support the Ottomans in the annexation of Crimean peninsula and the Ottoman Caucasian territories. French attempts to establish effective alliances against the Russians also failed since Austria was far from daring to confront Russia while under the threat of the Prussian aggression.³ Another fact that hindered the intervention of the French was that suspicion among the French authorities concerning the necessity of continuing pro-Ottoman policies created a sort of hesitation to take a

¹ Matthew Smith Anderson, *Doğu Sorunu*, İstanbul, 2001, p:21

² J.A.R.Marriott, *The Eastren Question An Historical Study in European Diplomacy*, Oxford, 1969, p:145-146

³ Paul W.Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848*, Oxford,1994, p:181

more activist position. The future French ambassador to İstanbul Saint Priest had suggested that the empire was doomed to collapse and France should have taken its own share by occupying Egypt in the early 1770's.⁴ Though not supported by the French authorities and installed to the French Foreign policy immediately, his views would finally gain priority during Napoleonic era. Finally Crimean crisis proved to the Ottomans that the French alliance was unlikely to go beyond nominal. By the 1780's France maintained this nominal support by the dispatch of some military specialists and technicians for modernization of the Ottoman army. But it would not suffice to maintain its political influence on the Ottomans. The Porte would persistently reject opening Black Sea to the French merchant fleets.

The rapid Russian advance in the Caucasus, intrigues of the Russian consuls in Zscasy and Bucharest together with the Russian opposition to the aperture of Ottoman consulates in Russian territories were straining the barely established peace between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. In fact Ottoman calculations to get back the Muslim populated territories like Crimea and the Caucasus was behind the policy of escalating the tension. Finally the Walachian Hospodar, Alexander Mavrocordato's flight to Russia triggered the outbreak of a blatant conflict.⁵ Then the Porte declared a series of demands to the Russian ambassador in 1787 among which the cession of Crimea to the Ottomans was present. The denial of the Ottoman demands would mark the beginning of another Ottoman-Russian war. This time Austria would ally with Russia and wage war on the Porte in 1788. However Austrian designs for territorial expansion in the Balkans would be overshadowed by its fear from a Prussian attack on Bohemia. Under the Prussian political pressure Joseph II of Austria could barely maintain the alliance with Russia for two years. When Russian position deteriorated as

⁴Marriott, p:148

⁵ Jacques Ancel, *Manuel Historique de la Question D'Orient*, Paris,1927, p:79

Sweden launched a surprise offensive from the north and won victories in the Baltic Sea against Russia, Austria concluded the Sistovo peace with the Ottomans in 1791 retaining Galicia but handing Serbia back to the Porte.⁶

Intensely occupied with the colonial affairs British governments remained distant to the Eastern question until the end of the 1780's. They showed little or no interest towards the Russian expansion. However the refusal of Catherine to renew the Anglo-Russian commercial treaty, betterment of Russo-French relations via trade agreements and the British tendency to provide cheaper wood products from Poland started a slow detachment from the Russian alliance in commercial matters. But a political split was also on the way. By 1788 the new government under Primer Minister William Pitt would intent to alter the British position from indifference to activism against Russia.⁷ Now Britain would conduct a containment policy to check the rapid advance of the Russians by establishing close relations with Prussia and the Ottoman Empire. Pitt sought to establish a federative system to safeguard the smaller powers of Europe against Russian expansion. Far from reaching the goal of a continental alliance including numerous powers his attempts ended with the conclusion of the Triple alliance between Britain, Prussia and the United Provinces. The alliance was to restore the balance of power in Europe which was changed by the partition of Poland and the Ottoman defeats. Besides Britain was concerned with saving Belgium from France and Prussia was in pursuit of Danzig while pressuring Denmark. British plans to curb a possible Russo-French trade monopoly in the Black Sea also required a firm policy against Russia.⁸ Under these circumstances the Russian occupation of Ochakov a strategic fort on the conjunction of the rivers Bug and Dinyester that controlled the trade route reaching Poland generated crisis between

⁶ Anderson, p:32

⁷ Schroeder, pp:129-130

⁸ Marriott, p:160

the alliance and Russia.⁹ However the reluctance of the Prussians and the lack of public support in Britain would inhibit Pitt's attempts to intimidate Russia and in the short run forcing it to cede Ochakov back to the Porte. In the end Britain could only suggest the Porte to make peace with Russia at any cost. Although Britain failed to bring Russia to the peace table with the Ottomans on the basis of *status quo ante* the Prussian land force combined with the British sea power had saved Holland from France, Sweden from Denmark, and Belgium from French- inspired Revolution and Poland from Russian domination. The significance of this failure of the continental alliance project in the Eastern affairs was that Britain no longer sought to confront Russia for the next 25 years leaving the Ottoman Empire vulnerable to Russian and Austrian aggression.¹⁰

By the Treaty of Jassy in 1792 the conclusion of peace between Russia and Turkey opened the way for the struggle between the German powers and the revolutionary French. The emergence of the first coalition namely the Austro-Prussian alliance against France which would be joined by others carried the epicenter of power struggle from the east to the west for a short period until 1797. Then by the advent of the second coalition led by Britain the antagonisms and clashes connected with the Eastern question would be refreshed. The French expansion would exceed the borders of Europe reaching up to Eastern Mediterranean and Egypt by the expedition of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798. France was no longer eager to sustain the integrity of the decaying Ottoman Empire on the contrary it was determined to get its share from its possessions. This would drastically change its position in the Eastern Question. Since the attack upon Egypt was also directed against British interests Britain would hand over the role of sustaining the Ottomans. Apart from curbing the British access

⁹ Schroeder, pp:124-125

¹⁰ Marriott, pp:163-164

to its Indian colonies France also had designs of reviving the ancient trade route between the East and West passing through the Red Sea reaching Mediterranean via Egypt.¹¹ Hence French projects regarding Egypt and the British counter measures to confront the French maximized the significance of the Mediterranean. The conquest of Italy, Malta and the annexation of the Ionian Islands enabled France to deal with the Egyptian affairs more solidly since it became a real Mediterranean power having control on the most strategic spots in the Mediterranean. Having established itself in Italy and the Ionian Islands France had the necessity to enter into direct contact with the local powers in order to be able to secure its feeble existence challenged by the British and the Russians. The latter two also took their counter measures and conducted their own strategies regarding the Mediterranean by establishing ties with the local powers by propagating revolutions, fostering instability and backing the autonomous local rulers. In sum the Mediterranean including the Southern Balkans became an extended part if not the epicenter of the power struggle between the great powers in which local autonomous powers assumed greater significance than ever engaging in foreign entanglements.

¹¹Schroeder, pp: 179-181

CHAPTER FOUR

BACKGROUND OF ALI PASHA

4.1 EARLY DAYS OF BRIGANDAGE AND TRIBAL WARFARE

Tepedelenli Ali Pasha was born in Tepedelen a small town on the left bank of the river Vjosa or Aous around 1750 as a scion of the Toskide Albanian nobility which were Muslims by majority.¹ His great grandfather Mustafa or Moutzo Housso, was a famous *kleft* chieftain who ascended to the official title of *kapıcıbaşı* and then *mutesellim* in the *nahiye* of Tepedelen. His mother Ismihan or Hamko also descended from a Toskide Albanian aristocratic family whose father was Zeynel Bey of Konitza. Mustafa's son Muhtar was a brigand leader of reputation too who perished in the war against the Venetian Republic at Corfu in 1717 and distinguished as *şehid* or martyr.² After a series of family quarrels and tribal conflicts following the death of Muhtar, his nephew Islam Bey took over the leadership of the brigand groups and also the control

¹ The ethnic origin of Ali Pasha is a quite controversial issue. Though it is almost clear that his mother was a Toskide Albanian his paternal descendance is vague. Unfortunately no source can exceed the limits of mere hearsays on this point. Among the very limited literature consisting of biographical works, historical narratives and travel accounts it is possible to view that the sources portraying his antecedents as Albanians outnumber the ones referring to his Turkish descent. Though both sides lack proper evidence rather than relying on some unspecified sources of a vague oral historiography it seems convenient to refer to the most popular explanations. Several western primary sources most of which are memoirs of the European travellers, commanders, diplomats who had been to Greece, Albania and even the court of the pasha are in a consensus about his Albanian origin. In addition their basic claim is that they got this information personally from the pasha who is said to have an exclusive interest for exposing his past.

² T.S Hughes, *Travels in Greece and Albania*, London 1830, vol:2,p-p:109

of the Toskide country. Then the Porte titled him as *mutasarrif* of the *Sancak* of Delvino with the title of *Mir-i miran*. But soon after Ali Pasha's father Veli killed his cousin Islam bey together with some other members of his family, the Porte officially recognized his seizure of power by promoting him to the latter's post namely *mutasarrif* of Delvino.³ Under the feudal tenure acknowledged by the Porte, Veli took possession of several *çiftliks* in the region but his reign was destined to end soon since the alliance of his resented rivals was strong enough to convince the Porte for his quick dismissal. After his dismissal and the appointment of Selim Bey to Delvino, the beys of Kaminitza, Klissura, Premeti and Argyrocastro waged war on Veli to eliminate him. Too weak to resist the allied beys Veli lost many of his territories and died by the year 1760. The desperate widow Hamko with her two little children had to face a severe struggle to retain the remainders of her husband's lands and treasure. The allied Beys taking advantage of the feeble situation of Hamko attacked the family's territories without delay. Since the youngster Ali was too inexperienced to head the war against the aggression of these Beys, Hamko gathered the most loyal vassals of her husband, organized them under her command, resisted the attacks of the confederacy of the hostile Beys and initiated counter brigand incursions into their territories. Unexpectedly she proved quite talented as a tribal brigand leader defending her territories and making serious amounts of booty by destroying the villages of the enemy tribes. Ali also received a complete military education from his mother during these tribal wars and started to lead small brigand groups himself. Besides, his character was shaped by the fierce circumstances of this constant warfare in addition to Hamko's ardent manner and implacable ambitions.⁴ Hamko installed revenge,

³ Dennis Skiotis, *From Bandit To Pasha: First Steps In The Rise To Power of Ali of Tepelen 1750-1784*, p:227

⁴ The biographies of Ali Pasha reflected by the primary sources of the western travellers unanimously portrait Hamko as a fiercely ambitious and merciless character. The sanguine stories of her struggle

undaunted temerity, mercilessness, greed for wealth and power to the young brigand's soul, which would help him to ascend to power.

The victorious resistance of Hamko against the confederacy of the neighboring tribes aroused an additional indignation among them since a woman chieftain foiled them. The inhabitants of Gardiki a town near Argyrocastro who suffered most from the attacks of Hamko's bands, sent a select band to Tepedelen that infiltrated into Ali's house and managed to kidnap Hamko with her daughter Şehnisa while Ali was away.⁵ The dreadful abuses inflicted on his mother and sister as well as the loss of the head of the family's brigand bands led Ali to take over and collect forces with haste. But just before his attempt to rescue his family, one of the notable Gardikiots Demir Dost Bey anguished by the miserable conditions of Hamko and Şehnisa, helped them to flee from Gardiki.⁶ He safely brought them back to Tepedelen where Ali was still preparing for an attack. Soon after this incident Ali became much more desirous of leading the brigand forces and attacking the foes of his family. The shame of having failed to rescue his mother and sister from the Gardikiots as well as his mother's unending humiliating reproaches flared his ambition for revenge and victory.⁷ But this time Ali and his family were no longer wealthy enough to maintain the necessary number of troops to struggle against enemy tribes. Having fled from Tepedelen before the expected attack of the Gardikiots, the family started roaming the mountains with a small number of troops hoping to collect as much treasure as possible to strengthen their forces and retake their possessions. Meanwhile Ali's fortuitous discovery of a

with the menacing relatives consolidate this image. Besides all emphasize that the character of Ali was shaped by her revengeful manner.

Hughes, pp:109-110, Poqueville, pp:270-271

⁵ Hughes, p:113

⁶ Gabriel Remerand reflects the story a bit different. According to him no abuse could have been inflicted on the captives since Şehnisa would marry the son of Kaplan pasha soon after her release. Considering the Albanian traditions the tribal communities would never admit such a marriage provided that she and her mother were treated in a dishonoring manner. Ahmet Mufid also asserts that the two captives were released after their ransom was paid by a Greek merchant.

⁷ Hughes, p:114

buried pot full of Venetian sequins enabled him to collect more troops and continue brigand activities in the mountains for some time.⁸

Under the illusion of this sudden relief and recovery in terms of wealth and power, Ali marched against the tribal confederacy of the Beys of Gardiki, Argyrocastro, Goritza, Hormovo and Kaminitza who had usurped his father Veli's territories and drove them away from Tepedelen.⁹ In the battlefield his forces were about to be annihilated by the confederates but he could break the alliance of the enemy tribes astutely after a secret visit to their camp by which he could convince the chiefs of Gardiki and Argyrocastro, barely loyal to the alliance, to withdraw their forces and turn against the rest of the Beys. Having secured peace with these two neighboring tribes Ali ravaged the mountain districts in Epirus with his extended number of klefts. Thanks to his achievements in brigandage he could confine his mother to the harem taking the management of affairs into his own hands. He gradually established an absolute reign in his hometown Tepedelen owing much to his cunning conspiracies and ruthless violence, which gave him an exclusive reputation as a sanguinary brigand chief. The increased amount of treasures and the spread of his kleftic terror aligned other Toskid families with him augmenting his authority in Epirus. In addition to Ali's forces there were also independent kleft groups which were in a sort of agreement with him. He allowed them to operate in certain regions close to Tepedelen on the condition of paying a certain amount of tribute and yielding a portion from the booty.

