

## History

# THE GREEK REVOLUTION OF 1821 AND THE ROMANIANS: THE 25<sup>th</sup> OF MARCH 1821 RECALLED IN *ΕΛΠΙΣ* [ELPÍS], THE PERIODICAL OF THE HELLENIC UNION OF ROMANIA<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This study presents the forerunners and artisans of the Greek Revolution of 1821, as well as the main events of the historical process unfolding during the Greek Revolution and the War of Liberation (1821–1829), as reflected and recalled in the periodical of the Hellenic Union of Romania, *Ελπίδα/Speranța* (Elpida/Speranța [Hope], 1993–2004), respectively *Ελπίς/Speranța* (Elpis/Speranța [Hope], since 2004). Special attention is given to the studies published in *Ελπίς/Speranța* by the periodical's long-standing contributor Apostolos Patelakis, a university professor based in Thessaloniki, who can be rightly considered the most significant Philo-Romanian contemporary Greek author, writing an honest and earnest history of the Greek Revolution of 1821.

**Keywords:** Greek Revolution of 1821; Greek Liberation War of 1821-1829; Hellenic Union of Romania; *Ελπίς/Speranța* (Elpis/Speranța) periodical; Apostolos Patelakis.

## 1. Introduction

During the last couple of centuries, the Greeks have kept on solemnly recalling the unforgettable 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1821, when, at the Monastery Agia Lavra (near Kalavrita) in Peloponnese, bishop Palaion Patron Germanos sanctified the flag of the revolution, raised against the Ottoman occupation and representing the blue cross of Orthodoxy on a white field (Zamfiropol, 2004, p. 17). The Greek Revolution turned into a nine-year war (1821-1829), which led to the independence of Greece (1832). The Greek Revolution of 1821 was characterized by Apostolos Patelakis as the first triumphant revolution of national liberation from Europe, and in 1830 Greece also became the first national state in the Balkans (Patelakis, 2021, pp. 3, 17).

The Greeks living in Greece and all over the world celebrate today two national days, commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1821 and *Το μεγάλο ΟΧΙ* [The Great NO] of 28 October 1940. Among the two, the Greek Independence Day of 25<sup>th</sup> of March apparently counts as the most important, at least in Romania, where ample manifestations take place organized by the Hellenic Union, the political forum of the Greeks from Romania (Cosma, 2022, pp. 1029-1057).

The periodical of the Hellenic Union from Romania, *Ελπίς/Speranța* [Hope] was published as a bilingual periodical in Neo-Greek and Romanian without interruption for the last 32 years, first under the name *Ελπίδα/Speranța* [Hope] (1993/1997-2004), then under the current one (since 2004). It has 4 numbers per year (according to the seasons of the year), 100-

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120 pages each, vividly illustrated and with a consistent cultural, artistic, scientific and political table of contents (Cosma, 2021b, pp. 377-378, 388-391). *Ελπίζ* also renders the pulse of the Greeks in Romania celebrating year after year the two national days of Greece.<sup>2</sup>

In a case study presenting the historical articles and studies published during the last decades in the journal of the Hellenic Union from Romania, *Ελπίζ/Speranța*, our presentation aims to offer, on the one side, an analytical approach of the complicated event history of the Greek Revolution of 1821, strongly intertwined with that of the Romanian Revolution of 1821, as well as of the longlasting Greek Liberty War of 1821-1829 (1832), which has been analyzed by the researchers in its 4 stages. On the other side, our scientific objectives regard the little known Greek historiography of Romanian citizenship (Vasile Caplan and especially Apostolos Patelakis), who have investigated the revolution of 1821, turning point in modern Ellada's history, while their *agora* (αγορά) has been for many years the very journal *Ελπίζ*. The bilingual periodical's Romanian-Greek perspective on the described historical event is unique, highlighting specific features and identity traits, but also a deep understanding of the history both of the Romanians and of the Greeks.

The methodology of this study case involves the content analysis of the published articles, the historiographical contextualisation and the comparative approach mirroring the Greek and Romanian old heroes and recent authors dedicated to the phenomenon of the revolution of 1821.

## 2. Historical Articles in *Ελπίζ*, Periodical of the Hellenic Union from Romania

The Greek Revolution of 1821 and the Greek War of Independence from 1821-1829 generated a large range of heroes, undoubtedly characterised by their endless courage and devotion for the cause of the motherland *patrida* (πατρίδα).

From the Pantheon (Πάνθειον) of the Greek heroes of the 1821 revolution, exposed by *Ελπίζ* in an illustrated gallery of portraits, we mention (in alphabetical order of names): Odysseus Androutsos (1790-1825), Markos Botsaris (1790/1798-1823), Laskarina Bouboulina (1771-1825), Athanasios Diakos (1788/1791 - 24 April 1821), Alexandros Ypsilantis (1792-1828), Dimitrios Ypsilantis (1794-1832), Konstantinos Kanaris (1793/1795-1877), Georgios Karaiskakis (1782-1827), Ioannis Kolettis (1773/1774-1847), Theodoros Kolokotronis (1770-1843), Yannis Makrygiannis (1797-1864), Andreas Miaoulis-Vokos (1769-1835), Georgakis Olympios (4 March 1772 - 9 September 1821), Grigorios Papaflessas (1788-1825), Nikitas Stamatelopoulos Tourkofagos (1782-1849), Nikolaos Stournaris (?-1826), Kitsos Tzavellas (1800-1855) (Uniunea Elenă din România, 2020, pp. 15-18; Cosma, 2021a, pp. 56-83).

Some of them, like Alexandros Ypsilantis, Georgakis Olympios, distinguished themselves on the battle field in the Romanian Principalities. Others, of Aromanian (Vlach) descent and Greek feelings, brought a major contribution to the attainment and acknowledgement of Greece's independence, thus earning the status of Greek national heroes and evens martyrs: Rigas Velestinlis or Feraios (Riga din Veleștin, 1757-1798), Georgakis Olympios (Iordache Olimpiotul, 1772-1821), Ioannis Farmakis (Ioan Farmache, 1772-1821), Markos Botsaris (Marcu Bociari, 1790-1823), Theodoros Kolokotronis (Teodor Colocotroni,

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<sup>2</sup> As a regular member of the Hellenic Community in Cluj-Napoca (since 2005), I own the almost complete collection of *Ελπίδα/Speranța* (Hope), the publication of the Hellenic Union from Romania/περιοδικό της Ένωσης Ελλήνων Ρουμανίας, published in București, between 1993/1997-2004, renamed *Ελπίζ/Speranța* [Hope], since 2004. This collection of the periodical of the Hellenic Union from Romania will be donated to the Central University Lucian Blaga Library in Cluj-Napoca, as soon as I update and finish the book which I prepare, approaching *Minoritatea națională elenă din România și revista Ελπίζ, 1993-2023* [The Hellenic national minority in Romania and the periodical *Ελπίζ*, 1993-2023].

