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The campaigns of 1822 & 1823.

Keywords: People: Theodoros Kololotronis; Odisseas Androutsos; Admiral Kanaris; Andreas Miaoulis; Khursid Pasha, Omar Vronis Pasha, Dramali Pasha
Events: Sieges of Tripolis, Modon, Koroni & Akrokorinthos; Battle of Peta; Battle of Dervenaki

Questions.

1. What was the style and tactics of fighting adopted by both sides?
2. What were the Greek military plans in 1822 and in 1823? What were their strategic objectives? Were they achieved?
3. How did the war at sea proceed?
4. Why did the Greek forces lose the Battle of Peta? Why did the Ottoman forces lose the Battle of Dervenaki?
5. Describe naval warfare in 1822 & 1823: which side was more successful? Why?
6. At the end of 1823 which side was winning the war? Why?

The Greek armed forces [in 1822]

Whatever the Filiki Etairia may have done in bringing about the revolts that marked the first few months of the Greek war of independence, it had failed entirely to provide the Greeks with a centralized military organization. Nor had it provided them with a plan of operations other than that which had miscarried at the outset; and, although funds had been collected, there had been hardly any stockpiling of arms and ammunition and no attempt to organize depots of food and clothing. The old mills at Dimitsana in Morea produced only enough gunpowder to provide for the ordinary needs of a limited area. Elsewhere needs were met by a long established trade of moderate proportions. Similarly a moderate trade in arms had long existed. It was the ambition of every Greek and Albanian to acquire a pair of pistols, a gun, a dagger and a yatagan. Gradually many Greeks and Albanians had obtained guns and pistols of more modern design, particularly as, during the Napoleonic wars, there had been a considerable amount of gun-running by both the French and the British to the partisans and the enemies of Ali Pasha. Hence, although the traditional irregular bands were relatively well armed for the type of warfare they indulged in, it was some time before all the new recruits could discard their obsolete weapons for the more up-to-date types. All the same, considerable quantities of arms and ammunition had been taken from the Turks in the Morea and as the war went on there came a steady trickle of supplies from the commercial Greeks and the philhellenic committees of western and central Europe.

Nevertheless, in the early stages of the revolt the peasants and shepherds who joined the bands (very few traders and artisans took up arms) were very poorly armed and almost totally without military training. Apart from their enthusiasm, which arose from their religious fervour and a desire to grab the land, not many had much to offer. Hundreds deserted whenever the surviving Turks made sorties from their strong positions. So great indeed was the number of desertions that Kolokotronis, who was commander-general of the Karitena irregulars, used to post guards around his camp at Chrisovitsi. Nevertheless the enthusiasts remained and gradually learned the art of kleftic warfare from their natural leaders. Those at Chrisovitsi were given some training and, since ammunition was more precious than words, quite a lot of longwinded speeches. At that same camp, which tended to be a fairground rather than a military establishment, Kolokotronis attempted to impose some discipline. He established a rudimentary military police and he meted out heavy punishment to those who were uncooperative or who attempted to run away. To keep his troops in camp, he made some attempts to pay them: he sent out representatives to collect taxes and supplies from the villages around, and these too came in for rough treatment if they failed to make a fitting contribution to the national cause.

In western Greece (which did not join the revolution until early June 1821) conditions were somewhat different from those in the Morea. Instead of bands of kapi under the control of the primates (bands which were augmented by recruits from the villages), there were the strong and, in their own peculiar fashion, well disciplined bands of armatoli. These military classes were highly independent: they were hostile to the primates who had been accustomed to seeking protection against them from the [Ottoman] beys. It was therefore not easy to organize them to fight a national war, especially as from time to time they made their own traditional accommodations (katakia) with the Turks who still maintained a strong footing in western Greece.

As in western, so in eastern Greece, where in the early stages of the war the famous kleft Odiseas Androutsos emerged as the principal leader, the military classes predominated. Here, as in the Morea, military camps were formed and these were joined by the peasantry. To provide funds and food supplies for these camps, committees were set up in Athens and Livadia, These collected taxes from the villages and also the rents and dues of confiscated [Muslim] properties. Generally speaking the taxes, rents, and dues collected were those that had obtained in [Ottoman] times.

The rudimentary Greek supply-system of the Morea and of western and eastern Greece tended to keep the bands of irregulars tied down in places where they were not needed and prevented the Greek forces from closely blockading from the land the [Ottoman] held fortresses. Nor was it easy to concentrate sufficient forces to attempt to take these strongholds by assault. In any case, siege artillery was almost entirely lacking. The pieces brought to Greece by certain philhellenes were far too few and of insufficient calibre for breaching these massive fortresses, which in nearly all cases were well endowed with natural defences. Moreover, Greek troops were unsuitable for storming strong positions. The Greek much preferred his traditional type of warfare-kleptic or [Ottoman] warfare, as it was called. Even the new leaders (as distinct from the old armatoloi, kleftes

and kapi) who were thrown up by the war- men like Makriyannis, Hadzichristos, Hadzimichalis and Karadzas- adopted this particular form of fighting.