As Ali expanded his area of control and emerged as a remarkable bandit chieftain, the authority of Kurt Ahmet Pasha of Berat the most influential Bey of Albania of that time who was also titled as *Derbentler Başbuğu* or superintendent of

⁸ This story takes part in all travel accounts narrating the history of the pasha. For the most detailed: Hughes, p:115, Davenport, p:12

⁹ Hughes, p:116

all roads and mountain passes was also challenged to a great extent.¹⁰ Kurt Pasha had arrested him with his militia and imprisoned him for some time in the first years of his brigand career during his wars against the tribal confederacy. But now having increased the number of his troops and acquired considerable riches from pillage, Ali was far from being an easy prey for him. Apart from pillaging and ransoming the travelers passing from the mountains his brigands also started to spread their terror in the plains attacking villages and small towns. Ultimately he exacted huge amounts of ransom from the chiefs of the towns Zagori and Paleo Pogoghiani, threatening them with destruction if they failed to pay the taxes or *haraç* and resist him by taking Kurt Pasha's side.¹¹ After receiving the letters of these two town's chiefs full of complaints and demands for help together with the imperial orders released from the Porte ordering Ali's elimination, Kurt Pasha organized a conspiracy by which he aimed to assassinate him.¹² He sent envoys to Tepedelen and invited Ali to his palace proposing a post in his court namely *kahyalık* and promised help to secure an official pardon from the sultan. Having complied with the counsels of his servants bribed by Kurt Pasha and his mother Hamko, Ali proceeded to Berat. But at last Kurt Pasha preferred to negotiate the terms of an alliance with Ali rather than to assassinate him. Thus Ali, seeking each and every means to strengthen his position consented to enter into Kurt Pasha's service with his militia. He fought against the rebel pasha Mehmet Bushatli of Scutari who revolted when the Porte deprived him of his rights of exploitation of the lands between Avlona and Alessio belonging to the sultan's sister by appointing Kurt Pasha as his successor. Ali's achievements in the battlefield that proved his reputation as a valiant warrior were enough to give him the courage to make a daring request to

¹⁰ Hughes, p:120

¹¹ William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, Amsterdam 1967, vol:1, pp:465

¹² Cevdet Dahiliye, 12 S 1177, No:1143

Kurt Pasha.¹³ Confident about his value on behalf of the Pasha, Ali unveiled his intention to be his son-in-law.¹⁴ Thus Kurt Pasha would make use of him in his struggle against the rival Beys in return for tolerating his brigand activities to a certain extent. But the consequences would be quite disappointing for Ali. Kurt Pasha refused him and even chose Ibrahim Pasha of Avlona as his son-in-law who possessed a far higher rank in the Albanian tribal aristocracy with greater domains. This matrimony marked the beginning of a long-lasting discord and rivalry between Ibrahim and Ali. But Kurt pasha would be dismissed soon by the intrigues of his rivals who had anticipated the possible aftermath of his alliance with Ibrahim. As this marriage was concluded in 1764 Ali fled from Berat returning to the mountains for banditry. This time he was operating in the surroundings of Ioannina pillaging the villages and robbing the passengers on the way. But he would not save his klefts from being dispersed by the allied villagers under the leadership of the Hormovites. Having failed to establish himself either in the city or in the mountains Ali took refuge at the court of Kaplan Pasha the manifest foe of Kurt Pasha. Once again he sought to establish family ties with the Albanian tribal aristocracy. In 1768 he married Kaplan Pasha's daughter Ummugulsum and accomplished his desire to be a part of a potent and wealthy family.¹⁵ Muhtar and Veli who would play a significant role in his pashalık as the governors of Morea and Prevesa were the offspring of this marriage.¹⁶

During his residence at the court of Kaplan Pasha Ali never ceased to arrange conspiracies to supplant his suzerain. In pursuit of an imperial post namely the *mutasarrıflık* or deputy governorship of Delvino Ali constantly suggested to Kaplan

¹³ Guillaume F.F Vaudoncourt, *Memoirs on the Ionian Islands: Considered In a Commercial, Political and Military Point Of View*, London 1816, Reprint: Elibron Classics, London 2006, p:230

¹⁴ Remerand, p:18

¹⁵ Gabriel Remerand, *Ali de Tebelen, Pacha de Janina*, Paris 1928, p: 19

S.T Hughes cites the name of the bride as Emine while Poqueville gives the name as Ummugulsum. Hughes, p:115

¹⁶ Remerand, p:19

Pasha to abstain from crushing the Himariot Clefts of Acarnania whose bandit activities had incited the Porte's rage. Kaplan Pasha was ordered to eliminate the Himariots but he reacted to the imperial orders with reluctance since he had designs to keep on good terms with those klefts. Discouraged by his own priorities and also Ali's counsels Kaplan Pasha delayed the urged operation and estranged his relations with the Porte. On the other hand Ali was engaged in a secret correspondence with the governor of Rumelia informing him of Kaplan Pasha's friendly relations with the Himariots and inclination to revolt in tandem with the Klefts. The perfidy of Ali was to serve the Porte's plans to eliminate Kaplan Pasha. Then in 1768 the governor of Rumelia summoned Kaplan Pasha to testify in his court the affairs of Hurmovo and Ali assured of his father-in-law's fate, employed all his talents to persuade him to go. Finally Kaplan Pasha arrived in Manastır where he would be executed by the governor. The quick elimination of Kaplan Pasha maximized Ali's expectations to be rewarded by the Porte with the pashalık of Delvino and a portion from his treasure. But Kaplan Pasha's treasures were confiscated by the Porte and his son Ali Bey of Argyrocastro was appointed as his successor.¹⁷

The failure of his intrigues for elevation to a *pashalık* drove him to resort to establishing additional family ties with the Albanian notables. As a result he managed to arrange a marriage between his sister Şehnisa and the new pasha of Delvino Ali in 1769.¹⁸ This political marriage would end when Ali Pasha of Delvino was killed in a suspicious bloody family quarrel in 1773.¹⁹ Now the opportunity of elevation to the

¹⁷ Pouqueville, *Voyage Dans La Grece*, Paris 1826, Ch LXXXIX, p:275

¹⁸ Remerand, p:24

¹⁹ Remerand, p:25

Pouqueville narrates a more detailed story and addresses Ali Tepedelenli as the main instigator of this murder. According to him Ali Tepedelenli offered Süleyman brother of Ali of Argyro Castro marriage with Şehnisa and support for handing over the pashalık to him with all its treasures. But as Süleyman killed his brother the Porte chose Mustafa Kokka and later Selim Bey for the pashalık of Delvino. Therefore neither Ali Tepedelenli nor Süleyman acquired any gain from their intrigue. Pouqueville, p:279

pashalık of Delvino was refreshed for Ali. But the widespread suspicion about his connection with the murder rooted by his inaction to seek revenge from the murderers of his brother-in-law aroused fierce indignation among the tribal communities and inhibited his designs. Then the Porte appointed Mustafa Kokka to the pashalık but interestingly he had the same fate as Ali Pasha of Argyrocastro. In consequence Selim Bey one of the wealthiest beys of Delvino ascended to the pashalık to whom Ali Pasha pretended to be loyal and maintained his amicable relations for some time. But Ali would turn against Selim too when he fell into disfavor before the Porte.

The Venetian *Proveditori* or governors in the Ionian Islands used to pursue a traditional policy of refraining from generating any discord with the semi-independent Albanian Beys owning domains in the littoral Albania. More than that, they used to give the highest priority to the forming of solid alliances with these beys for mere logistical purposes for the most part obtaining wood and grain. Selim Pasha having taken advantage of this policy consolidated his relations and acquired a strong cooperation with the Venetian authorities on the islands. These close relations even reached to selling land to the Venetian republic. In fact Selim had sold a tiny strip of grove along the coast of his domains at the vicinity of Butrinto to the Venetians.²⁰ Nevertheless the territories under Selim Pasha's control just as all territories within the dominions of the *ayans* and vassal beys legally belonged to the sultan. Thus selling of the sultan's property even to non-Muslims was a felony and it would be penalized with the harshest sanction when it was unveiled. Informed of the sale by his agents Ali enjoyed this fortunate opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty to the Porte and to gain credit for his promotion to an imperial office he had been craving for so long. Then Ali's agents sent several reports tracing the deeds of Selim and after

²⁰ Pouqueville, p:281

presenting the evidences of infidelity to the Porte Ali volunteered to lead any possible operation against him.²¹In the meantime the antagonists of Selim in Delvino who were already eager to join in any intrigue against him were organized by Ali and sent letters of denunciation to the Porte supporting his claims. Finally the *firman* ordering Selim Pasha's removal would arrive to Ali rendering him responsible for the operation, which meant the expected reward was on the way for him.

4.2 ALI PASHA AT THE PORTE'S SERVICE

The Porte's policy towards the menacing local notables was simply based on fostering conflicts among the most powerful ones and preventing absolute domination of a single *bey* that could eradicate nominal Ottoman sovereignty in the corresponding region. The official titles and honors granted by the Sultan were utilized as leverage to check and maintain the power balance among the *ayans*. The competition among the *ayans* boosted by greed and jealousy was always promoted by the delivery of these imperial titles and honors. In addition the elimination of the most disfavored *ayans* was undertaken via other *ayans* who were considered relatively more manageable and less perilous by the Porte. Actually this cyclical competition for being the instruments of the Porte's vengeance saved the empire from excessive decentralization and total dismemberment. Ali made great use of this policy of the Porte in his career and benefited from the changes in its attitudes towards the local Beys.²²

²¹ Pouqueville, p:264

²² The most manifest example of this policy can be seen in the struggle against the unruly ayan Mehmet Bushathl of Scutari, Kurt Pasha, Kaplan Pasha, Ibrahim Pasha and lastly Tepedelenli Ali Pasha were encouraged to fight against this influential ayan. Among these allies of the Porte the first two were removed by new competitors with less influence and power. The other two ayans loyal to the Porte, Ibrahim and Ali got into a severe struggle in which Ali Pasha enjoyed the favor of the Porte at the initial phase since he was the weaker. The solutions to settle their disputes were mostly in favor of Ali like the cession of Ohrid to him by Ibrahim. However the Porte shifted sides in the later phases of the conflict as Ali expanded his domains. It supported Ibrahim when he was about to be crushed by Ali. It sent orders to Ali to stop his aggression immediately.
HAT 29 Z 1215, No:264/ 15326

By the dismissal of Kurt Pasha from the *pashalik* of Berat and also from the Derbends in 1778 Ali had paid all his attention to acquire his binary post. Consequently he hired his services to the Pasha of Negroponte for a short time and achieved a considerable wealth by which he managed to aggrandize his militia.²³ At length having detached from all suzerains, Ali undertook serial massacres and booty again in all parts of Epirus and subdued Kaminitza, Libokovo, Malisovo, Hormovo, Lekli and Giates.²⁴ His brigandage infested throughout the pashalik of Berat destroying many towns and villages inhabited by the *reaya* of Kurt Pasha. Nevertheless he gradually installed his own authority in some parts of the pashaliks of Ioannina and Berat. In his first major attempt to gain the Porte's favor he volunteered to march against Selim Pasha of Delvino who as mentioned before had ceded or literally sold a strip of grove near the town of Butrinto to the Venetians. Complying with order of the Porte to reduce Selim, he penetrated his court, gained his confidence by his services, and finally murdered him with the help of the latter's antagonists.²⁵ In fact Ali was expecting to be granted the pashalik of Ioannina or Delvino as he eliminated a perfidious *ayan*. But the reward of this treachery was only the post of *kahya* or lieutenant to the newly appointed Çatalcalı Hacı Ali Pasha who also got the title of *Derbentler Başbuğu* after the dismissal of Kurt Pasha.²⁶ Though it was much less than what Ali expected, this post laid the foundations of Ali's future sovereignty in Greece and Albania. More than that, he would achieve the expected reward thanks to this humble post. Since Hacı Ali Pasha retired to his seraglio leaving the entire responsibilities of his very title as *Derbentler Başbuğu* to his *kahya*, Ali found the

HAT 29 Z 1216, No:258/14874

²³ Hughes, p:123

²⁴ These were the Toskid villages at the vicinity of Tepedelen inhabited by the rival beys most of which were Ali's kinsmen. Hughes, p:116

²⁵ Vaudoncourt, p:232

²⁶ Skiotis, p:231

opportunity to establish his authority, spreading his terror, suppressing the *armatols*, *klephts* and many of his rivals via his official duty of maintaining the security of the roads and mountain passes. Due to his achievements in suppressing the klefts and armatols, he was granted the pashalık of Triccala and Thessaly with two tails in 1783.²⁷ This very first acquisition in terms of official authority enabled him to deal with the affairs of Thessaly and Epirus more solidly. Soon after receiving the *berat* appointing him as Pasha he chose to reconcile with Ibrahim, the successor of Kurt pasha, by marrying his two sons Muhtar and Veli to Ibrahim's daughters.²⁸ Once again establishing family ties concluded the peace and provided him a suitable and secure atmosphere, though temporary, to crush the relatively weaker Beys.

1787 was also the year of the commencement of a war between the Porte and the allied powers of Austria-Hungary and Russia that would last until 1792 by which Ali found a suitable ground to progress his career at the Porte's service. Thanks to the efforts of his agents in Istanbul as well as his blatant achievements in suppressing the *armatols* and *klephts* in Epirus, he obtained a *firman* calling his Albanian troops to support Grand Vizier Yusuf Pasha's army against the alliance.²⁹ His contributions to the Ottoman defense along Danube and in Belgrade would be awarded soon by the title of *derbender başbuğu*, the office which he held in practice for some time as the kahya of the short lived başbuğ Hacı Ali Pasha. This crucial post conferred on Ali Pasha additional privileges and authority over other pashaliks which facilitated the installment of his rule gradually in the whole of Rumelia.

The anarchy in Epirus resulting from the incessant conflicts between the beys for the pashalık of Ioannina, which was vacant at that time incited Ali Pasha's ambitions to expand his rule there. After a couple of unsuccessful military campaigns

²⁷ Hughes, p:127

²⁸ Hat 24 RA 1217 No:119/4838

²⁹ Vaudoncourt,p:234

to crush the local beys, the Porte's refusal of his solicitations for the pashalik and Sultan's orders prohibiting his interference to the city, Ali Pasha's agents sent a forged firman to the inhabitants dictating their surrender, threatening them with complete massacre in case of further resistance and announcing him as the new pasha of Ioannina.³⁰ Then the city surrendered including the local beys who had barely postponed their own conflicts and allied against Ali's aggression. Ali Pasha stationed a deterrent garrison into the city without delay and gained many adherents among the notable inhabitants of the city by promising protection of life and property, posts in his court and even considerable amounts of riches from the booty. He also soothed the tension in Istanbul and regained his credit by marching against the rebel Bushatli Kara Mahmut Pasha. In addition by using the tool of bribery so cunningly he established significant links with the high rank bureaucrats who would shape the decision of the Porte about him. Thus the Porte acknowledged his treacherous seizure of the pashalik by a *fait accompli* officially and he was recognized as the Pasha of Ioannina in 1787.³¹

4.3 THE SULIOT AFFAIRS

His subsequent gains in terms of territory and offices ascended him to a formidable Bey from a frugal bandit chief. So intimidated by this rapid consolidation of power, many of the local Beys of Southern Albania and Northern Greece yielded to him without much resistance. Enjoying the feebleness of his rivals, Ali Pasha undertook several military operations and annexed the territories on the way to his hometown Tepedelen. By conquering, Klissura, Premeti, Ostanitza, Konitza, and the entire Acarnania he added a vast territory along the river Aous to his dominions and extended his sway to the North. But the Suliots, a confederation of the Greek speaking

³⁰ Vaudoncourt, pp:236, Hughes, p:132

³¹ Remerand gives that date as 1788 while Hughes and Vaudoncourt cites as 1787. Remerand, p:31

Albanian tribes of Christian creed from the high mountains of Southwestern Epirus, who had remained semi-independent from the Ottoman control in their inaccessible country, constituted a fierce challenge against his authority and further conquests.

The Suliot community was consisting of a few hundred Albanian families belonging to the nineteen tribal federations of ancient origin, which were called *faras* scattered around more than sixty villages.³² Among these *faras* the most potent were the Zervates, Botzarates from Dragani, Drakates from Martani, Busbates from Lakohoria, Dagliates from Fanari, Tzavellas, and Pasates.³³ Due to the geography of their land with rocky soil and high mountain ranges covered with dense forests, almost no agricultural output was produced. They relied mostly on forestry, raising sheep herds but much more than that ransoming, robbery and pillage. As a closed community dwelling in a mountainous region they retained their barbarian features like vendetta which fostered constant warfare among the *faras*. But this barbarian character of the Suliot community rendering them quite prone to warfare boosted by the scarcity of resources for subsistence and a high level of loyalty to the kinsmen, led them to act in unison against the external threats despite the antagonisms inside their communities. Their constant preparedness for war and mobility together with their geographical advantage that enabled them to attack and quickly retreat to their inaccessible country rendered them almost invincible. Their leading connection with the Ottoman Empire was the *Harac*, the poll tax exacted from the non-Muslims which sufficed them to retain their independence.³⁴ Even their women were familiar with

³² The exact number of the total Suliot villages was 66. The heart of Suli was consisting of only 4 villages and the rest were subject to these four in the tribal hierarchy. There were also Suliot settlements in the villages Kiafa, Avariko and Samoniva outside the great ravine of Suli.. Leake, William Martin, Travels in Northern Greece Adolf M. Hakkert, Amsterdam 1967, Vol:1 pp:503-504

Unlike Leake, Remerand call them war federations and cite their names as Symmachia. Remerand, p:42

³³ Leake, pp:501-502

³⁴ The amount of harac was 35 paras for each man and 10 paras for each boy.

warfare participating in clashes when needed. At the outskirts of their mountains there were villages attached to their confederation assisting them secretly with provisions when they fled deep into the forests in the high mountains. The Suliots often allied with the foes of Ali Pasha and received some degree of assistance from the Albanian Beys, Russia, France, Greek *armatols* and inhabitants of the Ionian Islands. Not only did they constitute a great challenge towards the expansion of Ali Pasha's authority in terms of material destruction and loss of men but also their long-lived persistence in defending their mountains symbolically overshadowed his glory.