1770-1843), Petrobei Mavromihalis (Petru Mavromihali, 1765-1848), Ioannis Kolettis (Ioan Coleti, 1773-1847) (Tanampasi, 2017, 2021; Cosma, 2021a, pp. 56-83).<sup>3</sup>

The periodical of the Hellenic Union of Romania includes, among other contents, several historical articles and scholarly studies dedicated to Greece's national day and to the pivotal event that shaped the formation of the modern Greek nation and state: the Greek Revolution and War of Independence (1821–1832).

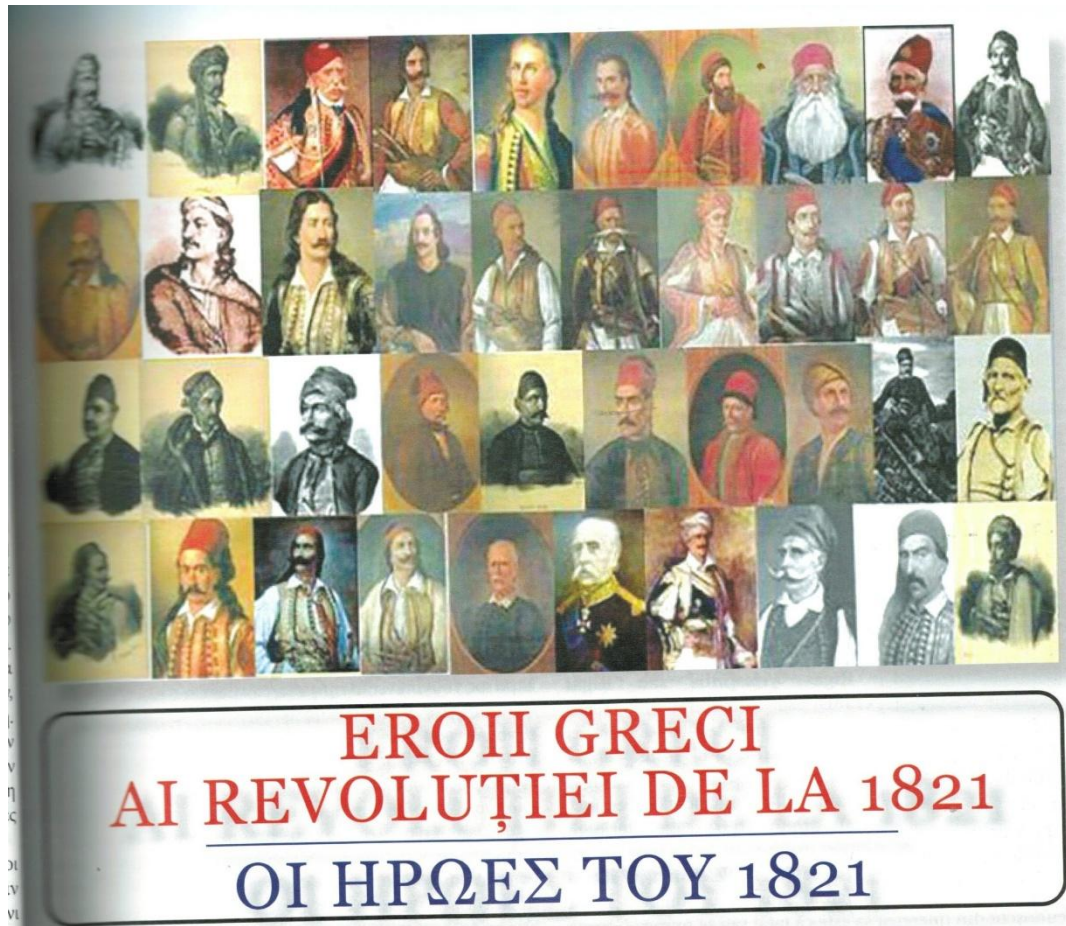


Image 1. Greek Heroes of the 1821 Revolution.  
*Ελπίς/Speranța*, January-March 2020, front cover, p. 1.

### 3. Vasile Caplan and his *Short history of the Hellenic revolution of 1821* (2004)

*Α Σύντομο ιστορικό της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης του 1821 / Scurt istoric al revoluției elene din 1821* [Short history of the Hellenic Revolution of 1821], presented by Vasile Caplan (2004), indicates the chronology of the 9 revolution years (1821-1829), as well as the participation of political leaders (Ioannis Kapodistrias) and military commanders (Alexandros and Dimitrios

<sup>3</sup> Anastasia Tanampasi (from the University of Western Macedonia, Kozani) approaches the issue of the Aromanian heroes of the Greek revolution in: “Teaching and Celebrating the Greek Revolution in the Romanian Schools of Greece”, paper delivered at the International Conference *An Epoch Threshold? The Year 1821 in the History of South-East Europe, at Bicentennial*, organised, within the Grant of the CNCS-UEFISCDI, PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-1868, “The Romanian Area and the International Crises: Dynamics of the Military Occupations (1769-1918)”, project manager Gabriel Leancă, by the Faculty of History and the Center for the History of International Relations of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iași, 23-25 September 2021. For details, see Anastasia G. Tanampasi, *Το ρουμανικό εκπαιδευτικό δίκτυο στη νότια Βαλκανική (τέλη 19ου - μέσα 20ου αιώνα): τα σχολεία, τα πρόσωπα και οι ιστορίες τους* [The Romanian education network in the Southern Balkan peninsula, from the end of the 19th century until the middle of the 20th century: The schools, the people and their storie], PhD thesis (dedicated to her father Georgios H. Tanampasis, as former pupil of the Romanian school in Veria), University of Western Macedonia, Florina, 2017, p. 1,179.

Ypsilantis, Odisseas Andrutsos, Iorgos Karaiskakis, Theodoros Kolokotronis) in the Greek Revolution and War of Independence (Caplan, 2004, pp. 3-8).

Another article, published by the editors of *Ελπίς* (2007) and offering *Σύντομα στοιχεία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης του 1821 / Scurte date ale Revoluției Elene de la 1821* [Brief information on the Hellenic Revolution of 1821], itemizes the 4 phases (stages) traversed between 1821-1832 by the revolution and war that secured Greece's national and state independence (Uniunea Elenă din România, 2007, pp. 3-7).

