

ALBANIAN SOLDIERS IN THE OTTOMAN ARMY DURING THE GREEK REVOLT AT 1821

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Introduction

Ottoman Army organization had started to deteriorate from the mid-17th century. Military failures made the social and economic problems worse. In this situation, alternative potentials in the empire appeared because of the increasing military needs of the central government and the provincial governors. By the way, general employment of the *Albanian warriors* who were famous with their courage and strength became possible.¹

There were a lot of reasons for employing Albanian warriors with *salary* while there was Ottoman regular army corps, including janissaries and soldiers from the states. Governing problems, had existed in the states and land system after the defeat in Vienne at 1683, was one of these reasons. Also after the end of the conquering era, the castles and fortresses at the borderlines were built for defense and there were not a necessary number of soldiers in these buildings. This problem was tried to be solved by employing the warriors with long- matchlock-guns from *Bosnia, Herzegovina* and *Albania*.² During the time, the necessity of *mercenary* increased too much as seen in the example of the Ottoman army which established for pressing the *Greek Revolt in 1821*, was almost composed of the Albanian soldiers.³

There were historical reasons for choosing Albanian soldiers in the Balkans. A strong feudal-system had existed in the Albanian lands before the Ottoman rule. This social structure, which consisted of the local connections and obedience around the lords, continued by integrating, first, *timar (fief)* system after the Ottoman conquest in 1385 and then, *devshirme* system. The flexibility of the

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¹ Istanbul Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Cevdet Askeri (C. AS), no. 25527.

² Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, Istanbul 2009, pp. XV, 17-30, 147-149.

³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Istanbul 1309, vol. XI, pp. 50-55.

Ottoman rule made it easy for the Albanian tribes, who were known as stubbornness and rebellious, to integrate the Ottoman system.¹

During the decline period of the Ottoman Empire, the Albanian dynasties of the past, who were fief-holders appeared as the owners of the great *malikâne* (lease) and *farms* (çiftlik). So, governing bodies, called *pashalik* in the sancaks (provinces) of the Albanian region and had military potentials were established during the 18th century. These pashaliks which had weak relations with the center, like the *âyâns* in Anatolia and Rumelia, gathered, in time, around the *Pashalik of Scutari* (Shkëder/İşkodra) at the north and the *Pashalik of Yanya* (Ioannina) at the south. Mehmed Pasha from *Bushati* (*Buşatlı*) family at the north and the dynasty of *Ali Pasha of Tepelena* at the south established the control.² Afterwards, the empire started to apply to the pashaliks when it had need mercenaries.³

The Ottoman Empire had increasing interior and exterior problems with the turn of the 19th century. These problems deeply felt in the Balkans because of its mixed ethnic structure and being near to the Europe. So, the need for the Albanian soldiers for solving the crisis, increased. While the *Nizam-ı Cedit* (*New Order*) reforms started for solving the structural problems of the state by *Sultan Selim III* (1789-1807), had failed, the authority of the state almost disappeared in the center and periphery. New power centers which were rival to the state authority, had established. Janissaries, which were the significant military power of the Ottoman Empire, were gone out of control and started to be a part of political rivalries in Istanbul together with some Albanian groups.⁴

From the beginning of the 19th century, the influence of the Albanian mercenaries increased at the political rivalries in the center and also in the states. Apart from these chronic problems inside, the effects of the *French Revolution* started to be seen on the borders of the Ottoman Empire. The first effects of the revolutionary thoughts were seen in the Balkans. The republican regime of France which invaded the *Venice* in 1797 and then spread through the *Dalmatia*, became a neighbor of the

¹ Nuray Bozbaba, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Arnavutluk ve Arnavut Ulusculuğunun Gelişimi*, Istanbul 1997, pp. 53-63; Gergana Georgieva, “Administrative Structure and Government of Rumelia in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: The Functions and Activities of the Vali of Rumelia”, *Ottoman Rule and The Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, Rethymno 2007, pp. 8-15.

² The Pashalik system in Albania, which was against the centralization programs of Sultan Mahmud II, lost its power in two stages. First, Tepedelenli Ali Pasha was took away during the Greek Revolt in 1821 process. Then, after 1831, Mustafa Pasha of Scutari was eliminated. For the pashalik organization in Albania look at N. Bozbaba, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Arnavutluk ve Arnavut Ulusculuğunun Gelişimi*, Istanbul 1997, pp. 76-79, 115-130; Dimitris Dimitropoulos, “Aspects of the Working of the Fiscal Machinery in the Areas Ruled by Ali Paşa”, *Ottoman Rule and The Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, Rethymno 2007, pp. 61-72.

³ BOA, Hatt-ı Hümayun (HAT), no. 39928; G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 58-61.

⁴ Câbi Ömer Efendi, *Câbi Tarihi*, (Ed. M. A. Beyhan), vol. I, Ankara 2003, pp. 237-238; 297-299.

Ottomans. A new power struggle started in the *Mediterranean* with Napoleon's Egypt campaign in 1798. During this process, Tepedelenli Ali Pasha with his Albanian mercenaries at the struggles in Dalmatia¹ and Mehmed Ali Pasha with his Albanian mercenaries in at the struggles in Egypt had crucial roles.² Also, the fame of the Albanian mercenaries spread out of the Ottoman borders.³

Serbs were the first nation that had revolt in the Balkans (1804). This revolt suppressed easily with the support of the Albanian mercenaries because of the lack of European support for the Serbians.⁴ At that time, Sultan Selim III was dethroned and killed because of his reform policies and the new Sultan, *Mahmud II* (1808-1839) came face to face with a chaos situation. The Albanian mercenaries were continuing their services during the *Russo-Turkish War* between 1806 and 1812 and for the state rulers, while Mahmud II succeeded to the throne.⁵

It is obvious that the Greek Revolt in 1821 was the most serious problem that the Ottoman Empire had encountered during the 19th century. The impacts of the revolt which had become a European problem and had a *religious* character, continued approximately ten years.⁶ On the eve of the Greek Revolt, Ottoman rule in Albania

¹ Tepedelenli Ali Pasha and his Albanian soldiers were efficient at the fights in Corfu Island. The Albanian soldiers were successful to capture Corfu and other Ionian Islands (Seven Islands), fought against the French soldiers at Preveze. However, they plundered the city: Câbi Ömer Efendi, *Tarih*, pp. 58, 91, 125-126.

² The governors of Egypt employed Albanian and Kırçali mercenaries before the French occupation. So, the Albanians were familiar with this region. The need for the mercenaries increased during the French occupation. The biggest Albanian mercenary group, which came to Egypt at that time, was under the command of *Çarhacı Tahir Pasha*, who was also an Albanian. Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Aga (Pasha) was in this group as *serçeşm/sergerde* (head man/sergeant). The Albanian mercenaries became a significant factor at the rivalries between *Egyptian Mamluks*, governors from the center and Mehmed Ali Pasha of Kavala. At last, Mehmed Ali Pasha, who had the support of the Albanian and Kırçali mercenaries, became the governor of Egypt. By the way, the most important activity of Mehmed Ali Pasha in the eyes of the empire was breaking down the Albanian influence in Egypt. See: Yüksel Çelik, *Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha, Siyasi Hayatı ve Askeri Faaliyetleri (1756-1855)*, (İÜ. Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Thesis), Istanbul 2005, pp. 28, 33-34, 38-62; Câbi Ömer Efendi, *Tarih*, p. 91.

³ Austrian Emperor demanded mercenaries from the Ottoman Empire during the Italian campaign of France. With the petition which had reached to Sublime Porte by the ambassador of Austria in Galata, to Sublime Porte he demanded 50,000 mercenaries from the Ottomans. Half of these soldiers would be Turkish and the rest would be Albanian. They would be given 50 piasters per month as a salary and 50 paras for daily needs. The Ottomans refused this offer because of the Serbian revolt in 1804: Câbi Ömer Efendi, *Tarih*, c. I, pp. 526-527.

⁴ Câbi Ömer Efendi, *Tarih*, vol. I, p. 448.

⁵ Tepedelenli Ali Pasha fought against the Russian army in the Balkans together with his son *Muhtar Pasha* and his 15,000 Albanian soldiers: Câbi Ömer Efendi, *Tarih*, vol. I, p. 448.

