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Italian Military Officers on Service of the Greek War of Independence: Case Studies from D. Romas' Archive

by CHARALAMPOS N. VLACHOPOULOS

ABSTRACT. Central reference points of this paper are the Zantiot count Dionysios Romas (1771–1857), politician with rich patriotic action, who introduced Masonry in the Greek area; episodes of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman yoke; and the Philhellenes Italian volunteers, who supported the Greek struggle. The issues explored in this essay, on the basis of important published and unpublished archival sources, are: firstly, Romas' social, political and ideological origins and his formation according to the principles of liberalism and nationalism in the Ionian Islands and the Italian peninsula; secondly, the establishment, under his leadership, of the Zante Committee with the aim of the political, economic and military support of the Greek revolution; and finally the relations developed by Romas and the Zante Committee with a group of Italian military officers, who were engaged in the conflict between the Greeks and the Egyptian armed forces during the critical – for the Greek struggle – year of 1825.

KEYWORDS: GREEK WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, DIONYSIOS ROMAS, IONIAN ISLANDS, MASONRY, ZANTE COMMITTEE, ITALIAN PHILHELLENES, ITALIAN MILITARY OFFICERS, EGYPTIAN ARMY.

Count Dionysios Romas' Early Origins and Prioritizations

The turning point from the 18th to the 19th century is a critical period for the Ionian Islands' history as the Venetian dominion collapses and there begins the painful phase (1797–1815) of rapid and continuously changing political developments, which constitutes in the change of «five flags in seventeen years»¹ (democratic French, Russians–Ottomans, Napoleon, British). During this period many Ionian aristocrats were taking active part in the commerce and in the economic processes of the European mar-

1 Ermannos LOUNTZIS, *Επτάνησος Πολιτεία*, Corfu, 1968, p. 189.

ket as landowners and urban residents with usurious and banking activities. In parallel they were having a steady orientation to the European ideas and, mainly, they were experiencing the lack of national independence as a pejorative element across the other civilized people.² In this outline many Greeks of the Ionian Islands, foremost the men of letters, were living a “double life”: on one hand, kingpin of their life was considered the reality, the political situation and the culture of the Italian peninsula, dependence catalytic «on the level of the configuration of their political education, ideology, aesthetic, social patterns»; on the other hand, they were feeling a kind of patriotic debt to their subject brothers of mainland Greece, to whom they had the duty to help in every way.³

Dionysios Romas was one of these aristocrats. He descended from a manorial family of the Italian peninsula⁴ which had had a past of about three centuries. The family settled in Zante about 1610⁵ and registered in *Libro d'oro* (catalogue of the 93 noble families) in 1621.⁶ The basic privilege of the nobles, undoubtedly, was located in their capability to participate in the local Community's Council, which means, in the local governance. This class of *cittadini* (citizens) constituted a kind of administrative aristocracy around the Venetian government and monopolized the public offices perpetuating their strength through means which were relying more upon the ancestry than the economic strength or the mental ability.⁷

When Dionysios reached maturity, he left for legal studies to Padua following the road towards the Italian universities, a trend of the Ionian aristocracy.⁸

2 Evelin DURIE, *Ο Επτανησιακός μυστικός εταιρισμός πριν και κατά τον αγώνα της ανεξαρτησίας*, Vol. 1, Athens, Panteion University, 1999, pp. 197–198.

3 Dimitris ARVANITAKIS, «Γλώσσα και εθνική ταυτότητα στο Ιόνιο κατά τον δέκατο ένατο αιώνα», *Τα Ιστορικά*, 46 (2007), pp. 17–18.

4 De Regoli's family tree from Rome (D. Romas' Archive–Zante Committee [hereafter: DRA], *Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive Society [ELIA]*, 1.2.).