This form of warfare had been developed to a high degree of perfection by the Albanians. Being always short of men, the Albanian tribes simply could not afford to throw lives away. Hence, with a good eye for suitable terrain, they fought as much as they could from concealed positions, from which they fired with deadly accuracy. Each band fought as a team and each member put his personal safety before everything else. It was a crime to get wounded or to risk one's life for personal glory: to do so was to expose fellow fighters to unnecessary danger and every man was needed to fight another day. In emulating the Albanians the Greeks did not carry caution quite so far. During the war of independence they often assembled quite large forces, and some of their leaders, Kolokotronis for example, had had experience of the methods of western militarists. Nevertheless they rarely risked themselves in the open: they had no cavalry to speak of; they had no bayonets; the idea of forming hollow squares was abhorrent to them; and, in any case, the business of loading their muskets (kariofilia) was such a lengthy process that out in the open a Greek soldier was a sitting target. Being usually outnumbered by the [Ottoman] formations, the Greeks preferred to lay ambushes in the defiles, to allow a portion of the enemy to pass, and then to fall upon the rear, hoping to inflict heavy casualties and to capture baggage animals and supplies. Their many successes depended upon their excellent marksmanship. This The Greek armed forces they achieved by constant shooting for amusement, learning how to allow for the idiosyncrasy of their weapons and testing carefully each new supply of powder. Although too many it seemed that they were for ever wantonly wasting ammunition, the truth was that they saved it in the long run: for in battle they used their cartridges sparingly and to good effect.

Needless to say, this kind of warfare could hardly be employed in the task that confronted the Greeks in the first year of the war that of taking from the Turks the fortified castles. Here their only recourse, short of bribing the Albanians constituting a part of the garrisons to surrender, was to bring 'Stratigos Psomas' ('General Bread') into action and gradually starve the defenders into capitulation. But for logistic and other reasons the Greeks always found it difficult to maintain a close blockade for any length of time. Hence just as no strongly fortified position fell to assault in the early stages of the war (Tripolitza was not strongly defended), so none of the great fortresses -Modon (Methoni) and Koron (Koroni) in the south-west of Morea, Patras, Lepanto and the castles of Morea (Rio) and Rumeli (Antirio) on the gulf of Korinthos, Nafplion on the gulf of Argolis, Negropont (Chalkida) and Karistos on the island of Evia, Vonitsa on the gulf of Arta, Zitouni (Lamia) in eastern Greece, and the Acropolis of Athens-was forced to capitulate through lack of food. Supplies invariably, trickled in (they were sold to the garrisons by the Greeks outside), and, although water was sometimes in short supply, each stronghold had its own wells or springs and cisterns.

Nevertheless it was important to prevent the defended from making a sortie, and relief forces from getting near. The Greeks therefore usually maintained around the castles sufficient troops to drive back those who tried to escape. These troops, or at least some of

them, were posted either at points around the outer walls (usually in places that provided natural cover), or in hastily constructed redoubts known as tambouria-foxholes constructed of stones and earth. In the daylight hours Turks and Greeks grinned at one another from close distance. Instead of exchanging shots, they more often, like the heroes of Homer, exchanged abuse. There was moreover much boasting and chaffing, one of the objects being to elicit military intelligence from one another. The Giaours (Christians) and the Kardates (Moslems) played this game according to an established code of honour: it would indeed have been thoroughly dishonourable to fire while these parleys were in progress.

Since many of the [Ottoman] fortresses were on the sea the defenders from time to time received supplies from enterprising ships' captains (chiefly Austrians) who commanded handsome profits for their services. Some of these captains and their ships fell into the hands of the island Greeks, who in the early days of the war had been able, as a result of their possession of large merchant fleets and of their experience as privateers, to organize squadrons of respectable strength. At the beginning of the war of independence the Greek shipping communities had just over 300 armed merchant vessels which provided a livelihood for some 12,000 sailors. About half of these vessels came from the islands of Idra, Spetses and Psara, and it was these three islands which made the major contribution to the 'war upon the sea.' The organization of the Greek fleets resembled very closely of the irregular armies on land. In the first place, there was no permanent commander-in-chief. Each island elected for each single expedition its own admiral and vice-admiral. In these elections, conducted in assemblies of ships' captains, the shipowners (nikokirei), who like landowners were known as primates, had usually a preponderant voice. More often than not the admiral chosen came from a rich and influential family. His first duty was towards his island. Although in March 1822 a Greek naval ministry was set up, its direction being entrusted to a committee of three representing the principal islands, localism remained strong and the so-called national navy was merely a euphemism for hastily improvised joint expeditions. For such expeditions it was usual to appoint a senior admiral, who was merely a *primus inter pares*, a phrase which can with equal truth be applied to admirals of the island squadrons or indeed to the captains of each single vessel. Every ship¹ retained the freedom it had enjoyed as a commercial vessel and every warlike expedition was looked upon as a commercial venture. The sailors and officers regarded themselves chiefly as partners in a common enterprise. They usually demanded a month's pay in advance and a share in all booty and prizes taken. If after a month there was no gain in sight they insisted on returning to their base.

The three islands exaggerated their contribution in ships when they later made claims to the Greek state for compensation. Figures produced by Greek historians vary considerably. It would seem, however, that the preponderance claimed for Idra by Trikoupi in his history of the Greek revolution is not borne out by more modern research. It is now generally admitted that Spetses provided the greater proportion of the larger and the newer ships.

Under such conditions no long-term naval strategy was possible, and even though

specific expeditions were designed with some foresight they rarely proceeded according to plan.