⁶ Ali Fuat Örenç, *Balkanlarda İlk Dram: Unuttuğumuz Mora Türkleri ve Eyaletten Bağımsızlığa Yunanistan*, Istanbul 2009, p. 27-200.

was tenuous. In a decade that roughly corresponded to the Greek War of Independence, but actually preceding and succeeding it, the Ottoman government moved with great energy to bring Albania into the centre's orbit¹. Albanian soldiers and their leaders should be mentioned as the most significant actors of the revolt process. *Christian (Orthodox) Albanians*, who were supporting the Greek rebels and also Muslim *Gheg (Gega)* and *Tosk (Toska)* Albanians,² who were become indispensable parts of the Ottoman Army, had crucial roles in this long struggle.³

Rules of Employing the Albanian Warriors in the Ottoman Army: “Kâ’ide-i Arnavudiyye”

Ottoman Army recruited the Albanian warriors mostly from the Gheg dynasty in the north and Tosk dynasty in the south.⁴ Actually, there had been a serious rivalry between these dynasties.⁵ Sometimes, this rivalry affected the army. Ottoman rulers tried to balance the situations while making appointments like governors and army commanders and they tried to choose the persons who were familiar with the psychology of the Albanian warriors.⁶

Ottoman records described the Albanian soldiers as *brave, fearless, heroic, hard and warlike*.⁷ Albanians served in the army as infantry and cavalry.⁸ They were successful at the *guerilla fights* because of their life styles and for this reason they were chosen.⁹ The state also got pack animals, if needed, from the Albanian regions with money.¹⁰

Some problems had started to appear in time while the number and influence areas of the Albanian mercenaries increased. Main problem, caused by the Albanian mercenaries during the 18th and 19th centuries was the failure of paying their salaries. Also, some serious problems which were caused because of the failure of the payments occurred in the battlefield during the Greek revolt in 1821 and that

¹ Hakan Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”: Ottomans, Albanians and Turks in The Greek War of Independence”, *Ottoman Rule and The Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, Rethymno 2007, s. 214.

² BOA, HAT, no. 40597; Beqir Haçi, *Epiri dhe Pretendimet Absurde Greke, Koha, Shtepia Botuse Koha*, nr. 37, Korrik 2000, p. 20 (I want to thank to Rezart Mezani, who help met o use the Albanian sources).

³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XI, pp. 43-153; Christine Philliou, “Breaking The Tetrarchia and Saving The Kaymakam: To be an Ambitious Ottoman Christians in 1821”, *Ottoman Rule and The Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, Rethymno 2007, pp. 183-188.

⁴ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XI, pp. 121-125.

⁵ N. Bozbaba, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Arnavutluk ...*, pp. 72-79.

⁶ BOA, HAT, no. 39928; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 80-82, 104-106.

⁷ BOA, C. AS, no. 25527; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 121-125. Douglas Dakin, *The Grek Struggle for Independence 1821-1833*, London 1973, pp. 72-73.

⁸ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 46-52.

⁹ G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, s. 227-228.

¹⁰ BOA, HAT, no. 40285-E.

disturbed the government so much¹. On the other hand, Albanian warriors, who had not any choice except being a mercenary because of the geographical properties of Albania,² mentioned the problems while they could not get their payments in time.³ So, a regulation, called *kâ'ide-i Arnavudiyye*⁴ had been prepared for solving the problems of employing the Albanian mercenaries.⁵

The state, while it needed soldiers for a war or a rebellion, tried to *contact* (mukâvele) with the Albanian dynasty leaders and the chiefs of the warriors with the help of local rulers⁶. Both sides had to agree on requirements, had determined before, for the Albanian mercenaries to get a position in the army or in the service of a local ruler. Some of the significant requirements were the amount of the salary, duration of the employment and describing the battlefield. These requirements which were determined after the negotiations with the Albanian leaders (called pazarlık), organized as a contract (mukavele) or a *voucher* (senet).⁷ Albanian leaders, who also, demanded same ranks for themselves, did not start their service before the end of the contract process.⁸ This contract was confirmed to the *qadı* (kadı) of the region.⁹ Payment bills called as *tahvil* and prepared for the payments of each soldiers, were dated for two months periods (ulufe).¹⁰

Albanian infantry and cavalries, who provided their arms by themselves,¹¹ fight for a period of 2 months,¹² 4 months¹³ or maximum 6 months¹⁴, so called seasonal. If they collected as summer combination, they left the battlefield absolutely at November and they went their homes in contrast to the significance of the current military situation. Especially, Ghegs behaved not according to the states agenda but the context of the contract. In this situation, the state had to collect new soldiers for winter combination.¹⁵ This situation, as seen during the Greek Revolt in 1821, caused serious problems and great losses during the critical military operations or at the services like defending the castles or redoubts.¹⁶ And Albanian warriors did not

¹ H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:...”, pp. 214-237.

² BOA, HAT, no. 21513-A.

³ BOA, HAT, no. 40488; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:...”, pp. 214-237.

⁴ BOA, C. AS, no. 25527.

⁵ BOA, HAT, no. 21513-G; no. 21513-J; no. 37827; no. 40477.

⁶ H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:...”, p. 214.

⁷ BOA, HAT, no. 40477; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, p. 65; G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 231-232; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:...”, p. 229.

⁸ BOA, HAT, no. 40488; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, p. 65.

⁹ BOA, HAT, no. 38057.

¹⁰ BOA, HAT, no. 40477; C. AS, no. 17011.

¹¹ G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 17-30, 147-149.

¹² BOA, C. AS, no. 25527.

¹³ G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 147-149.

¹⁴ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 121-125.

¹⁵ BOA, HAT, no. 37770; no. 38723; no. 39855; no. 40503-M; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 80-82; 104-106.

¹⁶ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 80-82.

want to fight at the distances which were far away from their homes collective escapes occurred while they were taken to the great distances.¹

It became a tradition to appoint a *sergeant* (*bölükbaşı*), a standard-bearer and a non-commissioned officer to each group of 30 Albanian infantry and cavalry soldiers apart from their leaders in order to command them easily.² And a *chieftain* (*başbuğ*) was appointed to lead every 1,000 warriors.³ The Albanians, also wanted the appointment of a shrewd *lieutenant-governor* or *tipstaff* (*dirâyetli bir mütesellim* veya *mübaşir*) for the possibility of a failure of payments from moment they had gathered at their homelands to the moment they had joined the Ottoman Army.⁴ They insisted on that this man should be a significant person, so, they could obey his authority. Actually, they saw this tipstaff (*mübaşir*) or lieutenant-governor (*mütesellim*) as a hostage or insurance for their payments.⁵ For this reason, the son, the brother or a significant man of the local ruler had chosen as *mübaşir* or *mütesellim*.⁶

The payments of Albanian warriors were registered at the records as *ulufe*, *harc*, *güzeşte* or *mahiye* determined as monthly and paid per two months after the permission of the Sultan.⁷ The payment records which had showed service duration of the warriors in the army and called *harc tezkiresi* (pay ticket),⁸ *ulufe makbuzu*⁹ or *tahvil*¹⁰ were made out when first contract (*mukavele*) had done. The total number of the *salary* (*ulufe/harc/mâhiye*), actually mentioned in the contracts. The salaries of the warriors did not start when they had registered for the army. Generally they had their two salaries in advance before reaching the army.¹¹ Conditioned in the contract, sometimes the first payments would be deferred.¹² *Ulufe* payments were done by *Grandvizier*, *Commander-in-Chief*, or *Governors* at the army. The notebooks which these payments were making out were completed, lastly at the desk of *Treasury* and *Chief-accountancy* at Sublime Porte.¹³

The payments of the Albanian warriors had changed in accordance with being *infantry* or *cavalry*. The payments of infantries generally had varied on 25

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 38329; no. 39964-D; G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 233-234; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:...”, pp. 214-217.

² BOA, HAT, no. 21513-A.

³ BOA, C. AS, no. 25527.

⁴ BOA, HAT, no. 38057.

⁵ BOA, HAT, no. 38723.

⁶ BOA, HAT, no. 38057; no. 38751-A.

⁷ BOA, C. AS, no. 17011; no. 21362; no. 25527; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 80-82.

⁸ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 26-29.

⁹ BOA, HAT, no. 21577.

¹⁰ BOA, HAT, no. 37941.