Surprisingly, the first phase of the Greek Revolution started in February 1821 and unfolded until September 1821 not in Mainland Greece, but in the Romanian Principalities. Namely it was the uprising of the “Philiki Etairia”, a masonic society led by Alexandros Ypsilantis, “Phanariot” (Greek from Phanar/Constantinople) general in the Tsarist army. The Etairists entered Moldavia, then headed southwards, to Wallachia, with the clear intention to cross the Danube and fight against the Ottomans. As the Etairists wanted to maintain the Phanariot regime in the Romanian Principalities, they tried to subordinate the Romanian revolution that had already been triggered by Tudor Vladimirescu since January 1821 and so they entered into conflict with the Romanians' national aspirations. Under the excuse that Vladimirescu made a deal with the Ottomans, unfortunately, the Etairist Greek allies in Moldavia and Wallachia are, in fact, morally and factually responsible for the betrayal of the leader of the Romanian revolution (Alexandros Ypsilantis, Georgakis Olympos) and for the assassination of Tudor Vladimirescu (Vasileios Karavias) (Cosma, 2021a, pp. 56-83).

In mainland Greece, the revolution officially broke out at the Monastery of Agia Lavra on 25 March 1821, when Bishop Palaion Patron Germanos sanctified the flag of the revolution. As time went on, the revolution extended to the islands of Spetses, Hydra, Psara, Kasos, and Mykonos, as well as in mainland Greece, advancing northwards towards Thessaly and Macedonia. The first senates in Peloponnese and Central Greece were organized and the first constitution was drafted.

The second phase of the Hellenic revolution includes the years 1822-1823, when the fights fully moved to the Greek territories. The Ottoman forces destroyed the island of Chios in March-April 1822, but the Greeks registered victories on water (Konstantinos Kanaris set fire to the admiral ship of the Turkish fleet) and on land (in Peloponnese, Theodoros Kolokotronis was appointed supreme commander). Mesolonghi in Central Macedonia was besieged for the first time. In 1823, Markos Botsaris was killed in the battle of Karpenisi. At Mesolonghi fell lord Byron on 19 April 1824 (Caplan, 2004, p. 6).

The third phase, between 1824-1827, brought the revolution's decline and the beginning of the inner civil wars. In 1824, in Peloponnese, Kolokotronis gathered his partisans at Tripoli, and Konduriotis at Kranidi. The Ottomans allied with the Egyptians, who occupied Crete and Kasos, while the Turks destroyed Psara. However, the Greeks decisively won the navy battle of Gerondas. In 1825, after the battle of Maniaki, where Papaflessas was killed, the first regular Greek army was organised by Philhellenic commander Favieros. Pages of bloody war and of supreme heroism of the Greek fighters and inhabitants were written during the second siege and blockade of Mesolonghi (1825-1826). When Mesolonghi fell, the whole Mainland Greece crushed. The flame of the revolution was lit again by Georgios Kairaiskakis due to his victories of Arahova and Distomo. A government of 11 members (among which president Andreas Zaimis and member Konduriotis from Hydra) was chosen. But in 1827 Faliro (Piraeus) and Akropolis (Athens) fell. Karaiskakis was forced to obey to the orders of the foreign officers and to attack Athens on 23 April 1827. As events rapidly drew to a close, Karaiskakis was wounded and died, and the Greek offensive of 25 April ended terribly, as the Greeks lost 1,500 warriors and several commanders. Yet, with the involvement of the Great Powers—England, France, and Russia—in the famous naval Battle of Navarino (8 October 1827), in which the combined Anglo-French-Russian fleets confronted the Ottoman–Egyptian fleet, the latter was completely

destroyed, an outcome that effectively marked the liberation of Greece. The Greeks summoned the third national assembly in Trizina, voting a new constitution and appointing Ioannis Kapodistrias as governor of Greece. At the same time, the Greeks gained a great diplomatic victory as the treaty of London was signed in July 1827. Nevertheless, Central Greece still remained under Ottoman domination (Caplan, 2004, p. 7).

The fourth and last phase lasted from January 1828 to February 1830. In Aegina, the capital city, Ioannis Kapodistrias took the official oath as a governor of Greece on 26 January 1828. The revolution broke out once again, and Kapodistrias's government reorganized the revolutionary forces, which in 1829 reconquered the mainland, including the heroic city of Missolonghi. In Petra, the last victorious battle was fought on 25 September 1829 by Dimitrios Ypsilantis, Alexandros Ypsilantis's brother, who had led the battle of Drăgășani on 9/21 June 1821. Eventually, the protocol signed in London on 10 March 1829 and, subsequently, the special protocol of 3 February 1830 internationally acknowledged the independence of the Hellenic state under the rule of a hereditary king (Uniunea Elenă din România, 2007, pp. 3-7).

After the assassination of Ioannis Kapodistrias in Nafplio on 27 September 1831, the Treaty of London of 1 February 1832, by virtue of which Otto of Bavaria became King of Greece, was concluded. Subsequently, through the London Conference and the Treaty of Constantinople (1832), the Ottoman Empire was obliged to recognise Greece's borders along the Volos–Arta line (in force until 1881) (Caplan, 2004, p. 8).

#### 4. Apostolos Patelakis Celebrating 200 Years Since the Beginning of the Greek Revolution

In 2013, when celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the periodical of the Hellenic Union from Romania, led by editor-in-chief Mariana Alecu and published in București, counted among its permanent correspondents and collaborators Gabriela Papaefțimiu, Angela Bratsou (both from Athens), as well as Apostolos Patelakis (from Thessaloniki) (Vancea, 2013, pp. 19-20). Consulting the journal's collection, I have identified several historical articles and studies written continuously by Apostolos Patelakis and published from 2009 to the present day (Cosma, 2021b, pp. 390-391).

Born in Romania to a family of Greek origin, he emigrated to Greece (1979). Since 1980, he has been a researcher and professor of Romanian language at the Institute of Balkan Studies (Ιδρυμα Μελετών Χερσονήσων του Αίμου, IMXA) in Thessaloniki, Patelakis championed the Romanian - Hellenic relations for over 4 decades. Apostolos Patelakis published in 2017 a unique book in the Romanian historiography, describing *Războiul civil din Grecia (1946-1949) și emigranții politici greci în România (1948-1982)* [The civil war in Greece (1946-1949) and the Greek political emigrants in Romania (1948-1982)]. In 2018, when he became honorary citizen of Craiova, the Romanian Television made an appreciative documentary film with and about him, metaphorically entitled *Apostolos Patelakis, Romania's Heart in Salonik*.<sup>4</sup>

The studies signed by the journal's long-standing collaborator Apostolos Patelakis on *25 Martie – Ziua Națională a Greciei / 25η Μαρτίου – Ημέρα Εθνικής Εορτής των Ελλήνων* [The 25th of March – the National Day of Greece] (in 2013) and on the occasion of *199, respectively 200 de ani de la începutul revoluției grecești de la 1821 / 199/200 χρόνια από την έναρξη της ελληνικής επανάστασης του 1821* [199/200 Years from the Beginning of the Greek Revolution of 1821] (in 2020 and 2021), represent authentic editorial events, showing not only a consistent synthesis of the revolution and war for the liberation of Greece (1821-1832), but especially the

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<sup>4</sup> The documentary film *Apostolos Patelakis, inima României din Salonik* [Apostolos Patelakis, Romania's heart in Salonik] was produced by the Romanian Television (TVR) Craiova on 29 December 2018.

