

# The Greek independence revolution and beyond: the zooming of the albanian role and impact

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## Abstract

The nineteenth century is generally considered a century which inspired many nations, both in the East and West, towards the path of independence. While their aims may have been similar, the approach, the overall struggles and management of their individual independence courses, were rather distinctive. One of the most striking examples was Greece. The ethnic Greeks may have had a great desire to obtain independence, but lacked strategy, commitment, and unwavering determination. Their independence fate, however, was destined to be heavily relied upon their ancient neighbors, the Albanians. Indeed, the Albanians turned out to be the principal benefactor on the ground, conducive to Greek independence.

The main aim of this research is to expose the Albanian role especially during the Greek independence revolution. A substantial part of the study delves in the Albanian leadership and responsibility (both military and political) during the respective revolution. The study also explores that thousands of Albanian soldiers from various factions took part in Greek revolution battles. In addition, the study addresses the fact that the Albanian soldiers resorted to fights, even, with their fellow Albanians, all related to the Greek independence. The key objective of the paper is exclusive reliability on the Western sources (British, American, German, Italian or French), vis-à-vis examined topics, to increase, as much as possible, the objectivity

of the research outcome. Several distinct themes are examined, considering Albanian contribution to the establishment of the modern Greece, almost all of them, originating from the Western sources of the nineteenth century, the century when the revolution occurred. The paper also incorporates the descriptions of the accounts, of three Westerners (Thomas Gordon, British army officer, Samuel Gridley Howe, American Medical Doctor and George Finlay, a Scottish historian), who were part of revolution and witnessed the developments.

The research also delves on the implication of the ethnic Albanians in Greek politics, (both in the nineteenth and in several decades of the twentieth century), in which the Albanians 'occupied' the key positions in Greek government, sometimes almost uninterrupted for decades, (like the post of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Marine), during the nineteenth and the twentieth century. The study also explores the segment of the assimilation or the Hellenization of the Albanians in Greece, and offers a view on the challenges that developed, especially with respect to the exposition of Albanian identity within Greece. In addition, the paper also briefly examines the Albanian social impact in Greece, by offering interesting inputs and establishes that Albanian contribution to the modern Greece is rather unique, not only in the Balkan context, but very likely, *sui generis*, for the entire world. Finally, the study concludes that it is an exclusive responsibility of the historians, both, in the region and beyond, to present, as much as possible, an objective and compromising picture of history, and use it as a mechanism to create, not fresh hate, but synergic effect, conducive to encounter future challenges.

**Keywords:** Greece, Albanians, war, military, population, politics, language

## Introduction

The Balkan developments of the nineteenth century, and the interplay of the regional and world powers, was rather determinable for the future history of the nation's living in this region. The numerous events in this respective century, also involved the geostrategic interest of powers, with general repercussions also for countries of the Balkan region. Greece, with its characteristic history and geography, is a case in point. In addition, the latter country also had idiosyncratic path towards independence, with the apparent Albanian factor playing a key role.

The Albanians, however, did populate a huge area of Greece, with Athens, the current Greek capital, being practically an Albanian village. (About, 1855, p.32) The demography factor probably instigated their contribution drive in the Greek revolution. The Albanians were, from the very beginning, part of the Greek's national endeavours, in their aspired path towards independence. The Albanians joined the *Philikí Etaireía* (or Friendly Brotherhood) a Greek secret national society, they were key in the Revolutionary Independence War, and were largely involved post-independence Greek state. In addition, for decades (with some minor interruptions) they run the post of Greek Prime Minister, but also, for substantial amount of time, they held the post of President, Ministry of Marine, Interior, Defense and many other high positions in the Greek state.

There is massive interest among researchers on the historical developments related to the Balkans, and the history of modern Greece takes a substantial attention. There are numerous discussions, often conflicting, that concern the Albanian factor in relation to the establishment of the Greek independent state and subsequent political developments.

The research paper, above all, intends to explore multifarious, but thematic issues, in order to address the concerns summarized in the question format, listed below:

1. What was the ethnic Albanian population picture within the nineteenth century Greece?
2. What characterizes the Albanian contribution to the Greek Revolution?
3. Who were the main actors of the Greek Revolution, and how was the leadership structured?
4. What was the role of Albanians in post-independence Greece?
5. Did the Albanians have an impact in social life of Greece?

### **1. Brief outlook on Albanian origin**

The Albanians and Greeks, for many historians, are the oldest autochthonous people inhabiting the Balkans. The former, the Albanians, are widely considered to be the direct descendant of the Pelasgians. (Schneider, 1894, p.21, Nuova antologia et al, 1887, p.126) The German Academic, Friedrich August Wiedebrug (1787) describes Albania as "...the former Epirus and Illyria."(p.108), while Thumb (1914) argues that the Albanian race is distinctive, "plainly different from Slavs and Greeks,

forming with Greeks the oldest population of the Peninsula.” (p.22) Likewise, King and Mai, (2008) underscore that

*“Most historians agree that present-day Albanians are descendants of the Illyrians, and ancient tribe that inhabited the western Balkans”*  
(King and Mai, 2008, p.28)

Even though the Albanian and Greek paths of history have gone in their unique directions, presenting a collective front, at a variety of challenges, was not uncommon. This is not difficult to imagine, as proximity often binds peoples to common interest, or the assumed common interest, if such interests last.

In the old days, the fights did not necessarily occur due to territorial occupations or invasions but were more ideologically oriented. The territory, as such, was large but there were fewer people to inhabit the region, hence, it was not uncommon for people to spread in various parts of the regions. This ‘easy-settling’ pattern, and the apparent ethnic co-habitation may have, very likely, complicated researchers’ work to draw, a rather, conclusive line on the history of physical and or cultural boundaries among the ethnicities.

History of Albanian and Greek sharing habitation is very old, and it is actual even today. The Albanians populated various parts of the region. More specifically, they also populated the areas within the boundaries of today’s Greece, and that, even before Ottomans took over Greece. (Finlay, 1861a, p.34) While the Albanians and Greeks have differed in language, historically they shared many attributes and characteristics together, as well as renowned figures of the past.

Moreover, living side-by-side meant that they shared many attributes and likely even impacted one another. Many mysterious names linked to Greece’s geography, ethnography and linguistics “were thought to be Slavonic, whereas they are Albanian.” (Thumb 1914, p.29).

The goal of this study, however, is not to move too far back in the history of the nations concerned, but to present exclusive findings (based on Western sources), targeting, namely, the nineteenth century and the first decades of the last century.

## 2. An outlook of Albanian population in Greece during the nineteenth century

An ancient population data comparison, between the Albanians and the Greeks, may have been interesting to observe, however, respective credible data statistics, may be very difficult to obtain. Yet, during the last few centuries some data population records are available. The number of Albanians and Greeks (in European and Asian Turkey), by the mid nineteenth century, were practically the same, to about 2 million. (The Athenæum, 1854, p.333) However, the respective comparison, but only within the European Turkey, reveals a different picture - about 1.6 million (Albanians), *versus* approximately 900,000 (Greeks). (Boué, 1840, p.32)

This large number of the Albanian population meant that they inhabited sizeable areas of the Balkans, and the territory of then Greece, was no exception. What's more, for substantial period of the nineteenth century the Albanians populated most of the areas Greece. They were numerous, both, in population figures and in areas they lived. As highlighted above, the Albanians populated Greece even before Ottomans took over Greece. (Finlay, 1861a, p.34) There are numerous sources that substantiate the fact that Albanians, in massive numbers, populated the nineteenth century Greece. George Finlay,<sup>1</sup> in his book, titled, *History of the Greek Revolution* (1861a), underlines the names of the areas in Greece, where the Albanians lived, during the nineteenth century, by saying that the Albanians populated

*"the whole of Corinthia and Argolis, extending themselves into the northern part of Ardadia and eastern Archaia...[and] [t]he islands of Hydra and Spezas were entirely peopled by Albanians... [Furthermore] Marathon, Platea, Leuctra, Salamis, Mantinea, Ira, and Olympia, are now inhabited by Albanians, and not by Greeks. Even in the streets of Athens, though it has been for more than a quarter of a century the capital of a Greek kingdom, the Albanian language is still heard among the children playing in the streets near the temple of Theseus and the arch of Hadrian."* (p.35)

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<sup>1</sup> George Finlay, was a Scottish historian, who joined the revolution, for the Greek cause.