¹¹ BOA, HAT, no. 40488.

¹² BOA, HAT, no. 37941.

¹³ BOA, C. AS, no. 17011; no. 21362; no. 25527.

¹⁴ BOA, HAT, no. 38551.

30 piasters¹, 35 piasters² and 40 piasters.³ The payments of the cavalries started from 40 piasters⁴ and vary on, according to the situation, up to 250 piasters.⁵ Standard-bearers got 40 piasters, sergeants had a payment equal to the ulufe of 5 soldiers and a pair of bread and a little meal as ration. The indispensable ratio was *kokoroz*, a type of *corn bread*, for the Albanian soldiers whether they were Muslim or not. They got a *kıyye* of this bread daily.⁶ A pare from the normal payments of salaries, money was distributed as a reward after the success in the battlefield with the order of the Sultan.⁷ The ulufes of the warriors inherited to their sons incase of their deaths.⁸ The bread and meal rations and *meşta*,⁹ warriors clothes for winter, were provided by *Nüzul Emini* (Supplies Officer) and *Kasapbaşı* (Chief-butcher) at the army.¹⁰ Sometimes, the state got cost of military (asker bedeli) from Rumelia for giving the ulufes of the Albanian warriors.¹¹

When the salaries were paid late or did not paid at all, the Albanian warriors, refused to leave the army whether their service duration was lasted or not they had demanded extra payment for the delay. This situation had recorded as managing of the payments.¹² These situations caused serious problems for the Treasury. The unpaid soldiers caused serious problems in the army. They could plunder the villages and towns or attacked to the high ranked officials.¹³

Ottoman commanders and governors used to complain about the Albanian warriors and *Kırcalı* soldiers recruited from *Gümülçine* region (in Thrace) because of these serious problems. Government officials generally criticized the warriors for not fighting for the state and religion but money.¹⁴ These complaints, sometimes by Grandvizier or Governor, showed the weakness, fear and mistrust.¹⁵ The state, tried to solve the discipline problem of the Albanian soldiers stemming from the payment

¹ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 26-29.

² BOA, HAT, no. 39928; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors””:..., pp. 221-237.

³ BOA, HAT, no. 21175-G.

⁴ BOA, C. AS, no. 17011; no. 21362.

⁵ G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. s. 121-125.

⁶ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp.161-162.

⁷ BOA, HAT, no. 39937; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 26-29.

⁸ BOA, C. AS, no. 17011.

⁹ BOA, HAT, no. 39855.

¹⁰ BOA, C. AS, no. 25527; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 26-29.

¹¹ BOA, HAT, no. 38816.

¹² BOA, HAT, no. 21175-G, no. 39937; no. 39964-D.

¹³ For the problems occurred because of the failure of payments look at BOA, HAT, no. 21175-G; no. 37827; no. 37941; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 100-101; 121-125; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors””:..., pp. 214-237.

¹⁴ BOA, HAT, no. 37827; no. 39928; no. 39937; G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, p. 147-149.

¹⁵ BOA, HAT, no. 38079-A; no. 38557.

crisis generally by counseling, sometimes by stressing out the religious discourse and rarely by threatening them.¹

It should be mentioned that although employing Albanian soldiers caused serious problems, it had financial advantages for the state. In contrast to Janissaries, the state did not have to pay them other than the campaign times. They did not have the right of retirement or compensation. The most important advantage was that they provide all the tool including the arms by themselves.²

The Albanian Mercenaries at Greek Revolt in 1821

It is hard to say that the Ottoman Empire ruled the crisis of the Greek Revolt successfully. This failure was presence both in military and diplomacy. As a consequence, the Greece, the first independent state at *Balkan Peninsula* established with the support of *Europe* at the end of the revolt (1830). Because of the false strategies, Ottoman Government was unable to get maximum benefits from the army and the navy. For this reason, the state had to use, first, the Albanian mercenaries and then, well trained *Cihadiye* soldiers of *Mehmed Ali Pasha*, the governor of Egypt.³

The Greek Revolt, first, had started in Wallachia (Eflak) and Moldavia (Boğdan) in February 1821. Alexander Ipsilantis, the leader of the revolt, chooses this place because he was expecting military support from Russia.⁴ There were Christian Albanians,⁵ called as *Kaba Rum* (vulgar Greek) in the Ottoman records *Serbians*, *Bulgarians* and some *Romanians* with the rebels who left *Bucharest*.⁶ Ottoman soldiers, easily, repulsed these irregular troops. While the rebellion was suppressed, Ipsilanti escaped to *Austria* and had arrested there in June 26, 1821. The Albanians and the Serbians who supported the rebels had dispersed. However, the most of the Greek rebels succeeded to reach the *Morea Peninsula*.⁷ The Ottoman Empire issued *fermans* for forbidding the employment of the Albanians under the service of the

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 40318-E. Also look at G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 231-232.

² G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 147-149.

³ BOA, HAT, no. 27770; no. 33906-K; no. 38785-C; Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men, Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt*, New York 1997, pp. 9- 37, 263-268; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:...”, pp. 221-237.

⁴ Yücel Özkaya, “1821 Yunan (Eflak-Buğdan) İsyancıları ve Avrupalıların İsyancı Karşısındaki Tutumları”, *Üçüncü Askeri Tarih Semineri*, (Ankara 1986), pp. 115-118.

⁵ BOA, HAT, no. 37892-A; *Vak'anüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi* (Ed: Y. Demirel-T. Erdoğan), İstanbul 1999, vol. II-III, p. 542.

⁶ İlber Ortaylı, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Milliyetçilik”, *XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi*, (Ankara 1999), p. 3.

⁷ BOA, HAT, no. 23699; no. 38428; no. 38546; no. 38547; no. 38681; no. 44927-D; no. 45229-B; no. 45229-D; no. 51343; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XI, pp. 120, 192-199; Şanizade Mehmed Atallah Efendi, *Şâni-zâde Târîhi*, (Ed. Z. Yılmaz), İstanbul 2008, vol. II, pp.1046, 1062, 1265.

local rulers¹ and the entrance of the Albanians, the Bulgarians and the Serbians to the region. The state wanted to send those people who were caught in the region without permission, to Rumelia.²

The second and the significant phase of the revolt started in the Morea Peninsula in April 6, 1821 and spread to the *Aegean Islands* in a short time. While all these were happening, the Ottoman rulers were taking the wrong steps which made it easy for the Greek rebels. The state sent all the troops on Tepedelenli *Ali Pasha*, the governor of Yanya when the revolt had started.³ A year before the revolt, Sultan Mahmud II had dismissed Ali Pasha, in accordance with his policy of eliminating local powers who were in rivalry with the state and then, pasha had upraised at March 23, 1820 and came into contact with the Greeks.⁴ This situation prepared suitable atmosphere for the rebels, because Ali Pasha had suppressed the Greeks with his son, *Veli Pasha*, the governor of Morea for a long time⁵ and was following every development closely.⁶ The Ottoman soldiers in the Morea Peninsula and the Aegean islands were sent to Yanya because of Ali Pasha incident under the command of *Hurşid Pasha*. There were 12,000 Ottoman soldiers in the whole Morea Peninsula, and most of them were Albanian mercenaries.⁷

Tepedelenli Ali Pasha incident affected the employment of the Albanian mercenaries for the Ottoman army negatively. There were Gheg Albanians under the command of Mustafa Pasha, the governor of Scutari, in the army which had sent to Yanya.⁸ Tosk Albanians, famous for guerilla fights, were under the siege with

¹ *Wallachia-Moldavia* (Eflak-Boğdan or Memleketeyn) voyvodas, from *Feneriot* families in Istanbul, had a lot of Christian Albanians under their service before the revolt. They sent, nearly, 50 Albanians to 10 or 15 villages for obtaining the public order and collecting taxes. However, people complained about them. There were Albanian influence in the cities. Thus, the Russian consul at Bucharest wrote that the city was under the control of the Albanians while Ipsilantis, the leader of the revolt, arrived. See: BOA, HAT, no. 45390-D; no. 45424; no. 45516; no. 45685-Ç.

² BOA, HAT, no. 38779-A; no. 45453-A; Cevdet Hariciye (C. HAR), no. 3283; no. 5314.

³ N. Bozbaba, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Arnavutlar ...*, pp. 115-134.