Romanian component of the Greek Revolution of 1821 (Patelakis, 2013, pp. 21-22; Patelakis, 2020, pp. 7-14; Patelakis, 2021, pp. 3-17).

With regard to the forerunners of the 1821 Revolution in the Romanian Principalities, the Romanian-Greek historian characterizes Rigas Velestinlis (1757–1798), who lived and militated in Bucharest for fifteen years, as the first martyr and the first revolutionary of his people (Patelakis, 2020, pp. 7-10)<sup>5</sup>.

The author insists on the implication of the Greek diaspora in the outbreak of the first Serbian Revolution led by Karađorđe (1804-1813) and in founding of the Philikí Etairía in Odessa (1814). After Ioannis Kapodistrias refused to take the lead of Etairia (September 1818), on 21 April 1820 Tsarist general Alexandros Ypsilantis (28 years old) gave his consent to take over this masonic and military organization as its commander in chief, *arhiós* (αρχηγός) (Patelakis, 2020, pp. 11-14).

The first flag of liberty was sanctified on 19 February 1821 in the Church Saint Nicholas of Galați. Immediately after the consecration, several hundreds of Etairists, led by Vasileios Karavias, attacked and burned down the residence of Topucci Bașa, chief of the Turkish garrison in Galați. This was the beginning of numerous atrocities and acts of vandalism exerted by the Etairists against the Muslim military and civilians, but also against the Romanian population, which ended in the shattering reply of the Ottomans, who hit back in the battle of Galați on 1 May 1821 (Ardeleanu, 2013, pp. 141-145).

Apostolos Patelakis clearly indicates the chronology of the Etairist movement led by Alexandros Ypsilantis in Moldo-Vlachia during spring and summer of 1821. Parting from his headquarters in Chișinău (Bessarabia, Russian province), Ypsilantis crossed the Prut River (22 February 1821), heading to the capital of Moldavia, Iași, that became the headquarters of the first outburst Etairist Revolution. In Iași he launched his famous proclamation of 24 February 1821, *Μάχου υπέρ πίστεως και πατρίδος* [Fight for faith and motherland], and on 25 February he signed an order for the organization of the revolutionary army in two corps, put under the command of his brothers Georgios and Nicholas Ypsilantis. On 27 February 1821 Etairia's flag and Ypsilantis's weapons were blessed by Moldavia's metropolitan bishop Veniamin Costache at the Monastery Three Hierarchs, while the anthem of Rigas was sung in church along with the religious songs (Patelakis, 2020, pp. 7-14).

*Arhiós* Ypsilantis left Moldavia for Wallachia, on the route taking from Iași to Târgu Frumos, Roman, Bacău, Focșani (where the *Ιερός Λόχος* [Sacred Band] was formed – on Romanian territory - in mid-March of 1821, as the first regular army corps in the modern history of Greece, made up exclusively of Greek students that voluntarily registered to fight against the Ottomans), Buzău (where Ypsilantis joined the troops of Georgakis Olympios), Mizil, Ploiești, București. With his army of 6.500 men (among them there were only 2.000 Greeks, the others were Bulgarians, Serbs and Albanians), Alexandros Ypsilantis entered the capital of Wallachia on 28 March 1821, setting his headquarters in Colentina (Cosma, 2021a, pp. 61-70).

A month later, Russia's consul in București delivered him a letter from Kapodistrias. Ypsilantis was announced that Alexander I had not only excluded him from the Tsarist army and had disavowed the Greeks' movement, but the Russian tsar had also allowed the intervention of the Ottoman troops, in order to crush the revolution both in the Romanian Principalities and in Greece. After the failed attempt to come to an agreement with Tudor Vladimirescu, Ypsilantis left București (1 April 1821), camping at Târgoviște. The Turkish army entered the Principalities (30 April 1821), while Tudor also left București (15 May 1821), heading to Pitești. Alexandros Ypsilantis decided to arrest the Romanian leader with the help of Georgakis Olympios, who arrived in Vladimirescu's camp and, after showing to the Pandours their commander's correspondence with the Ottomans (falsely accusing Tudor of treason), he

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<sup>5</sup> Original source text: “ο πρώτος μάρτυρας και ο πρώτος επαναστάτης του εθνούς”.

arrested the Romanian revolutionary leader (21 May 1821). Vasileios Karavias took Tudor Vladimirescu to Târgoviște, where he shamefully tortured and killed the prisoner (in the night of 27/28 May 1821) (Cosma, 2021a, pp. 70-83).

Ypsilantis decided to trigger the first great battle of the Greeks against the Turks in Oltenia (Small Wallachia), in Drăgășani, on 8 June. But the same infantry captain Vaseilios Karavias opened the attack earlier, on 7 June, without a well-established plan and without Ypsilantis' agreement. Out of the 375 young men of the Sacred Band, 200 of them died, and 37 were taken prisoners and later beheaded in Constantinople (Patelakis, 2013, p. 22).

After the failure in Wallachia, the Etairists' struggles continued in Moldavia, equally unsuccessful, first at Sculeni (17 June 1821), where Athanasios Karpenisiotis distinguished himself, then at the Monastery Secu (7-23 September 1821), where the tragic epilogue of the Etairist rebellion took place (Patelakis, 2013, p. 22).

After the two-month Turkish siege, the monastery surrendered to the Ottoman assailants, and 28 innocent monks were slaughtered and martyred. In his famous *Patericul românesc* [Romanian Patericon], archimandrite Ioanichie Bălan gratefully commemorates the *nameless monks and martyrs*, writing that the murder of these pious monks in their own monastery is *a unique fact in the history of our monasticism*, reminding us of the Church Fathers killed by the Bedouins in Sinai, in Rait and at the Monastery Saint Sabbas, in the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries (Bălan, 2011, p. 339). At the Monastery Secu, Georgakis Olympios heroically fought and died, while Ioannis Farmakis was taken prisoner, sent to Constantinople and beheaded in late autumn of 1821 (Patelakis, 2013, pp. 21-22).

Thus, professor Patelakis concludes that, starting from the Romanian Lands, *the revolutionary spark ignited the torch of liberty in the Balkans* (Patelakis, 2013, p. 22).

In 2020 Apostolos Patelakis presented the Greek revolution on Romanian land (Patelakis, 2020, pp. 7-14), while the anniversary article of the bicentennial of 25th of March 1821, published in the pages of the journal *Ελίς* by the quoted researcher from Thessaloniki in 2021, thoroughly describes the evolution and progress of the revolution and war in Greece (1821-1832) (Patelakis, 2021, pp. 3-17). These useful synthesis and fine analysis of the revolutionary, military and diplomatical events address the general public interested in the complicated history of the Greek Revolution of 1821.