Additionally, About (1855) highlights that

*"....Athens, twenty-five years ago, was only an Albanian village. The Albanians formed, and still form, almost the whole of the population of Attica ... The Turkish village which formerly clustered round the base of the Acropolis has not disappeared: it forms a whole quarter of the town....An immense majority of the population of this quarter is composed of Albanians." (About, 1855, p.32)*

Thomas Gordon<sup>2</sup> (1832a), strengthens further such claims, when he says,

*"Attica, Argolis, Boetia, Phocis and the isles of Hydra, Spezzia, Salamis, and Andros, are inhabited by Albanians. They likewise possess several villages in Arcadia, Achaia, and Messenia." (p.34)*

In addition, besides Hydra, Spezzia also "islanders of...Psara [were] mostly of Albanian extraction." (Engelhardt, 1884, p.241) There are many other sources that highlight the quantity of the Albanian population in Greece. Indeed, in Attica, with some exceptions in certain areas, "there is no Greek but they are all Albanians; however many are already completely merged with the Greeks." (Nuova antologia et al, 1895, p.305) There are many similar claims that substantiate these descriptions of the time. (Martin, 1877, p.289, Phillips, 1897, p.332, Bintliff, 2003, p.140) Moreover, the population of Albanians in Greece was so massive that prompted someone to create a doctrine that Albanians were a majority in Greece. This is underlined by About (1855) who said

*"According to a certain paradoxical school, there are no more Greeks in Greece - all the population is Albanian...It is not difficult to see the tendency of such a doctrine..." (About, 1855, p.27)*

The Albanian population in Greece was very large, but they were gradually assimilated into Greek model.<sup>3</sup> The following section, however,

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Gordon, was British army officer who joined the Greek independence revolution camp.

<sup>3</sup> A specific segment of this research (below) will endeavour examine the assimilation process of the Albanian populated areas in Greece, and their respective struggles to preserve the Albanian language.

will delve into selected Albanian ethnonyms, followed by their respective characteristic divisions (based on culture, dialects and religion) before embarking into the critical theme of this study, the Albanian involvement in Greek Revolution.

### **3. Critical accounts related to the Greek independence revolution and the Albanian factor**

During the Ottoman administration of the Balkans, many ethnicities felt inconvenient with Porte's rule. Using proxies to attain independence was not uncommon. The Albanian factor was used or abused in this regard. As the Albanian general popularity for bravery, trust and commitment was not unheeded in the region and further, they (as will be discussed later) were apparently lured to get implicated in certain Balkan nations' drive for independence.

The ethnic Albanians are identified by different ethnonyms. From sources explored in this study, the Albanians, are also called

- Shkyp tars<sup>4</sup> (Schneider, 1894, p.21, Peacock, 1914, p.181),
- Pelasgians, (Nuova antologia et al, 1887, p.126, Schneider, 1894, p.28),
- Epirots (Nuova antologia at el, 1879, pp. 249-250)
- Arnauts<sup>5</sup> (Chiara 1869, p.37, Abbot, 1849, p.25), or
- Arvanit<sup>6</sup> (Schmitt 2012, p.128)

As a large Balkan nation, the Albanians mainly embraced three different religions or faiths (Islam, Catholic Christianity and Orthodox Christianity). Furthermore, depending on the region they lived, they were also divided into three major ethnic subgroups

- a. Gegs, Ghegs or Guegs (Gegët in Albanian),
- b. Tosks (Toskët in Albanian),
- c. Tzamides, Tchamides, or Chams (Çamët in Albanian) (Tozer 1869, pp.166, 184, 210)

These Albanian ethnic subgroups may have been differentiated by their diverse cultural, linguistic (dialectic) or religious characteristics. Even though the attitudes of Albanians towards their fellow compatriots,

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<sup>4</sup> Shkyp tar or Shqiptar, is a native Albanian endonym for their own nationals.

<sup>5</sup> Turkish ethnonym that implies Albanian ethnicity.

<sup>6</sup> Greeks call the Orthodox Albanians, Arvanits or Arvanitas.

irrespective of region or faith, were generally fair and balanced, yet still such a wide division may have had a negative impact towards building a united front.

While the Albanians struggled to present a common front, the other nations did not stand still, but used the means available to achieve a national aim. The Serbs, for instance, in 1806, used the Albanian factor, as proxy, to fulfill their ambition to attain the independence from the Ottomans. An ethnic Albanian, named Jani Kondo, (or also known as Kondo Bimbashi), who was a senior official at the Turkish administration in Belgrade, was fundamental in a critical Serbian revolution battle. He betrayed the Ottoman trust and joined the Serbian struggle for their respective national independence aspirations. (Ranke 1844, p.151, Paton, 1845, p.296).

Even more explicit was the situation with Greek war of independence. The main protagonists in this endeavour, both in the East and the West of the then Greece, were, the Albanians. From the East "Albanian Christians of Dervenakhoria [Megaria] rose and whole Attica and Boetia speedily followed suit." (Phillips, 1897, p.52). From the West there was Mark Boçari<sup>7</sup> and his comrades from the village of Souli or Suli.

Souli, a former "an Albanian village" (Hobhouse 1855, p.383) now locality in northwestern Greece, was critical to the Greek revolution. The people of Souli were "Albanian in origin, belonging to the division of that people called Tzamides" (Holland 1819, p.239). Finlay (1877), said "[t]he name of Suliots was reserved for the Albanian warriors, who ruled and protected the agricultural population..." (pp. 43-44). Gordon (1832a) considered "the Souliotes, the flower of Albanian warriors" (p.76). Tozer (1869) notes that

*"the Suliotes, whose territory was the knot of the mountains in the southern part of this division, and who are so famous for their heroic resistance..., were pure Albanians, and in their families spoke only the Albanian language." (p.184)*

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<sup>7</sup> Mark Boçari in 1814 "joined the Greek patriotic society known as Hetairia Philike..." (The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1910b, p.311) Laskarina Bubulina also joined this Philikí Etaireía, (or Hetairia Philike) the secret organization, which was preparing for Greek Revolution. (Pontoporou, 2017) The Philikí Etaireía (meaning Friendly Brotherhood), was "a patriotic conspiracy founded in Odessa (now in Ukraine) in 1814." (Britannica Online, 2020)



The tense situation between the Souliotes and the Ottomans<sup>8</sup> occurred from time to time, especially during the early 1820s. (Gordon 1832a, pp. 205-384) This period was manifested with contests, fights and battles. The most famous battle, in Greek independence drive, probably, occurred in Kerpenisi, on the second part of August 1823. A well-prepared plan of Mark Boçari, an Albanian from Souli, that included his followers, classically conned the Albanian-led (Ottoman) army. The latter army was, thus, commanded by Albanian named Omer Vrioni,<sup>9</sup> along with his three Albanian lieutenants Tahir Abbas, Hagos Bessiaris and Elmaz Bey (Gordon 1832a, p. 378). In addition, they had a significant number of Albanian soldiers with them, where many of them, lost their lives. (ibid, pp. 205-500) This venture undertaken by Boçari, that involved also the use of his Albanian native language, was not pro-Albanian, but pro-Greek. Howe (1828) details Boçari's execution of the plan, that occurred on the second part of the August 1823, when he says,

*"About ten o'clock, on the night of the 19th [August 1823], everything being arranged, Botzaris with his band of Suliotes, started upon his daring undertaking. They passed the outposts of the Turks, by speaking to them in the Albanian tongue, and telling them they had come from Omer Pashaw, from whom reinforcements were expected. Botzaris thus traversed a considerable part of their camp, amid the thousands who slept in confident security; he had nearly reached the centre, when he sounded his bugle, and was answered by the wild snout of his men, who began the work of destruction....Amid all this Botzaris pushed on...shouting aloud, and calling them to follow him to the tent of the Pashaw, which he had nearly reached, when suddenly his voice was hushed; he fell, struck by a random shot and died in an instant...The victory was complete...and their camp plundered..."*  
(pp. 145-146)

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<sup>8</sup> As this research paper substantiates below, the Ottoman army, especially during the Greek independence war, often consisted Albanian leadership and Albanian soldiers, both, within Albanian populated region proper and from Egypt.

<sup>9</sup> Omer Vrioni (or Vriones) was an Albanian from a place near Berat city (in Albania) who served as viceroy of Egypt and later received the title of Pashalik of Ioannina and Arta. (The Monthly Critical Gazette, 1825, p.408)

In this battle, as Long (1836) revealed, hundreds of Souliotes resorted to fighting the fellow

*“Albanians, consisting of about 4000 Miredites under Jeladeen Bey...The Souliotes marched silently to the attack and surprised the Albanians, of whom they made a great slaughter” (p.304)*

This celebrated battle underlines the unpleasant truth where Albanians were fighting and massacring the fellow Albanians, in the name Greek independence. This battle, indeed, it was neither the first (of such Albanian versus Albanian battle) nor the last. (Gordon 1832a, Gordon 1832b) The following section will attempt to examine the key actors of the respective inter-Albanian battles.