5 Eleni ΚΟΥΚΚΟΥ, *Ιστορία των Επτανήσων από το 1797 μέχρι την Αγγλοκρατία*, Athens, Papadimas, 1983, pp. 15–16.

6 Spyridon THEOTOKIS, *Αναμνηστικόν τεύχος της Πανιονίου Αναδρομικής Εκθέσεως*, Corfu, G. Aspiotis brothers, 1914, p. 38.

7 Dimitris ARVANITAKIS, «Θεός, μνήμη, ιστορία: στοιχεία για τη μελέτη της βενετικής κυριαρχίας στο Ιόνιο», *Τα Ιστορικά*, 35 (2001), p. 263.

8 Georg Ludwig MAURER, *Ο ελληνικός λαός*, Athens, Tolides brothers, 1976, p. 298.

Padua was the main destination of the Greek students during 17th and 18th centuries. Venetian administration had enacted privileges for the Greek Student Organization of the city, whereas two Greek colleges were operating there. The number of Greek students was highly large in the Law School.⁹ As it has been written «Venice was a very significant Greek locus, meeting and communicative centre of the inhabitants who were living under the Venetian rule [...] The history of the Ionian education is closely related to the University foundation of Padua».¹⁰



1. Dionysius Romas, oil painting by Spyridon D. Pelekasis. Athens, National Historical Museum.

Furthermore, in Padua, the Ionian professor Marcos Charbouris (1731–1808),¹¹ as an energetic freemason and possible participant to the foundation of the Masonic lodge in Corfu (1782), was the spiritual leader of the Corfiot students who were returning to Corfu after their studies in Padua.¹² Let's not forget that the “Big Lodge of Verona”, maternal lodge of the Corfu's masonry

9 Aristeides STERGELLIS, Τα δημοσιεύματα των Ελλήνων σπουδαστών του Πανεπιστημίου της Πάδοβας τον 17^ο και 18^ο αι., Athens, “Parnassos” Philological Association, 1970, pp. 33–34.

10 Chrysa MALTEZOU, «Νησιά του Ιονίου. Η τελευταία περίοδος βενετικής κυριαρχίας (1669–1797)», in Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους, Vol. 11, Athens, Ekdotike Athenon, 1975, pp. 217–218.

11 Πία CHATZIPANAGIOTI–SANGMEISTER, Ο τεκτονισμός στην ελληνική κοινωνία και γραμματεία του 18^{ου} αιώνα: οι γερμανόφωνες μαρτυρίες, Athens, Periplous, pp. 48–57.

12 DURIE, cit., pp. 56–61.

headquartered in Padua. In this environment it is logical for us to search for the Romas' first contacts with masonry, which constituted one of the foremost activities in his lifetime. In the middle of the 18th century, the Ionian intelligentsia had, also, absorbed the creative impetus of the refugees from Crete, who had arrived at the islands after the fall of Candia to Ottomans (1669) and had combined this influence with the western progressive ideas flourishing in Europe at that time.¹³

These impacts were maintaining to the Islands' movements of cultural revitalization, which defined, in a serious degree, the personality of young Dionysios. We should not omit the fact that Romas studied in Padua exactly at the time when the French Revolution exploded shaking with its ideas the entire old structure of monarchic Europe. There he realized for the first time the strength of bourgeoisie's ascent and acceded to the liberalism, which for an energetic Greek of the era «translated into revolutionary act against the Turks».¹⁴

At 1803 Romas will participate energetically in the formation of a very progressive Constitution, which was interlacing the establishment of human rights with the national and cosmopolitan necessities.¹⁵ The national aspect of the framer's thought appears to the regulations for the institutionalization of the Greek language as the formal language of the State and for the Greek education of the young people.¹⁶ For the Seven Islands the Italian language's rejection was affiliating absolutely with the route for the nationalization of the Ionian people.¹⁷

For the first time, also, in the Ionian Islands the foundation of civil schools was accommodated; a central high school in all the islands and a military

13 MALTEZOU, cit., pp. 212–213.

14 Apostolos VACALOPOULOS, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού*, Vol. 4, Athens, Herodotus, 2007 [2nd ed.], p. 7.