Ali Pasha's first great campaign against the Suliots was held in 1792 in which he aligned with Beys of Margarithi and Paramithia. Since their territories were also adjacent to Suli they were in constant struggle against the terror of the Suliots. The pasha once again resorted to his exclusive talent in conspiracy and intrigues after collecting his troops. Too prudent to take the risk of directly attacking the wily Suliots the pasha arranged a cunning conspiracy. He wrote to chiefs of Suli inviting them to participate in a joint operation against their common enemies the Beys of Argyrocastro.³⁵ Despite the endless clashes between the Albanians this sort of temporary alliances were common among them. Then the Suliots responded to the invitation by sending a token force led by Lambros Tzavellas to inquire about the pasha's real intentions. Then the Pasha took them as hostages offering Tzavellas his freedom and even riches on the condition that he would join his side and work for him as an agent among the Suliots.³⁶ Pretended to have accepted the offer with content he turned back to Suli where he exposed the intrigue to the leaders of the Suliots tribal confederacy. Then the Suliots decided to extend their assaults against Ali who had already been informed of Tzavellas's treachery and attacked the village of Kiafa in the

Leake, p:502

³⁵ Poqueville, p: 298

³⁶ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independance 1821-1833*, Los Angeles 1973,p:31

Suli territories beforehand. But this very attempt resulted with a severe defeat of the Pasha's forces though they managed to kill Tzavellas. Not only did he lose men and prestige but also he was forced to pay high amounts of ransom to get some of his best warriors back from the Suliots. But he was determined not to detach from the affairs of Suli. Georgios Botzaris a notable chief in the Suliote community in Lakia was controlling the *faras* on the frontiers of Suli and his conduct towards the neighboring Beys including the pasha was peaceful unlike the rest of the chiefs thanks to the satisfactory amounts of bribe paid by the Beys. Having guaranteed Botzari's abstinence from interfering to the forces marching to Preveza via a narrow mountain pass in his lands Ali Pasha crushed their defenses in Nicopolis and occupied Preveza in 1798. More than that Botzaris' adhesion and defection led him even attack his kinsmen. Although he was killed soon, the pasha prospered in installing new dissensions among the tribes weakening their traditional solidarity against foreign enemies and made great use of Botzaris in the conquest of Preveza. His victory in Nicopolis and conquest of Preveza alleviated the disgrace in the aftermath of the great campaign in Suli to a certain extent. In fact Preveza was the second eminent source of provision for the Suliots after Parga, which would be the pasha's next target unless the Ottoman-Russian forces arrived.

More Albanian Beys joined the operations against the Suliots as their resistance remained solid and the destruction of their swift raids to the Albanian villages even got severer. By 1801 Ali Pasha conglomerated a series of remarkable beys most of whom were literally his enemies and organized another large scale campaign against Suli. Pronio Aga, Mahmut Dagliani, Hasan Zapari, Mustafa Ziguri, Ibrahim Khemi, Suleyman Coban, Bekir Giocatore and even Ibrahim Pasha of Avlona

aligned with the pasha.³⁷ This time a significant number of Suliots were slain and numerous villages in Suli were captured. But applying the most efficient tactics of guerilla warfare the Suliots under the leadership of Foto Tzavella and Dhimo Draku repelled the attacks of the allied forces retaining their positions in the higher ranges of Suli. The failure to break their resistance totally demonstrated the necessity of altering the strategy used by the allies. At length Ali Pasha built a chain of watchtowers along the precipitous Suli frontier. The towers were fully garrisoned and armed to detain any possible movement from the mountains. They would also serve to cut the communication and transportation towards the high hills of Suli. Hence a long-lasting blockade was set out rather than laying sieges and pursuit operations with huge forces. In fact it was impossible to control the whole area surrounding Suli by building towers and deploying forces. The Suliots somehow refreshed their provisions from Parga and also found means to carry off food and horses from their occupied villages.³⁸ Then the pasha resorted to futile efforts like demanding from Hierotheus, the metropolitan of Ioannina, to write the bishop of Parga and convince him to use his spiritual authority to prevent the help of the Parganots to the Suliots.³⁹

The loose bonds that connected the Beys in the alliance to Ali pasha's cause concerning the Suliots were to be unraveled soon. The intrigues of the pasha for seizing the castle of Delvino and his final conquest in 1802, which dispossessed Mustafa Pasha from his hometown, dissolved the moribund alliance. Ibrahim Pasha, Pronio Aga and Mahmud Dagliani started to furnish the Suliots with all sorts of provisions.⁴⁰ As a response to that move Ali Pasha offered peace to the Suliots with some stipulations like exiling Foto Tzavella, admitting Kitzo Botzari as the governor

³⁷ Leake, pp:509-510

³⁸ Leake mentions about the arrival of a serious amounts of powder and lead from the French. p. 517

³⁹ Leake, p:513

⁴⁰ Hughes, pp:142-145

of Suli and guaranteeing not to target his territories. On the other hand the interference of the French by sending ammunitions to Suli alarmed all neutral neighbor tribes and led them to side with the pasha. The Porte also urged the pasha to reduce the Suliots by releasing a firman summoning all local beys to join the operations. In the meantime the blockade on Suliot hills was elevated to the strictest level thanks to the contributions of the Tzamidhes and the Armatols. Suffered by intense famine and lack of weaponry the Suliots had to retreat to a few strongholds and transfer some of their population to Parga as well as the islands. The serial attacks of the vigorous alliance under the command of Veli pasha to the last points of resistance Kiafa, Samoniva and Dala were repulsed by the feeble remainder of the Suliot warriors. Now it revealed that once again the result of the war would be determined chiefly by the power of gold rather than the power of arms. The Suliot traitors, Kutzonika and Pyllo Gusi, after receiving a satisfactory quantity of purses from Veli took some soldiers of the pasha inside their houses at midnight.⁴¹ Backed by a swift general attack on Suli the intruders captured two of the villages slaying many of the defenders and forcing the rest to retire up to Kiafa who were left no chance but to surrender soon. In sum the pertinacious resistance of the Suliots against the pasha ended by December 1803 by an agreement signed between the Suliots and the concert of neighbor *Beys* under the leadership of Ali Pasha.⁴² According to the agreement Suliots would evacuate the entire Suli territory with their movable properties and they would be allowed to depart and settle securely in a distant location they wished. But as the evacuation began Ali Pasha found no benefit in keeping loyal to the terms of the agreement and massacred the Suliots who left their mountain forts.⁴³ A tiny group could flee and took refuge in

⁴¹ Hughes, pp:182

⁴² Leake,p: 519

⁴³ Stanford Shaw, *Between Old and The New: The Ottoman Empire Under Sultan Selim III 1789-1807*, Cambridge 1971, p:316

Parga under Russian protection where they would transfer to Corfu. Thus the Suliot resistance perished opening the way for the conquest of the entire Epirote coast and the loosen allegiance of numerous local beys was now to be strengthened by the intimidation of the Pasha's treacherous triumph.

The suppression of the Suliot challenge as well as the destruction of other *Kleft* groups fortified the authority and prestige of the pasha in the Balkans. Gradually his pashalık became a safe haven for the merchants and international trade.⁴⁴ He found solid pillars for his sovereignty in the *pashalık* among the merchants since he provided a dissimilar level of security for trade. This alliance with the merchants not only accelerated his rise but also the development of international trade in the *pashalık* facilitating his contact with the foreign powers.

⁴⁴ Halil İnalcık & Donald Quataert, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi*, İstanbul 2000, vol:2, p: 792

CHAPTER FIVE

ALI PASHA AND FRANCE

5.1 RELATIONS UNTIL THE RUPTURE BY THE OTTOMAN CAMPAIGN AT VIDIN

The French conquest of Italy and the collapse of the Venetian Republic by the treaty of Campo Formio in 1797 altered the balance of power politics in the Mediterranean. France annexed the whole territory of the old Republic of Saint Marc including the Ionian Islands and their mainland dependencies along the Albanian coast. This annexation generated the reasons and the means of the relations between the French and Ali Pasha by introducing the French to the Adriatic, Ionian Sea and even Epirus as the heir of Venice.

The Ionian Islands and the coastal towns of Butrinto, Parga, Arta, Vonitza, Preveza the ex-Venetian territories seized by France mainly relied on the supplies provided from Albania in terms of food, livestock, wood, resin etc. The assurance of this critical logistic supply was fundamental for the subsistence of the troops as well as the local population there.. Thence the Republic of Venice had always pursued subtle policies to keep in good terms with the autonomous *Beys* of Albania at the vicinity of its territories. France as the new sovereign of these locations was not immune from this indispensability either. On the other hand Albanian grain and

wood was crucial for the French troops on the Italian peninsula. Besides these regions were of great strategic significance since they constituted one of the few crossroads of trade between the East and the West in the Mediterranean. This fact was also admitted and even uttered by Napoleon who mentioned in a letter to Talleyrand that the Adriatic and the Albanian coast had much more importance for French interests than the whole Italy.¹ As the most powerful and influential bey of Albania of that time Ali Pasha was the leading figure for France to establish amicable relations and form a sort of strategic alliance to secure its existence on the ex-Venetian territories. Moreover this alliance would serve to sustain its greater policy concerning the East including the invasion of Egypt, to control the trade routes and to eradicate the British influence in the Mediterranean. Apart from all these calculations the French were also in pursuit of spreading the revolutionary ideas in Greece and liberating the so-called heirs of the ancient Greek civilization from the Ottoman yoke. They were secretly organizing ceremonies where enthusiastic discourses on the liberation of *Hellas* exhilarated the Greeks.² French intelligence officers were establishing contact with the Greek dissidents in the Peloponnese spreading rumors of a planned invasion of the peninsula that would end with an independent Greece under the protection of France.³ These propaganda activities had a twofold function for the French. They would serve the designs of a French-led Greek independence movement. At the same time they would alleviate the effects of the worsening French position in the Egyptian campaign.⁴ A formidable Greek insurgence in the Morea would undermine the Porte's power and

¹ Stavrianos, p:201

² The secret deputations of the French were especially active in Maina. Boppe, p:13

³ Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire- The Functioning of a plural society*, New York 1982 Vol:1,p:18

⁴ Boppe, p:14

attention in the Egyptian affairs. But the French intrigues did not provide the expected results at least for the Egyptian affairs. However French cooperation with Ali Pasha and promotion of his constant attempts for consolidating his power offered more visible advantages to the French. Having acquainted with the authority of the pasha and his existing capabilities the French were eager to establish permanent contact with him. Primarily Ali Pasha's cooperation could duly serve the policy of liberating Greece. In other words the Greek independence movement could proceed easier through the involvement of the Pasha's existing authority and organized government structure. This intersection and amalgamation of basic mutual interests laid the foundations of the relations between France and the pasha. However further strategic calculations of the pasha were likely to sour the relations without delay. Seeking additional means and support to be able to act more independently from the Porte, Ali Pasha had his own tertiary plans for the Ionian Islands and the coastal towns of the French to be realized in the short run. Had he seized these territories he would obtain a remarkable source of wealth by controlling an excessively strategic spot of trade in the Mediterranean. The conquest of littoral Albania together with one or more Ionian Islands if possible would have enabled him to destroy his rivals sheltered by the harsh geographical conditions and the inflexible ban of the former Venetian Republic on Ali Pasha's marine activities. Thus he would gain precious advantage for his military operations by guaranteeing easy access to the country of his foes from the sea. In addition Ali Pasha had plans for importing the latest military technology and weaponry from the French as well. These contradicting plans and interests of the two parts would lead to extremely fluctuating diplomatic relations of short lived alliances to be followed by hostilities and then quick reconciliations. One of the most remarkable aspects in these relations

between the French and Ali Pasha is that the maneuvers of other actors namely the Porte, Russia and Britain shaped the course of the relations to a great extent and each had to deal with Ali pasha as an independent counterpart in time.

The Albanian affairs of the French were under the responsibility of Napoleon Buonaparte who was the general in chief of the French Army in Italy and the architect of the very policy favoring the rapprochement with Ali Pasha. He personally engaged in a series of correspondences with him and then directed the conduct of his policy via his generals and consequently consuls in the region. Relying on the wording of these correspondences it is possible to evince that Napoleon encouraged the pasha blatantly to pursue the ultimate design of establishing an independent Albanian Kingdom and expressed his alacrity for cooperation. However Ali Pasha demonstrated no overt sign of detaching from the Porte's orbit even at the beginning while paying maximum attention to French alliance.

The first step in installing diplomatic relations was taken after the appointment of General Gentili as the Governor of Corfu and the commander of the French Forces in the Ionian Isles, by Napoleon with orders to negotiate with Ali the possible means of this cooperation. At the first meeting with Gentili, Ali Pasha declared his promptness to engage in close cooperation with France and as a prerequisite for his future services he demanded permission to use the Corfu Canal to transfer his forces dispatched against the confederacy of some rebel tribes in the North of Epirus, namely the Chamouri or Çamlık league formed by mainly the inhabitants of Vasilliona-Navitza and Himarra. In fact the rugged geography of South Albania with high mountain ranges covered with dense vegetation was a great obstacle for subduing independent tribes like the Suliots, Philates and the Himariots.

Hitherto the Venetians had managed to check Ali Pasha's power and expansion by rigorously keeping the entire Albanian coast including the Corfu Canal closed to his vessels.⁵ But Napoleon found it such a trivial concession for the inauguration of the amicable relations with Ali Pasha and let him step into the coastline towards the North. But the troubles of the Çamlık league remained unresolved at least for a couple of years since further concessions were needed to have a firmer existence on the Albanian coast. Consequently Ali Pasha established military facilities, depots and a customhouse at Salagora. Moreover he acquired rich fisheries in Santa Quaranta and seized the excellent harbor of Porto Palermo on the gulf of Arta that enabled him to control the sea trade route reaching Prevesa.⁶ He also surrounded the territory of his strong rival Mustafa Pasha of Delvino. In continuous contacts with Gentili, Ali gradually elevated the price of his alignment with the French and listed additional demands for being capable of rendering his services adequately. He demanded at least four officers specialized in modern canonry, ammunitions, vessels, the right of civil navigation and also of trade at the bay of Arta and the strait of Corfu.⁷ More than that, he overtly expressed his pretension to secure access to the Dalmatian coast and even establish his rule in the unruly *pashalık* of Delvino. But all of his demands were not likely to be met by Napoleon who only consented to Ali pasha's seizure of some coastal villages and to send two military specialists to serve in his court. In addition Napoleon also ordered the sale of two gunboats to him at a lower price as a sign of goodwill and support. Though not satisfied by this agreement Ali assured Gentili of his loyalty to France thenceforth. Whilst the 1798 Ottoman campaign against the rebel *ayan* Osman Pasbandoğlu of Vidin in which Ali

⁵ Vaudoncourt, p:78

According to an agreement between the Porte and the republic of Venice Ali Pasha was also banned from constructing forts along the coastline.