The [Ottoman] fleets had the advantage of being composed of larger vessels more specifically designed for war and of having heavier guns and larger crews. Against these vessels the Greek brigs (which ranged between 250 and 500 tons) could hardly be expected to win a firing match and they could hardly hope to capture them by assault. But certain Greeks had experience in the use of fireships (*burlotti*) and these they employed on occasion, though not on all occasions, to good effect. For this purpose they used old ships or prizes. The preparation of each vessel was a lengthy business. First of all there were long negotiations with the owner or owners concerning the price; and then followed the task of recruiting volunteer crews who invariably demanded extra pay, for, by the very nature of the operation, no booty or prize money was likely to be forthcoming. These crews and their captains certainly displayed much courage and considerable skill; and if they did not take a great toll of [Ottoman] ships, nevertheless one or two of their more spectacular successes (notably the blowing up of the [Ottoman] flagship off Chios by Kanaris in June 1822) instilled great fear into officers and crews of the [Ottoman] fleets, whose main object in any case was to elude the Greek squadrons and to carry supplies and reinforcements for the Ottoman armies and garrisons.

On an average the Greeks managed to keep at sea about sixty vessels for six or seven months every year. The limiting factor was chiefly a lack of funds. To fit out a brig with its hundred-strong crew and to maintain it at sea cost somewhere in the region of 20,000 *grossia* (approximately 274 pounds sterling). Money was also needed to maintain idle ships, to make the necessary repairs, and to feed the crews which, while not at sea, were employed on guard duties on land. Some of this money was drawn from central funds but much of it came from the pockets of the primates, from the taxation of the islanders, and from prizes, the proceeds of which were usually divided into three parts, one for the owner, one for the crew and the third for the community.

The first Greek fleet was assembled in April under the command of Yakoumakis Tombazis, an Idriot primate, who had had considerable experience in nautical operations. The first intention was to send this fleet to the coast of Epiros where small and somewhat disorganized [Ottoman] squadrons were cruising. But at the instance of a well-intentioned but totally inexperienced patriot of Chios, Neofitos Vamvas, who became subsequently a teacher and scholar of some importance, the Greek ships were dispatched to raise a revolt in the rich island of Chios. The peaceful Chiots, however, refused to respond, while the appearance of the Greek fleet off the island only served to cause the Turks to strengthen their garrisons and seize as hostages the archbishop and some seventy principal citizens. Nevertheless during the course of its first cruise the Greek fleet made many prizes and the crews laid their hands on a considerable amount of booty. They plundered an Austrian ship at Tinos and they captured a [Ottoman] vessel carrying, besides rich presents from the Sultan to Mohammed Ali, pasha of Egypt, many wealthy [Ottoman] families whom they robbed and put to death. Further booty fell into their hands towards the end of May. This time the Greek fleet sailed in two divisions, the larger one of thirty-seven sail under

Yakoumakis Tombazis to patrol the archipelago in the hopes of intercepting a [Ottoman] fleet which was about to leave the Dardanelles, the other of twelve brigs under Andreas Miaoulis to blockade Patras and to try conclusions with a [Ottoman] squadron cruising off the coast of Epiros. On 5 June Tombazis fell in with a [Ottoman] man-of-war to the north of Chios and drove it to seek safety in the roads of Eressos. Against this ship a hail of Greek broadsides produced no effect. It was then that the Psarian admiral, Apostolis, suggested that Yannis of Parga should be asked to prepare fireships which should be manned by Psarians who had had experience with the Russians at the battle of Tsesme. Two of his fireships failed to find their mark but a third commanded by Papanikolis was superbly directed, with the result that the [Ottoman] ship went up in flames and eventually exploded. So alarmed were the remaining Ottoman ships that they hastily retreated to the Dardanelles. But instead of following them up Tombazis, a man who was easily swayed by others, proceeded to Kydonies (Aivali) to rescue wealthy Greek families under threat from the Turks. Having failed to learn the lesson of Chios, he was easily persuaded that, if only he appeared off Asia Minor, a million Greeks would rise against the Turks. In the event, his arrival was a signal for the Moslems to sack that prosperous city. Hundreds of Greeks perished, many were taken off to be sold as slaves, and most of the shops were destroyed by fire.

By way of contrast the appearance of Miaoulis's squadron in the western seas early in June 1821 led Mesolonghi, Vrachori and other centres in western Greece to join the revolution. But it failed completely to destroy five [Ottoman] ships which, escaping from Patras, found safety under the guns of the fortress of Lepanto; and although it managed to sail through the little Dardanelles into the gulf of Korinthos it found no quarry in that area. The great exploits of Miaoulis, who was to replace the timid Tombazis as the principal admiral, lay in the future.

During the first year of the war the Turks on balance were the victors at sea. When in August 1821 the Greek squadrons were back at their home bases the kaptan bey, Kara Ali, left the Dardanelles with some thirty ships. Having joined forces with Egyptian and Algerian squadrons he threw supplies into the fortresses of Koroni and Methoni. He next disembarked reinforcements at Patras, thus weakening the blockade perfunctorily maintained by the Greeks on land. In October Ismail Gibraltar, the commander of the Egyptian squadron, attacked Galaxidi, the principal Greek shipping centre in western Greece. He burned the town and carried off some thirty-four brigs and schooners. Learning however that Miaoulis had again put to sea with a fleet of thirty-five sail, he decided to hasten to Constantinople with the Galaxidiot prizes. He succeeded in avoiding any general engagement. On 12 October the Greeks however drove ashore at Zante [Zakynthos- one of the Ionian Islands off the west coast of Greece] one of his Algerian brigs which had become detached from his main forces. In so doing they came into collision with the British authorities of that island, a collision which increased the growing tension between the Ionian islanders and the British administration which the Greeks, despite its declared neutrality, regarded as pro-[Ottoman]. Following this incident, during the course of otherwise ineffective skirmishing and exchange of cannon fire between the rival fleets, the

Greeks lost a brig, which Kara Ali carried off with his other prizes, its yardarms bedizened by the bodies of Greeks who had perished in the encounter.....