⁴ Christian Albanians came for help when Ali Pasha of Tepelena called the Greeks for an alliance. People from *Odisa Andruco, Karaiskaki, Varnaciotti, Athanas Dhiako, Gura, Griva, Gardhiciotti, Vangel Zapa, Bakola ve Boçari ve Cavela* families which were significant actors of the Greek revolt joined Ali Pasha's army (see: Aristidh Kola, *Arvanitet dhe Prejardhja Greke*, Botimet TOENA, Tirane 2008, p. 363). Also, Kakosil Greeks from Corfu Island sent support to Tepedelenli: BOA, HAT, no. 20928; Şanizade Mehmed Ataulhah Efendi, *Tarih*, vol. II, pp. 1012-1013.

⁵ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Istanbul 1309, vol. XI, pp. 72-73.

⁶ BOA, HAT, no. 38811-E; no. 38811-F.

⁷ Sture Linner, *W. H. Humphreys' First "Journal of The Greek War of Independence" (July 1821-February 1822)*, Stockholm 1967, pp. 5-10; A. F. Örenç, *Balkanlar'da ...*, pp. 28-29, 32-33.

⁸ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XI, pp. 153.

Tepedelenli Ali Pasha.¹ Apart from that, some Christian Albanians, who were together with Ali Pasha before, passed to Morea Peninsula and started to fight against the Ottoman Army with the Greeks at the front lines.²

It had heard that there were 100,000 armed Greeks in the Morea Peninsula at the beginning of the revolt. There were a lot of Christian Albanians in this number. Some soldiers and officers from Europe joined the rebels voluntarily. Also, together with *Hydira* (Çamlıca) and *Spetsai* (Suluca) which had a significant Albanian population, most of the Aegean Islands supported the revolt.³ Because of the Greek pirates in the Aegean, logistic support to Morea by the Ottoman Navy became harder.⁴

When the Ottoman officials heard the revolt, it headed towards to the Albanian mercenaries because of the problems caused by the janissaries. Although it tried to collect soldiers from Anatolia and Rumelia at the beginning of the revolt, a lot of difficulties had occurred. As a result the Morean army largely consisted of the Albanian mercenaries and their numbers had reached to 40,000. The state started to assign the persons who knew the Albanian traditions, as the rulers or the commanders.⁵

The Greek Revolt progressed according to the program of *Philiki Eteria Committee*,⁶ which also had some Orthodox Albanian members. The first movements appeared at around of *Kalavryta*, *Argos*, *Nauplio*, *Patras*, *Corinth* and *Vestice*. =0These first attacks were suppressed with the help of the soldiers who had come from the army in Yanya and some cities which were under the siege were saved.⁷

The biggest Muslim massacres had occurred in *Tripoli* (Tripoliçe) city during the Greek Revolt. Tripoli, administrative center of Morean Peninsula, had a significant number Muslim population. Apart from this, after the beginning of the revolt, Morean Muslims, including Albanians, and the Jews went to Tripoli as refugees. So, the population of the city passed 40,000. At the beginning, there were 1,700 Albanian mercenaries under the command of *Elmas Aga* in Tripoli.⁸ Then, 3,500 soldiers had transferred from Yanya to Tripoli. The leader of the rebels at the region

¹ For more information look at: Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XI, pp. 43-49, 50-55, 153; A. F. Örenç, *Balkanlar'da*, pp. 27-61.

² A. Kola, *Arvanitet dhe Prejardhja Greke*, p. 363.

³ A. Kola, *Arvanitet dhe Prejardhja Greke*, pp.127-200.

⁴ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 91-93; A. F. Örenç, *Balkanlar'da*, p. 63 and other pages.

⁵ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XI, pp. 50-55; A. F. Örenç, *Balkanlar'da*, p. 167.

⁶ A. Kola, *Arvanitet dhe Prejardhja Greke*, p. 223. The significant member of *The Philiki Eteria Committee* in Rumelia like Andruco, Kacioni and Mitromara were Albanians: A. Kola, *Arvanitet dhe Prejardhja Greke*, s. 223.

⁷ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XI, p. 148

⁸ S. Linner, *W. H. Humphreys' First*, pp. 60-61; D. Dakin, *The Greek Struggle....*, pp. 66-68.

was *Theodoros Kolokotronis*, a Christian Albanian.¹ The Greeks surrounded Tripoli in the autumn of 1821. The city was sieged by 60,000 rebels for 5 months. The people in the city made a treaty with the rebels because of the lack of support from the state. According to this treaty, the Muslims in the city would be transferred to the Albanian shores in return for 5 million piasters. However, Elmas Aga, the leader of the Albanian mercenaries, in the city made a secret contract with the rebels. According to this, the Albanian mercenaries opened the gates of the city for the rebels at the night of October 10, 1821.² While the Albanian mercenaries were going out, the Greek rebels had entered the city. The Greeks made a terrible massacre. Approximately 40,000 people, consists of Turks, Albanians and Jews got slaughtered by the Greek rebels.³ This particular betrayal of the Albanian warriors was mentioned during the rebellion when a problem related with them had occurred.⁴ The relationship between Kolokotronis and Elmas Aga was explained in a letter, which had caught, written by Kolokotronis, addressing the Muslim Albanians.⁵

Commander-in-chief Hurşid Pasha, who had suppressed the Tepedelenli Ali Pasha incident, was sent to Morea with his soldiers after Tripoli massacre. And also, *Mahmud Pasha of Dhrama*, who had collected soldiers from Albanian region, went to the peninsula. The population of the army reached 25,000. Approximately 4,000 infantry and cavalry of Albanian mercenaries were included to the army. They would be under the command of *Zekeriya Debre*. By the way, all Albanian soldiers were counted and had given to the command of *Zekeriya Debre*. Total number of the Albanian mercenaries reached 7,000. However, Hurşid Pasha demanded money, equal to the 40,000 soldiers' ulufe from the Sublime Porte.⁶

The prepared army went on *Livadhia* (Livadya) and *Thebes* (İstefe), where the situation was very critical. The successful operations were done up to *Modon* (Methoni). However, the first crisis with the Albanian warriors had occurred. While the army was marching on Nauplio –at the inner side of Morea-, *Zekeriya Debre* demanded 16.000 piasters salary for his warriors from Nüzul Emîni. Although *Nüzul Emîni Yakup Aga* told that there was no money, he could not convince them. Thereupon, the Albanians started to squeeze Dramalı Mahmud Pasha. And Pasha swore that there was not any money but, also, he could not convince *Zekeriya Debre*. Actually, this problem did not occur not only because of the money. The rivalry between the Albanian dynasties in the army had increased.⁷ *Zekeriya Debre*

¹ For the letter of Kolokotronis: BOA, HAT, no. 39917-R; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:...”, pp. 224-225, 238-239.

² S. Linner, *W. H. Humphreys' First ...*, pp. 60-62.

³ BOA, C. DAH, no. 14244; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 24-25, 220-221; A. F. Öreñç, *Balkanlar'da ...*, pp. 38-39.

⁴ BOA, HAT, no. 40503-M.

⁵ BOA, HAT, no. 39917-R.

⁶ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 46-52.