⁶ Hughes, p:151

⁷ Boppe, pp:8-9

Pasha also participated with his forces was a sort of test for which part he would offer his services. Four months after Ali Pasha joined the imperial army before the walls of Vidin news concerning the capture of Malta and then the invasion of Egypt by France was spread throughout the battlefield leading Ali to return to Ioannina urgently.⁸ He left his son Muhtar as the commander of his forces. As the Porte declared war against France and signed an alliance with Russia and Britain Ali Pasha soon came to the understanding that he was to reconsider his position and his newly developed relations with France before they became hazardous. In fact France seemed to be destined to retreat from Egypt and also lose its possessions in the Ionian Sea in case of an operation of the Ottoman forces supported by the Russian or British fleets against its feeble existence there. The Seven Isles namely Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia, Santa Mavra, Cerigo, Paxos, Ithaca together with their dependencies like Butrinto, Arta, Prevesa and Parga were already the subjects of Ali Pasha's ambitions for conquest and the role of the loyal servant to the Porte would probably provide him the opportunity to capture at least some of those territories either by direct conquest under the pretext of crushing the infidels or the granting of them by the Porte as a reward for his services in the war. Thus Ali Pasha pretended to be loyal to both sides at the initial phase of the war and invited to his court a French officer to discuss what to do after the latest developments lest the French realized his sudden policy shift. In fact Ali Pasha encouraged by the French defeat in Abukir was ready to unveil his enmity and prepared a conspiracy to the envoy by which he would acquire the crucial details of the French defenses in the Isles especially in Corfu for his military operations. Following his invitation General Chabot, successor of General Gentili, sent his adjutant General Rose to Ioannina to

⁸ Vaudoncourt, p:240

discuss the so-called possible steps to be taken by the pasha against the Porte and its allies.⁹ Afterwards, Ali Pasha was acquainted by Rose that Corfu just as the rest of the Isles, was incapable of resisting a long siege and the French troops on the Island had an inconsiderable number. Just after making sure that an operation on Corfu would not face serious resistance and getting the details about the logistics of other islands by captious questions Ali arrested Rose and conveyed him to Istanbul to be imprisoned in the famous Seven Towers.¹⁰ Consequently Ali Pasha sent an ultimatum to France demanding the immediate recognition of his authority in Prevesa, Vonitza, Santa Mavra and Butrinto, declaring that he would keep Chabot imprisoned until his demands including the recent ones concerning weaponry and ammunition were absolutely met. In fact the negotiations were in vain since Ali was determined to take the side of the victorious and France was far from having that image on behalf of him. Having decided to intimidate Ali Pasha and check his capabilities before the joint forces arrived Napoleon dispatched armies to Albania. In the meantime the pasha sent an ultimatum to the French garrison in Preveza to surrender the city. Having rejected surrendering, the French 6th and 79th brigades supported by the Prevezans organized their defenses out of the city near the ruins of ancient Nicopolis.¹¹ But the delay in the arrival of the newly dispatched French army left the defenders helpless against the Albanians commanded by the Pasha's himself.¹² Then the pasha inflicted a severe defeat on the French in October 1798 and occupied Preveza with ease. This victory cut off the provisions going to the Suliots, augmented the prestige of the pasha enabling him to contribute to the

⁹ Vaudoncourt, p:242

¹⁰ Boppe, p:17

¹¹ Boppe, p:19

¹² Hughes,p:154

forthcoming joint military operations of the Ottoman and Russian fleets to the islands.

5.2 MADONNA DI MONTENEGRO AFFAIR: THE FRENCH SLAVES IN IOANNINA

1798 was also an eminent year for the unofficial relations of the pasha with the French that can give hints about his approach to the west. Libyan corsairs captured an Italian vessel, *Madonna di Montenegro* returning from Egypt carrying a few reputed French generals, scientists and a high rank member of the French Catholic clergy. Among the passengers there were two generals, Poitevin and Beauvais, one artillery colonel, Charbonnel, the general commissar of war, Fornier, naval officers, Joye, Bouvier and Mathieu.¹³ In addition to these military officers there were also three members of the French High Commission of Arts and Sciences dispatched to Egypt; Pouqueville the future French consul in Ioannina, Bessieres and Gerard accompanied by the monk Guerini who was the former inquisitor of Malta. Soon after, the captives were sent to the ports of Navarino where Joye and Fornier were submitted to the Ottoman admiral Kadri Pasha. Then the rest were sent to Butrinto to be sold as slaves. Acquainted with the arrival of the captives to Butrinto Ali Pasha summoned the corsair chief to his court and bought Poitevin, Charbonnel, Bessieres, Bouvier and Guérini from him.¹⁴

The pasha treated his new French slaves with an unexpected sympathy and respect. He promised them their liberation after two years of service, assured them about immunity of life, and honored them by gifts. In fact he obtained with ease the long awaited French military specialists that the diplomatic entanglements with

¹³ Boppe, p:27

¹⁴ Remerand, p:63

France did not provide him before. He initiated a couple of military rearrangements and ordered Poitevin to restore and reorganize the fortifications around the city and the lake of Ioannina.¹⁵ Besides Bessieres served him to manage his commercial and fiscal affairs while Charbonnel taught at the newly established artillery school in Bonila.¹⁶ Charbonnel was also appointed as the commander of his artillery troops and accompanied the Pasha as his personal counselor wherever he roamed in the country. The Pasha made great use of Charbonnel's services and relied much on the modern artillery regiments he established in his quick rise as well as in his struggle against the local beys like Mustafa Pasha. On the other hand the monk Guérini converted to Islam and took his place in the court of Ali Pasha as one of his most loyal servants who stayed attached to him until his fall. Molla Mehmet Guérini served Ali Pasha as his chief dragoman responsible for all foreign affairs functioning like a foreign minister and at the same he served as the imam of his seraglio.¹⁷

All French captives except Guerini managed to flee from Ioannina and returned to France via Corfu.¹⁸ But their departure would not necessarily end their engagement with the Pasha. On the contrary their course of fate would be dissimilar to that of Guerini since their experiences during the captivity in the court of the pasha would lead them to be employed as the intermediaries of diplomacy between France and the pasha. In sum the *Madonna Di Montenegro* affair generated many of the protagonists of this diplomacy and a remarkable mass of intelligence about the

¹⁵ Boppe, p:27

¹⁶ Boppe, pp:28-29

¹⁷ Boppe,p:30, Vaudoncourt, p:253

¹⁸ The naval officer Bouvier would organize the tiny fleet of the pasha but he managed to get a license from the pasha to leave Janina and rendered no considerable service to him. Boppe, p:29

Pasha on behalf of the French that would be utilized in the shaping of the French policy with regard to him.

5.3 NAPOLEON AND ALI PASHA: POQUEVILLE'S MISSION IN IOANNINA

French expansion in the Mediterranean reached its peak by the invasion of Egypt in 1798 at the expense of the British and Russians both seeking further political and military expansion in the territories of the Ottoman Empire. Hence the very interests of the British and Russians converged on assisting the Porte to repel the menacing French and an alliance between the three parties did not take too long to be sealed. According to the war plans of the alliance between the Porte, Russia and Britain the task of purging the French existence in the Ionian Isles was assigned to the British- Ottoman joint fleet at first. However the Russian fleet set sail to the Ionian Sea with the pretext of the insistent invitations of the inhabitants of the Isles. This last minute *fait accompli* led the British fleet to take course towards Egypt. Although the Russian designs concerning the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of the Balkans harassed the Porte, no serious objection was seen from the Ottoman side. Whilst, Ali Pasha who had been assigned by the Porte to attack the mainland dependencies of the French, rapidly occupied Butrinto, Vonitza and additionally Gomenitza before the arrival of the joint fleets.¹⁹ But he failed to crush the stiff resistance of the Parganots and the tiny French garrison backed by some of the Suliots who escaped from the Pasha. In the meantime the joint fleet faced a considerable resistance only on the Island of Corfu, which did not surrender until an

¹⁹ Cevdet Hariciye 12 1213, No:1262

The Porte was also urging Ali Pasha to arrive Preveza and Parga before the Russians. Thus these two cities would be captured by the pasha without the Russian support in order to prevent any Russian claim.

Cevdet Dahiliye 14 R 1213, No:204

additional land force assembled among the forces of Ali Pasha, his son Veli Pasha and Ibrahim bey of Avlona joined the siege operation. As a result the French were dispossessed of all their gains after the treaty of Campo Formio, and the Ionian Islands were united under the flag of the so-called Septinsular Republic established by the treaty between the Porte and Russia in March 1800. According to the treaty the mainland dependencies captured by Ali pasha were conditionally ceded to the Porte. Accordingly the new republic would be under the suzerainty of the Porte paying the triennial tribute of 75000 Ottoman *guruş* having an equal status to the State of Ragusa.²⁰ Besides, Russia together with the Porte would guarantee the continuity of its sovereignty safeguarding it from any foreign intervention and preventing the Muslims from settling on the islands.²¹

But this joint protection was of no avail for the traditional Russian designs related with the Mediterranean and the Balkans. Russian agents adroitly boosted the indignation among the masses towards the nobility that was favored by the Ottomans, until complete anarchy and disorder ruled over the islands. They even stirred up numerous peasant revolts challenging the nobles who were the remnants of the Venetian aristocracy and relatively the nominal Ottoman sovereignty in the republic. They fomented the resentment and opposition of the magistrates against the Catholic nobility to incite the religious enthusiasm namely the Orthodox zeal which would gain Russia a solid ground in the republic as the so called protector of the Orthodox world. Then the Septinsulars invited the Russians to subside the turmoil whose interference would also be convenient according to the joint protection clauses of the treaty signed with the Ottomans. By the deployment of a

²⁰ Cevdet Hariciye 29 B 1215, No:290

²¹ Cevdet Hariciye 6 C 1215, No:564

stronger Russian garrison on Corfu with its auxiliary forces on several islands, the tension was soothed but the republic fell under the *de facto* occupation of Russia.

Despite the services and contributions of Ali Pasha during the war the Porte refrained from rewarding him by granting him the *pashalik* of the territories he personally captured from the French as he had expected. Moreover he was ordered to withdraw his troops from these territories urgently and to deliver them to Mustafa Pasha of Delvino, one of his strongest rivals. But his endeavors on the side of the Porte were not definitely fruitless. Soon after the peace in 1800, he was appointed the governor of whole Rumelia, *Rumeli beylerbeyi*, and several posts of *derbentler başbuğu* or superintendence of high roads and mountain passes scattered all around Rumelia, were united and bestowed on him as *derbendat nazırlığı*.²² These offices consolidated his authority in the whole Rumelia to a great extent though there were still enclaves of autonomous beys or tribes like those of the Suliots, *pashaliks* of Delvino, Scutari and Lepanto within the area of his rule.

The period between 1800 and 1804 was merely a pause for the diplomatic relations between the French and Ali Pasha since loyalty to the Porte gained the latter more than supporting the French and nullified temporarily the necessity of resorting to foreign support. In fact Ali Pasha was driven solely by rational calculations serving his interests of amassing more treasuries and obtaining as much autonomy as possible while keeping his nominal ties with the Porte intact. For Ali Pasha a new rapprochement would only be possible if the French could compensate their losses and regain their position potent enough to offer him what the Porte

²² In the early 19th century the Porte abolished the local security organizations based on the traditional Greek militias *armatoloi* and *martalos*. Their function was handed over to Albanians and Turks. The new organization was called *derbentler başbuğluğu* under the supervision of the *derbentler nazırlığı*. Just like Armatols and martalos they were responsible for the security of the mountain passes and inaccessible mountainous regions against the aggression of the bandits. Sonyel, p:97

would not. On the other hand the French also admitted that little could be done in the Balkans and especially in Albania and Greece without having amicable relations with Ali Pasha. Thus Napoleon personally did not cease his efforts to reestablish the connection with Ali Pasha by sending representatives to his court whose missions would finally succeed by 1804. Having established his son Veli in Triccala and the elder one Muhtar in Ioannina, Ali Pasha was now engaged in fixing his court in Manastir enjoying the additional privileges and authorities of occupying the *beylerbeyi* office. He turned his attention towards the Albanian affairs especially crushing the Suliots, Klefts together with the neighboring *pashaliks* as well as strengthening his own treasury by imposing heavy taxes to the subjects and converting their occupied lands to *çiftliks*. Among these the most challenging task was fighting against the Suliots, the source of the most formidable resistance to his authority in Albania. Ali Pasha initiated several campaigns supported by the Porte and even some of the rival Muslim Beys to crush the Suliots, but all were doomed to failure despite the fact that some Suliote chiefs like the famous Botzari were aligned with Ali Pasha thanks to the omnipotence of bribery. Finally the subsequent defeats against the Suliots, which proved the harshness of disseminating this warlike tribe by mere military means made Ali Pasha, postpone the revival of his diplomatic relations with France to be able to deal with the subtle intrigues of local politics. On the other hand the counter policy of the French to retaliate against Ali Pasha for his sudden shift of sides reached to providing logistical support to the Suliots. This very policy of retaliation also delayed the revival of the alliance between the two.

The outcome of the Egyptian campaign was a severe catastrophe for the French influence in the East. Not only France was driven out of Egypt and the Ionian Islands but its access to the Balkans was inhibited as the British substituted

their short lived leadership in the Mediterranean trade and the Russians handed over their role as the instigator of revolutions among the Christian *reaya* of Ottoman Rumelia. But Napoleon's elevation to power as the emperor of France by 1804 entailed a quick recovery for the French influence in Albania and Greece. After the victory of Austerlitz in 1805 and the capture of the Dalmatian coast including Venetian Albania Napoleon paid special attention to Epirus and to secure Ali Pasha's alliance. Unlike the British and Russians Napoleon pursued the policy of strengthening Ali Pasha paving the way for his independence that would result in a satellite Albanian kingdom. At that time the Ionian Islands, Albania and Epirus were viewed as the rear gates of the Balkans and also the Ottoman Empire where no great power could establish its influence and control properly. Apart from that Philhellenism boosted by the ideals of liberating Greece from the Ottoman sovereignty and the revival of the ancient Greek civilization, which was considered as the very core of the European civilization, was at stake. In fact there was a sort of competition between France and England in addition to the competition for dominating the Mediterranean trade, for the realization of these ideals that triggered the flood of countless European archeologists, historians, poets, adventurers etc. to Ottoman Greece. Ali Pasha who emerged as the most powerful *ayan* in Rumelia was in favor of reviving the relations with France without delay since he was aware of the advent of Philhellenism and desired to use it for backing his position before the Porte, which was quite susceptible as it had always been for all *ayans*. More than that, the lack of a solid local support or a cause that would strengthen his authority among the *reaya* made foreign assistance indispensable. Thus the immense European interest in the liberation of Greece was meant to be manipulated to secure this assistance. There are also further motives encouraged him to invest in

diplomacy with the French. His struggle against the Suliots who received protection and logistical support from Britain, Russia and occasionally France was deadlocked. The Russians on the Septinsular Republic were in coalition with the wealthy Greek merchants constantly preparing for insurgence using the *klefts* as a military power. The British had also proved hostile to his aggrandizement expressing their discontent for his semi independent status and designs for independence.