#### **4. The key actors of inter-Albanian battles and the leadership structure**

This part of the study will endeavour to explore the three Albanian-led armies during the Greek war of independence. They are as follows:

1. Albanian combat force inside Greece - fighting on behalf of Greeks.
2. Albanian combat force inside Albania - fighting on behalf of Ottomans.
3. Albanian combat force of Egypt - fighting on behalf of Ottomans.

The rationale behind this section analysis is, not to go to the bottom and explore the battles individually, but merely to attempt and identify key Albanian actors implicated Greek independence war. Moreover, the section also delves on some specific, but related issues.

##### **4a.1. Albanian combat force inside Greece fighting on behalf of Greeks: Albanian leadership (of West, East and Middle Greece) and the Albanian soldiers**

The importance and number of Albanian fighters for Greek independence was enormous. They were coming from different parts but fighting for the common aim. The number of key fighters for the Greek independence, who had Albanian origin, is large, however, some of the key figures is relevant to reveal. A list with such names, is provided, in the Table 1, below.

**Table 1.** Names of some Albanian heroes fighting for the Greek side during the Revolution

ALBANIAN NAME (ALSO KNOWN AS)		ETHNICITY	WESTERN SOURCE/S HIGHLIGHTING ALBANIAN ETHNICITY
<b>Teodor Kolokotroni</b> (Theodor/s Kolokotroni/s)	(Father) ↑	Albanian	(Parry, 1827, p.157, Selections from et al, 1836, p.111, Pinon, 1909, p.802, Gratico, 1941, p.23)
<b>Jonani Kolokotroni</b> (Gennaios Kolokotroni/s)	↓ (Son)		
<b>Marko Boçari</b> (Marco/s Botzari/s)	(Brothers)	Albanian	(Dorsa, 1847, p.115, Engelhardt, 1884, p.242, Pinon, 1909, p.802, Peacock, 1914, p.179, St Clair 1972, p.24, Zinovieff, 2004, p. 190)
<b>Konstandin Boçari</b> Constantine/Costas Botzari/s			
<b>Laskarina Bubulina</b> (Lascarina Bouboulina)			
<b>Jorgo Kondurioti</b> (George/ Georgios Kountourioti/s)		Albanian	(Pinon, 1909, p.802, Newman 1945, p.263, Forster, 1958, p.59, Galaty 2018, p.114)
<b>Kiço Xhavela</b> (Kitzo/s Tzavela/s)		Albanian	(Keightley 1830a, p.56, Coppi, 1840, p.46, Dorsa, 1847, p.115, Engelhardt, 1884, p.242)
<b>Andrea Zaimi</b> (Andreas Zaimis)		Albanian	(Newman 1945, p.263)
<b>Konstandin Kanari</b> (Constantine/Costas Kanaris)		Albanian	(Biondelli, 1856, p.81)
<b>Andon Kryeziu</b> (Antonio/s Kriezi/s)		Albanian	(Garston 1842, pp.287-288, Schmitt 2012, p.128)
<b>Dhimitër Bulgari</b> (Dimitri/Dimitrios Bulgari/Voulgaris)		Albanian	(Engelhardt, 1884, p.242)
<b>Odhise Andhrutso</b> (Odyssea/Odysseas Androutso/s)		Albanian	(Comstock 1828, p.193, Nuova antologia et al, 1870, p.48)
<b>Andrea Miauli</b> (Andrea/s Miaouli/s)		Albanian	(Dorsa, 1847, p.115, Engelhardt, 1884, p.242, Galaty 2018, p.114)
<b>Nikollë Stornari</b> (Nicola/Nikolaos Stornaris)		Albanian	(Dorsa, 1847, p.115)
<b>Jani Gura</b> (Yannis Goura/s)		Albanian	(Dorsa, 1847, p.115)
<b>Dhimitër Plaputa</b> (Dimitri/Dimitrios Plapouta/s)		Albanian	(Galaty 2018, p.114)
<b>Jorgo Karaiskaqi</b> (George/Georgios Karaiskakis)		Albanian	(Dorsa, 1847, p.115, Engelhardt, 1884, p.242)
<b>Jorgo Vernakioti</b> (George/Georgios Vernakiotis)		Albanian	(Dorsa, 1847, p.115)
<b>Teodor Griva</b> (Theodor/os Grivas)		Albanian	(Dorsa, 1847, p.115)
<b>Manuel Tombasi</b> (Emmanoui Tombazis)	(Brothers)	Albanian	(Dorsa, 1847, p.115)
<b>Jakov Tombasi</b> (Iakovos Tombazis)			
<b>Jani Koleti</b> (Ioannis Coletti/Kolettis)		Albanian	(Diario di Roma 1825, p.2, Wegelin, 1845, p.250)

**Sources:** Parry, 1827, p.157, Selections from et al, 1836, p.111, Pinon, 1909, p.802, Gratico, 1941, p.23, Dorsa, 1847, p.115, Engelhardt, 1884, p.242, Peacock, 1914, p.179, St Clair 1972, p.24, Zinovieff, 2004, p. 190, Galaty 2018, p.114, Forster, 1958, p.59, Keightley 1830a, p.56, Coppi, 1840, p.46, Newman 1945, p.263, Biondelli, 1856, p.81 Garston 1842, pp.287-288, Schmitt 2012, p.128, Comstock 1828, p.193, Nuova antologia et al, 1870, p.48, Diario di Roma 1825, p.2, Wegelin, 1845, p.250.

These are not the only ones. The list could go much larger. Other important Albanian fighters that is worth mentioning include Jorgo Sakturi, (Georgios Sachtouris), (Biondelli, 1856, p.81), Giorgaki Olympi, (The London Magazine, 1829, p.483), Nikita Stamatelopoli, Noti Boçari but there are also others. (Dorsa 1847, p.115). Furthermore, the number of Albanian soldiers that fought for Greek independence was in thousands (Keightley 1830b, p.216, Finlay, 1877, p.293)

The Albanians, however, were also committed to helping Greece financially. Finlay (1836) underlines how Albanian families helped financially the Greek independence cause by saying that

*"[t]he leading families of Hydra...[like]...The Condouriottes, the Tombazis, Miaouls...and Boulgari spent large sums in the service of [Greek independence]" (p.19)*

This study, however, attempts, wherever possible, to use the authentic Albanian (spelling) of the surnames of those (confirmed) Albanian heroes of the Greek independence revolution, in order to present a fairer description of their genuine native surnames. Indeed, the surnames of Albanian heroes of the Greek independence, like for instance, Boçari, Xhavella, Zaimi, Gura, Kryeziu, and Kanari, are, even today, common Albanian surnames.

Some Western authors, however, did use (a rather) proper spelling of the respective Albanian names (Nuova antologia et al, 1887, p.126, Petrotta 2003. p.255). Other authors<sup>10</sup> have exposed their respective Albanian origin, yet still, have opted, for the Hellenized surname version, by adding the letter 's' to the end of their respective surnames. Like for example, Botsari becomes Botsaris, Tzavella becomes Tzavellas, or Zaimi becomes Zaimis.<sup>11</sup>

While the aim of this study is to expose the Albanian factor in the Greek revolution and beyond, this does not imply, in any way, that the Ottomans and Greeks were largely marginal. Thus, one cannot overlook the fact that Ottomans and Greeks were important players in this revolutionary theatre too. From the Ottoman side, Sultan Mahmud and Reshid Pasha were critical figures in the Greek Revolution. (Finlay, 1861b). From the Greek

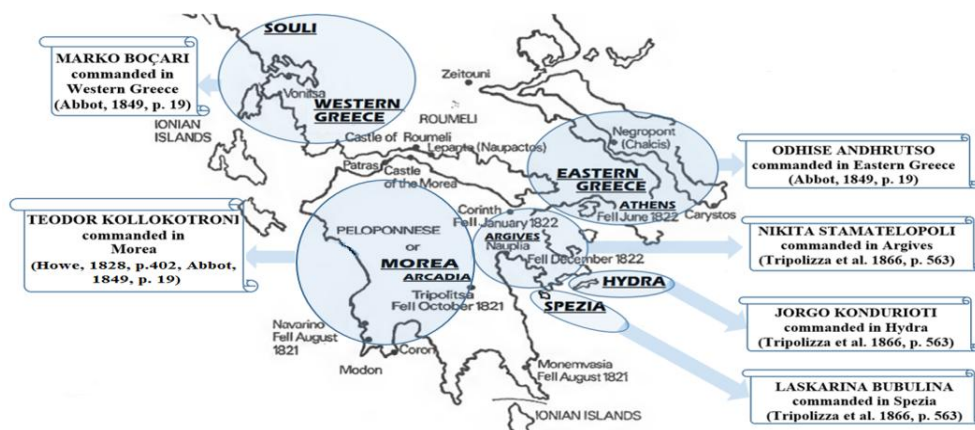
<sup>10</sup> Like Finlay, (1861b), p.30, Comstock (1828), p.193, or Keightley (1830a), p.56, for instance.