Apostolos Patelakis shows that the revolution should have started in Peloponnese, according to the decisions adopted by the Etairist leaders in the port Ismail (Bessarabia) at the beginning of October 1820. Archimandrite Grigorios Dikeos, nicknamed Papaflissas, was sent to Peloponnese. Out of various reasons, prince Alexandros Ypsilantis, general commissioner of the "Authority" (Γενικός Επίτροπος της Αρχής), postponed to trigger the revolution, until he finally decided to take action in the Romanian Principalities, in Iași (24 February 1821).

In the middle of March 1821, there were two revolutionary centres, where the situation was inflammatory: in North-Western Peloponnese, in the region Ahaia, with the capital in Patra, and in the southern mountain area Mani, where there also militated since January Theodoros Kolokotronis (51 years old), who was appointed by the Etairists commander of the armies in Peloponnese. On 17 March 1821, the revolution bursted out in the mountain commune Kalavrita (near Patra), liberated by the Greeks on 21 March 1821, after the massacre of 200 Turks (Patelakis, 2021, pp. 3-4).

On 22 March 1821, metropolitan Germanos (nephew of the ecumenical patriarch Grigorios V), leading the notables *kotsambasides* (κοτζαμπάσηδες), raised the revolution flag in the central square of Patra, and the Greeks shouted: "Ζήτω η Ελευθερία!" [Long live Liberty!] On 23 March 1821, the local notables gathered at the historical Monastery Agia Lavra (Αγία Λαύρα), near Kalavrita (one of the oldest Orthodox monasteries in Greece), raised again the revolution flag with the motto: "Ελευθερία ή θάνατος" [Liberty or death]. On the same day of 23 March, the rebels from the peninsula Mani, led by prince Petrobei Mavromihalis and Theodoros

Kolokotronis, occupied the city Kalamata. In a short time, under the influence of Papaflessas, too, the whole Peloponnese rose to rebellion (Patelakis, 2021, pp. 5-7).

Describing the above mentioned revolutionary outbursts in Peloponnese and dating the episode at the Monastery Agia Lavra on 23 March 1821, Apostolos Patelakis offers a very nuanced approach of the introductory events of the revolution, implicitly showing the conventional character of the day proclaimed as national day of all Greeks. The historian emphasizes that the revolution in Greece did not break forth neither on 25 March, as Alexandros Ypsilantis had established, nor in a determined place. Because there was no coordinated action, the revolution bursted out spontaneously, in different places, and the revolutionary events that unfolded in the period 21-31 March 1821, in Peloponnese and Central Greece (Rumeli, Ρούμελη), constitute together the beginning of the revolution in Greece (Patelakis, 2021, pp. 5-6).

As the first Greek camps were established around the fortresses and fortified cities along the shores of the peninsula, where Turkish refugees had gathered, the character of the war came to be defined by the beleaguering of the fortresses of Pylos, Methoni, Koroni, Monemvasia, Nafplio, and Acrocorinth. The first irregular troops were made up of shepherds, peasants and craftsmen, without weapons, military knowledge and commanders. The great strategist Kolokotronis understood that the Greeks' victory depended on defeating the Ottomans in Tripolitsa (today Tripoli), that was the political-administrative center of Peloponnese. In Valtetsi (12 May 1821) Kolokotronis beat the Turks.

Meanwhile, the flame of the revolution ignited in the islands Spetses (26 March 1821), Psara (10 April), Hydra (17 April), spreading to the rest of the Aegean Sea islands. In Eastern Central Greece the revolution bursted out almost concomitantly as in Peloponnese, in the third decade of March 1821. Here the captains *armatolis* (άρματολοί), helped by their armed troops of Vlach (Aromanian) highlanders<sup>6</sup>, were in charge with the inner watch of the mountain regions. They, and not the notables *kotsambasides*, were holding the local power. The experienced captains Athanasios Diakos, Dimitrios Panourias, Diouvouniotis, Ioannis Gkouras, Odysseas Andrutsos applied the tactics of the so-called "outlaw war" (κλεφτοπόλεμος), with surprise attacks and drawing the enemy into various ambushes, thus exhausting the Ottoman army, that suffered great losses (Patelakis, 2021, pp. 7-8).

The Greeks also repelled the attack of the Turks near Amfissa, at Gravia (8 May 1821), and defeated them near Lamia, at Vasiliska (26 August 1821), saving the revolution in Central Greece and Peloponnese, where the siege of Tripolitsa was in a critical phase.

The author shows that revolutionary movements took place in other parts of Greece, too (in the North and East: Thessaly, Macedonia, Thracia; in the islands Thasos, Samothraki, Rodos, Cyprus), yet the revolution was unsuccessful because of the bad organization of the improvised military corps and the lack of coordination of the military operations.

In Peloponnese, where *the heart of the revolution beat* (Patelakis, 2021, p. 8), at Kaltetzi (26 May 1821), the first form of government in revolutionary Greece was constituted as the Peloponnese Senate, having as president prince Petrobei Mavromihalis, but excluding Theodoros Kolokotronis.

In June 1821, Dimitrios Ypsilantis (28 years old), high officer with military studies in France, accompanied by numerous Greek intellectuals and Western Philhellens, arrived to Peloponnese, authorised by his brother, Alexandros Ypsilantis. Apostolos Patelakis highlights Dimitrios Ypsilantis' major contribution to the military organization of revolutionary Greece, as, following the model of the Sacred Band in the Romanian Principalities, he formed the first regular army corps under the command of the French major Joseph Baleste, and also created

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<sup>6</sup> The *armatolis* (άρματολοί) and their irregular armed troops formed of mountain inhabitants from Central Greece were all of Aromanian (Vlach) descent.

the first artillery battalion, commanded by the French philhellenes Maxime Raybaut and Olivier Voutier.

Dimitrios Ypsilantis participated to the siege of Tripolitsa, encouraging the Greek strikers tired after 5 months of fighting and bombing the city walls with the new formed artillery. On 23 September 1821, the Greeks conquered Tripolitsa and, although they found the Muslim population suffering from hunger and typhus, they made a terrible slaughter lasting for 3 days, when about 10,000 Turks were killed and many others were taken prisoners. Professor Patelakis does not offer an adorned vision of the events, when he writes that the Greeks took an awful revenge for the four centuries of oppression and humiliation suffered from the Turks. It was the Greeks' greatest victory until then, but the massacre darkened this important victory (Patelakis, 2021, p. 9).

The success registered by the revolutionaries raised the question of governing the territories controlled by them. On 20 December 1821, in Epidaurus, the First National Assembly of the Greeks (η Πρώτη Εθνοσυνέλευση των Ελλήνων) began, in the presence of 60 representatives (most of them from among the notables from Peloponnese, Central Greece and from the islands, only a few from among the military commanders, and even their leader, Dimitrios Ypsilantis, was missing, too).