15 Spiros VLACHOPOULOS and Evanthis CHATZIVASILEIOU, *Διλήμματα της ελληνικής συνταγματικής ιστορίας*, Athens, Patakis, 2018, pp. 48–61.

16 Athanasia GLIKOFRIDI-LEONTSINI, «Θρησκεία και Γλώσσα στην Επάνησο Πολιτεία», in *Επάνησος Πολιτεία (1800–1807). Το πρώτο ανεξάρτητο ελληνικό κράτος*, Argostoli, *Cephalonian Historical Research Society*, 2003, pp. 421–430.

17 Dimitris ARVANITAKIS, *Ανδρέας Μουστοξύδης–Αιμίλιος Τυπάλδος. Αλληλογραφία (1822–1860)*, Athens, Benaki Museum–Kotinos, 2005, pp. 97–106.

school in Corfu. The regulations are ostensive of the framers' thought and objectives to offer pluralistic education to all citizens without exceptions regardless of class and origin. This element differentiates, more than anything else, the ancient from the new regime in the Ionian Islands, as derived directly from the concept of the French Revolution that the education can be the vehicle for changing and conquering social and national aims.¹⁸

The mystic organizations and their conspiratorial action comprise another characteristic of the Balkan radicalism of the era which, mounting from Italian and European patterns, was arriving impetuous to the subjected Hellenism. In these lodges there were becoming members, mostly, socially high-up men who were associated with the decisions centres and usually were having the mood to convert their revolutionary consciousness to collegial and national one.¹⁹ In the Greek case the illuminated minds were using the mystic organizations as another opportunity of carrying the ideas of Enlightenment to Greeks as the only channel through which Greece's freedom might derive from.

It had come, then, the time for Romas to proceed one step further actualizing the connection of the ascending nationalistic ideology with the philosophical-ideological convictions of masonry. The oath of the members of Philiki Etaireia, the secret society which prepared the Greek uprising, was underlining, moreover, the faith to the democratic ideas and to the human rights thanks to which most people of the nationalistic epoch were rebelling. In this oath was clear all the new philosophical and political streams, which were prevailing in Europe; French Enlightenment, U.S.A.'s Declaration of Freedom, Italian *Carbonari*²⁰ and, generally, mystic and masonry lodges.

18 Georgios LEONTSINIS, *Ζητήματα επανησιακής κοινωνικής ιστορίας*, Athens, Tolides brothers, pp. 298, 307–308, 326–329, 361–363, 546–547.

19 Roberto GERVASO, *Η καταραμένη αδελφότητα: Η Ιστορία της Μασονίας*, Athens, Enalios, 2003, p. 282.

20 George ZORAS, *Η εν έτει 1822 μάχη του Πέτα κατ' ανέκδοτον χειρόγραφον του απορρήτου Αρχείου του Βατικανού*, Vol. 1, Athens, Athens' Academy, 1979, pp. 380–411.

The “Italian” stint of Romas

The explosion of the Greek War of Independence finds Romas in the Italian peninsula, where he stayed for four years developing intense activity in favor of the Greek revolution. During this period Romas will contribute into the general effort of the Greeks of Diaspora for «the formation of a frame for the explanation/legalization, on the base of which the struggle for the political autonomy of the Greek nation will get what it deserves».²¹ As the Greek historian Filimon mentions «Romas fights through speech and press the accusations, aspersions, insults against the Greeks for their contacts with Carbonari and French Jacobins».²²

The aristocrat of Zante will, also, act vigorously in favor of the Greek struggle with his activation when the Greeks were trying to protest their rights to the Holy Alliance Congress in Verona (October 1822). In this congress the Greeks were looking with great hopes forward to achieving the intervention or at least the neutrality of the Great Powers, as the inner condition of the country was disappointing.²³ In their Begging Report, which Greek rebels sent to emperors (August 1822), they were claiming existence «national, separated and independent» as the only guarantee for their religion, life and honor. They were asking for the help of the European family of Christianity and declaring their decision to die in the name of their liberty.²⁴