Military operations in 1823

The [Ottoman] campaigns of 1822 and 1823 were primarily attempts to relieve and strengthen the Moslem garrisons in the fortresses of Methoni, Koroni, Patras, Rio, Antirio, Nafplion, Negropont (Chalkida), Karistos, Vonitsa, Zitouni (Lamia) and Athens. In January 1822 the massive fortress of Akrokorinthos had capitulated to the Greeks. Here the Albanians of the garrison, who numbered about one hundred and fifty, had negotiated a safe passage for themselves across the gulf. The remaining Turks, who were militarily weak, agreed to surrender their arms and property, provided they could keep enough money to hire neutral vessels for their journey to Asia Minor. But while they waited at Kechries for ships to arrive, Greek troops attacked them and murdered them, making off with the spoils. This incident, following the sack of Tripolitsa [Tripolis] some months before, made the remaining garrisons more than ever determined to hold out and the [Ottoman] authorities in Constantinople [Istanbul] more than ever resolute to strengthen and supply the fortresses remaining in Moslem hands. For this task, however, the [Ottoman] fleet was hardly fitted. Although the Sultan could put to sea some eighty vessels, including six or seven ships of the line, the [Ottoman] crews, which had been hastily improvised to replace the Greeks who had formerly provided the navigational skills, were highly incompetent. In any event, to make the fortresses secure large land forces had necessarily to be employed to raise the somewhat perfunctory blockades maintained by the Greek irregulars-forces which, it was hoped, in cooperation with sorties from the strengthened garrisons, would drive the Greeks into the mountains, prevent the insurrection from spreading, and ultimately re-establish the Sultan's authority. To provide these land forces was not an easy matter. Although Ali Pasha had been defeated, much time and patience was needed to assemble Albanian levies for service further afield and, although relations with Russia had improved, it was still necessary to keep Asiatic troops on the northern frontier of the Ottoman Empire.

As the [Ottoman] forces had necessarily to be assembled as separate eastern and western armies, it was only natural that they should advance southwards through the broken coastal plains along two separate routes, the one in the east leading through the gates of Thermopylae and the other in the west through the Makrinoros. As they advanced they had to maintain some control of the many routes that lay between them, guard every defile that they left behind them, and, to reach the Morea, the western army must either be transported across the gulf of Patras or move along the northern shores of that gulf to link up with the eastern army with a view to forcing the defiles of the Korinthian isthmus. It was on these lines that for two successive years the Turks endeavoured to mount an offensive in the Morea, only to find that their lines of communication were much too long, the campaigning season much too short, and their supporting naval forces, although never fully challenged by the Greeks, too disorganized, too deficient in determination and nautical skill. They always lost considerable time in mustering unruly Albanian forces in the west

and in reaching the point (Larisa) of concentration in the east; and when at last they began to move they were frequently harried by the Greek irregulars, who had become past-masters in guerrilla warfare.

The immediate object of the 1822 campaign was the relief of Nafplion, the strongest fortress in the Morea, around which the Greeks had managed to maintain considerable blockading forces. In the east Khursid, the *seraskier* of Rumeli, assembled a large army at Larisa. In the west a second army was formed under the command of Omer Vrionis who, following the fall of Ali Pasha, had become the pasha of Jannina. But this western army made a very poor showing despite the favourable conditions created by the [Ottoman] successes in suppressing the revolts in Agrafa, Pindos, Thessaly and Macedonia. Like his predecessor, Omer Vrionis found himself harassed by the Souliots who were in firm possession of their native mountains on his flank. Needless to say, the benefits to be gained by aiding these sturdy Christian Albanians were obvious to the Greeks, above all to Mavrokordatos, the commander-in-chief in western Greece. Taking with him a corps of one hundred philhellenes under the command of Colonels Dania and Chevalier, a six-hundred strong Greek regiment of regulars (first formed by Dimitrios Ipsilantis) under the command of Colonel Tarella, a corps of Ionian Greeks under Panas and a band of Souliots under Markos Botsaris, he left Korinthos and repaired to Mesolonghi. There he was joined by three hundred Moreots under Gennaios Kolokotronis and some seven hundred men from Mani. With these small forces, which had only two light guns, he advanced to Komboti in the neighbourhood of Arta, hoping to rekindle the revolution throughout the whole of western Greece and to mobilize large forces. The response was poor. The kapetanei were highly suspicious of Mavrokordatos and the soldiers were fully occupied in collecting taxes, tithes and rents, in order to provide for their own subsistence. Of all the principal chiefs only the seventy-year-old armatolos Gogos Bakolas, who the year before had repulsed the Turks in the Makrinoros, definitely joined Mavrokordatos. But it is very doubtful what his real intentions were. He had no use for Mavrokordatos, nor for the European officers in his service. At all events, having established himself at *Peta* near the river Arta (Arachthos), he opened communication with the agents of Omer Vrionis. Meanwhile to Peta the corps of philhellenes, the Greek regulars, and Botsaris's Souliots had been dispatched by Mavrokordatos, who himself remained some fifteen miles in the rear at Langada. At Peta the philhellenes dug themselves in, in an exposed position. But Botsaris, who had learned that his clansmen in Souli were at the end of their tether, attempted to force his way through to render them assistance. He counted on support from the chieftain Georgios Varmakiotis, and he intended to take advantage of the efforts of Kiriakoulis Mavromichalis, who had gone by sea to land a force at Splandza (Fanari) on the coast of Epiros. He was soon in difficulties: Gogos, who detested the Souliots, had informed Omer Vrionis of these plans, and Botsaris, receiving no help from Varnakiotis, was obliged to retreat. It was not long before confusion reigned. Colonel Dania, having refused to take orders from the German philhellene, General Normann, who was acting as Mavrokordatos's chief of staff, had decided to follow the advice of Gogos and had gone to the support of Markos Botsaris. The Ionian troops had followed suit. Nevertheless Colonel Dania managed to regain his