Ali Pasha's admittance of the appointment of Julien Bessieres as the consul of the emperor in Ioannina was the commencement of an era of reconciliation in which the cooperation and alliance between the two parties would be much more solid than the first rapprochement. He was cousin of Marshall Bessieres, one of the favorite foreign servants of Ali Pasha, who had pioneered the modernization of his artillery force, established ateliers for cannonry and prepared the strategies of his expeditions. Julien Bessieres hired a talented agent Dr. F.C.H.L Pouqueville who would carry out surveillance activities in Ioannina acting as the personal doctor of Ali Pasha in his seraglio, until he would take over the consulate from Bessieres. In fact Pouqueville would be the most eminent figure in the history of the diplomatic relations between Ali Pasha and France by his mission as the consul of the emperor. His familiarity with the traditions, language and culture of the Ottomans after several years of captivity in Istanbul as well as his medical career with specialization in the treatment of the Oriental Plague facilitated his acceptance by Ali Pasha whose interest in hiring European scientists, military specialists and medical doctors in his court was well known.²³ At length Pouqueville gained more and more credit in Ioannina as he demonstrated satisfactory results in his personal medical services that he rendered to the pasha. The official status of Pouqueville

²³ Boppe, p: 43

was soon to be acknowledged by the Porte with a *berat* allowing him to represent the French emperor in Ioannina. Moreover, this *berat* was accompanied by precious gifts from the sultan as a ritual of the protocol to be submitted to Napoleon and to Prince Eugene. Thus the French support to the cessation designs of Ali Pasha would be undertaken under the veil of Pouqueville's official recognition by the Porte. Meanwhile Ali Pasha also appointed one of his confidants, the Italian monk converted to Islam, Mehmet Guerini to deal with his relations with France. Pouqueville's efforts to reanimate the interrupted rapprochement included the recreation of confidence and reintroduction of the Pasha to Napoleon as a versatile ally in the region. In other words he ardently took a position in favor of the Pasha justifying the deeds and demands of him before Napoleon. His letters of advice to the French *charges d'affaires* Rufen in Constantinople encouraged his promotion in the eyes of the Porte.²⁴

The preliminary objective shared by the two was to drive the Russians immediately out of the Ionian Islands who were propagating revolutionary ideas among the Orthodox populations including the Serbs in Dalmatia and wealthy Greek merchant families in Albania opposing the consolidation of the French influence as well as the authority of Ali Pasha.²⁵ Hence the Russian military existence on the Islands inhibited the penetration of the French to the Balkans from the west and at the same time defied Ali Pasha's rise. To sum up, this shared understanding of threat seemed to be sufficient for the rebuilding of the alliance. But Napoleon also had greater projects for the entire Balkans by which he gave the mission to eliminate the Russian threat from the seaside to Ali Pasha, supported the *beys* of Bosnia and North Albania against the Austrians and finally sent troops and a couple of

²⁴ Pouqueville, Vol:4, p:214

²⁵ E. Driault, *La Politique Orientale de Napoleon 1806-1808*, Paris 1904, p:108

distinguished military specialists to provide assistance to the Ottoman army fighting against Pasbandoğlu in Vidin at the vicinity of the Russian forces. In other words, Napoleon's alliance with Ali Pasha and encouragement of his ambitions for independence was nothing but a fragment of the French policy of containing Russian and Austrian expansion in the Balkans; creating a suitable ground for his own. As the initial sign of support to Ali Pasha, Sebastiani, now the French Ambassador in Istanbul, spent great efforts to ensure the granting of the *pashalik* of Morea and Lepanto, both of which had crucial strategic importance for containing the Russians, to Ali Pasha's sons Veli and Muhtar.²⁶ More than that, the Pasha himself was also granted imperial permission to occupy the rest of the ex-Venetian territories on the mainland, which brought him the *pashalik* of Prevesa soon. But military aid was still a matter of controversy for both sides. Ali Pasha emphasized that the greatest threat was coming from the Russians on the islands and it was mandatory for him to evolve his forces from tribal warriors to a deterrent regular army. Nevertheless the incessant demands of Ali Pasha for obtaining French military aid in terms of training and equipment had always been replied by meager supplies of ammunition, canonry and assignment of small regiments of artillery commanded by a few middle rank officers. Among these officers Hacı Nicol Papasoglou of Greek origin was the most eminent figure. He had been assigned to recruit mercenaries among the local population to join his army called *Chasseurs d'Orient* for French operations in Dalmatia.²⁷ This was a sort of legion commanded by Greeks and soldiered by Slavs which had proven quite successful in the French attacks against the city state of Ragusa. This time a similar legion would be gathered among the Albanians to confront a possible Russian aggression and Ali Pasha,

²⁶ Pouqueville, p:352

²⁷ Boppe, p:66

though he was resented by the degree of military aid, not only allowed the recruitment of Albanian mercenaries in his territories for this Greek-Slavic legion but also hired Nicol as the commander of his own troops. Thus the long disputed French military aid was realized via allocating funds for mercenaries without dispatching a noticeable number of French soldiers. Whilst, the Porte reconciled with France by the end of 1806 and even furthered the relations to a military alliance against the aggression of Russia. Russian rapid advance through Walachia and Moldavia abrading the Ottoman existence in the Balkans led to the Porte's closure of the Bosphorus to Russian vessels inhibiting the provision of logistics to its troops on the Seven Islands. These developments donated Ali Pasha the opportunity for furthering his demands from the French and even insisting on the handing over of Corfu to his sway.²⁸ Driven by the objective of achieving means to control the trade corridor between Italy and the Balkans, Ali Pasha sought to capture at least one of the larger Ionian Islands and this time he simply took the highest bid by demanding from Napoleon the recognition of his sovereignty on Corfu, the largest and most eminent of the Seven Islands. Thus Ali Pasha would back the feeble French existence in Dalmatia by checking the Russians on the Islands, preventing them from sending reinforcements to Cattaro under French siege and even eliminating the lesser number of their troops on the smaller islands.²⁹ In turn he would acquire a remarkable hub of trade, a wealthy community to levy the highest *harac* as well as an extremely strategic checkpoint controlling the exit of the Adriatic to the Ionian Sea. But Napoleon favored a procrastinating policy towards Ali Pasha's territorial demands rather than negotiating the cession of the aforementioned lands with clear terms or rejecting them totally until the final reconciliation with the Russians by the

²⁸ Driault, p:113

²⁹ Paul F Shupp, *The European Powers ad the Nearestern Question*, New York 1966, p: 277

Tilsit Peace. In 1807 France released a comprehensive military aid package to the pasha consisting of one gunboat, one corvette, 50 artillery men with several officers, ordinances and military stores via the Kingdom of Naples.³⁰ By this appeasing supply of military aid the pasha's detachment from France was postponed if not halted. Though retaining the so-called ally role and reflecting complete compliance to Napoleon's instructions in the official correspondences and talks after the delivery of the military aid, Ali Pasha did not refrain from undertaking preparations for attacks against the Islands. He built fortresses, military stores along the tiny coastline he controlled and at the same time continued his efforts to convince Napoleon about his military operation plans at least to the nearest islands if not Corfu. Consequently a *fait accompli* that would not receive a deterrent reaction from France was on the way. Furnished by the French military training, artillery and gunboats he laid siege on the island of Santa Mavra in spite of his failure to convince the French about neither Corfu nor any other island in the Ionian Sea. Meanwhile the Porte also opposed his move and ordered the immediate retreat of his forces.³¹ *Chasseurs d'Orient* recruits, an artillery regiment commanded by the French Colonel Guillaume Vaudoncourt and the French destroyer *Le Requin* served in the vizier's army inflicting a severe destruction on the Russian defenses on Santa Mavra.³² Simultaneously his forces attacked Parga the last unconquered ex-Venetian town on the Albanian coast but failed to break the Russian resistance. Insistent on his designs for the two Ali Pasha sent Mehmet Guerini with a deputation to the Tilsit Conference endeavoring to take part in the negotiations and realize his designs by diplomacy at the highest level.³³ He intrigued on behalf of the Russian and

³⁰ Vaudoncourt, Guillaume F.F, p:251

³¹ Cevdet Hariciye R 1219 , No:8278

³² Hughes, p:202

³³ Pouqueville, vol:4, p.350

French plenipotentiaries to secure a promise for the cessation of land and lobbied for his master's claims about the importance of the demanded territories for his nascent Greco-Albanian kingdom.³⁴ The conclusion of the Tilsit Peace ceding the Ionian Islands back to the French once again nullified Ali Pasha's efforts on Santa Mavra and Parga. Having received the note of Napoleon urging him to retreat from Santa Mavra and reminding the repossession of the ex-Venetian lands by France, Ali Pasha had to quit the ongoing operations. Just after the disappointing outcome of Tilsit, Ali Pasha refreshed his last diplomatic maneuvers towards the French for the last time by demanding only Parga.³⁵ At the same time he elevated the duties on grain, wood and livestock exported from Albania to the Isles to deter the French who were in urgent need of cash as well as all sorts of logistics. But it revealed soon that the diplomatic means had almost no benefit for Ali Pasha who gave the highest priority to capture as much territory as possible from the Ionian Islands and their single remaining dependency Parga at any cost.

5.4 THE SPLIT: NAPOLEON CONFRONTS ALI PASHA BY THE ALBANIAN LEAGUE

The Tilsit Peace evolved Ali Pasha's relations with France from a sort of loose cooperation based on mostly mutual promises rather than concrete actions to blatant enmity since both sides remained insistent on claiming sovereignty on the ex-Venetian territories in the Ionian Sea and the Albanian coast. Following the peace treaty France paid much more attention to other *beys* of Albania and even sought an Albanian league against Ali Pasha whose contact with the British turned into an alternative alliance. In fact the existence of a British fleet in the Adriatic and

³⁴ Vaudoncourt, pp:254,295

³⁵ Pouqueville, vol:4, p:353

Ionian Sea together with the increasing possibility of a British expedition joined by Ali Pasha forced the French to decide whether they would accept his territorial demands like the cession of Parga or they would seek his rivals' alliance to achieve a sort of counterbalance. French military capabilities on the Isles as well as in the Dalmatian coast relied solely on the logistics and provisions sent by the Kingdom of Naples. But the optimal source of provisions was mainland Albania which was for the most part under Ali Pasha's control. On the other hand patrolling and blockade activities of the British fleet in the Ionian Sea hardened the provisions from Naples and deepening the economic shortage there. Thus having secure access into mainland Albania was fundamental for the continuation of the French existence on the Isles and it required the detainment of Ali Pasha's aggression.

The last series of negotiations with France were held in 1807 by Sehri Efendi the second minister of state in the pasha's court who addressed to Cesar Berthier Governor of Corfu Ali Pasha's demands concerning Parga. However both sides had already decided about their next move which would do nothing but finalize the short lived cooperation. In fact the nature of the talks was of a mutual ultimatum. The arrival of the Parganot deputation requesting help and protection against the aggression of the pasha was utilized as a pretext to reject his demands. Besides Berthier's prompt declaration urging Ali Pasha to withdraw from the other mainland dependencies, Butrinto and Preveza, displayed the degree of discord between the two. Finally Berthier announced the annexation of Parga to the Septinsular Republic under French protection. Then the immediate response was in the form of additional financial and commercial sanctions imposed on the French. Ali Pasha elevated tremendously the already increased duties on agricultural products and livestock

exported to the islands. Furthermore, he prohibited all sorts of loans to French entrepreneurs, government authorities and citizens of the Septinsular republic.

Corfu became the center of opposition to the tyranny of Ali Pasha through the contacts of general governor of the Ionian Islands Bessieres and the General commissar Cesar Berthier with the tribal leaders and *beys* of Albania. Klefts, Greek Armatols, Muslim Albanian *beys* and Suliots seeking French protection sent their representatives to Corfu to discuss the details of the league against Ali Pasha by the end of 1808. But the sudden capture of the four islands by the British fleet, leaving only Corfu, Santa Mavra and Ithaca to the French triggered the Albanian league's attacks against Ali Pasha much earlier than expected.³⁶ Whilst the outbreak of a Greek peasant revolt in Thessaly under the leadership of the *armatol* captain Enthyme Blachavas for which Ali Pasha needed to spare a significant force encouraged other resented Albanian *beys* to join the league.³⁷ In addition the anarchy Blachavas caused, blossomed other uprisings led by Demetrio Paleopoulo and Niko Tzaras two celebrated kleft chieftains who were propagating their schemes of overthrowing the tyranny of the pasha and even establish a Greek government. Although they were far from achieving their ends they contributed to the preparations of the Albanian league by keeping a serious number of the pasha's troops in distant locations away from the league's predetermined points of attack. Finally Ibrahim Pasha of Berat assembled all formidable enemies of Ali around himself like the former pasha of Delvino Hasan Zapari, Pronio Aga of Margariti, Hasan Tagliani Aga of Konispoli, the Beys of Chimera, Xeromeros, Chamouri, and the Suliots. As the revolt in Thessaly spread throughout Macedonia, the Albanian league assisted by the French artillery regiments commanded by François Chaise

³⁶ Collingwood, p:74

³⁷ Hughes, p:211

initiated attacks against Ali Pasha's territories. Meanwhile the French ambassador in Istanbul was negotiating with the Ottoman high rank bureaucrats the means of persuading the sultan to declare Ali Pasha as a rebel. But as Ali Pasha overtly allied with the British by 1809, opening his ports to British merchants and navy, supplying them with all sorts of provisions in return for procuring assistance of the British fleet in his operations and receiving modern weaponry like the newly-invented Congreve rockets and fine artillery, the French military aid to the league became ineffective. On the other hand the revolt in Thessaly quickly degenerated and turned into mere brigandage coupled by massacres victimizing both the Greek and Muslim populations. Then the public support to the revolt faded drastically and Muhtar Bey crushed Blachavas' rebels with ease. On the other hand the Albanian league was far from maintaining its coherence and military might, as Ali Pasha was too generous in delivering them great amounts of gold in return for reconsideration of their positions. Besides he reconciled with the chiefs of Chamouri, Margariti, Paramythia and also the Chimeriotes. Having guaranteed the inaction of some *beys* in the alliance and furnished his forces with the British military aid Ali pasha marched against Berat and laid a siege on the chateau of the father in law of his two sons Ibrahim Bey in 1809. Thanks to the British military aid including the newly invented rockets under the direction of British officers Ali Pasha won a quick victory.³⁸ As a result Ibrahim was forced to surrender Berat and fled to Vallona leaving vast territories of his *pashalik* to Ali Pasha. In fact the conquest of Berat was realized without the knowledge and confirmation of the Porte.³⁹ But Ali Pasha dispatched envoys and informed the Porte that Ibrahim was in attachment with the unruly insurgents in upper Albania and established close ties with the Russians as

³⁸ Hughes, p:217

³⁹ Ahmet Cevdet, Tarih-i Cevdet, Vol:5, pp:2380-2381

well as the French to secure his independence. Besides he presented a forged scenario of revolt in Berat and asserted that the inhabitants were about to execute Ibrahim unless his forces took control of the city and suppressed the rebels.⁴⁰ Apart from using these pretexts he delivered a crucial amount of gold in the capital for the acknowledgment of his conquest as well as appointment of his son as the pasha of Berat. At last the Porte did not demonstrate any negative reaction to these developments and conferred the government of Berat to Muhtar. Thus Ali Pasha's dominions spread through the rich plains of Musachia, the most fertile province of Albania, and his eminent rival Ibrahim Pasha received a fatal blow by losing massive lands including his hometown.⁴¹

As France started to lose ground in Greek affairs by the swift advent of the British to the Ionian Islands, French conspiracies against the pasha gained higher frequency. Despite their adherence to the British some Greek revolutionary circles were not totally indifferent to the possibilities of any French support. Theodoros Kolokotronis and Ali Farmakis the most famous *kleft* leaders of their time initiated a stiff joint rebellion in the Morea. Without delay, they appealed to the French unfolding their plans to General Donzelot for propagating the revolt and overthrowing the tyranny of Ali together with his sons from Greece by their assistance.⁴² In fact Donzelot employed all his skills in depicting a quite encouraging scheme of French assistance to the rebels that would secure the establishment of a so-called independent government. Donzelot's generous offerings included 500 French artillerymen and 5000 Greek mercenary in French pay, one Corsican regiment, all means of transport and additional funds to recruit

⁴⁰ HAT , 3 § 1225, NO: 41603 B

⁴¹ Hughes, p:218

⁴² Dakin, p:32

mercenaries.⁴³ Moreover the French would soothe the tension in Istanbul and convince the sultan that the rebellion was not against the Porte but against the tyranny of the pasha. Thanks to the preliminary funds Donzelot supplied, the rebels recruited more than 3000 mercenaries among the pasha's foes. Nevertheless the formation of the Duke of York's Greek Light Infantry regiments following the British occupation of Zanta in 1809 the rebellion and attempts of cooperation with the French abruptly vanished. As the British propaganda and generosity prevailed over that of the French, Klefts started to enter British service in masses by joining the aforementioned regiments.⁴⁴ Even Kolokotronis took his place with the rank of captain in these regiments to whom Britain owed much for their distinctive efforts during the occupation of the Ionian Islands.