⁷ *Zekeriya Debre*, the leader of the Albanian mercenaries did not want to obey *Dramalı Mahmud Pasha*, because of being a member of a different dynasty. While the assignments

used this situation as an excuse and started to declare that they would not obey and would go back if the money did not get paid. Salary crisis was grown up while the army was at Argos. At this situation, the Albanian leaders who gave soldiers to the army and *Erib Pasha* made a secret conversation with Zekeriya Debre. Albanian leaders agreed on leaving Dramalı Mahmud Pasha and going to Corinth. They took their tents and soldiers without spending anytime and left the army. Morean Commander-in-chief did not have any information about the situation. Everything was learned in the morning. Hundreds of Albanians, who escaped at night, were attacked by the Greeks and went back to the garrison. The army had reached Nauplio with these problems.¹

The Governor of Morea sent a letter to the Sublime Porte and demanded money for the Albanians' ulufes. The Albanian warriors wanted all their money. They attacked to the residence of the governor. The governor sold all his households and paid some of their money and got some time for the rest of the payment. He mentioned that serious problems would be occurred if he could not find money of 1.500 scrip (kese)² in a specific time. Hurşid Pasha, who had faced with the same problems, wanted to make the payments to the Albanians after they had reached the army to prevent the escapes and rumors about the ratios of the payments.³

Although the Albanian warriors caused serious problems, the state needed them, because of the Greek uprising spreading on daily basis. Thus, at the beginning of the year 1822, the state started to increase the number of the Albanian mercenaries in the army. At that time, borderline problems occurred with Iran (Persia) and the state started to collect soldiers for the Eastern Army. After the first year of the revolt, Ali Pasha, the Commander-in-chief of Morea, other viziers in the region and the other high rank officials made a meeting at *Lamia (İzdin)* and evaluated the situation. The Pashas prepared a report pointing the Albanian mercenaries as the main factor of the failure and sent it to Sublime Porte. According to the high ranked officials, the main advantage of the rebels was the geographical conditions. They would hide at the steep passages and repulse the Ottoman soldiers. At the meeting, *Ali Şefik Pasha* said that the rebels were fighting *for religion* but the Albanian warriors were fighting *for money*. And he mentioned that it was possible for the Albanian warriors to change their sides if they could not get their payments. Logistic shortages were also discussed at Lamia meeting. The viziers determined that at least 80,000 soldiers and 10.000 pack animals were needed for the success in Morea. Despite all these critics, employment of the Albanian mercenaries continued

for Morea were done, the balance between the dynasties did not consider because of the Sultan's adviser *Halet Efendi*. While the important positions were given to the small dynasties, the members of the bigger dynasties did not spend too much effort: Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 59-62.

¹ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 46-52.

² 1 Ottoman scrip (kese) income 500 piasters (guruş).

³ BOA, HAT, no. 38557; no. 38573.

and 10,000 soldiers were registered in 10 days time though just 7,000 of them reached to the battlefield.¹

It was heard that Kolokotronis, the main responsible of Tripoli massacre, was around and his letters to the Albanian commanders in the Ottoman Morean army were captured. Kolokotronis described the Albanians as brothers and his sadness about their attacks on him. He claimed that he was loyal to the contract that he had made between them and he demanded a meeting by mentioning he had a lot of Albanian friends like Elmas Aga in Tripoli.²

Dramalı Mahmud Pasha, a Muslim Albanian leader, was assigned for fighting with Kolokotronis who was around Lamia. The Albanian warriors were encouraged and promised ulufe for fighting better. Mahmud Pasha and his army succeeded in the war around *Badracık* against Kolokotronis. More than 3,000 rebels were killed. Because of their success, Sultan Mahmud II ordered to distribute the money of 2.000 scrip to the Albanian mercenaries. This money, distributed instead of ulufes, was made up of 12.5 gold. So, every soldier got one more piasters.³

Although the Ottoman pashas pointed out the Albanian mercenaries as the main source of the problems, in general, there did not exist strict military discipline in the army. The coordination of the scattered troops was failing and the escapes could not be prevented. Also, there were rivalries between the governors and the commanders in the region. Logistic problem of Morean Peninsula was increasing day by day. Especially, lack of stuff and money were at the extreme point. Also, the rivalries between Tosk and Gheg Albanians in the army had increased.⁴ Dramalı Mahmud Pasha assigned as the governor of Morea and Commander-in-chief for solving these problems in June, 1822.⁵ At that time, the Greek rebels gathered an assembly at *Epidor* and declared their independence.⁶

The Ottoman Empire decided to focus on *Euboea Island*, a strategic point and Mesolongi, captured by the rebels, in 1823. Although Omer Pasha, the guard of Euboea was reluctant, the Albanian warriors were sent there.⁷ It had seen that Omer Pasha was right. Thus, the Albanian warriors, accommodated in the villages, started to leave their places for going to Euboea to demand their payments when they heard about the payments at other places. Although Ali Pasha warned them to go back, they did not obey to him. Because of this they were forced to go back, but most of them escaped to Lamia region. Ali Pasha wrote the situation to Sublime Porte and

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 37948; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 26-29.

² BOA, HAT, no. 915-39917-R; . Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:...”, pp. 224, 238-239.

³ BOA, HAT, no. 927/40277-A; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 26-29.

⁴ BOA, HAT, no. 38787-R.

⁵ BOA, HAT, no. 37927; 38332; no. 38681; no. 38877; no. 39106.

⁶ A. F. Örenç, *Balkanlar'da ...*, pp. 56.

⁷ BOA, HAT, no. 40285-F.

demanded approximately 2,000 Kurdish infantry soldiers from Anatolia for a successful campaign because of the geographical properties of Euboea land.¹

The city of Mesolongi had also a symbolic importance, like Euboea for the Greeks. It was a strong castle at the *Gulf of Lepanto* in the south western coast of Morean Peninsula. There was, nearly, 10 miles long swamp at around. The rebels took some precautions to prevent the progress of the Ottoman Army. There were a lot of voluntary rebels from Europe in Mesolongi, which had a naval defense possibility. Despite the precautions, the army could not start the Mesolongi campaign. Especially, the disobedience of the Ghjeg Albanians under the command of İškodralı Mustafa Pasha, was a great problem. Those soldiers, who were collected at summer, refused to fight in November and went back their homes. After their return, the navy reached to the region for the support, but they could not find Mustafa Pasha and left the region for an attack on *Psara Island*.² Because of this situation, the Greeks increased the level of their attacks towards the towns and villages around. The situation turned to negative at all fronts. Also, the rigorous behaviors of the Commander-in-chief against the Ghjeg Albanians caused some complaints.³ So, a change had occurred at the command element.⁴ Firstly, *Berkoççalı Yusuf Pasha*, who went to *Preveze* and had collected 10,000 Tosk Albanians but failed at the campaign at the inner parts of Morea while the Mesolongi issue was waiting, was dismissed.⁵

While the conditions were getting worse at Morea, the borderline problems with Iran turned to a confliction process in 1823. The state, started to collect mercenaries because of the mistrust against the janissaries. Thus, the commander of the Eastern Army opposed to collect soldiers from ordinary people and advised to get Albanian and Kırçali infantry from Rumelia. According to this, he asked if possible 10,000 soldiers, and if not at least 5,000 soldiers from Istanbul, under the conditions of the

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 39883-E; no. 39913-G.

² Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 80-82.

³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 95-97.

⁴ For more information look at: BOA, HAT, no. 25591; no. 32917; no. 38129-B; no. 38218-H; no. 38260; no. 38281; no. 38316; no. 38348; no. 38358; no. 38773-İ; no. 38382; no. 38618; no. 38851; no. 39966.

⁵ According to *Ahmed Cevdet Pasha*, a historian and a statesman, *Yusuf Pasha of Siroz*, a member of an Albanian dynasty, wanted to be the conqueror of Morea. Although he had money, he did not have enough soldiers. For this reason, he went to Preveze and started to collect Albanian mercenaries. At that time, *Omer Vryoni Pasha*, the governor of Yanya, offered Yusuf Pasha collecting the mercenaries by himself and acting together. However, Yusuf Pasha who was giving the money did not accept him as a partner without any money. Yusuf Pasha made meetings with the Albanian leaders directly and collected 10,000 Albanian mercenaries. Then, he moved towards Morea with his soldiers. Collecting *Tosc* soldiers by Yusuf Pasha disturbed Omer Vryoni Pasha who was a member of Tosk dynasty. He criticized Yusuf Pasha for going to Morea while the Mesolongi issue was continuing. He communicated with the soldiers in Yusuf Pasha's army secretly. A chaos occurred in the army of Yusuf Pasha near Mesolongi and the soldiers escaped for Preveze: Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 80-82.

payments would be given by the *Şark Defterdarı*. Those soldiers, under the command of the famous leaders would be transferred from *Saloniki* and *Gallipoli* to *Erzurum* but the plan failed. They couldn't find any Kırçali soldier because all of them were sent to Morea and had some problems for getting Albanian soldiers because of the situation at Rumelia.¹

Ottoman Army used the Albanian warriors not only on land but also at the naval campaigns. For example, there were Albanian warriors at the navy which was sent to *Psara Island* for a campaign. *İsmail Pasha*, the governor (mutasarrıf) of *Akarnania* and *Lepanto*, organized the soldier collection for *Psara*. He took 3,000 Albanian soldiers that he collected at *Lamia* to *Saloniki*. Those soldiers were taken to *Ipsala* by the navy under the command of Grand Admiral Mehmed Hüsrev Pasha. The Albanian warriors succeeded at *Psara*. Approximately a thousand rebels were killed, 500 of rebels were captured and a lot of booty was taken after a nine-hour clash.²