<sup>11</sup> Even today, in Greece or beyond, the Hellenized versions of these and other respective Albanian surnames (like Botsaris, Tzavellas, Zaimis, Gouras, Kriezis, Kanaris or Kountouriotis), are not uncommon.

side, on the other hand, Alexander Mavrocordatos and Agostino Capodistias proved to be the most significant leaders of the Revolution, who became involved in domestic politics, too. (ibid).

However, nonetheless, they were incomparable to the Albanians, who, to a large extent, were calling the shots, as they were directly involved, both, in leadership and soldiery combats, and both, conducive to the Ottomans and Greeks. The Albanian leadership in the revolution was not isolated in one area, but was spread practically in most of the areas where the fighting took place. An approximate geographical layout, within the Greek territory depicting the Albanian military command and control chain, in the respective revolution, is offered, in Map 2, below.

**Map 2.** Selected Albanian command and control chain in the Greek Revolution: Approximate geographical layout



**Source:** (Howe, 1828, p.402, St Clair 1972, p.42, Abbott, 1849, p. 19, Tripolizza et al. 1866, p. 563)

The sourced and detailed Map 2 above, highlights an approximate view related to the Albanian military leadership during the Greek revolution. Howe (1828) remarked that “Colocotroni, [was] Commander in Chief of the Morea” (p.402). Abbott (1849) specified that, “Marco Bozzaris [commanded] in Western Greece, and Odysseus in Eastern Greece” (p. 19) In other regions, “Niceta [commanded] the Argives,...Conduriote the valiant Idraotes and Bobbolina the patriots of Spezia.” (Tripolizza et al. 1866, p. 563) As noted

above, the number of Albanian soldiers fighting in favour of Greek independence was in thousands (Keightley 1830b, p.216, Finlay 1877, p.293).

Additionally, even in the critical battle of Navarino (1825-1827), Albanians were fundamental, again, both, in leadership and soldiers. Finlay (1861b) notes that, in the Navarino battle (that started in 1825), the Greek army was almost completely Albanian, both in leadership and army troops. (pp.64-66) This army leadership included Kiço Xhavella, Konstantin Boçari (the brother of Mark Boçari), Karaiskaqi, and Skurti (Hydriot sea-captain)<sup>12</sup> while the soldiers of the Souli, and the Albanians of Argolis also took part. (ibid) This battle was, again, very much an inter-Albanian fight, as the so-called Greek army, being practically, all Albanian, engaged in fighting against the forces of the fellow Albanian from Egypt, Ibrahim Pasha. (ibid)

However, despite the enormous efforts, the Albanian led Greek revolution, proved insufficient. Yet, European big powers of the time, Great Britain, France and Russia, did not disregard the Greek cause and got engaged. Following the intervention, of the latter powers, in the Battle of Navarino (October 20, 1827), and the subsequent developments and associated agreements that followed, an independent Greek monarchical state was formed with Prince Otto of Bavaria, becoming the King of Greece. (Britannica Online, 2020) In the Battle of Navarino, apparently no Greek joined the fight, therefore, consequently, this specific date October 20 (of the 1827) is not remembered as a significant date in the history of the Greek nation. (Chrysopoulos, 2017)

#### **4b. Albanian combat force inside Albania fighting on behalf of Ottomans: Ottoman army force consisting of major Albanian leadership and a combat force**

The Albanian heroes of Greek revolution had, above all, to battle also the fellow Albanians, not only from Albania, but also from Egypt, yet, both, fighting under Ottoman umbrella. The military regiment of the Albanians from Albania was large in army troops but very substantial in leadership. In addition, the composition of the Albanian army camp, included, soldiers of both faiths, Islamic and Catholic Christians. (Finlay, 1861b, p.11). Some of the key names of ethnic Albanian leaders that led the respective

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<sup>12</sup> Kundrioti, of Albanian origin, who could not speak the Greek language, during the Navarino battle, choose Skurti, a fellow countryman (The London Magazine 1826, p.16), from the Albanian populated island of Hydra, as a senior military chief. (Howe 1828, p.228)

Albanian troops, were Mustapha Pasha (Beauchamp, 1822, p.22, *The Spectator*, 1903, p.779), Omer Vrioni (Urquhart, 1838, p.75, *The Monthly Critical Gazette*, 1825, p.408, *Nuova antologia et al*, 1870, p.48), Veli Bey (Urquhart, 1838, p.256), Jeladeen Bey (Jourdain, 1828, pp.15-16, Abbot, 1849, pp.19-20), Yussuf Bey (Gordon 1832b, p.42), Ismail Pleassa (Comstock 1828, p.193, Keightley 1830b, p.249), Arslan Bey (Urquhart, 1838, p.256), Tahir Abbas (Gordon, 1832a, p.378, Keightley 1830b, p.249), and Elmaz Bey (Gordon, 1832a, p.378).<sup>13</sup> In addition, several thousands of Albanian soldiers took part in fighting against pro-Greek independence forces. (Gordon 1832b, pp.168, 170, Comstock 1828, p.272

#### **4c. Albanian combat force of Egypt fighting on behalf of Ottomans: Albanian leadership from Egypt with elite Albanian combat force**

To regain the control of the situation in these areas, the Ottoman government negotiated with another Albanian, but this time from Governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali. This famous Albanian ruler of Egypt had a trained military force and among others, also a large Albanian security force around him. This army was considered more than sufficient to subdue the Albanian led rebellion to the interest of Greek national cause. Following the agreement reached with the Ottoman authorities the Albanian governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali, sent his fellow son, Ibrahim, to the region to thrash the rebellion. (Finlay, 1861b) The end result was, another Albanian versus Albanian battle fight, conducive to Greek independence.

The key names of the ethnic Albanian leaders, from the Egyptian military regiment include Mehmet Ali, (Beauchamp, 1822, p.22) Hassan Pasha (Ioannides, 1864, p.107, Gordon 1832a, p.499), Ibrahim Pasha (Gordon 1832b, p.150, *British Society for et al.*, 1846, p.258), and Hussein Pasha (Gordon 1832b, p.150). The Egyptian military contingent, however, besides its Albanian leadership, it contained also thousands of Albanian soldiers too. (Abbot, 1849, p.25, Gordon, 1832a, p.499, Keightley, 1830a, p.245, Keightley, 1830b, p.216, Finlay 1861b, p.47). Therefore, instead of an assumed Ottomans versus Greeks war fight, the critical partakers in this revolutionary war arena were, almost exclusively, Albanians.

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<sup>13</sup> Other Albanian leaders include Banoosis Sevrranis, and Hagos Bessiaris, (Keightley 1830b, p.249, Gordon, 1832a, p.378).

As the revolution war ended, Greece entered a different stage - attempting to establish the national governmental institutions aspiring to move forward politically and economically. Yet still, Albanian factor in developing the newborn Greek state, proved indispensable. The following section will delve into Albanian contribution in Greek politics, more specifically will attempt to highlight Albanian involvement in Greek politics from about 1823 until around 1935.

## 5. Albanian factor in Greek Politics 1823-1935

The Albanian involvement in the Greek endeavours to establish a modern independent state did not stop, with the end of the revolutionary war. The new stages meant new opportunities to help the newly established Greek state, however, this time politically. Albanians, even during the revolutionary war, were involved in highest political hierarchical positions within the Greek war government.