From Venice Romas ran to Ancona to help, through his personal connections, the Greek committee which had been sent there (Andreas Metaxas, Philip Jourdain).²⁵ French philhellene Jourdain, in cooperation with Romas, wrote letters to the ministers of the Great Powers.²⁶ Romas accepted the re-

21 George THEODORIDES, «Το εικοσιένα στην Ευρώπη και τους κύκλους των Φαναριωτών: Μια επιστολή του πρίγκιπα Ιωάννη Καρατζά», *Δοκιμές*, 4 (1996), p. 145.

22 Ioannis FILIMON, «Διονύσιος ο δε Ρώμας», *Aion* 1555, 1857.

23 «News from Zante», 23/10/1822 (Dimitrios KABOUROGLOU, *Ιστορικών Αρχείων Διονυσίου Ρώμα 1819–1825*, Vol. A/68, Athens, Korinnis, 1901).

24 «Report of The Greeks to united monarchs», *Argos* 29/8/1822 (DRA, cit., 2.2./33).

25 Stefanos PAPAGEORGIOU, *Οι επαφές των επαναστατημένων Ελλήνων με το Βατικανό και τους ιππότες του Αγ. Ιωάννη*, in Stefanos PAPAGEORGIOU (Ed.), *Αφιέρωμα στον Αλ. Ι. Δεσποτόπουλο*, Athens, Papazisis, pp. 85–89.

26 A. Metaxas to Kings of Naples and France (DRA, cit., 2.2./38–39).

sponsibility to transfer them – in addition to the Begging Report – to Powers' Congress. Romas' intervention can be deemed crucial as without him «the Greek begging reports would never had arrived to the gathered European Kings in Verona nor to Pope Pius VII».²⁷

The result of these acts was the turn for the first time «Great Britain's so fearful diplomatic adversity towards a more favorable attitude».²⁸ Britain began, more intensively now, to be afraid of the possible exploitation of the Greek struggle for the fostering of the Russian plans in the Mediterranean Sea. This was, moreover, the only, even not negligible, profit for the Greeks from the convictions of the Great Powers' Congress in Verona, where finally the Greeks' envoys hadn't been accepted.²⁹

The basic interest of Romas, in the beginning of the Greek struggle, was, additionally, the reinforcement in every way of the fighting Greeks. Within this framework he tried to meet the needs for economic help or for directing volunteers to the first line of the war. As a result, he associated with every relative effort by communicating with the Greeks or European philhellenes who were trying for the same aim. His efforts hadn't eluded from the attendance of the Austrian police, which was shadowing closely all the Greeks living in its dominion.³⁰

The Zantiot aristocrat undertakes, also, the duty to search for “scientists” (experienced officers) from Italy and France, whose absence was obvious in the fighting fatherland.³¹ So, «searching everywhere for officers with brave and gentle sentiments, actuate and persuade them towards the fast and personal aid in favor of the country»,³² when at the same time he was energetically involved in the facilitation of men who were craving to travel to Greece.³³

27 Dimitrios SABATAKIS, *Μεγάλες Ζακυνθινές Μορφές*, Zante, 1952, p. 14.

28 FILIMON, cit.

29 VACALOPOULOS, cit., Vol. 6, pp. 374–375.

30 Th. Kefalas to F. Thiersch, Trieste 31/8/1821 (George LAIOS, *Ανέκδοτες επιστολές και έγγραφα του 1821*, Athens, Difros, 1958, pp. 214–216); Al. Kantakouzinis to Count Kapnisis, Modena 6/2/1822 (Dimitrios KABOUROGLOU, *Ιστορικών Αρχείων Διονυσίου Ρώμα 1826*, Vol. B/29, Athens, Estia, 1906).