prepared position at Peta. Already however Gennaios Kolokotronis had returned to the Morea at the request of his father. Quite obviously Mavrokordatos should have pulled back the remaining forces into strong positions in the Makrinoros, but being completely out of touch with his formations he did nothing of the sort. Hence the Greek forces at Peta were exposed to 5,000 Turks with 600 cavalry under the command of Mehmet Reshid Pasha (Kiutaya), who advanced from Arta on 16 July 1822. Part of his army he sent to the hills hoping to turn the Greek position from the north. These heights were occupied by Gogos, whose forces, instead of attacking the intruders, vanished into thin air and allowed them to attack the Greeks at Peta from the flanks. The philhellenes were surrounded and only twenty-five managed to escape. Half of Tarella's regulars and half of Panas's Ionians perished. In all over 400 died that day for Greece.

The disaster at Peta convinced the kapetanei, who were probably unaware of Gogos's treachery, that western military science and regular, disciplined troops were very poor substitutes for kleftic warfare. This conviction reduced considerably any chance there was of establishing a central government with power. Only by the creation of a national army could the regionalism and localism of the Greeks be brought under control. What is more, the disaster reduced the little political authority which Mavrokordatos had acquired and which he had hoped to increase by successful military operations conducted chiefly with regular troops. In large measure Mavrokordatos had only himself to blame; ignorant of military science, he had attempted to conduct a difficult campaign from a headquarters too remote from the scene of operations. In any case he was indecisive: had he left the military command to General Normann, his chief of staff, he might possibly have fared better; yet in the circumstances it is extremely doubtful whether Normann would have done more than beat a hasty retreat to the defiles of the Makrinoros.

After Peta, Mavrokordatos returned to Mesolonghi. Gogos went over to the Turks, who reinstated him as *armatolos* of Arta. The Maniats at Splandza sailed back to Mesolonghi with the body of their leader Kiriakoulis Mavromichalis who had been killed in a skirmish. The Souliots, having now no hope of assistance, finally capitulated, Omer Vrionis having agreed to give them 200,000 piastres and to allow them to repair with their families to the Ionian Islands. By the time they left (16 September 1822) the season was far advanced, and Omer Vrionis had been unable to join up with a [Ottoman] fleet which, having reached Patras in July, had returned to the Dardanelles. Meanwhile the unarmed inhabitants of Akarnania had fled to Kalamos, one of the smaller Ionian Islands which the British authorities had put at their disposal, along with ample rations. The kapetanei however remained in western Greece to fight among themselves, while several, for example Varnakiotis of Xiromero, Andreas Iskos of Valtos and Yannis Rangos, the sworn enemy of Karaiskakis, made *kapakia* (arrangements) with Omer Vrionis.

It was not until the late autumn that Omer Vrionis occupied the Makrinoros. Here he was joined by Kiutaya (Reshid Pasha) with 4,000 troops. Meeting with no opposition they advanced to Mesolonghi to which place they laid siege on 6 November. Here they found that Mavrokordatos, with the help of European officers, had organized defences. Day after day they delayed their assault. On 20 November seven Idriot brigades appeared and raised the

blockade from the sea by forcing a small [Ottoman] squadron to retire to Patras. Shortly afterwards the Greeks were able to ferry over a thousand men under the command of Petrobey, Deliyannis and Zaimis from the Morea. Adequate supplies of ammunition flowed in from Leghorn (Livorno). It was not long before Omer Vrionis was in difficulties. Greek fighters from Aetolia and Akarnania, assembling in his rear, plundered his supply lines. Only then did he decide upon an assault. But this venture which began on Christmas Day (6 January 1823) ended in failure. The Albanians thinking that they had surprised the Greeks were themselves surprised by withering fire. Omer Vrionis then decided to retreat to Karvasara. He met with no trouble in the Makrinom: not until he was nearly back did Iskos and Rangos desert him and rejoin the Greeks. The [Ottoman] eastern army fared no better. In April 1822 the Greeks planned to attack the advanced guard at Zitouni (Lamia), the *arios pagos* [the ruling council of the rebellion] having assembled near Thermopylae some 8,000 men who were subsequently joined by some 700 Moreots under Nikitas (Stamatelopoulos). The first division of these forces under Androutsos (Odisseas), the commander-in-chief, was transported in some thirty vessels across the gulf of Zitouni to the villages of Stilida and Agia Marina. Following a [Ottoman] attack, Odisseas and Nikitas were obliged to concentrate their troops in Agia Marina where they constructed *tambouria* (redoubts) which they showed no signs of leaving. The second division proceeded by land to Patradjik (Ipati) but failed to maintain itself in that small town. Odisseas, much to the annoyance of, and in defiance of, the civilians in the *arios pagos*, decided to return, having realized that it was quite impossible to advance from Agia Marina. For his intransigence the *arios pagos* dismissed him. Not long afterwards the two divisions disintegrated, for neither pay nor rations were forthcoming. Nevertheless Odisseas and many of the captains remained under arms. Enjoying considerable support from the local communities, he later (September 1822) convened his own general assembly which appointed him general (*stratigos*) of eastern Greece and Thessaly. Later still he drove the members of the *arios pagos* to Evia (Euboea) and appointed local ephor from among his partisans. In taking up this defiant attitude he was not alone. He was joined by Dimitrios Ipsilantis, who, abandoning his useless office of president of the legislative body, set up the standard of the *eteria* in eastern Greece. Needless to say, the conduct of Odisseas appeared to the central authority much more objectionable than the aloofness of the *arios pagos*, which at least paid lip service to the principle of national institutions. Taking advantage of this situation it appointed two men to assume control of eastern Greece—Alexis Noutsos, the civil authority, and Christos Palaskas, the military command. These two were nominees of Ioannis Kolettis, the minister of war, a portly physician who had made his mark in Ali Pasha's court and whose animosity to Odisseas dated from the days when they both served that illustrious tyrant. Noutsos, too, had learned his politics at Jannina [Ioannina, capital of the Sanjak of Epiros], while Palaskas was a renegade Souliot who too had chosen to serve that sworn enemy of his race. Both were soon to meet their doom. True to the traditions of Ali Pasha, whom he admired and perhaps hoped to emulate, Odisseas received his successors with open arms at his camp at Drakospilia, feted them well, and promised to confer with them the following day. That day however it was discovered that they had been murdered during