During the time of the revolution, respectively from late 1823 until around mid-April 1827, the Albanians, (Kondurioti<sup>14</sup> and Zaimi<sup>15</sup> - one following the other) were Presidents of the Executive. (Rulers et al., 2020a) A few years later, they, both, occupied positions in the highest Government Commission. (ibid) George Finlay (1861b) highlights that, Kondurioti and Koleti<sup>16</sup> “exercised absolute power in the name of executive body” (p.30) It is important to note that these Albanians, the main rival had the faction led by their fellow Albanian, Kolokotroni and his eldest son, leading to civil war. (ibid pp.28-29) Finlay (1861b) underscore that following the end of this brief (internal) Greek civil war (November 1823 - June 1824),

*“[t]he chief authority was [then] conceded to the Albanian shipowners; George Konduriottes of Hydra was elected president of Greece, and*

<sup>14</sup> Kondurioti, who later became the President of Greece, was the richest man in Hydra. (Howe 1828, p.219)

<sup>15</sup> During the revolution, Andrea Zaimi was a part of a government executive group, called “Presidents of the Executive” (Rulers et al., 2020a). Later he also became the President of the governing commission (Ibid, Howe 1828, p.320). British General Thomas Gordon, who participated in the revolution, highly valued Andrea Zaimi’s governance, saying that “[t]he President Zaimis possessed considerable merit”. (Gordon 1832b, p.305)

<sup>16</sup> Jani Koleti, was an Albanian, educated in Italy and practiced medicine. (Diario di Roma 1825, p.2)



*Botasses of Spetzias, vice-president...who could not address...in Greek language. (p.30)*

Kundrioti, who, "in June, 1824, [had] been named the president of republic" (Cochrane & Bourne, 1869, p.315), later resigned, from the post of the Greek President, instead, another Albanian, Zaimi, "was elected in his place." (Phillips 1897, p.224) All in all, the four Albanians, Kondurioti, Zaimi, Koleti and Botasi (or Botasses) were practically the key (political) figures during the revolution era.<sup>17</sup>

Following the end of the revolution, the establishment of government institutions and the respective ministries was considered crucial. The Albanians again were critical in developing post-revolution Greece, by taking profound responsibility to move forward the newborn state. The Albanian heroes of the Greek independence, and or their family descendants, for more than a century, held (extremely) often and nearly uninterrupted for decades, not only the post of Greek Prime Minister, but also several other key government positions. From the year 1834<sup>18</sup> until the year 1935<sup>19</sup> the Albanian (political) reign in the newborn Greek state was astonishing.

Indeed, from the around mid-1840s until around the late 1870s, the Albanians had, a rather, 'monopoly', exclusivity and responsibility to run<sup>20</sup> the Greek government, respectively, the Greek Prime Minister's post.<sup>21</sup> During this period, respectively from 1844 until 1878, the Albanians held, almost uninterrupted, (for about 32 years) this key Greek government position. Many of the familiar names like Kanari, Xhavella, Kundrioti and many others held the Prime Minister post.

What it is striking, during this period, is the fact that, in most of the cases the Albanian was the only rival of a fellow Albanian, for the post of

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<sup>17</sup> Yet the Albanian leaders did also have internal enmities, among themselves, even resulting in severe consequences, such as the death of Andhrutso, (the commander of the East part of Greece), in July 1825. (Finlay 1861b, pp. 92-94) Jani Gura was apparently responsible for the death of Odhise Andhrutso. (ibid)

<sup>18</sup> In June 1834, the Albanian Jani Koleti was elected as Greek Prime Minister. (Rulers et al., 2020a)

<sup>19</sup> In October 1935, the fellow Albanian Aleksander Zaimi finished the Greek President mandate. (Rulers et al., 2020a)

<sup>20</sup> Along with King Otto, who was the Greek monarch at the time.

<sup>21</sup> The position of Prime Minister until 1968 was called the President of the Ministerial Council. (Rulers et al., 2020a)

Greek Prime Minister. Moreover, in the year 1848 and in 1862, three different Albanians<sup>22</sup> had the responsibility to govern the Greek government, within the respective calendar years, reaffirming the strong Albanian competition for this top Greek government post. (Rulers et al., 2020a)

King Otto, (the Greek monarch at the time) who governed Greece, mainly with Prime Ministers, most of them being of Albanian origin, apparently did not favour Greek political elite, as, according to King, the Greek ministers lacked honesty and patriotism, with their intent being “only on profiting by office to enrich themselves and create places for their partisans” (Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1854, p.407).

By around the year 1832, numerous ministries were formed, and many of them were run from the Albanians. Indeed, the Ministry of the Marine since its establishment, in 1832 until 1869, with some minor interruptions, (in 1834, 1835, and 1866) was run by the Albanians. In other words, for more than 90 percent of the stipulated years' timeline, the Marine Ministry was run by the Albanians (See Table 2 below).

The Albanians also run practically all ministries (at different points in time). Apart from the Ministry of the Marine, also the two other ministries, the Defense Ministry and Interior Ministry were, a rather, Albanian exclusivity. For about 22 years, within the timeframe 1844-1882, Defense Ministry was run by the Albanians. As far as Interior Ministry is concerned, from 1855 until 1878, for about 17 years, (or about 70 percent of the specified years' timeline), the Albanians run this Ministry.

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<sup>22</sup> In 1848, the Prime Minister Xhavella was subsequently replaced by Kundrioti, who in turn, (later), was replaced by Kanari. Similarly, in 1862, the Prime Minister Miaoli was replaced by Kollokotroni, while the latter, was later replaced by Bullgari. (Rulers et al., 2020a).

**Table 2.** Some of the Greek Governmental Positions held by the Albanians: Selected posts, at a specific time periods, percentage of the specified years timeline and individuals holding the stipulated posts

ALBANIANS HEADING GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS IN GREECE				
POSTS	SELECTED PERIODS	APPROX. NUMBER OF YEARS IN CHARGE	APPROX. PERCENTAGE IN CHARGE (%)	SURNAMES
PRESIDENT	1920 - 1935	14 yrs (between 1920-1935)	88% (of the years in timeline 1920-1935)	Kondurioti and Pangalo
PRIME MINISTERS <small>(until 1968 they were called the Presidents of the Ministerial Council)</small>	1844 - 1878	32 yrs (between 1844-1878)	91% (of the years in timeline 1844-1878)	Koleti, Kanari, Xhavella, Kondurioti, Kryeziu, Bullgari, Miaoli, Kolokotroni and Zaimi
FOREIGN MINISTERS	1848 - 1872	8 yrs (between 1848-1872)	32% (of the years in timeline 1848-1872)	Kondurioti, Zaimi and Bullgari
DEFENSE MINISTERS	1844 - 1882	22 yrs (between 1844-1882)	56% (of the years in timeline 1844-1882)	Xhavella, Boçari, Griva and Karaiskaqi
INTERIOR MINISTERS	1855 - 1878	17 yrs (between 1855-1878)	71% (of the years in timeline 1855-1878)	Bullgari, Kondurioti, Kolokotroni, Zaimi
MARINE MINISTERS	1832 - 1869	35 yrs (between 1832-1869)	92% (of the years in timeline 1832-1869)	Bullgari, Kryeziu, Kanari, Kondurioti, Miaoli and Griva

**Source:** (Rulers et al., 2020a, Rulers et al., 2020b)

**NOTE:** Some of the individuals holding the posts are the exactly those fighters that fought for Greek independence, like Kundrioti, Kiço Xhavella, Andrea Zaimi, Konstantin Kanari, and others. The list also includes relatives of those Albanian fighters in Greek revolution, like Jonani Kollokotroni, the son of Teodor Kollokotroni (see Table 1 above) or Dimitri Boçari, the son of Mark Boçari (The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1910b, p.311)

In addition, it is worth mentioning that the particular years, like the year 1848, 1849, 1859, 1860, 1862, 1865, 1878, and 1915 are the specific, because during those calendric years,<sup>23</sup> the Albanians had in control, not only the Greek Prime Ministerial post, but also more than half of the then existing Ministries of Greece. (Rulers et al., 2020a, Rulers et al., 2020b) Hence, this

<sup>23</sup> It implies, either the entire calendar year, or a period of the respective year. Thus, during those years the Albanians had held the stipulated high Greek government's posts, either for the entire year or for less.

indicates that the politicians of Albanian origin, in those specified years, practically, ruled the Greek state single-handedly. (ibid)

Even in first decades of the twentieth century, the Albanian political impact in Greece was massive. Apart from holding numerous Ministries, the Albanians also held the Greek Prime Ministerial post, at different points in time, in each of the first three decades of the last century. As far as the post of the Greek President is concerned, it is also important to note that, about 88 percent of the timeline years, 1920 to 1935, the post of Post of President was held by the Albanians. While from about 1925 until 1928 (with minor interruption, during the second part of 1926), Albanians held two key Greek government position, the posts of the Greek President and that of Greek Prime Minister (ibid). Newman (1945), in a nutshell, highlighted this period as follows,

*“In its short courses as a republic, Greek had only three presidents - Coundouriotis, Zaimis, and Pangalos. All three were of Albanian stock (p.263)*