Although a victory had won in *Psara*, the army could not reach a successful result at *Morea* during 1823 and 1824. The commanders were changed a lot for the success and it prevented the continuity of the campaigns. The under-trained Ottoman soldiers who were sent to *Morea* in groups caused significant questions. Payment problems of the Albanian warriors continued increasingly.³ Apart from this, logistic problems could not solve and the soldiers lost their enthusiasm. At the last stage, the state started to make true steps. At first, they made a research and the archival records of *Morea* for determining the old victories to establish a successful strategy to suppress the rebellion. They pointed out how the former revolts had suppressed in *Morea* and the transformation points were used before.⁴ They pointed out that Albanian soldiers had used to suppress former revolts in the region but the differences of the old and current Albanian soldiers and the current Albanians' focus on money were mentioned. At this point, the state decided to use another method which also used before. Thus, solving the *Morea* problem was offered to Mehmed Ali Pasha, the governor of *Egypt* and a contract was signed after the bargains.⁵

Mesolongi remained at the first place in campaigns on *Morea* during 1824. However, the Albanian soldiers did not spend much effort because of the payment failures. *Yusuf Pasha* of *Siroz* demanded permission for collecting soldiers and

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 37309-A; G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 158-160.

² BOA, HAT, no. 38713; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 95-97.

³ BOA, HAT, no. 38751; no. 39539-E; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 22-23; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors””:..., pp. 225-233.

⁴ 3,000 Albanian mercenaries used for suppressing the revolt of the Greeks in *Morea* during the *Russo-Turkish War* in 1768-1774. Although the balance was broke down because of the Albanian soldiers, the state started to extract the armed groups from *Morea* and *Cezayirli Gazi Hasan Pasha* was appointed as the governor of *Morea* for his mission: A. F. Öreñç, *Balkanlar'da ...*, pp. 22-23.

⁵ A. F. Öreñç, *Balkanlar'da ...*, pp. 47-49.

solving the Morean problem before the Egyptian soldiers' arrive but his demand was refused. At that time, Kasapbaşı Hasan Pasha was sent to Lepanto region. There was a critical situation at that region. When Hasan Pasha went to the castle, he came across with Zekeriya Debre and his men who were demanding money. When Hasan Pasha said that he had no money with him, they locked him in a room and threatened him for giving him to the rebels or rending unless they could not get their payments.¹ They were giving a bread to him daily. Ali Pasha, the former Grandvizier, who met with the Albanian warriors, said that he could not have any money except a tobacco pipe, some jewelry and offered a valuable dagger for their payments. However, the Albanians insisted on cash and locked Ali Pasha in a room, too. Ali Pasha sold his valuable dagger with a price of 50.000 piasters and distributed the money to the soldiers for getting out of this situation. However, the money afforded only the half of the payments of the Albanians. When the situation was reported to Istanbul, the Sultan sent 75.000 piasters to Ali Pasha. He distributed all of the money and saved himself from the Albanians and went to Larissa through Preveze. Ali Pasha was dismissed because of these events. Hasan Pasha was saved by Omer Vryoni, the governor (mutasarrıf) of Yanya. Hasan Pasha was appointed to Arta (Narda) and 75.000 piasters was sent for the payments.² Meantime, Zekeriya Debre, caused a lot of problems for the payments, was secretly executed at Istanbul where he went to collect his wages.³

While the army focused on Mesolongi, a council had gathered in Istanbul in order to discuss the situation at Morea. The significant topic of the meeting was the situation of the Albanian warriors in the army. High rank officials mentioned the necessity of employing the mercenaries because of not having a regular army. At this point, it was decided to assign a powerful vizier, who knew the characteristics of the Albanians, as the Commander-in-Chief of Rumelia to make them fighting with more enthusiasm and Mehmed Reshid Pasha, the governor of Vidin, was selected for this mission. In addition to Rumelia state, Yanya and Devline districts, and Derbentler Nezâreti (mountain passes) were given under the control of Mehmed Reshid Pasha for increasing his position and authority. All the government officials at the region would be under his command. Saloniki and Kavala were given to Omer Vryoni Pasha as taking care of the balance between the dynasties. So, the

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 39966.

² Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 100-101.

³ Zekeriya Debre was appointed to the Morean army by *Commander-in-Chief Hurşid Pasha*. However, he caused some problems because of the failure of the payments and he behaved insulting to the viziers. He also disturbed Sirozi Yusuf Pasha. The payments of Zekeriya Debre became a problem again, after the death of Hurşid Pasha in 1823. The state determined the situation as a chance for solving the problem. A paper was given to Zekeriya Debre that he could get his payments from the estates of Hurşid Pasha of from the state treasury in Istanbul. He went to Istanbul for taking his payments. He went to Grandvizier with his papers. Grandvizier sent him to Defterdar Efendi. His issue was extended because of his behaviors to the viziers in Morea. Zekeriya Debre went to Sadaret Kethüdası and insulted him. He was arrested because of this. The, he was brought to the castle of Bosphorus and executed secretly: Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 101-103.

assignments that the Albanians would like had been done.¹ On the other hand, employing the Kırçali soldiers and Turkish soldiers (Türk uşağı) instead of Albanian mercenaries was discussing by the high rank officials. However, the inconsistency of them to the Morean climate and dying of the most of them because of the diseases made it hard to use them in the region.²

The state continued to take the decisions to make the Albanians happy. The farms of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, which were transferred to the treasury, had given to some Albanian leaders. And 50.000 piasters and a sable fur were given to *Palashzade İsmail Pasha* as a gift, who had joined the siege of Psara Island with Captain Pasha. He was promised the rank of vizierate and the governor of Yanya if he could be successful at Mesolongi. Some fermans were sent to some of the Albanian leaders like *Osman Bey*, the lieutenant-governor (mütesellim) of *Vlora* (Avlonya) and *Ismail Aga*, for promotion. All of them would be under the control of the Commander-in-Chief of Rumelia. Payments for military service were started at the Rumelian towns to afford the salaries of the Albanian warriors. And the orders were sent to the rulers of *Skopje*, *Prizreni*, *Kruseva* (Alacahisar), *Pristina*, *Stip* (İştib), *Kastoria* (Kesriye) and *Manastur* to collect more Albanian warriors. Mustafa Pasha of Scutari (İşkodralı) was prepared 5,000 soldiers. Kasapbaşı Hasan Pasha, who had problems with the Albanian soldiers at Lepanto, was invited to Preveze and assigned to the protection of *Arta* (Narda). After these precautions, Commander-in-Chief Mehmed Reshid Pasha left Vidin for going to Morea and reached quickly. He stayed there for ten days and went to Yanya. At that time, an amount of money consisted of 2.500 scrip was sent to him from the treasury.³

Mehmed Reshid Pasha decided to walk on Mesolongi at March 1825, because the escapes had increased in the army. The navy was assigned to transfer the goods which would be needed for the siege. Reshid Pasha reached Mesolongi by defeating the resistance on his way. While the siege of Mesolongi was continuing, the Egyptian soldiers under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, the new governor of Morea and the son of Mehmed Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt, moved towards to Modon. Christian Albanians were supporting the rebels there. Despite this, the Egyptian troops got, first, Modon, then Koroni and Navarino.⁴

Reshid Pasha felt the relief with the good news from Ibrahim Pasha and fastened his preparations. Cihadiye soldiers from Egypt reached Mesolongi at February 25, 1826. Indeed, there were a lot of Albanian irregular soldiers in the Egyptian army. They were in that army from the French occupation and they were so experienced. Those soldiers who were under the command of Ibrahim Pasha were so disciplined in contrast to the Albanian soldiers in the Morean army.⁵ At this time, Sublime

¹ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 104-106.

² BOA, HAT, no. 39928; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:..., pp. 218-219.

³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 104-106.

⁴ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 119-121; A. F. Öreñç, *Balkanlar'da ...*, pp. 75-79.

⁵ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 121-125.