On 1 January 1822 the first constitution (το πρώτο σύνταγμα) was adopted and, at the same time, the country's independence was proclaimed. As president of the executive (of the first Greek government) was chosen Alexandros Mavrocordatos, characterized by Apostolos Patelakis as the most experimented politician of the moment, while Dimitrios Ypsilantis, though chosen as the head of the parliament, was practically marginalized. The insignia and colors of the Etairia were removed, as well as any reference to this secret organization that, being accused of carbonarism, disturbed the Western conservative circles (Patelakis, 2021, p. 10).

The crucial battle for Peloponnese took place at Dervenakia (26 July 1822). The Turks were beaten, and Nikitaras, Kolokotronis' nephew, surnamed Τουρκοφάγος [Turks' Eater], distinguished himself during the fight. The prestige of Kolokotronis reached his apogee, and he was declared supreme commander of the entire army.

In parallel, several battles were fought at sea. A fleet of 7,000 Ottomans sent by the sultan landed on the island Chios (11 April 1822) and, for two days, it participated in an unprecedented massacre. From almost 100,000 inhabitants of Chios, about 23,000 Greeks of different ages were wildly killed, further 40,000 were taken prisoners and later sold as slaves in Egypt, Tunisia and Constantinople. More than 20,000 Greeks took refuge to other islands, especially to Psara. Chios was practically destroyed, as barely 10,000 inhabitants remained here. Apostolos Patelakis considers that the bloody events on Chios proved, once again, that in the rebelled regions the cohabitation between the Greeks and the Turks was impossible, and the breaking off was deep and definitive (Patelakis, 2021, p. 11).

The Second National Assembly unfolded, under pressure, in Astros (29 March - 18 April 1823). Among others, it decided to acquire a loan from England in order to support the revolution. The civilian party of the politicians from Central Greece and from the island Hydra won the supremacy against the politicians from Peloponnese, joined by the Etairists led by Kolokotronis.

Apostolos Patelakis criticizes the inter-Greek antagonisms, as personal interests, envy and ambitions of the leaders eventually led to an open conflict between the executive and the legislative. Two governments were formed: one representing the military's interests, led by Kolokotronis at Kranidis, the other at Nafplio, led by Konduriotis, representing the *kotsambasides*. The way to the first civilian war (7 March - 7 June 1824) was thus opened (Patelakis, 2021, p. 12).

The second Greek civilian war (October 1824 - May 1825) took the form of confrontations between regional representatives. Those from Rumeli (in Eastern Central

Greece) and those from the islands confronted the Peloponnesian representatives during a destructive war that took place, for two months, in Peloponnesian. The party of Rumeli and islands was victorious, taking from the enemy party many prisoners, among them being several military commanders, including Kolokotronis. The Greek civil wars simply exhausted the revolution's financial resources and wasted the funds of the two loans acquired from England.

After long fights, the Egyptians of Mehmet Ali Pasha conquered Crete (May 1824). On 11 February 1825, Ibrahim (37 years old), adoptive son of Mehmet Ali, an experienced and ambitious commander, landed in southern Peloponnesian, at Methoni. The terrified people claimed the liberation of the political and military leaders imprisoned by the government of Konduriotis. In the meantime, Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt advanced largely unopposed across the Peloponnesian, with the exception of a few isolated attempts at resistance, such as the Battle of Maniaki (20 May 1825), where Papaflessas died heroically.

The great strategist Kolokotronis was, finally, released from prison, taking the lead of the Greeks' army. However, his efforts to halt the Ottoman advance proved futile, and the Ottomans occupied the city of Tripolitsa. By the end of September 1825, Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt had taken control of almost the entire Peloponnesian, with only very limited exceptions.

Now his objective was the city-port Mesolonghi, situated in Western Central Greece, that was besieged by Reşit Mehmet Pasha, surnamed Kiutahis, since April 1825. On 12 December 1825, Ibrahim with 6,000 men, together with Kiutahis, intensified the attack upon the fortified city and cut off all the pathways leading to it, so the 13,000 inhabitants of Mesolonghi started to suffer of starvation and different diseases. The long blockade eventually determined the Greeks to execute a forced exodus on 10 April 1826. The Turks repelled the attack of the Greeks, and the result of the fight was terrifying. 5,000 men died in the bloody confrontation, while 6,000 women and children were sold as slaves in Constantinople and Alexandria. In the battle of Mesolonghi, considered by Apostolos Patelakis to be the apogee of the fights for liberty, there were killed numerous Philhellenes, too. Kiutahis turned towards Athens, that he occupied on 3 August 1826 (Patelakis, 2021, p. 13).

The Greeks summoned the Third National Assembly in Trizina (19 March - 5 May 1827), in order to modify the constitution and to strengthen the central power. On 14 April 1827, the Assembly elected Ioannis Kapodistrias—Russia's former Minister of Foreign Affairs and, in the words of Patelakis, "the most prominent personality among the Greeks at that time"<sup>7</sup>—as Governor of Greece for a seven-year mandate (Patelakis, 2021, p. 14).

On 6 July 1827 the Anglo - French - Russian Convention of London was signed. It stipulated common steps to be undertaken for gaining the autonomy of Greece under Ottoman suzerainty and concluding an armistice between the belligerent parts.

But a small incident triggered a great navy battle, ended with the crushing of the Turkish - Egyptian fleets in the Navarino gulf (20 October 1827). The tragic results of the battle registered on the Anglo - French - Russian allies' side 174 dead and 475 wounded people, and on the Ottoman side 6,000 dead (most of them Greek slaves, who were to be shipped to Egypt) and 4,000 wounded people.

In his letter of 14 August 1827, the distinguished diplomat Ioannis Kapodistrias (aged 51) informed the President of the National Assembly that he accepted the office of Governor of Greece and that he would arrive shortly, after undertaking a diplomatic tour, for the benefit of Greece, through the major European capitals of Saint Petersburg, London, and Paris (Patelakis, 2021, p. 14).

Indeed, on 20 January 1828, Kapodistrias arrived to Nafplio, in Greece, where he found a country in full chaos, poverty, epidemics, disorder and discord, according to Apostolos Patelakis. The reform measures adopted by Kapodistrias were extreme. He called for the

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<sup>7</sup> Original source text: "cea mai proeminentă personalitate a grecilor din acea perioadă [...]"

temporary suspension of the constitution and for his own investiture with extraordinary powers. He organized the army and fleet, revived the agriculture (introducing the potato culture), solved the problem of the “national lands”. He also recovered the economy, because the treasury was emptied by the English loans. He laid the bases of a modern education, took care of the hundreds of orphan children, ransomed the Greek prisoners from the slave markets of Constantinople and Alexandria. He organized the church and adopted measures for the protection of the citizens’ health. Last but not least, he liquidated piracy in the Aegean Sea (Patelakis, 2021, p. 15).