After the end of the World War Two, Alexandros Diomidis another Albanian, (British Documents on Foreign Affairs, 2000, p.153), held the position of Greek Prime Minister between 1949-1950. (Rulers et al., 2020a)

## **6. Assimilation or the Hellenization of the Albanians in Greece**

Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer, a German historian, was stunned with vast number of Albanians in the new established Greece. Fallmerayer bluntly claimed that, if one calls this newly established country, a ‘New Albania’, essentially, one gives it a real name. (Fallmerayer 1836, p. xxvii)

The Greeks, however, seemed reluctant to accept the ‘New Albania’ in Greece. Subsequently, the picture began to change due to the process of Hellenization or the assimilation of ethnic Albanians. This respective assimilation gained pace in the nineteenth century, where, many “fast assimilated to the Hellenic model” (‘Dalmatia and her neighbours’, 1877, p.8). However, as Albert Thumb, in his research, highlights

*“Albanians from the beginning did not stand in hostile opposition to the Greeks, their Hellenisation began quickly and without difficulty...*

*they are now either totally Hellenised or have at least adopted Greek customs and Greek feeling..."(Thumb 1914, p.31)*

Even though the process of Hellenization moved fast, still not all Albanians lost their native attributes - the Albanian identity. In Kingdom of Greece, despite apparent pace of assimilation, by 1870, still around 300,000 identified Albanians lived in Greece (Sears 1871, p.9). Likewise, Rennell Rodd, in his 1892 book, *The Customs and lore of modern Greece*, notes that

*"[t]he proportion of the Albanian-speaking population in the Hellenic kingdom at the census of 1879 was...224,000 [inhabitants]... [however] it must not be forgotten that, besides these Albanian-speaking people, there are great numbers who have lost their language and speak only Greek, but whose Albanian origin is historically certain." (Rodd, 1892, p.19)*

The assimilation of the Albanians, however, was not homogenous. For instance, although Hydra and Spezia were called Albanian islands (Finlay, 1877, p. 436), and that the Albanians living on the latter islands could not even speak the Greek language still, they "regarded themselves as Greek because their allegiance was to the Orthodox Church." (St Clair 1972, p.9) In addition, the Albanians continued to intermarry with newcomers (like in Athens), and "eventually they, like the Vlachs, ceased to be counted as a separate ethnic group - All this leads us to the pestering question of identity" (Panourgia, 1995, p.27)

As far as the spoken Albanian language in Greece is concerned, "[a]t the time of independence,... substantial portions of the population spoke Albanian" (Legg, 1969, p.86) Bintliff (2003) reaffirms this when he says Albanian language was widespread to the "much of the rural population in central Greece...by the time of the creation of modern Greek state in the 1830s" (p.140) Even about a century later, a substantial number of Albanians still spoke their native language. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, (1910a) highlights this by saying that

*"A large number still speak the Albanian language; many of the older men, and a considerable proportion of the women, even in the neighbourhood of Athens, are ignorant of Greek." (The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1910a, p.483)*

Even on the brink of the World War One, actually in the battle of the Dardanelles (1912), the Albanian language was not 'not forgotten' but used even by Greek army personnel. Edwin Jacques (1995) highlights this when he says,

*"During the naval battle of the Dardanelles in 1912 he (Greek Admiral Kunduriot) shouted a command to the crew of his battleship in the Albanian language. When asked afterwards why he had used this unaccustomed idiom, the admiral replied, "From enthusiasm!" His response corresponds very closely to the reason given by Alexander the Great for frequently speaking to his Macedonian troops in their non-Hellenic language" (Jacques, 1995, p.328)*

During the 1910s, however, the Albanian language apparently was key language spoken within the Greek Fleet as "[over] two-thirds of the Greek Fleet was... manned by men of Albanian origin" (USA Department of State, 1943, p.860) The World War One period marked also the time, where the Albanians, for a significant amount time, managed key government posts of the Greek state. Indeed, the Albanians, like Kundurioti, Zaimi, Miaouli and Kanari, run the Prime Ministry, Ministry of Marine, Foreign Ministry, Interior Ministry, and to less extent the Defense Ministry, Ministry of Finance and the Ministry that concerned Education. (Rulers et al., 2020a, Rulers et al., 2020b) Other Albanians that held high level Ministerial posts include Danglis and Repoulis (Gibbons, 1920, p.346, Rulers et al., 2020b)

These large crowds of Albanians, both, in politics and in army (fleet), did not forget, their Albanian roots, despite serving the Greek state. Apparently, despite the challenges encountered, they seem to have preserved the Albanian language, yet seemingly lacked sufficient courage to freely speak their native language. On one occasion recorded, the same Admiral Kundurioti, of Albanian origin, felt the need for (moral) intervention on behalf of their fellow Albanian native speakers. Jacques (1995) accounts this occasion as follows,

*"On another occasion Admiral Kunduriot learned that his ship's officers had forbidden the seamen to speak Albanian among themselves. The admiral summoned the seamen on deck and asked them, "A kuvëndoni Shqip, more?" (O you, do you talk together in Albanian?). The sailors looked at one another, hardly knowing what to*

reply. One of them took courage, and answered, "- We do talk together just a little, Admiral." (Jacques, 1995, p.328)

The attempts to deny or obliterate the Albanian factor within Greece, apparently were not inconsistent. Even the asserts of, Eleftherios Venizelos, the former Greek Prime Minister, (in the early decades of the last century), substantiate the apparent common Greek view, when he said

*"One may be tempted...to raise the objection that a substantial portion of this Greek population uses Albanian as its mother tongue, and is, consequently, in all probability, of Albanian origin,"* (Gibbons, 1920, p.345)

Moreover, Venizelos, apparently, also attempted to blur the picture of (famous families of) Epirots with regards to their genuine origin, despite massive substantiation. He noted that the Epirots were Greeks, even before revolution, yet the families in the North of this region (Epirus),

*"furnished the chief heroes of the War of Independence, and... had been among the foremost benefactors of Greece, founding Greek schools and public institutions."* (ibid, pp.345-346)

Venizelos, in this occasion, for one reason or another, missed the chance to mention the Northern Epirots' families, like for instance, Boçari and Xhavela, and their respective Albanian origin. However, he could not ignore the massive Albanian presence in political and military life, in which context Venizelos noted that,

*"[i]t may be useful to add that the present vice-president of the Greek Ministerial Council, Mr. Repoulis; the commander-in-chief of the Greek army, General Danglis; the commander-in-chief of the Greek naval forces and Minister of Marine, Admiral Koundouriotis; and the majority of the crews of the Greek navy, speak Albanian as their mother tongue."* (ibid, p. 346)

All in all, the assimilation of the Albanians could, probably, have been a careful calculated Greek game, which in turn, it may not have gone according to the plan. As exposed above, even about a century after the

revolution, the Albanian language appeared to be the key language in Greek fleet during the 1910s. Legg (1969), however, underscored that “the inhabitants, largely of Albanian stock, were only imperfectly assimilated into Greek nationality” (p.48)

The endeavours to fabricate the truth, to make the Albanians insignificant or disregard their tremendous contribution prior, during and after the independence revolution, is totally insane. Moreover, the Albanians and Greeks should attempt to find common grounds and look forward, towards mutual progress and prosperity for the entire Balkans. In addition, they should distance themselves from a framework of national (egocentric) interests.

History, however, should, as much as possible serve as a tool to unite nations, and not create rivalry. It is a moral responsibility of academics not in the Balkans but worldwide to use history constructively so that future generation can live in peace and harmony together. Ultimately, what importance has, for instance, a particular debate, on whether Boçari, Xhavella, Zaimi, or Kundrioti, are Albanians or Greeks, if the such debate may have very harmful consequences. Same debate can apply even for Alexander the Great or Pyrrhus.