Porte decided to send Mustafa Pasha, the governor (mutasarrıf) of *Alexandria* to Akarnania and Misolongi with Gheg Albanians, while Omer Pasha, the mutasarrıf of Yanya, had moved for Athens with Tosk Albanians. Fermans were sent to them. However, the governor of Rumelia opposed to these assignments and mentioned that he did not trust Omer Pasha. Then, the Sultan declared that he would be made changes after he got the information about this distrust.¹

A new problem occurred while the army was at the gates of Mesolongi. The commanding position of Tosk Albanians, who joined the siege in great numbers, became a problem. The leader of them *Avlonyalı İsmailpashazade Mirimiran Süleyman Pasha* was inefficient. Palaslızade İsmail Pasha, who had some promises at Istanbul, was provoking the Albanian leaders secretly. The Albanian leaders declared to the Commander-in-Chief that they would fight selflessly if they would be under the command of İsmail Pasha. Reshid Pasha did not like their oppressive behaviors. At that time, the escape of Süleyman Pasha without any permission was heard. At this situation, Reshid Pasha gave a vizierate rank to İsmail Pasha and inscribed it to Sublime Porte. Reshid Pasha wanted to do something before the winter and he accepted this situation for this reason. Especially, it was impossible to keep the Gheg soldiers in the army after November. The payments of Tosk soldiers were accumulated. When the Egyptian troops had reached to Mesolongi, Mehmed Reshid Pasha started his campaign for Mesolongi with saying “*Anyone who says I am a follower of Prophet Muhammed, follows me!*”² First, *Vasilika* and *Andilikoz* islands which were important for the capture of Mesolongi were taken at March 10-14, 1826. A lot of arms and booty were taken from these islands.³

The payments of Albanians in the army became a problem again before the last attack to Mesolongi. They said that they would not fight unless they got their payments and they wanted to go back their homes because of their contracts were expired. They demanded their former payments and then, they demanded for the next 3 or 4 months’ payments in cash. They declared that they would go wherever the commander wanted if they could get their payments. At this point, the governor of Rumelia went to Yanya and called the Albanian leaders for a meeting. The most of beys from *Devlina* had come to the meeting. Pasha told them that England, France and Russia were attacking to the Muslims in cooperation with the Greeks and they were aiming to remove Islam out of the world. He said that, at those hard days, Muslim brothers should not take care of money and offered them to join the army without demanding any payment but their foods would be given by the state. However, the Albanian leaders declared that they would not fight without money but they could provide 500 horses from all the Albanian sancaks for carrying rations during three months without any money.⁴

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 38822.

² BOA, HAT, no. 38057.

³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 121-125; A. F. Öreñ, *Balkanlar’da ...*, pp. 79-84.

⁴ BOA, HAT, no. 39722; no. 838057.

Reshid Pasha went back to the army. Mesolongi was surrounded from the land and the sea. However, some problems started to occur between the Albanian warriors and cihadiye soldiers of Egypt. It postponed the capture of Mesolongi for a while. Albanian warriors, who saw that the Egyptian soldiers got a lot of booty at the last campaigns, want to make the first attempt. Ibrahim Pasha and Mehmed Reshid Pasha discussed the situation and gave them a mission to capture a monastery on the north of Mesolongi. The rebels built a few bastions in the monastery which was in a lake. The Albanian warriors could not capture the monastery. Commander-in-Chief Reshid Pasha who saw that they were escaping, tried to stop them. He turned some of them back to the fight but he was shot by a bullet on his leg and injured. Ibrahim Pasha, who was watching the events, sent the cihadiye soldier of Egypt and captured the monastery.¹

The Greek rebels made tactical attacks at different parts of the Ottoman Empire to distract the Ottoman navy which was going to help the army at Mesolongi. One of these attacks was occurred at *Beirut*. The Greek fleet was consisted of 14 ships and the rebels were wearing Albanian clothes. They entered Beirut from the Greek neighborhood and caused chaos in the city in March 22, 1826.²

Despite all of the problems in the Ottoman army the siege of Mesolongi lasted with success after two months and the city was captured at April 23, 1826. 2,000 Ottoman soldiers lost in the war. After the capture of Mesolongi, which made a great effect at Europe, the army turned its direction to Athens. 12,000 Ottoman soldiers under the command of Reshid Pasha the Commander-in-Chief and the governor Rumelia, reached to the city. However, the ulufes of Albanian soldiers had not been paid yet and the problem increased. The soldiers were tired and there was lack at rations. These problems postponed the capture of Athens. At that time, Sultan Mahmud II who abolished Janissary Corps, was busy for establishing a new and modern army, called *Asâkir-i Mansûre-i Muhammediye* (Victorious Soldiers of Muhammed).³

The governor of Rumelia Reshid Pasha sent complaints to Sublime Porte because of the problems caused by the Albanians who did not get their payments. He said that he couldn't describe the problems with words. He did not have any alternative other than the Albanian warriors and that made him desperate. The payments of the Albanians reached a total of 15.000 scrip. Pasha wanted an amount of 4.000 scrip immediately.⁴ And Reshid Pasha demanded new established Mansure soldiers for the campaign at Athens. Sublime Porte, evaluated the situation and decided to sent money for the payments. Incomes of janissaries in *Create Island* used as source for these payments. Money, first, transferred to the *Imperial Mint* (Darbhâne-i Âmire), then, to the army. At that time Reshid Pasha started to employ Turkish soldiers step

¹ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 121-125.

² Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, p. 125.

³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih*, vol. XII, pp. 121-125; G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 161-162.

⁴ BOA, HAT, no. 38079-A.

by step in stead of the Tosk Albanians who left the army.¹ For this reason, he demanded soldiers from *Trikala* (Tirhala), *Ormenion* (Çirmen), *Prizreni* and *Skopje*. After a time, Salih Aga, the voyvoda of *Pirliye*, with 2,000 soldiers and Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt with 1,000 soldiers joined the siege at Athens. There were 30,000 Ottoman soldiers at the siege of Athens in the mid-May. The governor of Rumelia increased the attacks. At last, the army captured, first, the suburbs, then the castle of Athens and Acropolis at June 6, 1827.

Capturing the last castle from the rebels caused a great pleasure in Istanbul. However, Ottoman rulers did not continue with this pleasure too much and they tried to afford the needs of the soldiers in Athens. First, the accumulating payments of the Albanians should be paid and it had become a serious problem. Otherwise, it would be very hard to keep them in Athens. Also, there was a risk of plundering from Morea to Yanya and Trikala if they could not their payments. The state was compelled to strike money in order to pay the salaries at the Albanians. New *Grandvizier Topal İzzet Mehmed Pasha* prepared a detailed report for the Sultan and mentioned that more than 40,000 Albanian soldiers were employed during the Greek Revolt because of the necessity, their payments of them were completed and that would cause very serious problems because at the characteristics of the Albanians. He offered to get some money printed for solving the problem. He offered to mint copper coins in order to use all over the Ottoman world. Foreign copper coins had been used in Albania for a while and the copper coin was known. If the payments were done by that way, the state could continue to use 10,000 soldiers. High rank officials in Istanbul discussed to mint copper coins and asked the view of Imperial Mint. It had said that this system had been used before but it took to much time to print this amount of money. At last, it was decided to mint not copper but silver coins. So, there would not be a currency problem at the other parts at the empire. With the order of Sultan Mahmut II, silver coins were minted and sent to the army.²

The fall of Athens made a great impact at Europe. England, France and Russia which were in a rivalry to support the rebels increased their pressure on the Ottoman Empire. While the demands of these countries were refused, the relationships were became strained. At last, the Ottoman and Egyptian ships were burnt at *Navarino* in October 20, 1827.³ At this situation, the governor at Egypt wanted to withdraw his soldiers from the Morean Peninsula. Under that conditions, the absence of the Egyptian soldiers were tried to fulfill with the Albanian mercenaries, but the conditions were not suitable.⁴

The Greek rebels attacked to *Chios Island* during the Navarino Event (October 30, 1827). They sieged Chios with more than 90 ships during a year. There were 1,500

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 39830.

² BOA, HAT, no. 37827; A. F. Örenç, *Balkanlar'da ...*, pp. 89-93.

³ Ali Fuat Örenç, "1827 Navarin Deniz Savaşı ve Osmanlı Donanması", *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, (Istanbul 2009), vol. 46, pp. 43-47.

⁴ A. F. Örenç, *Balkanlar'da ...*, p. 160.