31 Fr. Tiersch to N. Stratis, Munich 25/7/1821; Th. Kefalas to F. Thiersch, Trieste 31/8/1821 (LAIOS, cit., pp. 167–169, 214–216).

32 FILIMON, cit.

33 Unknown to D. Romas, 2/7/1821; N. Vitalis to Romas, 3/8/1821; Romas to Al.

These actions of Romas constitute his personal contribution to the philhellenism's outbreak.

Under the change of the hostile European climate in 1823, with the active involvement of the English factor in the Greek affairs, we can include Romas' thoughts to return in Zante. Romas was feeling that had fulfilled the mission which he had voluntarily accepted after the explosion of the Greek war; The condition in the fighting country was crucial, as the civil war was raving, the economic problem was deteriorating and the diplomatic advocacy of the Greek issue was remaining stagnant.³⁴ He actually returned in the summer of 1823.³⁵

The precious contribution of the Zante Committee

Romas' progression to his fatherland didn't mean for such an active man but a new phase of his old decision to contribute to the economic, political, martial and diplomatic issues of the Greek struggle. Thus, in the fall of 1823, he kept up with the constitution of a committee deploying the already active network of the Zante members of Philiki Etaireia. For this aim he collaborated with the young doctor Panagiotis Stephanou and with Konstantinos Dragonas, who accepted the responsibility for the safe circulation of the committee's richest correspondence, a precious item for the effective forwarding of its plans.³⁶

Through the study of Romas' archive the researcher is impressed by the broadness of the fields in which the Committee aspired to have active role:

- creating a logistics system for the dispatch of foods and munitions for the fighting country through chartered ships;
- concerning about the loans of the Greek government and for the payment of Greek bills of exchange in Zante;
- protecting starving women and children;

Kantakouzinos, Venice 6/8/1821 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/14, 16–17).

34 «Information from Messolonghi», 17/3/1822; A. Flampouriaris to Romas, 4/4/1823; Germanos to Romas, Bologna 12/5/1823; G. Mavromichalis to Romas, Ancona 14/5 and 13/6/1823 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/35, 77, 79–80, 91).

35 Germanos to J. Zaimis, Romas and J. Papatrigopoulos, Ancona 13 and 16/6/1824 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/139).

36 A. Kalamogdartis, P. Polidoros to Dragonas, Zante's Lazaretto 24/12/1824 (DRA, cit., 2.5./136).

- acting for the deliverance of captives;
- trying to stop the Greek civil war;
- searching for the English help with the notorious «Act of Submission», a controversial diplomatic application with which the Greeks were asking for Great Britain's sympathy in order to save their struggle;³⁷
- contacting with philhellene officers in Ibrahim's Pasha camp organizing a wide net of spying, to which we will devote some detailed references.

The year 1825 started for the Greek war of independence with the landing of the Egyptian troops of Ibrahim Pasha, Ottoman Sultan's ally, in Peloponnese. The first reaction of the Committee exists in the memorandum of February 24, 1825;³⁸ the anonymous correspondent proposed to the Greek government to double its vigilance so as to prevent Ibrahim's movements, who had the big advantage of the money (he could approach the Greeks through promises and gifts so as to avoid their resistance till death).³⁹ Simultaneously, he was underlining the possibility of being attracted by the Greeks the European officers who were serving into the Egyptian army (as Giovanni Romei and Giuseppe Scarpa).

In a new memorandum of March 16⁴⁰, the Committee's members were informing Greek President George Kountouriotis that they had already organized a mystic net for collecting information from the Egyptian camp. They were also trying to send safely this information to the Greek government, as they had already collected the first items about the exact number and the organization of the Egyptian troops and the movements of the Egyptian navy. The information had been collected from letters which had fallen into the hands of the Committee's members and had been read before they were dispatched to their consignees.