After the London Convention of 6 July 1827 was signed, France sent to Greece an expeditionary corps, under the command of general Nicholas Maison. On 29 August 1828, about 14,000 French soldiers landed in Peloponnese, obliging Ibrahim to step back. At the end of October 1828, the Peloponnese were liberated.

The beginning of the Russo-Turkish war in April 1828 offered Kapodistrias the occasion to send a Greek army, led by Dimitrios Ypsilantis and Robert Church, to chase away the Ottomans from Central Greece, too. On 12 September 1829, the Greeks defeated the Turks in the battle of Petra (situated 120 km north-west of Athens), forcing them to retreat to Thessaly. In Apostolos Patelakis’s words, the great battle of Petra has remained in history as the last battle of the war for the independence of Greece. After eight and a half years from the outburst of the revolution in Moldo-Vlachia by Alexandros Ypsilantis, now his brother Dimitrios closed this sequence of battles with a brilliant victory (Patelakis, 2021, p. 15). Paradoxically, the first great battle in the Romanian Principalities, in Drăgășani (7/19 June 1821), and the last great battle in Greece, in Petra (12 September 1829), were commanded by the same Etairist general Dimitrios Ypsilantis.

The Treaty of London (February 1830) acknowledged: a) the full independence of Greece, but with b) the diminution of the territory under Greek control (which displeased Kapodistrias, who strived for a Greek state owning a territory as large as possible and including the island Crete), c) the hereditary monarchy as a form of government, but the chosen prince could not belong to a royal family of the three protecting powers (England, France, Russia). The proposed monarch was the king of Belgium, Leopold I. This proposal was ill-suited both for Kapodistrias (thus removed from leading the country), and for the Greeks (who could not choose their king themselves). Practically, by signing this treaty, the revolution in Greece was over, as Apostolos Patelakis notices (Patelakis, 2021, p. 16).

The authoritative government style practiced by Kapodistrias provoked the discontent of the notables from Peloponnese and the islands, and the fury of the ship owners from the island Hydra and of the mighty clan Mavromihalis from the peninsula Mani. On 27 September 1831, Ioannis Kapodistrias was killed by Konstantinos and Georgios Mavromihalis. In the bitter words of Apostolos Patelakis, this marked the tragic end of the Greek patriot, who sacrificed his life and fortune for the salvation of the Hellenic nation (Patelakis, 2021, p. 17).

There were governmental void and civilian confrontations following the death of Kapodistrias. The great powers were in a hurry to choose a prince and to regulate the situation of Greece on international level. According to the Treaty of London (7 May 1832), the Greek state turned into a hereditary monarchy, and its first monarch was Othon (Otto), second son of king Ludwig I of Bayern.

By Otto’s royal decree of 1838, the day of 25<sup>th</sup> of March was proclaimed as the National Day of Greece. Since that time, it is celebrated by all the Greeks from the country and from abroad.

With regard to the importance of the Greek Revolution of 1821 and the role assumed by Greece after centuries of absence from the historical stage, Professor Apostolos Patelakis concludes that the revolution possessed great significance and resonated deeply throughout Europe and the wider civilized world. For ten years the Greek Revolution had been the center of European diplomacy and of the public opinion due to the activity unfolded by numerous

Philhellenic committees from Europe and America. The formation of the Greek national state in 1830—the first national state to emerge in the Balkans—also exerted a moral influence on the evolution of neighboring states, within the broader context of the rise of the principle of nationalities in Europe. The author from Thessaloniki states with pride that, after centuries of absence, Greece re-emerged on the political map of the world alongside the other civilized European states (Patelakis, 2021, p. 17).

## 5. Conclusions

Several historical articles (especially those written by Apostolos Patelakis), published in the bilingual periodical of the Hellenic Union from Romania, *Ελπίς/Speranța* (Hope), approach the Greek revolution and war for liberty (1821-1829), as well as the large gallery of Greek heroes and martyrs connected with the 25th March 1821, the main national day of the Greeks living today in their homeland and in the worldwide diaspora.

Among the latter, there can be found numerous Aromanian personalities with Greek feelings, who became leading figures of the Greek history of the 18th-19th centuries, contributing to the creation of the Greek modern state and nation. Such were the *fărșerot*<sup>8</sup> forerunner of the Philiki Etairia and of the Greek revolution, Rigas Feraios, killed by the Ottomans in Belgrade and thrown into the Danube; the 1821 Etairist martyrs Georgakis Olympios and Ioannis Farmakis, fighting and dying for the Greek cause in the Romanian Principalities and in Constantinople; general commander of the Greek army in Mainland Greece, Theodoros Kolokotronis, who was a *fărșerot*, too; 1821 generals Markos Botsaris and Petrobei Mavromihalis; and last but not least: Aromanian Ioannis Kolettis, one of the finest Greek diplomats, who was the artisan and promoter of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* [Great Idea], the idea of creating Greater Greece.

Apostolos Patelakis can be rightly considered the most significant Philromanian contemporary Greek author, writing a honest history, with lights and shadows, of the Greek revolution of 1821 in relation to the 1821 revolution of the Romanians led by Pandour captain Tudor Vladimirescu.

Even so, the Greek author born in Romania, today professor at the Institute of Balkanik Studies (IMXA) in Thessaloniki, is best known for his book on *Războiul civil din Grecia (1946–1949) și emigranții politici greci în România (1948–1982)* [The civil war in Greece (1946–1949) and the Greek political emigrants in Romania (1948–1982)], published in 2017. It should be noted that, apart from the present study, which analyses the articles devoted by Apostolos Patelakis to the Greek Revolution of 1821, his other contributions on the modern and contemporary history and leading figures of the Greeks in Romania have, to date, been largely neglected by recent historiography.