the night.

The failure of the Greeks of eastern Greece to take the initiative enabled the eastern Ottoman army to advance at its leisure. That army of some 20,000 men including 8,000 cavalry was entrusted to Mahmud Dramali (pasha of Drama) who had replaced the veteran Khursid. Setting out from Zitouni early in July, by the 17th he had taken Korinthos, where he was joined by Yussuf Pasha's forces from Patras. He had made no attempt to take the Acropolis of Athens which, although well supplied with provisions and ammunition, had capitulated to the Greeks on 21 June owing to lack of water, a capitulation which had been followed by the usual massacre of the Moslems. Nothing of consequence had been done by the Greeks to impede his progress or to defend Akrokorinthos. But Dramali's good fortune proved to be his undoing. Throwing all caution aside and ignoring the sound advice of Yussuf Pasha, who outlined to him a military plan of using Korinthos as a base for building up strong naval forces in the gulf, taking the chance moreover that the Ottoman fleet would be on time at Nafplion, he decided to push on through Argolis. All seemed well. He passed through the narrow defile known as the Dervenaki (Tretos) and on 24 July reached Argos whence the Greek government had fled. He left no guards behind him in the Dervenaki and he posted no forces where other defiles exposed his flanks. He sent forward cavalry to join the [Ottoman] garrison at Nafplion, which stronghold was on the point of capitulation and which the Greeks could easily have acquired at the end of June or early in July if only they had carried out promptly the terms of the capitulation they had already negotiated. As it was, Dramali was able to seize the Greek hostages which the garrison was holding there as a pledge for the safety of Moslem hostages held by the Greeks?

Already Dramali was running short of supplies. The [Ottoman] fleet had gone around to Patras and was unlikely to return for several weeks. What he should have done was to have fallen back immediately to Korinthos, from which place he could have drawn supplies from Patras. Instead he dallied; and while he dallied the Greeks (who had already looted the villages from which the inhabitants had fled) now took command of the defiles, burned all the grain and forage they could not take away, and damaged the wells and springs. Already the Peloponnesian senate had stepped into the place vacated by the central government. Good patriots like Ipsilantis, Kolokotronis and Petrobey called for volunteers who came flocking in along with the *kapetanei* and the primates. Five thousand troops assembled at the fortified mills of Lema; others assembled at points on the marshy banks of the river Erasinos; and daily the Greeks skirmished with the Turks as they attempted to find water and fodder for their horses and baggage animals. Other Greek bands infiltrated into the mountains which overlook the plains of Argos. In the hills extending from Lerna to the Dervenaki, Kolokotronis, who had been appointed archistratigos (commander-in-chief), concentrated no less than 8,000 men. Around Agionori there were 2,000 troops under Ipsilantis, Nikitas and Papaflessas. Towards Nafplion large forces were assembled under Nikolaos Stamatelopoulos, the brother of Nikitas, and these were joined by Christian Albanians from Kranidi, Poros and Kastri. It was not long indeed before the Greek forces exceeded in number those of the Turks. If only Kolokotronis had in fact as well in name commanded the Greek armies, had it been possible

to draw up a general military plan, Dramali's forces might have been completely annihilated and Nafplion might have been captured with very little difficulty.

As it was Dramali was given the opportunity to carry out his belated decision to retreat. On 6 August he despatched an advance guard consisting of 1,000 Moslem Albanians to occupy the passes. These troops, who were probably mistaken by the Greeks for cobelligerents, got through entirely unmolested. But a body of Dramali's cavalry which was following up to occupy the Dervenaki was intercepted by Nikitas at the village of Agios Vasilis and was routed, a victory which gained for Nikitas the name of 'Turk-eater' (Turkofagos). Very few of the [Ottoman] delhis (cavalry) managed to escape; most of them had lost their horses and, as they tried to make their way on foot up the ravines of the mountains, they were almost all intercepted by small Greek bands or shot down by individual marksmen from concealed positions. During the encounter the Greeks took an enormous amount of booty-hundreds of horses and baggage animals and a considerable quantity of treasure, arms and stores.