On March 31, 1825 the Committee sends letters to President Kountouriotis and to admiral Anastasios Tsamados, through which it becomes apparent

37 «The aim of the Committee's foundation was further and general and not the approach to Britain, which is one, maybe the most important, of its achievements» (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A, pp. ξα'–ξδ').

38 «Comments on the present situation», 24/2/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/165).

39 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 29/4, 16/5/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/218, 231).

40 Zante Committee to Kountouriotis (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/174).

that the Committee's acts had had a very substantial content.⁴¹ In this correspondence there exists the detailed and revealing description of the spying net which the Committee had established in order to collect information from the Egyptian camp. Its basic informer was the Italian officer Giovanni Romei, who was at the service of Ibrahim's Pasha and – due to his masonry relationship with General Rosaroll – was always willing to inform the Greeks about the Egyptian military plans.

General Giuseppe Rosaroll–Scorza (1775–1825), commander of a division in Naples under the direction of Joachim Murat (1808–1815), former military commander of Zante during the French administration, was a member in Zante of the – under the auspices of Romas – lodge “Reborn Phoenix”, as Romei, too.⁴² The masonry relationship between Rosaroll and Romei (the first was the initiator of the second in the masonry) is clear in their correspondence with Romei's phrase as a characteristic example «Great Architect and Master of the Universe, protect the fair fight of the Liberals and humiliate all the ferocious tyrants, the only irreconcilable enemies of You».⁴³

Rosaroll had characterised as «abominable crime» Romei's act to cooperate with «the sacrilegious enemies of the Greeks and of the universal freedom» and he had volunteered to forgive his – lower in hierarchy – compatriot if he accepted to offer services to the Greeks' liberty. Romei will accept to perform this role, as Rosaroll promised him, at the same time, that Romas will take care of his reward by giving Greek lands and military posts.⁴⁴ An invitation to Romei so as to abandon Ibrahim and join the Greek army had been sent – with authorization of the Greek government – by the Italian philhellene count Santorre di Santarosa through a letter from Tripolitsa on April 2, 1825.⁴⁵

41 Zante Committee to Kountouriotis and A. Tsamados, 30/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/184–186); Actions' Report of Zante Committee (DRA, cit., 2.5. 1824).

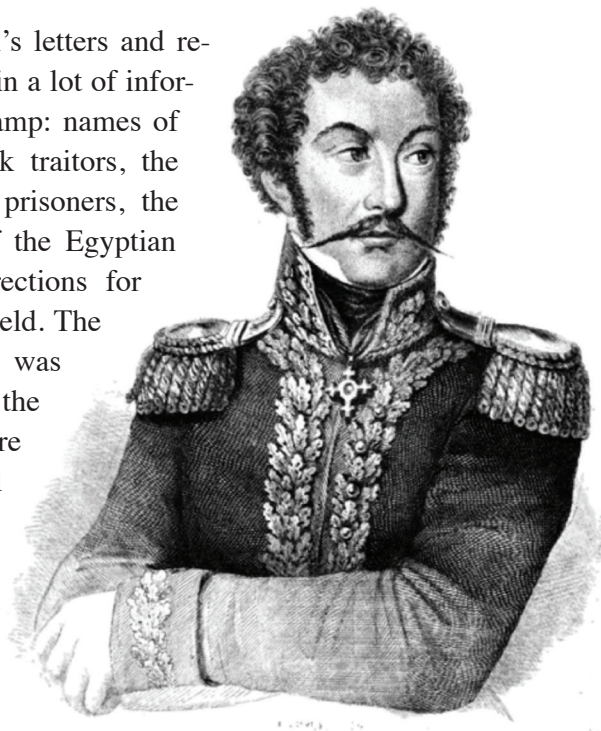
42 Rosaroll to Romei, Zante 1/4/1825 (Douglas DAKIN, «British Intelligence of Events in Greece 1824–1827: A documentary collection», *Bulletin of the Greece's historic and ethnologic society*, 13 (1959), p. 87).