Determined to disperse the members of the Albanian league, Ali Pasha eliminated the possibility of further French support to his enemies by encouraging the British to retain the blockade at Corfu and some Northern Albanian ports. Among the league Pronio Aga of Paramithia and Hasan Zapari of Margarithi both of whom Ali Pasha signed a temporary peace before his operation to Berat were the next preys of his troops.⁴⁵ After consequent operations of Omer Vryoni, one of the confidants of Ali Pasha, they capitulated showing little resistance and finally perished in the dungeons of Ioannina. On the other hand Ibrahim Bey, exiled in Avlona, revived his relations with France and engaged in a series of diplomatic correspondence with Paris offering the city of Avlona to the French to encourage them for an operation against Ali Pasha which would also restore his rule in the more eminent province of Berat including the fertile Musachian Plains. Ibrahim Pasha's efforts to compensate his losses and recover the desperate situation of the

⁴³ Dakin, p:33

⁴⁴ John W. Baggally, *Ali Pasha and Great Britain*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1938, p:41

⁴⁵ Hughes, p:219

Albanian league in its struggle against Ali Pasha were in vain since the French position in the Peninsular War in Spain worsened to a great extent by 1810. Thus France denied his offer stressing its intention not to sour its already fragile relations with the Porte by annexing a part of the Ottoman territory. The critical scarcity of food in Corfu was another fact that was binding the French to seek any possibility of convincing the pasha about alleviating the blockade or violating it in secrecy. The Albanian league so desperate to refresh the French support and weakened by the last defeats had to conclude a peace with Ali Pasha in 1811. Mustafa Pasha of Delvino, Tagliani of Konispoli and Murtaza Bey of Argyrocastro consented to send their sons as hostage in Ioannina as a demonstration of goodwill and loyalty to the terms of peace. The peace was followed by the issue of a sultanic decree granting the *pashaliks* of Elbasan and Avlona to Muhtar Bey. Therefore, just after Berat Ibrahim Bey's sovereignty was nullified also in Avlona, which meant the *de juri* elimination of the most formidable rival of Ali Pasha in Albania. In order to conclude this victory Ali Pasha cut all communication between Corfu and Avlona by the help of the British fleet and ultimately marched against Ibrahim. Harassed by the rapid advance of Ali Pasha and the penetration of the British to Albania on his side, the beys of Chamouri, Gardiki, Zulati, Culoza and Ducates were rallied around Selim Bey Kokka the most influential of the beys of Delvino and established a second Albanian league. Though France avoided taking part explicitly in this struggle against Ali Pasha by sending troops or providing military aid it did not refrain from using gold to organize and sustain the league. It was well documented by the French that numerous *beys* and *agas* of North Albania were granted these subsidies in return for contributing to the forming of the league with soldiers and weaponry.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Boppe, pp:135-137

But all was too late to stop Ali Pasha who managed to gain some followers of Ibrahim in Avlona by bribery. The amount also sufficed to secure the betrayal of his two personal servants. Informed by his agents the approach of Ali Pasha to the gates of Avlona, Ibrahim fled to the mountains in disguise and took refuge in the village of Gardiki. But his servants had already informed the pasha about his escape. Meanwhile Mustafa Pasha of Delvino, Selim Bey Coca with the chiefs of Liapuria, Gardiki and Argyrocastro assembled their forces to prevent Ali Pasha's expansion towards Delvino. The rapid victories of Omer Vryoni drove the league's forces back to the city of Argyrocastro which surrendered after a brief siege. Selim Coca, the chiefs of Argyrocastro and Lipuria barely escaped to Corfu and the rest namely Mustafa Pasha and Demir Dosti retreated to Gardiki like Ibrahim.⁴⁷ By this conquest the great valley of Druno, the most populated and fertile region of Albania, was seized by Ali Pasha who converted most of the territory to his private *ciftlik*.

The remainder of the league, which took refuge in Gardiki prepared for a solid defense. They had an advantageous position since the inhabitants of Gardiki as well as the troops in the city were all Muslim Albanians some of whom were kinsmen of Ali Pasha's soldiers. Being aware of this Ali Pasha's Albanian soldiers showed great reluctance to fight and this prevented the storming of the city at first. Before a total offense the pasha found it suitable to negotiate with the inhabitants to surrender Ibrahim. Then the Gardikiots did not hesitate to sacrifice Ibrahim and he was imprisoned with his family in Ioannina. But the surrender of Ibrahim would not save the Gardikiots to whom the pasha's final strike was yet to come. Having an absolute resoluteness to crush the remainders of the league and also avenge from the Gardikiots, Ali Pasha dispatched one of his Greek confidants, Athanasi Vaya to

⁴⁷ Hughes, p:222

recruit an army among the Greeks most of whom would be klefts to finalize the battle. Finally the Greek troops though arrived with retard, forced the defenders surrender the city and imprisoned Mustafa Pasha and Demir Dosti.⁴⁸ By the conquest of Gardiki in 1812 Ali Pasha eliminated almost all of his old antagonists and became the uncontested sovereign of Epirus possessing a large territory including a long stretch of coast controlling the Ionian Sea and the islands.

After the pasha's victory against the French-led Albanian league, French denunciations and threats to the Porte related with the hostile acts of the pasha towards France reached its peak. These diplomatic notes were responded by conventional assurances of mere clichés without any concrete action and it strained the relations of the Porte with France. Henceforth the Porte was engaged in the semi-confidential diplomatic relations of the pasha with France. The French foreign minister Talleyrand and under his supervision the French *chargé d'affaires* in Istanbul Latour Mabourg undertook a campaign of propaganda against Ali Pasha to make him fall into disgrace before the Porte.⁴⁹ They pressured the Porte by repeatedly setting forth allegations of aggression and violation of its neutrality due to its unruly pasha's hostile acts ⁵⁰ Ali Pasha defended himself by stressing the clandestine activities and intrigues of the French with the rebels. He also assured the Porte that he was taking each and every measure to preserve the interests of the Sultan without violating the neutrality as he had ordered.⁵¹ Though sultan Mahmud II was in favor of eliminating Ali Pasha, the Russian advance from the Danubian provinces and the fragile state of the Ottoman sovereignty in the Balkans defied by local insurgences impeded his removal. In fact the decrease of his credit in Istanbul

⁴⁸ Hughes, pp:224-225

⁴⁹ Talleyrand was threatening the Porte for launching military operations against Ali Pasha
Hat 19 C 1226, No:17180

⁵⁰ Hat 21 Ra 1223, No:5888/142

⁵¹ Hat 13 B 1226, No:37730/836

was rooted when he rejected to join the defenses against the Russians in 1809 by presenting excuses like his old age and unstable state of health.⁵² But at the same time he was personally commanding the operations against Ibrahim pasha and the Albanian league. As all foes of the pasha vanished by the defeat of Ibrahim the Porte would monitor his moves with additional vigilance. The tone of the French notes gradually got harder and finally the Porte received an ultimatum from Talleyrand in 1810 threatening to wage war on Ali Pasha and cease all diplomatic relations unless the pasha was penalized. The Porte's response was to send a *firman* to the pasha ordering him to return the boats captured from the French and the Corfiots, to submit the French fugitives in his court, to expel the British corsairs from Albanian ports and lastly to lift the ban on grain transportation to Corfu.⁵³ The Porte appointed an inspector responsible for carrying out an investigation regarding the administration of the *pashalik* and Ali's foreign relations. Ali Pasha was also dismissed from the *mutasarrıflık* of Ohrid, Triccala and Ilbasan as a sanction. As a result the dispatch of an inspector Celal Efendi and his dismissal from three of his *mutasarrıflıks* abated the tension in the relations to a certain degree. The Porte also sent instructions to the pasha about the necessity of retaining the amicable relations with Britain while soothing the French resentment stemming from the blockade on Corfu.⁵⁴

In light of the Ottoman documents delivered to the pasha it is possible to view that the period starting from 1812 until the final departure of the French from the Ionian Islands after the surrender of Corfu in 1814 passed with unending French denunciations about the pasha's hostile acts towards them and his close relations with Britain. The Porte strived to maintain peace with France by ordering the pasha

⁵² Cevdet Askeri, 25 Ş 1225, No:14394/347

⁵³ Hat 23 Ca 1225, No: 41423 B / 973

⁵⁴ Cevdet Hariciye , 25 S 1226, No:8165

to give as much secret concessions as possible to France but also urged him to act with prudence not to abort or damage his relations with Britain. Therefore the Porte was pursuing a sort of “imbalanced balance policy” somewhat in favor of Britain and this imbalance also accelerated the evasion of the pasha’s relations with France and the British domination in Greek affairs.

CHAPTER SIX

ALI PASHA AND GREAT BRITAIN

6.1 THE PROLOGUE OF RELATIONS WITH GREAT BRITAIN:

J.P MORIER'S MISSION

Ali Pasha's first contact with the British dates back to 1803 when he appealed to the British ambassador in Istanbul, William Hamilton, by a letter proposing close cooperation against France presenting a list of offerings, as well as the establishment of a permanent British consulate in Ioannina. In the very letter Ali Pasha was declaring that he was ready to render all the assistance to Britain with regard to provisions from Albania like timber, water, food, livestock, horses and allocation of his ports in the Adriatic for military or commercial use.¹ He also offered the British the right to disembark and station their troops along the coast to garrison any castle or build fortifications. Besides he expressed his intention to promote trade between Albania and Great Britain. He offered special privileges to the British merchants including the permission of cutting down timber in his territories in whatever quantity they would demand. ²After a series of correspondence and consultation with the British Foreign Minister Hawkesbury, J.P

¹ A Letter from the British Ambassador William Hamilton to Arthur Paget mentions the content of Ali Pasha's offerings, Baggally, p:84

² Boppe, pp:36

Morier was sent to Ioannina as a special envoy of the British Foreign Office. In addition to the basic responsibility of negotiating aspects of commercial and logistical cooperation with the pasha, Morier's mission would be to arbitrate between Ali Pasha and the Russians in the Septinsular Republic.³ In convenience with the British policy of alignment with the Russians against the aggression of Napoleon lasted until Tilsit, Morier worked on influencing Ali Pasha to comply with the terms of the agreement between the Porte, Britain and Russia concerning the Septinsular Republic. At that time the primary concern of Britain was to use Ali Pasha as a shield against the French penetration to Greece without reflecting an explicit patronage over the pasha. Morier's efforts were supported by the instructions of the Porte given to the pasha about conducting amicable relations with the British and complying with the terms of the tripartite agreement. However the Porte also instructed the pasha to cooperate with Britain in military affairs and assign a certain number of his Albanian forces to British command.⁴ The British were also concerned with the sympathy of the local population especially the Greeks towards the French existence in the region. Fearing a possible French invasion in Greece, Britain needed to eliminate any pillars of their influence. Morier was also rendered responsible for assessing the public opinion about the French. Furthermore Britain was preoccupied with the enmity between the pasha and Russia. In fact Ali Pasha's ambition for seizing the Islands with their mainland dependencies was a source of fierce antagonism against the Russians who were overtly hostile to him.⁵ Since their first step on the islands the Russians pursued a policy of protecting the *klefts*, *Suliots*, *izbanduts* or corsairs and also Greek insurgents who escaped from Ali

³ Baggally, pp:17-18

⁴ The order of the Porte included the assignment of two thousand Albanian soldiers by Ali Pasha under the command of the British to be used in the operations in the Mediterranean.
Cevdet Hariciye, § 1214, No:1120

⁵ Shupp, p:281

Pasha by providing them a safe haven in the island of Santa Mavra in particular.⁶ Additionally their contacts with the Greek primates and merchants to stir up a greater insurgence in Ali Pasha's dominions fostered suspicion and antagonism. Molested by the Porte's tendency to evade the renewal of the triple alliance and its recognition of Napoleon's imperial title, the British strived to prevent the realignment of the Porte and Ali Pasha to the French via Ambassador Arbuthnot and the special envoy Morier's missions. For the Porte, Napoleon's victories at Austerlitz, his capture of Dalmatian Coast and the hostile Russian attitude in the dispute with the Walachian *hospodars* were sufficient to lean on the French though this alignment would not last long. Besides Napoleon's generous offerings to Ali Pasha like military aid, some of the Ionian Islands and even independence, rendered the price of securing his rejection of the French alliance became unaffordable for the British. In sum Ali Pasha's choice in favor of the French trivialized the diplomatic efforts of Britain. As a response to the pasha's choice in favor of the French Britain safeguarded the klefts and even assisted their raids on the territories of the pasha.⁷ There emerged roughly two clashing alliances before Tilsit one was the axis between the Russians, Great Britain supporting the local klefts and the other France, Ali Pasha and the Porte. But all actors were quite prone to double-dealings and swift shifts of sides, which would be manifest at Tilsit.

⁶ Izbanduts were the Greek corsairs. Baggally, p:9

⁷ Dakin,p:33

6.2 THE QUESTION OF PARGA

The ill-fated mission of Morier was soon to be followed by Major William Martin Leake's appointment as the special representative of the British government in Ioannina.⁸ Leake had served in a military mission to Ali Pasha assisting the restoration of the fortifications in Albania during the triple alliance's wars against France. Then in 1807 his military mission turned diplomatic and through negotiations with Ali Pasha he reinstalled the British influence in Greece and Albania. Leake's mission had a decisive distinction from that of Morier since the rapid changes in the political conjuncture after Tilsit shifted the alliances between the main actors leading Britain towards the side of the Porte to confront Russia and France. In this conjuncture Ali Pasha was no longer to be contained but he ought to be supported according to the viewpoint of the British.⁹ On the other hand Tilsit proved to Ali Pasha that the French had no intention to fulfill his demands concerning the Islands and their mainland ports. On the contrary the French sought every means to contain him by supporting his rivals in Albania and acted with extreme reluctance to furnish him with adequate weaponry. The first step of the negotiations between Britain and Ali Pasha consisted of scrutinizing the common threats and the possibilities in case of cooperation between the two parties. Unlike the French, the British advocated the continuity of the Porte's nominal sovereignty in Greece and Albania and avoided discussing Ali Pasha's independence at first. Both stressed the urgent necessity of expelling the French from the islands leaving the greater questions aside to be settled after the French threat vanished. Ali Pasha expressed his eagerness to cooperate with the British as well as his need of artillery, ammunition and monetary aid to be able to sustain his military power. In addition he

⁸ Mackesy Piers, *The War in The Mediterranean 1803-1810*, London 1957, p:286

⁹ Driault, p: 245

requested from the British to assist him in his operations against Santa Mavra and hand over this nearest and least garrisoned island among the Ionian Islands to his sway together with the city of Parga.¹⁰ Consensus would not be easy to reach soon. In 1807 British authorities replied to his demands by accepting to extend the blockade on Corfu to Santa Mavra and dispatch a military aid the size of which would be decided after upcoming negotiations.¹¹ However they denied sending troops to the siege on Santa Mavra leaving this task to Ali Pasha's own forces. On the other hand no decision could be made about the situation of Parga. This result, though not fully satisfying for Ali Pasha, led his accredited agent in London Seyid Ahmet Efendi and the British representative Leake to carry out a much more arduous diplomacy to conclude the final agreement.¹² Ali Pasha announced that he was ready to open all his ports to British warships, to provide logistics and to ban all sorts of exports and transportation to the Islands as well as to the Dalmatian ports under French control. But he remained firm by exhibiting no flexibility with regard to his claims about Parga. The pasha also demanded half million pounds of subsidy per annum in exchange for exposing his country to French and Russian aggression by taking the British side.¹³ Though no final agreement was concluded concerning Parga, the issues of military aid, exchange of intelligence and the use of the Albanian ports by the British navy were settled. In other words the cooperation was realized in logistical means. Ali Pasha also admitted the recruitment of Greek regiments from the inhabitants of Morea to be stationed on the islands against the French. On the other hand the scheme of an independent Greco-Albanian kingdom was now utterly put forward to Ali Pasha by the British. Thus Britain was

¹⁰ Shupp, p:280

¹¹ Baggally, p:36

¹² Baggally, pp:37-38

¹³ Piers, *The War in The Mediterranean 1803-1810*, London 1957, p:347

magnifying the mission of the pasha by identifying the Greek revolution and his independence efforts identical. Relying on the existent organization and authority of the pasha who enjoyed a kind of *de facto* independence it would be less perilous and burdensome for the British to achieve the liberation of the Greeks. Once the liberation took place it would be less costly to topple this Albanian tyrant than engaging in subtle revolutionary activities without rigorous support from inside the Ottoman system. In accordance with this policy the British exposed their so-called projects about Albania to Seyid Ahmet mentioning the possibility of this kingdom under the sovereignty of Ali Pasha to which all Ionian Islands would be ceded at last with the condition of granting some trade privileges and the right use the Porto Panormo Harbor.¹⁴ Although no written statement or agreement was presented to Ali Pasha these unbinding offerings would suffice to keep him attached to the British and to mollify his resentment concerning Parga.