Two days later (8 August) Dramali attempted to evacuate his main forces by way of the route through Agionori. Here he came up against the Greeks under Papaflessas who was holding the main defile (Klisoura). Unable to proceed, he soon found himself assailed by Nikitas and Ipsilantis who made a forced march from their positions at the village of Agios Vasilis and at Agios Sostis. Although Dramali himself with the main troop of delhis managed to force his way through and finally reach Korinthos, the Greeks captured all the baggage and the military chest; and they annihilated almost completely the unmounted personnel of Dramali's army. But no sooner had they achieved victory than they dispersed: the Moreots hastened to return to their villages taking with them such animals and other booty on which they had been able to lay their hands. Had they been less intent on booty, they might have totally annihilated Dramali's army. As it was, many of the delhis lived to fight another day, but Dramali himself died, a broken man, in the following December at Korinthos. His campaign had been a disaster of great magnitude: out of an army of 23,000 with which he entered the Morea, barely 6,000 had survived.

After Dramali's defeat and the dispersal of the Moreot bands, the principal scene of military operations shifted from the land to the sea. In the third week of September a Moslem fleet of some eighty vessels (including transports) belatedly appeared at the entrance to the gulf of Nafplion. Shadowing these vessels was a Greek fleet of sixty sail. Although much firing ensued neither side came near enough to inflict any damage. Nevertheless the Greeks, who had five fireships in their fleet, evidently instilled such fear into Mehmet, the kaptan pasha, that, despite a fair wind which would have taken him into Nafplion, he decided to quit the Morea and seek the safety of Suda on the island of Crete, leaving his compatriots in Nafplion in dire want and distress. By December so short of food was the garrison of Palamidi (that massive fortress which dominates the town of Nafplion) that it abandoned its thankless task. Shortly afterwards Kolokotronis coming up with his bands opened negotiations with the Turks. As at Tripolitsa a year or more earlier, the troops, fearing that the chieftains would get all the booty, assembled at the gate and threatened to take the place by assault. But on this occasion the arrival of Captain Hamilton

in the British frigate *Cambrian* led to an honourable capitulation. Not only did he take off many of the Turks but he insisted that the Greek government should charter vessels to transport to Asia Minor other Moslems who wished to leave.

Meanwhile the kaptan pasha had left Suda to take up a station between the island of Tenedos and the Asiatic mainland. Here on 10 November 1822 he was surprised by Captain Kanaris, who, with a well-directed fireship, destroyed one of the larger [Ottoman]' men of war. Had the Greeks only been less impetuous the kaptan's flagship might have met with a similar fate. Nevertheless the Turks lost a corvette which in the haste of all the Moslem vessels to get away ran ashore at Tenedos and became a total wreck. For a while the [Ottoman] fleet remained scattered, but it eventually reassembled in the Dardanelles. For his lack of enterprise the kaptan pasha Mehmet was dismissed and Khosref, often known as Topal (the lame), was appointed to take his place.

All this time, despite the failure of the Greek squadrons to secure a real command of the sea, enterprising Greek captains, chiefly from Psara and Kasos, carried out raids on [Ottoman] coastal traffic between the Dardanelles and Egypt. There came in for destruction or seizure not only commercial vessels flying the [Ottoman] flag but also ships of other nations, especially those of Austria. British and French ships for the most part were left unmolested, but there were occasions when these too were subjected to acts of piracy, thus provoking retaliation upon the part of the commanders of the British and French naval squadrons in the Levant. Piracy and privateering had become a lucrative business, so lucrative indeed that many of the best Greek ships and crews, instead of taking their place in the national navy, preferred to cruise as lone raiders on [Ottoman] commerce.

Despite the failure of the campaign of 1822, Sultan Mahmud remained firm in his resolution to bring the Greeks to heel and to reassert his authority throughout his empire. Towards this end he endeavoured to regain the confidence of the Greek communities by releasing hostages and by sending orders to the provincial authorities to refrain from imposing hardships on the Christian populations. At the same time he adopted a policy of conciliation towards Russia and indeed towards the envoys of other Christian powers. Fearing that Europe might combine in defence of the Greeks he was ready to offer lenient terms of submission to his rebellious subjects and to give an undertaking that he would not disturb the tranquility of the Christian communities which had not taken up arms. Finally, in order to reduce his military commitments he began negotiations with the Persians, negotiations which led to the signing of a peace treaty on 28 July 1823.

In order to avoid the perils of the isthmus of Korinthos and the defiles (dervenakia) of Argolis, the Sultan planned to direct his main army under Omer Vrionis against western Greece. This army on reaching the shores of the Gulf of Lepanto was to be transported to Patras by the Ottoman fleet, which was first of all to carry reinforcements to the [Ottoman] garrison at Korinthos. The eastern army in two divisions under Reshid Pasha (Kiutaya) and Yussuf Pasha was to subdue the klefts of Olympos, many of whom were still in revolt, and to put down rebellion throughout eastern Greece. This done, a part of that army was to advance to Salona and establish contact with the western army, it being hoped that the cavalry, or at least some of it, would be transported to Patras in readiness for operations in

the plains of Elis and Messenia.