43 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 28/4 and 13/6/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/218, 242).

44 Rosaroll to Romei, Zante 16/3/1825 (DAKIN, cit., pp. 82–83). The active struggler P. Skylitzis–Omerides was considering Rosaroll as the most appropriate for the success of a plan referring to the disruption of the Ibrahim's forces through the bribery of the Albans and European mercenaries (Giannis KOKKONAS, *Ο πολίτης Πέτρος Σκυλίτζης Ομηρίδης (1784–1872)*, Athens–Corfu, 1999, p. 184).

45 Babis ANNINOS, *Οι φιλέλληνες του 1821*, Athens, Dimiourgia, 1995, pp. 74–77). The

In Romas' archive Romei's letters and reports are abundant and contain a lot of information from the Egyptian camp: names of European officers and Greek traitors, the living conditions of Greek prisoners, the strength and organization of the Egyptian troops and considerable directions for repelling them on the battlefield. The experienced Italian officer was recommending, first of all, the persistent guerrilla warfare (stating as well the theoretical principles of its application) and the stubborn defense on fortified locations, while he was insisting on the necessity to be followed the tactic of scorched earth. These opinions – through the Committee – were arriving to Peloponnese and to its Chief General Theodoros Kolokotronis, who had



2. General Giuseppe Rosaroll-Scorza.

Source: Gabriele d'Amato (Ed.), *Panteon dei martiri della libertà italiana*, Vol. 1, Torino, Stabilimento tipografico Fontana, 1852 [2nd ed.].

«knightly and gentle» Santarosa was killed bravely (26/4/1825) on the island of *Sphacteria* (Spyridon LABROS, «Ο ιταλός φιλέλληνας Σανταρόζας», *Νέος Ελληνομνήμων*, 11 (1914), pp. 289–302). About the involvement of the philhellenes Italian volunteers in the Greek War of Independence, see the following studies by Stathis BIRTACHAS, encompassing the earlier literature: «Εκφάνσεις του ιταλικού φιλελληνισμού κατά τη δεκαετία του 1820», in A.B. MANDILARA, G.B. NIKOLAOU, L. FLITOURIS and N. ANASTASOPOULOS (Eds.), *Φιλελληνισμός: Το ενδιαφέρον για την Ελλάδα και τους Έλληνες από το 1821 ως σήμερα*, Athens, Herodotus, 2015, pp. 373-391; «I filelleni italiani: i volontari negli anni della rivoluzione greca», in Virgilio ILARI (Ed.), *Italy on the Rimland: Storia militare di una penisola eurasiatica*, tomo I, *Intermarium*, Rome, Società Italiana di Storia Militare – Nadir Media Edizioni, 2019, pp. 139-150; «Esilio risorgimentale e filellenismo combattente al tempo di Ugo Foscolo: il conte Giacinto Provana di Collegno in Grecia (1824-25)», in Francesca Irene SENSINI and Christian DEL VENTO (Eds.), *Ugo Foscolo tra Italia e Grecia. Atti del Convegno internazionale "Ugo Foscolo tra Italia e Grecia: esperienza e fortuna di un intellettuale europeo"*, Nizza-Ventimiglia (9-11 Marzo 2017), Sesto San Giovanni (MI), Mimesis Edizioni, 2019, pp. 355-369.

formed a similar action plan. Above all, Romei was suggesting the prevention – at all costs – by the Greek navy of Egyptian army's reinforcing with new aids, an action that could pave the way for Ibrahim's defeat.⁴⁶

Colonel of the engineers arm Giovanni Romei was the only European officer of this arm in the «silly» Ibrahim's troops which – except for they were naked, barefoot and underpaid – were suffering from lack of uniform education, almost entire ignorance and they knew only the whips' discipline.⁴⁷ Romei mentions the beatings and starvation as main reasons for the desertion of many Arabs from the Egyptian camp and expresses his sorrow for the Greeks' disability to exploit the situation. As for Ibrahim himself, Romei was recognizing his bravery and his stubbornness but he was highlighting his entire lack of military education and experience (he barely knew to write and was administrating his army without staff and a topographic map of Peloponnese).