Indeed, as the latter debate is concerned, one must bear in mind that Alexander the Great, by abundant international sources, is of Albanian origin. For instance, Secundus (1573) while describing Alexander the Great's campaign in India, emphasizes that Alexander the Great was the King of Albania. (p.249), just like Gottfried (1710) who called Alexander the Great the Albanian King (p.180) Some sources expose that Alexander the Great, appear to be the first Albanian king, as before him, there were no accounts (recorded), of any other Albanian king. (L'art et al, 1819, p.448, The London Encyclopædia, 1844, p.438) In addition, Peacock, (1914) highlights that Alexander the Great, along with his family, was, of Albanian origin. (p.186) Finlay (1861a), on the other hand, underscores that

*“Alexander the Great must, according to...archeologists, have spoken an ancient Albanian dialect at his riotous banquets with his Macedonian officers.” (p.41)*

In addition, even Pyrrhus, (a distinguished soldier of his time), is recognized by numerous Western sources, to be of Albanian origin. Mauro and Aldrovandi (1556) and Antonio de Guevara (1568) describe, in their



sixteenth century books, Pyrrhus as King of Albania (Mauro and Aldrovandi 1556, p.132, Guevara 1568, p.86). Likewise, Crespet (1587) elucidate "Pyrrhus [as] the King of Epirots or Albanians" (p.6), while Drelincourt (1658) remarked that Pyrrhus was the King in Albania (Drelincourt, 1658, p.205) Dorsa (1847), on the other hand, calls "Pyrrhus,..the hero of the ancient Albanian people" (p.43) while Peacock, (1914) underlines that "Pyrrhus, the greatest soldier of his age, was a Shkypetar or Albanian" (p.183)

Again, irrespective of positions on the issues of origin, such debates should not act as a divisive point, but rather a reflection on how to build common bridges and move forward. The following section will delve into specific Albanian contribution into social life of the modern Greece.

## **8. Albanian factor within the Greek social context**

The role and impact of the Albanians was not limited only to the Greek war of independence and post independent politics. The social impact is also of particular interest. The Albanians have, indeed, been very successful businessmen in Greece. (Newman 1945, p.263) In addition, the demand for Albanian products in Greece, was also very high. St Clair (1972), describes the demand for Albanian equipment in Greece, in details when he says

*"The bazaars of Tripolitza, Nauplia, Mesolonghi, and Athens were filled with gold-embroidered jackets, gilded yataghans, and silver-mounted pistols. Tailors came flocking to Greece from Joannina and Saloniki. Sabres, pistols, and long guns, richly mounted, were constantly passing through the Ionian Islands as articles of trade between Albania and the Morea. The arms and dress of an ordinary palikari, made in imitation of the garb of the Tosks of Southern Albania..." (p.233)*

Even in the field of medicine, the Albanians had a reputable impact in Greece. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, (1841) emphasizes that medical surgery was "chiefly in the hands of Albanians, who have [had] skill enough to reduce fractures and dislocations" (p. 729) However, among the most astonishing impact, of the Albanians in the Greece, is the costume, or the national dress. Rodd (1892) elaborates this astoundingly when he says,

*"Since the war of Independence, the Albanian costume has become the national dress of continental Greece. The white kilt (fustanella) with its many pleats is now worn quite short, though a few old-fashioned people may still be seen with the more graceful skirt in use at the beginning of the century, which fell an inch or two below the knee. The fustanella is really, I imagine, a decorative development of the shirt, worn like a tunic belted at the waist, as still seen among the poorer peasants who cannot afford such "ungrudging" folds of linen." (Rodd, 1892, p.73)*

This dress gained popularity during the war of independence likely around the 1824 to 1825 (St Clair 1972, pp. 231-232), at the time when Kondurioti, Zaimi, Koleti and Botasi (Rulers et al., 2020a, Finlay 1861b, p.30), were leading figures in then Greece. St Clair (1972) describes magnificently these developments when he said,

*"It was probably at this time [1824-1825] that the Albanian dress made its decisive step towards being regarded as the national dress of Greece. The Government party, being largely Albanians themselves, favoured the dress" (p.232)*

In addition, Lichnowsky (1918) too, established that "the so-called Greek national dress is of Albanian origin" (p. iv), yet, additionally even "the dress generally worn by the peasant women in Greece is also of the Albanian type." (Rodd, 1892, p.75) Thumb (1914) moves the Albanian impact in Greece's society, to another level, the physical transformation, when he said that "the Albanians also belong to the elements which took part in the physical transformation of the Greek race." (p.31) In this context, Eliot (1900) remarks that "clearly, the modern Greek must be of very mixed blood." (p.293), Phillips (1897), on the other hand, explains that

*"the so-called Hellenes of the to-day are, in fact, a mixed breed of Albanians, Slavonic, and Latin origin, with a slight tincture of Greek blood" (p.3)*

Thumb (1914) also underscores that Albanians "were added to the ancient Greek blood" (p.32). Similarly, The British Quarterly Review (1877), notes that,

*“while it is absurd to talk of modern Greeks as if they pure Hellenes, it is equally absurd to talk of their having no drop of true Hellenic blood in their veins. They are beyond doubt a people Hellenic in its essence, but which [over the centuries] has assimilated, [lately, through]...a large Albanian, infusion.” (The British Quarterly Review, 1877, p.166)*

Despite everything underscored above, still, Greece today is a popular anti-Albanian ‘hotbed’. It is not uncommon to see “the graffiti on street walls declaring, "Albanians, you'll never become Greek!", (Zinovieff 2012). Anti-Albanian chants have been also recorded by the Greek crowds (Asimakoulas, 2016, p.452) Sofka Zinovieff, a Greek academic, expressed her shocking view on the treatment of Albanians in Greece, when she said,

*“Sometimes I'm disgusted with being Greek and how they treat the Albanians. Nobody mentions the importance of Albanian culture in Greek history or that many of the heroes of the Greek revolution were Albanian - Botsaris, Bouboulina.” (Zinovieff 2004, p. 190)*

The hatred again the Albanians should not be condoned in this very mixed blooded Greece. After all, those who write such unpleasant graffiti or join anti-Albanian chants, may themselves have more Albanian blood than Greek. Indeed, the Greek history perplexity can sometimes create peculiar narratives. When speaking about native Greek history, Nikos Dimou, a prominent Greek writer once said, “We used to speak Albanian and call ourselves Romans...” (Kimmelman, 2009)

## 9. Conclusion

This study focuses on exclusive examination of the Albanian impact in Greece’s struggles during the most of the nineteenth century, and beyond. The focal point is the Albanian factor during the Greek independence revolution, and the forthcoming political developments in Greek political arena. A number of developments both, during the nineteenth and the twentieth century, namely in militarily, political and social context, have been selected and examined.

This paper, in the introductory part, put forward several questions that involve the topics concerned. Based on the respective research questions put forward, the study draws final conclusions.

1. First, the Albanian population in Greece was very large. Albanians occupied Attica, Argolis, Boetia, Phocis the islands of Hydra, Spezzia, Salamis, and Andros, and some villages round Arcadia, Achaia, and Messenia. (Gordon, 1832a, p.34) Athens, at around, the time of revolution was considered simply "an Albanian village". (About, 1855, p.32) The islands of Hydra and Spezas were entirely populated by the Albanians (Finlay 1861a, p.35) and Finlay (1877) called them, the Albanian islands. (p. 436) The Albanian population in Greece was so large, prompting one to think that probably the number of Albanians in Greece exceeds that of Greeks. (About, 1855, p.27) While the number of Albanians and Greeks, within the entire Ottoman Empire, by the mid nineteenth century, were virtually the same, at around 2 million (The Athenæum,1854, p.333) However, when focusing only in the Balkan region, the number of Albanians was almost double that of the Greeks (1.6 million versus 900,000). (Boué, 1840, p.32)

2. Second, the research establishes that the Albanian contribution to Greek revolution was remarkable by any standard. They took part practically in every initiative related to the Greek Revolution, from Philikí Etaireía (a secret movement) to the battlefields, in the name of Greece independence. The paper also closely examines the August 1823 Kerpenisi battle, probably the most celebrated battle in the Greek independence revolution. This battle was planned and executed practically exclusively by the Albanians. Indeed, both leaderships and army troops (the Suliots), were Albanians, while Greeks remained rather "spectators". (Finlay, 1861b, p.11) Greeks also failed to participate in another critical battle, that of Navarino in October 1827. (Chrysopoulos, 2017) The Albanian factor was indispensable during the Greek revolution, thus impacting, the shaping of the history of both, Greece and Balkans. Peacock (1914), underlined that "[i]t is unlikely that the liberation of Greece would have been obtained had it not been for the Albanian warriors who supplied the best fighting (Peacock, 1914, p.178).

3. Third, the study revealed that the main actors of the revolution, both in military and political arena were the Albanians. Instead of an assumed Ottomans versus Greeks fight, most of the fights resulted to be led by the Albanians, and very often even among the Albanians themselves.