The plan was probably an improvement on that attempted the previous year. But at the very outset it miscarried. The train of artillery for the eastern army, some 1,200 guns for the ships, supplies of ammunition, and various other military stores were damaged by a great fire at Constantinople. This fire, which was probably the work of the unruly janissaries, destroyed the arsenal of Tophana, some 6,000 houses and fifty mosques, the greater part of the suburb of Pera being reduced to ruins. Nevertheless Sultan Mahmud II, amid all the confusion, decided to carry on, even though operations would have to be reduced in scale. What he could not do, however, was to provide a large fleet to carry supplies and reinforcements to Patras and Korinthos. He had to be content with providing the new kaptan pasha, Khosref, with a relatively small squadron of frigates, whose mission it was to harass the Greek ships and to prevent them from embarking on major or decisive operations. It was this squadron which assisted Reshid Pasha in subduing Trikeri and in driving the kapetanei of Olympos to seek refuge on the islands of Skiathos and Skopelos-much to the consternation of the inhabitants, who found themselves eaten out of house and home.

Not until the klefts of Thessaly had been subdued by Reshid's division was it possible for Yussuf Pasha to undertake the task of subduing eastern Greece. But although he managed to advance and to plunder many villages and monasteries in the region of Parnassos and Elikon, he suffered heavy losses in the defiles at the hands of Androutsos (Odiseas). Nevertheless he was able to reach Kastri (Delphi), but, instead of pushing on to Salona with a view to linking up with the western army, he established a headquarters at Thebes, from which place he sent out columns not only to Negropont in Evia (Euboea) but also into the plain of Athens. At the time the Greeks were endeavouring to build up an army in Evia and Kolettis, despite his total lack of military qualifications, had managed to get himself appointed commander-in-chief. But before the army could be assembled the Turks appeared upon the scene, and Kolettis had to flee. It therefore fell to Androutsos, who was virtually fighting on his own account, to deal with the situation. Leading his own bands in the southern part of the island, he encountered the Turks near Karistos and inflicted upon them a heavy defeat.

Meanwhile the [Ottoman] western army had run into difficulties. Part of this army, which was commanded by Mustai, pasha of Skodra, had been assembled at Ochrid. Consisting of some 8,000 Guegh-speaking Albanians, 3,000 of whom were Catholic Mirdites, it provided the advance guard of the forces at the disposal of Omer Vrionis, who himself had the Tosk-speaking Albanians under his immediate command. At first Mustai Pasha had made good progress. Western Greece had failed to make adequate preparations. Mavrokordatos who had held three offices-president of Greece, governor-general of western Greece, and commander-in-chief of the army of western Greece had left Mesolonghi to take up residence at the seat of the central government, leaving military affairs in the hands of a committee of three. This committee was even weaker than Mavrokordatos and it failed completely to persuade the chiefs of Etolia and Akarnania to concert defensive measures. It is no wonder that Mustai Pasha's sub-commander,

Djelaleddin Bey, marched without opposition through the plain of Agrafa as far as the valley of Karpenisi, under Mount Velouchi, where he arrived with a mixed force of Catholics and Moslems 4,000 strong. But as with Dramali the previous year, the easy going was his undoing. At midnight on 21-22 August, Markos Botsaris, leading 350 Souliots, attacked his camp, inflicted heavy casualties on his troops, and carried off much booty. But he was obliged to leave Djelaleddin in possession of the field of battle, for the Greek bands which were nearby failed to move to his support. Hence on encountering opposition all that the Souliots could do was to retire with their booty. Sadly they carried with them the body of their leader Markos Botsaris, who was shot in the head during the early stages of this brief encounter.

Greatly incensed at being surprised, Djelaleddin's Gueghs pressed on through the ravines towards Vrachori. At Mount Kaliakuda, where the river Karpenisi joins the Aspropotamos (Acheloos), they encountered some opposition, but nevertheless they passed un-harmed through the defile of Brusog and arrived at Vrachori where they joined up with the Tosks under the command of Omer Vrionis. Delayed by the usual squabbles between Tosk and Guegh Albanians, Omer managed in October 1823 to mount an attack on the Greek-held fortress of Anatoliko, an island in the lagoon, some five miles to the north-west of Mesolonghi. To the relief of this important outwork the Greeks managed to send a naval squadron. On 11 December this squadron seized a [Ottoman] brig which had taken refuge in Ithaki and with it a large sum of treasure, an incident which called forth a stern rebuke from the British Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands and the seizure by a British ship of several Greek vessels which were held by the British until the Greek government had paid as compensation 40,000 dollars to the Turks. That same day (11 December) Omer Vrionis raised the siege of Anatoliko and withdrew to the north, passing unmolested through the defiles of the Makrinoros.

During the campaign of 1823 neither side had distinguished itself on either land or sea. Neither the [Ottoman] western army nor the eastern army had been able to gain a footing in the Morea. The Greeks, being more than usually disorganized, failed to inflict upon their enemies a major defeat. They had indeed regained possession not only of Nafplion but also of Akrokorinthos (7 November 1823) and on that occasion too, thanks largely to the exemplary conduct of and firm control exercised by Nikitas, the terms of the capitulation had been faithfully observed. On the sea, however, they had very little to be proud of, unless it were the successful and lucrative raids that Greek sailors of Psara, Kasos and Samos carried out on the coasts of Asia Minor. The ships of Idra and Spetses were for the most part idle or in a state of mutiny. Admiral Miaoulis was driven on several occasions to a state of despair. If anything the [Ottoman] admiral Khosref had the greater reason to be satisfied. In June he landed 3,000 troops to reinforce the [Ottoman forces] at Karystos and he ran considerable supplies into Negroponte [the island of Evvoia]. He later took supplies to Methoni and Koroni and he managed to land reinforcements at Patras. But he did not go to the support of the [Ottoman] western armies: he returned to the Dardanelles early in July [1823].