Now furnished by British weaponry, technical training and money Ali Pasha was supposed to act in conformity with the British war plans. Ali Pasha was instructed by the British to assist the Austrians to expel the French garrisons along the tiny coastline of Dalmatia.¹⁵ But having plunged into the quarrel with Ibrahim Pasha of Berat Ali Pasha abstained from fulfilling his share in the operation. In fact the Albanian troops were not appropriate for siege operations against well fortified garrisons. In addition there was an uncalculated long and rugged route to Dalmatia passing from the territories of the most formidable enemy of the pasha.¹⁶ Thus the failure of the Dalmatian invasion revealed that the British alliance with Ali Pasha could bring no offensive advantage. In the meantime the pasha eliminated the menace of the two subsequent Albanian leagues formed by the most powerful *beys*

¹⁴ Baggally, p:68

¹⁵ Piers, p: 362

¹⁶ Piers , p:348

of Albania supported by the French. Thus the possibility of the emergence of a serious threat from the local *beys* against his authority was eradicated. In tandem with Ali Pasha's war against the league the British occupied four of the seven Ionian Islands Cerigo, Cephalonia, Zanta and Ithaca in 1809, driving the French to their last great stronghold, Corfu. The conclusion of peace between the Porte and Britain in the same year generated such an affirmative atmosphere which legitimized to a certain degree the latent contact of the pasha with Britain. In addition Ali Pasha played a key role in the capture of Santa Mavra by the British in 1810 hoping to get the island soon as a reward for his services though no clear agreement was existent about the situation of the island. But in general this deal with the British was manifestly fruitful for Ali Pasha when compared to his short lived attempts to ally with the French which ended to no affirmative result but antagonism and counter conspiracies. On the other hand, Ali Pasha's logistical assistance by opening his ports and allocating a vast resource of wood, resin, food, horses etc. was fundamental for the British maritime operations. Apart from the logistical support of the pasha, the British authorities were allowed to recruit mercenaries among the Ottoman reaya in the *pashalık* and this opportunity not only enhanced the military capabilities of Britain but also facilitated its access to the Greek revolutionaries.¹⁷ In sum despite the deadlock in the negotiations concerning Parga the output of the very alliance was satisfactory for both sides at least at the initial phase.

One of the most significant impediments on the way to a concrete final agreement about Parga was the opposition of Robert Adair, the British ambassador and plenipotentiary in Istanbul, who found Ali's claims too extravagant and unacceptable. Though he repeatedly highlighted the *sine qua non* nature of

¹⁷ The Porte strictly opposed the recruitment of mercenaries among the Ottoman reaya by Britain due to the fact that the majority of these mercenaries were Greek peasants. Cevdet Dahiliye, 29 Ş 1226, No:9176/184

cooperation with Ali Pasha against France and of strengthening him against his rivals, he also suggested seeking the means of alternative maneuvers independent from Ali's effect without souring the relations with him, a proposal that came to be admitted by the British government. The unending dispatch of emissaries by the inhabitants of Parga requesting British protection rather than Ali Pasha's rule also hardened the settlement of the dispute in favor of Ali Pasha. Besides, British suspicions about Ali Pasha's double dealing, boosted by some intelligence reports reflecting hints of secret negotiations with the French following the days of the conquest of Saint Mavra, caused a cautious approach towards him. Accordingly the British government decided that British interests and cooperation against the French would be secured better by keeping the islands undivided. Therefore the already controversial issue of ceding any of the islands to Ali Pasha was taken out of the agenda though no negative reply was given to him. By the appointment of G. Foresti, a young Greek to the consulate in Ioannina in 1810 and the retirement of Leake mutual skepticism dominated the relations. The reluctance of the British to conform to Ali pasha's plans concerning the island of Santa Maura and Parga and their policy of procrastination reminding that of the French led him consider alternative means of conduct. He simply resorted to a policy of mere blackmail declaring that the French general Donzelot offered him the immediate cession of Parga for lifting the sanctions he had imposed on the French on Corfu like the very embargo including the ban on all sorts of transportation to the island and reproached for the retard in the settlement of the cession dispute.¹⁸ In addition to that he erected new fortifications in St. George opposite Santa Maura and furnished him with more artillery power than agreed before. Thus Ali was reminding his demands to the

¹⁸ Hughes, pp:244-245

British once again by threatening them implicitly with a possible reconciliation with the French. Informed by his agents about the military preparations at Corfu, Foresti made a proposal to the Foreign Office in 1811 emphasizing the urgent need of expelling the French from Parga. But London considered that Napoleon's position would not let to a large scale operation on the islands and the possible French offensive would be of minor importance since the inhabitants of Parga were eagerly seeking British protection. By 1812 Ali Pasha intensified his 'diplomatic' efforts on behalf of the British government sending his representative, the Greek dragoman Kolovos, to London to present and defend his claims.¹⁹ But the British authorities were indeed confident about the impossibility of reconciliation between France and Ali Pasha calling the latter's bluff. They were assuming that Ali Pasha had literally nothing to expect from France after his failure in Russia that would trace the beginning of his end except a war of propaganda to announce him rebel by the Porte. In fact the French had waged this war on Ali Pasha as he turned against them after Tilsit. But the frequency of the notes and letters of denounce sent to the Porte full of complaints about Ali Pasha's attitudes towards the French reached a noticeable amount as the French influence started to fade in the islands.

Resented by the British inaction to fulfill his demands Ali Pasha resorted to a *fait accompli* by sending a note to the French governor at Corfu General Donzelot demanding the immediate cession of the village of Aya, a dependency of Parga situated on the frontier. As he received the refusal of the general he occupied the village without declaring war in 1814.²⁰ Many of the inhabitants of Aya were either massacred or enslaved by the Pasha's forces. Their territories were allocated to the favorites of Ali Pasha and were converted to *çiftliks*. Following the easy prey of Aya

¹⁹ Baggally, p:63

²⁰ Hughes, p:235

Ali Pasha ordered the final conquest of Parga. Then his troops invaded the territory of Parga outside the city walls while the Parganots retired to the fortress. The inhabitants together with a small number of French troops managed to detain and repulse the invaders despite their eminent number of casualties. Terrified by the fate of Aya and assured about the possibility of the vizier's another attempt for conquest, the Parganots came to the understanding that French could no longer be the power to rely upon since they failed in protecting whoever they supported against Ali Pasha hitherto. Then they contacted the commander of the British forces on Paxos, Captain Garland, and requested the assistance of Britain against the vizier by presenting an intercepted letter of him offering bribe to the French commander of Parga, a Greek colonel of the *Chasseurs d'orient*. Just after Garland's report arrived, General Campbell, the King's commissioner and the commander of the British forces in the islands, sent a detachment to Parga. The British were in favor of occupying the island before Ali Pasha and decide what to do after monitoring his next maneuver in the new conjuncture. But their major concern reflected an image of having gained the will of the inhabitants for the occupation. Afterwards Parganots received a declaration from the British stipulating that the inhabitants ought to take the possession of the citadel themselves and raise the British flag as a sign of their own will to enter under British protection. Armed and organized for the conspiracy The Parganots forced the French garrison in different quarters to yield with a surprise attack that left little opportunity to resist.²¹ The operation was concluded by the raising of the flag and the entrance of the British forces into the city on March 22nd 1814. Soon after the fall of Parga the French surrendered Corfu to the British and also its active role in Greek affairs..

²¹ Hughes, pp:239-240

The British occupation of Parga was viewed by its inhabitants as a guarantee not to enter the vizier's control. Moreover, they demanded a permanent legal unification of the city with the Ionian Islands under British protection. But the British seemed to be undecided about the status of Parga, vacillating between retaining its possession and leaving it to the pasha until the Congress of Vienna. In the year 1815 Ali Pasha renewed his demands for Parga by addressing Castlereagh and Earl Bathurst the colonial secretary.²² However he was replied with the pretext that the case was a part of the issues to be discussed in Vienna. Later on Britain declared that in full compliance with the decisions of the convention signed in Paris in tandem with the congress of Vienna the status of the islands together with the mainland dependencies would be restored as it had been determined by the treaty of 1800. Therefore Parga would be ceded to the Porte but this time on the condition of compensating the losses of the inhabitants which would have to choose to emigrate from the city. The result seemed to be such a favorable one for Ali Pasha having no doubt that he would be granted the pashalik of Parga. But the huge number of the emigrants, literally the whole inhabitants constrained the Porte's treasury to release adequate funds for the compensation and paralyzed the negotiations from the very beginning. Ultimately upon Castlereagh's proposal, the Porte consented to allow Ali Pasha to contribute to the payments and even it offered him the pashalik of the city for which he had strived for so long. Considering the ancient status of Parga concluded by the 1800 treaty which was nothing but absolute sovereignty of the Porte immune from Ali Pasha's authority, it reveals that the British rewarded the vizier for his cooperation by a tricky maneuver leaving no option to the Porte other than seeking Ali Pasha's financial assistance for the cession of Parga.

²² C.K Webster, , *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh 1815-1822*, p:348

The negotiations and the long process of cession commenced in 1817 by the appointment of the commissioners of both sides. The inhabitants of the city were informed of the decision after all preparations were completed by the arduous work of the commissioners to value and enlist the estates. J.Cartwright and Hamid Bey were the commissioners responsible for the evaluation whose preliminary task was to invite the inhabitants one by one to testify before the officials whether they wished to leave the city.²³ Meanwhile Ali Pasha underwent a couple of intrigues to delay the process, saving himself additional time to collect the necessary funds and even lessen the amount of indemnities to be paid by threatening some of the Parganots to remain. Besides, he dispatched his agents to stir up an uprising against the British which would enable him to interfere in the city. But the works of the commissioners were already doomed to failure since the question of the olive harvest was not solved. The indemnity would diminish provided that the Parganots were given enough time to gather their olive crops. As this olive harvest dispute remained unsolved the accomplishment of the evaluation was halted. In 1818 new commissioners arrived at Parga and reiterated the testimony of the inhabitants which revealed that not even one single Parganot desired to live under Ali pasha's yoke. This time each commissioner carried out his own survey and this separate work ended with a serious gap between the values they calculated for the whole estates in the city. ²⁴This great difference spoiled the consensus atmosphere and put the relations of Britain with the pasha in strain. Having the priority to normalize the relations with the Porte as well as with the pasha Britain sought alternative solutions to the crisis. In 1819 the British High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, Maitland, opened a new series of negotiations with the Pasha which were concluded with an

²³ Baggally, p:67

²⁴ The calculations were as such : British 276.075 Ottoman 56.756 pounds
Baggally, p:71

agreement on the amount of the indemnity payment and the methods to be followed during the handing over of the city. The fixed amount was almost an average of the calculations of two sides namely 150000 British pounds.²⁵ Thus Ali Pasha and the Porte consented to pay two times more than their commissioners' calculation. According to the agreement a small regiment of Ali Pasha's troops would enter the city to make the final arrangements for evacuation but the Parganots refused solidly to admit the pasha's forces inside the city before their departure. Hence they were deployed at the frontier very close to the entrance of the city. But the British vessels allocated to realize the evacuation of the city failed to arrive on time and Albanian soldiers impatient to finalize their task accumulated at the gates of the city. The primates organized a campaign and called for help from the Greek vessel owners on the Ionian Islands to evacuate the city.²⁶ As a result the transportation was procured by the assistance of the islanders. Finally most of the Parganots were settled in Corfu and some immigrated to mainland Greece. In May 1818 Britain handed over the city to Ali Pasha's forces after receiving the indemnity.²⁷

The last remarkable enterprise in the diplomatic relations with Britain took place in 1820 when Ali Pasha was overtly alarmed by the approaching storm from the Porte's side. In the eve of his revolt he contacted Sir Thomas Maitland, the British Governor of Corfu, to discuss the possible assistance of Britain to his planned uprising.²⁸ While waiting for the instructions of London Maitland sent Colonel Charles Napier to undertake a survey of the military capabilities of the pasha. But the pasha could get no official response apart from the personal advice of Napier.

²⁵ William Miller, *Ottoman Empire and Its Successors, 1801-1927*, London 1966, p:63

²⁶ Baggally, p:73

²⁷ Cevdet Dahiliye, 9 N 1234, No:5592

²⁸ Dakin,p:50

The cessation of Parga would mark the last territorial gain of the Ottoman Empire in Europe as well as the beginning of Ali Pasha's fall. The cessation of a Christian territory that remained immune from Ottoman expansion even in its gold age was a brilliant diplomatic triumph for Ali Pasha. But from this cessation on, his relations with Britain would become dormant if not hostile. They would remain indifferent to the affairs of the pasha until he was crushed by the Porte. On the other hand the inhabitants of Parga who deserted the city by the cessation constituted the most ardent and activist circle of the Greek revolutionaries. More than that their aversion to the pasha nullified the attempts of him to steer and appropriate the revolutionary movements among Greeks.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

The basic motive behind the foreign entanglements of the Pasha seems to be securing his autonomous rule and wealth by staying within the limits of the Ottoman Imperial system rather than following a project of independence. At least there is no plausible evidence to suspect that he had a planned and organized initiative of independence. On the contrary his extreme caution and fluctuations of policy which always ended up with keeping more loyal to the Porte demonstrate that his main objective regarding in foreign relations was using leverage against the Porte to secure his existence. However British and French conduct of policy regarding Ali Pasha including the discourses of their officials give hints of a designed project of establishing a Greco-Albanian kingdom. But this project seems to have been halted as Ali Pasha proved hostile to both powers revealing that he was in pursuit of short term gains.

The pasha's foreign contacts were not totally out of the control and influence of the Porte. On the contrary the Porte was not only acquainted with most of the features in the negotiations between the two European powers and the pasha but also it participated in many of them through instructions to him. This partial check on the

diplomacy of the pasha resulted to a constant hesitation about his possible moves towards independence via foreign assistance. Though Ali Pasha always left a spare room for acting independent from the Porte and ignored the sultan's *firman*s when necessary, he never detached totally from the basic circle of the Porte's European policies. In other words the pasha preferred to stay in the Ottoman system and dealt with foreign entanglements independently at the same time.