The paper underlined that the Albanian factor was involved in three different fronts:

- a. *Albanians of Greece on behalf of Greeks*
- b. *Albanians of Albania on behalf of Ottomans*
- c. *Albanians of Egypt on behalf of Ottomans*

The Albanian contribution in Greek independent battles is rather unique in the world. In addition, it may be astonishingly unique to comprehend that the Albanians resorted to fighting even the fellow Albanians – in the name of free Greece. As illustrated above, Mark Boçari with his Albanian comrades in August 1823, organized an attack, on a largely crowded Albanian led Turkish army. Boçari and comrades apparently knew that they are about to fight Albanians, as they talked to Albanian outposts in native tongue, and additionally, they knew that the leadership of the camp was Albanian too. Yet still, they “marched silently to the attack and surprised the Albanians, of whom they made a great slaughter” (Long, 1836, p.304) Idiosyncratically, Greek were watching the Albanians fighting drama from the mountainous hill. Finlay (1861b) highlights this when he says

*“The Greek soldiers in the neighbouring villages of Tranakhorio and Nostimo, when it was too late, became ashamed of their inactivity, and reproached their captains for causing the death of the bravest chief...”*  
(p.11)

In other words, in this renowned battle of the “...August 1823 the [Albanian] orthodox Tosks surprised the camp of the [Albanian] Catholic and [Albanian] Mussulman Guegs.” (Finlay, 1861b, p.10) while “[t]he Greeks were encamped idly on the hills.” (Finlay, 1861b, p.11) This battle had other repercussions for the Albanians. Following the attack, the suspicion grew within the Albanians soldiers circle (who were included in the Ottoman army camp), prompting another internal fight among Albanians themselves. Keightley (1830b) remarks that

*“[t]he confusion and terror caused by the attacks of the Sooliotes, made the different corps of Albanians suspect each other of treachery; and they began to fire on one another.”* (p.159)

In addition, to this Kerpenisi battle (of August 1823), other inter-Albanian clashes, were recorded during the respective revolution (Gordon 1832a, Gordon 1832b). It is very difficult, however, to find out the real number of Albanians casualties during the Greek war of independence, but certainly there were many (Gordon 1832a, pp. 205-500).

**Figure 1.** Inter-Albanian fight during Greek independence revolution



*Author's reflective sketchy picture conveying selected actors and specific episodes of Greek independence war, based on the sources explored in this study*

A reflective picture, conveying Albanian factor in the Greek independence war, along with the fellow respective actors, depicting selected episodes during the revolution, is presented in the Figure 1 above. The study also revealed that even the Albanian chiefs, within the Greek camp, resorted to fighting among themselves, in one case, the victim recorded was Odhise Andhrutso, the Albanian who commanded in Eastern Greece. All in all, these unlikable and peculiar inter-Albanian dramas, sound, not only *sui generis*, but also tragically for human rationale.

4. Fourth, the study establishes that the Albanian involvement in post-independence Greece, notably in Greek politics, was very substantial. Throughout the nineteenth century and even in the first decades of the twentieth century the Albanian authority and control, in Greek politics,

was massive. The study underscored that even during the revolution era, the Albanians were elected in two of Greece's top post, the President and the Vice President of Greece. These two positions were occupied by two fellow Albanians, Kundrioti and Botasi, who could not even address in the Greek language. (Finlay 1861b, p.30) In addition, at this time another Albanian, Jani Koleti, also had "exercised absolute power in the name of executive body" (ibid) When President Kundrioti resigned, Zaimi, another Albanian, was elected the Greek President, effectively replacing Kundrioti (Phillips 1897, p. 224)

In the post-independence Greece, the Albanian political impact in modern Greece politics did not diminish but was rather consolidated. The study underlined that from 1844 until 1878, except for a very marginal period, the Prime Minister position in Greece, was an Albanian exclusivity. Additionally, many other key Greek ministries were held by the Albanians. Moreover, the study highlighted above, that in certain years of the nineteenth century, the Albanians, not only that they run the post of Greek Prime Minister, but had run more than half of, then, existing ministries. This, however, implies that for a substantial amount time, the Albanians run the Greek state affairs almost singlehandedly. Their political impact in Greece, however, continued even in the twentieth century. Even in the early decades of the last century and that for several years, the Albanians held, apart from numerous ministries, also the key state positions, the President, Prime Minister and President of Senate.

5. Fifth, the research revealed that the impact of the Albanian factor in Greece's social life, during the nineteenth century, was also substantial and should not be overlooked. The demand for Albanian products in Greek markets was very high. St Clair, (1972) underlined that when Greeks were in the possession of money, they were largely attracted to Albanian made products. (p.233) In addition, the Albanians in Greece were also very famous for medical surgery, as this branch of medicine was "chiefly in the hands of Albanians, who have [had] skill enough to reduce fractures and dislocations" (The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1841, p. 729) The study underscore that among the most astounding social impact, of the Albanians in the Greece, is the Albanian costume, which in turn, then later became a national dress. This reputable costume become the national dress of Greece, during the revolution era, and the government party being predominantly Albanian, favoured the costume. (St Clair, 1972, p.232).

All in all, as the sources above revealed, the nineteenth century Greek independence drive was practically an all-Albanian drama, played in the Greek theatre, but with the playwrights and main performers being virtually all Albanians. The Albanian-led Greek independence movement and the pertinent developments resembles the 'Alcestis' play of Euripides, which is painted with vagueness, and ends tragically.

The research establishes that the Greek factor in Greek revolution was, surprisingly, marginal in comparison to the Albanian contribution. The key protagonists such as Boçari, Xhavela, Zaimi, Kundrioti, Kollokotroni, Gura, Kryeziu, Kanari, and many others (cited above), are Albanian heroes of Greek independence. They were brave warriors, and additionally, very powerful, both, financially and politically. Kollokotroni, who commanded Morea (or Peloponnese), was considered to be "the most powerful one in all Greece." (Cochrane & Bourne, 1869, p.344) On the other hand, as highlighted above, Jorgo Kundrioti an Albanian, who could not even speak Greek language, "had in June 1824, been named the president of republic." (ibid p.315).

One can, therefore, argue that the Albanians, apparently, considered the continental Greece territory, just as Fallmerayer (1836), viewed it, a 'New Albania' (p. xxvii). The Albanian (factor) impact was immense, and it is rather insane to minimize it, or attempt to omit completely. The study underscored that the Albanians did indeed largely populate the territory of Greece, with Athens, Hydra and Spezia, among others, being called Albanian territories. For a substantial amount of time, the Albanian language, the Albanian products, costumes, and respective guns, among others, overwhelmed the continental Greece. In Athens, "a special court had to be set up in Albanian language to administer justice..." (ibid p.263) This environment and respective circumstances may have prompted the Albanians to fight for that perceived homeland. Moreover, the renowned Albanian families like Kundrioti, Tombazi, Miaoli, and Bullgari contributed to the war, not only as warriors and or chiefs, but also financially. (Finlay 1836, p.19).

As the time passed by, despite accentuated contribution, the Albanians were not warmly welcomed to express freely their respective identity. The Hellenization of the Albanians was progressing yet imperfectly. (Legg 1969, p.48) By the 1870s, still, hundreds of thousands of Greek citizens, were identified as ethnic Albanians. (Sears 1871, p.9, Rodd, 1892, p.19).



History, geography and physical transformation of Greece, (respectively Greeks) has the unwavering Albanian mark. Attempts, to overlook or minimize the Albanian factor in modern Greece, are insane and should be condemned. Several sources, highlighted above, emphasized that the modern Greeks' blood have a substantial Albanian infusion, as, for several centuries, numerous generations of the Albanians and Greeks shared the area together.<sup>24</sup> The former, largely, later on, may have felt more 'Greek' than Albanian, in spite of ethnic origin. The ethnic transformation subject or the ethnicity of historical figures, may be sensitive issues, and should, thus, be somewhat, overlooked, due to its potential to cause unnecessary frictions and tensions within the Balkan Peninsula. What's more, getting involved in such debates today, can also be considered, rather, irrelevant.

In this troubled area, however, the future competitions should, thus, no longer be directed towards 'self-satisfactory' insults or bullying the neighbouring nations, but on how the respective nations resort to sacrifice for the sake of peace and stability of the entire region. This may not be easy, but attempts, nevertheless, should be made. The Balkans, after all, needs high integrity dynamic and charismatic leaders, who use the productive energy to fight beyond national boundaries. Such energies, in turn, may, then, have a chance to be transformed into a solid synergy base, conducive to encounter future common challenges.

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<sup>24</sup> Various Albanian populated regions did undergo the Hellenization. Apart from Attica, Hydra, and other Albanian populated area in Greece, the specific transformation of the Albanian population in the Peloponnesus also offers, a rather conducive thematic insight. In the Peloponnesus, by around mid-fifteenth century, lived about 200,000 Albanians (Struck 1912, p.61). A few centuries later, in early twentieth century, the number (in the Peloponnesus) stood, to only around 90,000 (Thumb 1914, p.31).

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