Christian Albanian mercenaries between the rebels. Total number of the rebels was 5,000. There were Muslim Albanians the army which was sent to the island. Muslim and Christian Albanians confronted once again as also happened many times during the revolt. Chios Island was saved with the support of navy.¹

By the year 1828, the situation turned into the favor of the Greeks in Morea. France sent soldiers to the peninsula in the name of three states which were supporting the rebels. As a result of this, a lot of cities including Athens, Tripoli, Mesolongi and Lepanto were captured by the rebels. Albanian soldiers started to leave their positions because of the lack of enough rations. For example, 5,000 Albanians left the *Gerniş* town and went to *Badracık* and *Agrafe* region because of the reason that they did not have a place to stay during the winter. While 2,000 Albanian soldiers, under the command of *Arslan Bey*, Omer's nephew and the governor of Berat², an Albanian leader left *Mavrila*, the rations were kept by the rebels. Mesolongi was captured by the rebels because of the problems occurred by the failure of the payments of the Albanians. Sultan Mahmut II got very sad in the face of this news. He mentioned his complaint in one of his writings and he wrote that he left the people who cause these situations, to God.³

While the things were getting worse at the rebellion area, the strained relationships with Russia caused a great war. 1828-29 *Russia-Turkish War* made the things worse in Morea and Rumelia. The state had to fight against the Russians both in the Balkans and the Caucasus and the need for the Albanian mercenaries increased.⁴ Before the war, Albanian leaders were invited to Istanbul and informed about the preparations. After the meetings with the Albanians, evaluations about using Albanian mercenaries were discussed and *Kanicalı Hüseyin Bey* was ordered to prepare a report about collecting soldiers for a war with Russia. Hüseyin Bey mentioned that it was hard to get out of any soldiers out of Yanya but it was possible to get 1,000 soldiers from Delvina and 1,500 soldiers from *Vlora* (Avlonya) in his report. At last, it was evaluated that the Albanians would not want to fight against the Russia. Sultan Mahmut II, reacted the report and ordered to employ 3,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry with a salary of 30 piasters per month temporarily from the region. The state wanted to prevent any unrest in the Rumelia during the Russian war and for this reason, it was employing the Albanians. Thus, Ibrahim Pasha, the guard of Vidin mentioned his thoughts in favor of this. A meeting was held in Yanya with all Albanian leaders and the terms were discussed with this aim. Furthermore, the Albanian leaders made a meeting between themselves at the house of Ibrahim Pasha in Delvina and wrote a letter to Sublime Porte which included their demands for fighting against the Russia. It was tried to

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 40089; no. 40597; Ali Fuat Öreñ, *Balkanlar'da ...*, pp. 169-171.

² H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors””:..., p. 219.

³ BOA, HAT, no. 37827; no. 38038; no. 38057; no. 38335; no. 42684-A.

⁴ G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 227-228; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors””:..., pp.226-233.

collect soldiers in Rumelia for the fighting and some of them were collected from Albania and Çirmen (Ormenion).¹

While the war with Russia was going on, Mansure soldiers at the strategic locations in Morea were taken back to Istanbul. At it was decided to put Albanian mercenaries with a salary of 40 piasters under the command of Arslan Bey instead of Mansure soldiers.² Omer Pasha, the commander at *Euboea*, sent some Albanians under the command of Abbas and *Kasım Mesguram* for guarding the villages. However, the Albanian warriors made a deal with the Greek rebels during the fight and came back to Livadhia. According to this deal, Albanian leaders would provide the entrance of the Greeks into Livadhia. Thus, the events occurred like in Tripoli and the rebels entered the city at midnight easily and the city captured by the Greek rebels totally.³

After the Russia- Turkish war in 1829, there were 10,000 Albanian warriors under the command of the governor of Rumelia and it was decided to decrease that number in half. Because of the autonomous Greek state was established according to the Treaty of Edirne in 1829.⁴ The state focused on another issue related with the Albanians. After the end of the Russian war, the soldiers, under the command of Mehmed Reshid Pasha, were sent on to Mustafa Bushati in Scutari. Also, there were some problems in Bosnia. So, influence of Bushati family in Scutari would be break down, like Tepedelenli Ali Pasha in Yanya and *Pazvantanoglu* in Vidin⁵. Mustafa Pasha operation was started in the mid-1831. Pasha had an army which consists of 10,000 Gheg Albanians. Regular Ottoman troops and Tosk Albanians, rival dynasty, were sent on Mustafa Pasha. At first, Mustafa Pasha went to Scutari castle and the he capitulated. At this process, some of the Albanian leaders who were with Mustafa Pasha entered the command of Mehmed Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt. Mehmed Ali Pasha sent his men to the coasts of Albania for collecting soldiers.⁶

The last case of employing the Albanian mercenaries in great numbers in the Ottoman army was the revolt of Mehmed Ali Pasha. The state started to have problems with Mehmed Ali Pasha at the last stages of the Greek revolt. Mehmed Ali Pasha was criticized for taking back his without giving any information and both sides blamed each other. The reason of decision of taking away last great local power of the Empire, the governor of Egypt, was his expansionist activities at the

¹ BOA, HAT, no. 21513-G; no. 21513-G; no. 21513-J; no. 39443-C; no. 42460; no. 43666; C. AS, no. 17011; no. 21362; no. 25527; Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 212-213, 218-220, 233-234; H. Erdem, ““Perfidious Albanians” and “Zealous Governors”:...”, pp. 233-237.

² BOA, HAT, no. 42734.

³ BOA, HAT, no. 39491-A; no. 39491-G.

⁴ A. F. Örenç, *Balkanlar'da ...*, pp. 186.

⁵ Rossitsa Gradeva, “Secession and Revolution in the Otoman Empire at the end of the Eighteenth Century: Osman Pazvantoglu and Rhigas Velestinlis”, *Ottoman Rule and The Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, Rethymno 2007, pp. 74-94.

⁶ BOA, HAT, no. 22201; no. 20444; G. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, pp. 152, 153; 239-241.

region. The revolt of the governor of Egypt continued for ten years¹ and there were Albanian mercenaries both in the Ottoman army and in the Egyptian army.² The Albanian soldiers, who were successful at the mountain and guerilla fights, could not get a success at the wars of regular armies like the war at *Konya* plain. The Albanians in the Ottoman army did not make any sense for this reason. Also, payment problems occurred. At the end of the war, the future of the Albanians and Bosnian soldiers in the army was discussed. Albanian cavalries sold their horses because of the lack of money after the war at *Konya*. Some of the Albanians distributed to the *Anatolian cities* and some of them wanted to settle in *Baghdad*. The state was happy for not paying anything to them. However, transformation of the other Albanians who were still in the army became a problem. For preventing them to plunder the towns on their way, the officials tried to transfer them to *Saloniki* without any contact with the Anatolian towns.³

Conclusion

Employing the Albanian mercenaries in the Ottoman army during the 18th and 19th centuries, definitely, was not a desired choice. Albanian warriors occurred as temporarily solutions for extraordinary conditions. As Sultan Mahmud II mentioned in his writings, the state did not expect any service and loyalty from the Albanian Pashas. The conditions made it compulsory to use them.⁴ Actually not only the Albanian soldiers but also the Kırçali mercenaries from Rumelia, Laz and Kurdish mercenaries from Anatolia and the Circassian mercenaries from Caucasia were not so efficient for the state.

It should be mentioned that there were benefits for both sides for employing mercenaries in the army and in the local services. The state afforded their military needs from these mercenaries. Being a mercenary was became a way of earning life for the Albanians because of disadvantages of their lands. It was not a comprehensible situation that the Ottoman officials employed the Albanians as mercenaries when they needed them and then criticized them for fighting not for religion and the state but for the money. Those complaints did not make any sense while the state could not send its regular troops, like janissaries, to the battlefields. It would be a realistic approach to consider the Albanians, who were fighting for money as a way of life, not as a group which used to cause problems to the state but as a group resulted from those problems which were already existed.

¹ For Mehmed Ali Pasha Revolt look at: M. Hanefi Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, Istanbul 1998.

² BOA, HAT, no. 181254.

³ BOA, HAT, no. 19896; no. 20036; no. 20076-A; no. 20107.

⁴ BOA, HAT, no. 38751; no. 42734.