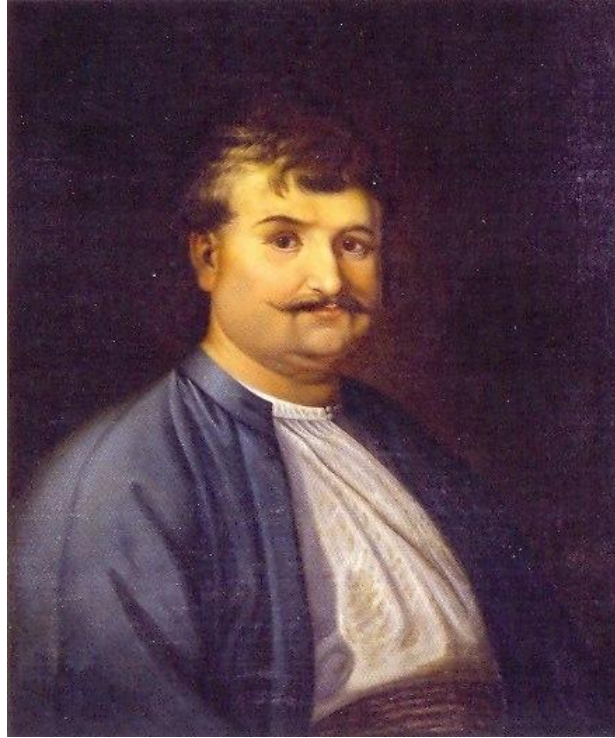
The current Romanian historical literature on the Revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu (1821) remains limited, with the exception of a small number of anniversary conferences organised in Craiova by the Institute of Socio-Human Research C. S. Nicolaescu-Plopșor of the Romanian Academy, and in Iași by the Faculty of History of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University: *1821-2021. Bicentinarul Revoluției conduse de Tudor Vladimirescu* [The bicentennial of the revolution led by Tudor Vladimirescu] (14-15 May 2021); *An Epoch Threshold? The Year 1821 in the History of South-East Europe, at Bicentennial*, 23-25 September 2021, and the publication of a volume dedicated to *1821-2021. Bicentinarul Revoluției conduse de Tudor Vladimirescu 1821-2021* [The bicentennial of the revolution led by Tudor Vladimirescu] (2021). All the more so, the consistent contributions published annually in *Ελπίς / Speranța*, together with the cultural events regularly organized by the Hellenic Union of Romania, remain

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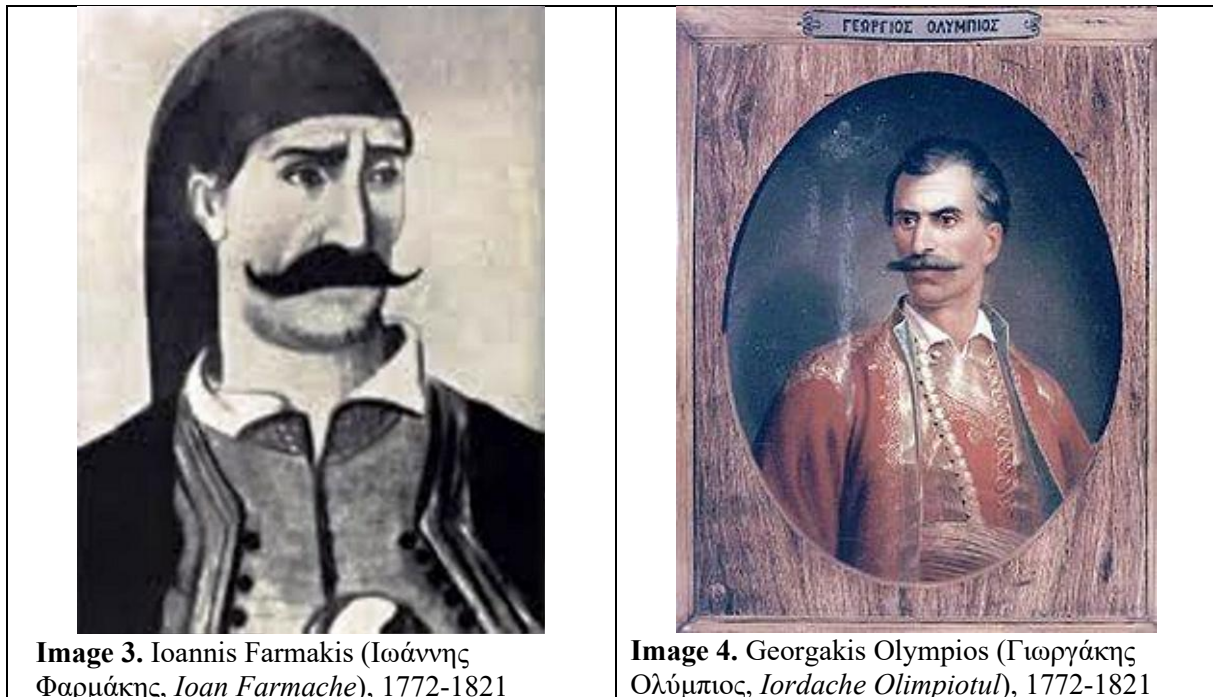
<sup>8</sup> *Fărșerot* is an Aromanian born on the territory of present Albania.

the only significant milestones marking this highly important moment in the study of the modern era: the Greek Revolution of 1821 and its connections with the Romanian Revolution of the same year.

### Greek Heroes and Martyrs of the 1821 Revolution of Aromanian Descent



**Image 2.** Rigas Veleshtinlis or Ferraios  
(Ρήγας Βελεστινλής or Ρήγας Φεραίος, *Riga din Veleştin*), 1757-1798.





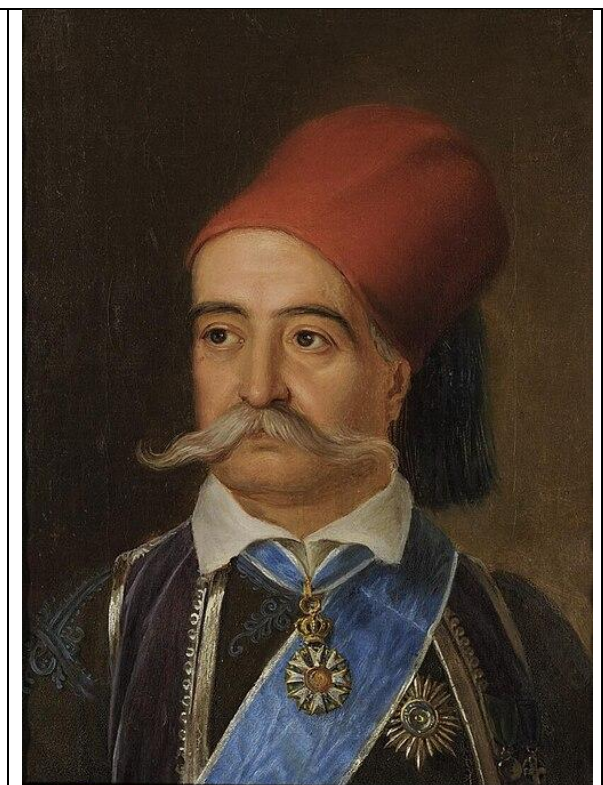
**Image 5.** Theodoros Kolokotronis (Θεόδωρος Κολοκοτρώνης, *Teodor Colocotroni*), 1770-1843.



**Image 6.** Markos Botsaris (Μάρκος Μπότσαρης, *Marcu Bociari*), 1790-1823.



**Image 7.** Ioannis Kolettis (Ιωάννης Κωλέττης, *Ioan Coleti*), 1773-1847.



**Image 8.** Petrobei Mavromihalis (Πέτρος Μαυρομιχάλης, *Petru Mavromihali*), 1765-1848.

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