The nature of the pasha's diplomatic relations with France can be portrayed with a few simple words: flattery, blackmail, exploitation, deceit and abeyance. The pasha responded to the preliminary demands of cooperation coming from the French authorities via military officers or diplomats with the highest level of alacrity and fondness. Thus the inauguration of the contacts was facilitated by the blandishments of the pasha to Napoleon in particular. His official correspondences with Napoleon demonstrate how the pasha attempted to present an attachment to the spirit of the French revolution and to what extent he exalted its protagonists. Though these were no more than symbolic aspects of mere flattery, they probably gained the pasha additional sympathy on behalf of the French who were in pursuit of collaborationist chiefs or *beys* in the Balkans for expansion. But when it came to negotiating and conducting the terms of that cooperation, the pasha proved not decent enough to fulfill what he had offered, preferring a policy of sudden increases in his price of loyalty. On the other hand he always had the priority of keeping the Porte content or at least avoided from resenting it, acting quite sensitive in justifying his deeds. To serve this end, he never spared gold from his potent acquaintances in Istanbul. In other words the changes in the political conjuncture of the constant wars against Russia and Austria never sufficed to make him completely turn against the Porte. On the contrary he broke with France with ease when he found necessary to

demonstrate an absolute obedience to the orders of the Porte. Furthermore, he fought against France with an excessive zeal unseen in his career. As he viewed the betterment of the French position in Europe after the battle of Austerlitz and the Pressburg peace he could reinstall himself to the French cause by flattery and artifice. But when it came to provide the logistics to the French as it had been agreed he acted with caution and often declined to fulfill his promises properly. His avarice and immense suspicion resulted from his Kleftic background; together with his resolute plans for continuous territorial expansion never let the relations develop towards a systematic cooperation for independence. In fact the French probably came to the understanding in time that he could only be used for short term logistical purposes and promotion of the French trade capabilities. Having perceived the essence of the French approach the pasha also viewed them as a source of military technology and equipment to be exploited rather than a political force to ally upon for securing his independence. Thus he utilized the French military support against the rival tribes and *ayans* in the Balkans as much as he could. As the military aid received from France faded in accordance with the alterations in French policy he resorted to blackmail by leaning on to Britain as a substitute. But this blackmail would entail the extirpation of the French existence in the Balkans which was not such an auspicious event for his diplomacy based on double-dealings.

Ali Pasha's relations with Britain developed through a balance policy shaped by mere blackmail and intrigues to maximize the supply of military equipments, monetary aid and trade opportunities. The rivalry between the two great powers on the Balkan affairs was manipulated and exploited by the pasha. The diplomacy between the pasha and Britain simply consisted of the negotiations for what Britain could offer to the pasha different from France. For the pasha the answer was as

simple as the cession of Parga and Santa Mavra to his *pashalik*. But the British though consenting to cede territory to him in principle were hesitant to fix it beforehand with the terms predetermined by the pasha. On the other hand the possibility of rehiring his services to the French imposed a constant check on the British. In fact the pasha never ceased to keep in touch with the French and continued his intrigues by secretly violating the British blockade on the islands, informing the French authorities about the British plans. But the departure of the French deprived Ali from these double-dealings used as additional pillars or trumps in his relations with Britain. On the other hand the British proved less controllable than the French for him since they had much better relations with the Greeks who literally surrendered them all Ionian Islands. Thus the pasha was bypassed by the Greek initiative that welcomed the British authority and lost one of his greatest advantages to be used in exchange for his territorial demands. He had offered to the British authorities to participate in the operations against the French in addition to providing logistical supplies. He was probably seeking a *fait accompli* by occupying Parga and Santa Mavra with his own forces. But the Greek uprisings on the islands rendered the French defenses ineffective and surrendered the islands to the small number of British vessels. In sum the British played the Greek card more effectively than the French and confronted the double-dealings of the pasha with excellence. The British also made use of Ali not only in terms of logistics but also in reintroducing themselves as attached to the Porte's amity against the threat of Russia and France. These contributions of Ali to heal the damaged relations between the Porte and Britain would not yield any political harvest for him on the contrary fostered suspicion of the Porte.

The fundamental question that arises when analyzing the pasha's relations with these two great powers is whether they were conducted for the pasha's independence. This project of independence seems to be the initial instigator of his contacts with the west but the courses of both the pasha's and his counterparts' policies conducted in time reflect a common intention of strategic cooperation in terms of logistics and territorial gains rather than a greater project of cessation. As far as the British and French are concerned it is evident that they at least pretended to have serious projects for establishing an independent Greco-Albanian kingdom under Ali Pasha's rule. But Ali Pasha's insistent adhesion to the Porte during his close diplomatic relations with Britain and France can be considered as a sign of mistrust or change of foresight on achieving independence if any via the assistance of these great powers. It is possible to consider that Ali Pasha plotted such a consequence of independence via foreign support and initiated this diplomacy in convenience with this objective. But in the final analysis the development of these relations highlights an evident detachment from this presumed cause in each party's conduct regardless of whether these two powers manipulated the desire of the pasha to be independent or contemplated to give hand indeed to such a project. The diplomatic pressure and counter propaganda campaign of the French against the pasha in Istanbul that accelerated his fall displays that this detachment occurred much earlier for France. The advent of the French agents who undertook propaganda activities to stir up a Greek revolt in city of Maina in Morea without counseling with the pasha also proves that France had omitted the pasha from his designs. As far as Britain is concerned, that detachment is viewed as clear as that of the French case. By 1818 after the cessation of Parga, Britain literally minimized his relations with the pasha to commercial issues. Moreover the British preferred to

remain indifferent to his fate and rejected his requests for help when the Porte declared him as rebel. Ali Pasha's final political moves also indicate that his independence was no longer on the great powers' agenda. In this manner it is notable that the political solitude of the pasha in his last years led him to seek ways to align with the *Hetairists*, the Greek revolutionaries against the Ottoman threat. He sent his agents to the revolutionaries to gain their collaboration for a Greco-Albanian independent state.¹ He even announced his conversion to Orthodoxy and declared himself as a member of the famous *Philiki Hetairia* revolutionary organization.² His desperate attempt to appropriate the Greek revolution or at least take a decisive part in it demonstrates how distant Britain and France were to the so-called idea of his independence at that time. It would be convenient to deduce from these developments that he had to continue the two great powers' project regarding his independence this time on his own. Another crucial point about the nature of the diplomacy of Ali Pasha with Britain and France is that both had inaugurated the relations with appealing generous offers to the pasha like Corfu and barely realized a trivial portion of them. Presuming that Britain and France had really invested in his independence plans until his fall the level of their generosity in terms of military aid and cessation of territory should have been far higher.

The question of Ali Pasha's independence and the Greek liberation ideal were intertwined to a great extent for Britain and France. This dualism indeed was the major problematic that shaped their relations with the pasha. After the French revolution the political ramifications of the philhellenic zeal coupled with the existing imperialist calculations to get the best share from the demising Ottoman

¹ Molly Greene, (Review) *Epirus, Ali Pasha and the Greek Revolution: Consular Reports of William Meyer from Preveza* by E.Prevelakis; K.Kalliataki Merticopoulou, IJMES, Vol:32, No:2, May 2000, pp:297-300

Dakin, p:67

² Dakin, p:49

Empire had generated the western policy of supporting the Greek national awakening. But the political specifications of Greece were to determine the method and means to be used for this support. Considering the existence of a mighty local bey in Greece and south Albania prone to European entanglements, the least costly and most rational strategy was to liberate this nominal servant of the sultan first and nurture the Greek revolution in the hands of him. This strategy had additional immediate advantages for the European great powers like erecting a stronghold against the Russian expansion and securing a vast source of provisions both for the Ionian Islands and their military forces operating in the eastern Mediterranean. Therefore in the eve of such a large-scale nationalist awakening the preparations, namely the creation of a Modern Greek nation and consciousness, were supposed to be realized under the custody of Ali Pasha. In simplest terms the European estimation was that once the independence of the *pashalik* was achieved, the transformation of this new state by overthrowing the Albanian dynasty would not be so troublesome since its semi developed statecraft, the foundation of the ultimate Greek state, was already dominated overwhelmingly by Greeks. First the French came to the scene and put this strategy into practice by encouraging the pasha for liberation. As their encouragement was replied by the pashas close interest in cooperation, the strategy of testing his capabilities and loyalty to the cause of independence was put into use. But the pasha had left little room for having a long preamble for the relations and expected the realization of his demands at the initial stage. Impatient to remove the menace of his local rivals and preoccupied by the changes in the international politics Ali Pasha compelled the French to ascertain their position about this cooperation. But the reluctance of the French to meet his demands in terms of military aid and cessation of land derailed the relations towards

antagonism. As retaliation to the French caution he delayed fulfilling what he offered and even increased his demands. Finally the pasha attached himself to the Porte stronger than ever and utilized the opportunity of acquiring much of what he asked from the French this time by confronting them. But the consequences were not completely satisfactory for him after his sharp shift of sides. The Russian penetration into the region altered the conditions on which the diplomacy had been built to the detriment of the pasha. Russian maneuvers to lead the initiative of the Greek revolutionary movement on their own was casting out the pasha and even defying his existence. In such a relatively vulnerable position Ali Pasha had to reconcile with the French who captured the Dalmatian coast and partially compensated his losses in the Ionian Sea. The lack of alternative options for both sides facilitated the reconciliation. But this time the French policy was diverted towards establishing direct contact with the Greek population in the *pashaliks* of Ioannina and Morea without damaging the relations with the pasha. The dispatch of the French officers to various cities of these *pashaliks* by the approval of the pasha to recruit mercenaries and propagate revolutionary ideas namely the *Chasseurs d'orient* initiative, was a fragment of this strategy by which the relations were kept intact and Greeks were accessed at the same time. Therefore the pasha admitted an intermediary position between the French and his Greek subjects. He also chose to pursue a policy of procrastination towards the Porte's warnings about the revolutionary activities of the French agents in the Morea like the delivery of books of propaganda and secret meetings.³ Hence one of the clearest points that can be deduced from his deeds in the light of these facts is that he was in favor of a Greek revolt sponsored by the French but he strictly opposed to the attempts of the

³ Hat, 25 S 1218 No:13767

Russians who also arduously campaigned to stir up the revolt under their own supervision. It is least likely that he gave that concession to the French in exchange of mere military aid. Though he received indeed an additional series of military aid including weaponry and technicians he had never been content of the quantity of it. The most logical presumption seems to be his tendency to view the Greek liberation as an integral part of his own independence. In other words he was probably assured of the fact that he would be the ruler of the independent Greece at the end of the day. He could not struggle to achieve it on his own without receiving western aid, since he had strong foes that could eliminate him including Sultan Mahmud II whose approach to the *ayans* was obvious. But France did not prove more generous than before in territorial concessions and even resorted to double-dealings by contacting Ibrahim Pasha as a check on Ali. These put a constant strain on the second phase of the relations that compelled Ali Pasha to seek British adhesion.

The French failure to appease Ali Pasha and the loosening of their interest in him after the Tilsit Peace fully introduced the awaiting British into this complicated diplomacy. Driven by commercial as well as political motives, Britain would easily take over the mission of Greek liberation and act in tandem with the pasha. On the other hand British adherence enabled Ali to blackmail the French and extort the maximum gain from double-dealings. But he failed to calculate that the British would soon eliminate the French existence bypassing him. Indeed they managed to accomplish it without the direct contribution of Ali Pasha depriving him his greatest leverage used at the beginning of the relations. In fact they accomplished this task by using their most significant advantage in Greek affairs which was their sympathy among the Greek inhabitants boosted by the British Philhellenes. This advantage assisted them in repelling the French from the islands and enabled them to directly

engage in the Greek revolutionary movement more effectively. But this engagement would end up with the isolation of the pasha especially after the cessation of Parga. Now the independence of Ali Pasha was no longer considered identical to the independent Greece project in the eyes of the British authorities. His political isolation and vulnerability to the Porte's aggression led him to seek alliance with the Greek revolutionaries of *Philiki Hetairia*. But they were not in favor of admitting the custody of the pasha.

Ali Pasha's social stratagem regarding his envisaged independent state was mainly favoring the Greek language and culture as the basis of the social structure in his *pashalik*. Unlike the tribal characteristics of the Albanian elements that caused constant warfare and divisions among his subjects, the Greek language had a sort of unifying function since its daily use was common among Albanians and Turks. Then the significant role of the Greek language gave some exclusive advantages to the Greek population in the *pashalik*. By the encouragement of the pasha the wealthy Greek merchant Diaspora constantly repatriated some of their profits obtained from their international networks of commerce and contributed to the development of many Greek cities in Epirus, for the most part its capital Ioannina. The city became a center of the Greek renaissance serving as a hub of education and culture after the opening of several colleges and accumulation of Greek intellectuals. Many of the remarkable figures of the Greek revolution like Sakelarios, Psallidas, Kolettis who also served in Ali Pasha's court staffed the schools in Ioannina and took part in the task of disseminating revolutionary ideas.⁴ Thus a new Greek speaking literary class that had nationalistic sensitivities and strong connections with the Greek public was generated in these schools. Ali Pasha also had serious

⁴ Duane Koenig, *A Report from the Ioanian Islands, December 1810*, *The Journal of Modern History* Vol:15, No:3 (Sep,1943),pp:223-226

contributions to the linguistic transformation of the Greek language, which overlapped with the revolutionary movements. The Dimotiki dialect of Greek had been adopted as the language of Ali Pasha's court where its written form was developed and its codification was accomplished.⁵ The adoption of this popular dialect as the official language together with the promotion of its development closed the huge gap between the ruling elite and the public paving the way for creating a national cohesion and consciousness. These developments display the hints of the very project of generating a Greek oriented independent kingdom very similar to that of the famous Rigas Fereos. Fereos had envisaged a Balkan-Asian state or a centralized Hellenic republic with various ethnicities and religions melted in the single pot of Greek cultural heritage.⁶ It is possible to contemplate that Fereos had some degree of influence on Ali Pasha in terms of uniting the distinct elements by the Greek culture. But it is most unlikely that Ali Pasha shared the foresights of Fereos advocating a democratic Hellenic state in which all elements, Muslims and Christians alike, would have the right to vote and participate in the administrative offices.

At the beginning of his relations with the west Ali Pasha was somehow rendered as the protagonist of this project of liberating Greece in the hands of an oriental despot. It is most likely that he was not always fully attached to this cause and gaining more wealth as well as expanding his domains was of higher priority for some time. Though he was linked to this project with loose ties he did not decline to fulfill the basic features of creating a Modern Greek nation. Then the ill fate of the *ayans* in the empire and the unexpectedly fast introduction of Britain to his region that almost isolated him and diminished the value of his cooperation made it

⁵ K.E Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte, Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece*, Princeton 1999, p:63

⁶ Dakin, p:29

inevitable to completely appropriate the Greek independence project. But it was not such a good timing since the British policy concerning Greece was no longer centered on his independence. In addition the impossibility of further foreign support and the resolution of the Porte to extirpate all *ayans* forced the pasha to seek an alliance with the Greek revolutionaries. But just like Britain they were in favor of his removal by the Porte and exploited him as a source of additional weaponry. To sum up the diplomatic relations of Ali Pasha with Britain and France ended up with a state of political desolation when the Greek revolution matured enough to triumph on its own. Apart from the failure of the very project of his independence he even lost the means of sustaining his reign in the Ottoman imperial system as he lost his diplomatic ties with the great powers.

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