In Romei's letters to Rosaroll there are revealed, particularly, Ibrahim's plans – which he shapes after the suggestions of French colonel J.A. Sève – to move himself through the area of Eleia to Patras and then to fortify Tripolitsa, and generally, the wider plans of Sublime Porte to hit the Greeks both from north and sea, after Ibrahim has ensured his success in Peloponnese. Patriots from Zante had notified in time for the Turkish plans Greek Chief General of Central Hellas John Gouras.⁴⁸ In fact, for the first time the Egyptian plans come to light concerning the extermination of the Greek people and colonization of Peloponnese by Egyptian villagers (who are mentioned as «hordes of slaves»).

Romei – except for his observations to the Greeks through the Zante Committee – is proved to be a very good connoisseur of the international balances and interests. He puts correctly Ibrahim's military and economic reinforcement from French into the frame of the English-French competition for the domination in the east Mediterranean Sea and in India. The French were undermining the aspirations of the Egyptians for the possession of

46 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 21/2 and 24/3/1825; 8 and 29/4, 24/7/1825; 12/5/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/177, 181, 199, 218, 270, 228); Correspondence between Romei and Rosaroll, Methoni-Zante 23/3 and 1/4/1825 (DAKIN, cit., pp. 85–87).

47 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 13/6/1825 and 20/11/1826; Chr. Zachariades to Dragonas, Pyrgos 3/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/242, 193; Vol. B/331).

48 Zante Committee to Gouras, 23/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/180).

Peloponnese, Crete, Syria, even Istanbul, hoping through them to dominate themselves in the wider area and to take the primacy from England, which had had its own policy reinforcing the Greeks mainly with the English loans.⁴⁹

The Italian officer was revealing the duplicitous French politics,⁵⁰ which was strengthening, in parallel with the Greeks, Egyptians through the philhellenic committee of Paris and through the expectations which the French missionary in Greece, general Roche, was inciting. Pessimistic about the future of the Greek revolution Romei was mentioning the trained Egyptian troops which were expected in Peloponnese in order to give the final strike to Greeks. The only solution was the equivalent military organization of the Greeks provided that they would be supported by the English and would have a capable leader as General Rosaroll was. The military officer from Naples was admiring especially Rosaroll's value and that's why he was insistently conjuring him to take the helm of the Greek army so that Arabs will be dismayed (and mainly European officers who were under their service) and the Greeks' economic exhaustion be avoided. This aspect was supported by Zante Committee's members too.⁵¹

Second informer of the Zante Committee inside the Egyptian camp was the Italian lieutenant Giuseppe Scarpa who had even earlier communicated, through the Committee, with the Chief Secretary of the Greek government Panagiotis Rodios, advising the Greeks to exploit the first three months of the Egyptian invasion to Peloponnese in order to organize their resistance destroying foods and villages, which could be of precious help to Ibrahim in case of his advance.⁵² Rosaroll had anyway ordered Scarpa not to communicate with Rodios. The same order had also been given to Romei so that any leak could be avoided.⁵³

Scarpa reveals, also, to Rosaroll the French plans for Peloponnese and informs about the education of the Egyptians as he waits for the invitation of

49 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 13/6/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/242).

50 Konstantinos Spiliotakis, «Αμερικανικά εκθέσεις εκ του Αιγαίου 1825–1827», *Ελληνικά*, 25 (1972), pp. 159–160.

51 Romas to Fr. Adam, 4/4/1825 (DAKIN, cit., p. 91).

52 State's General Archives (SGA), Executive Body 1825/150.

53 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 8 and 28/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/174, 199, 218).

the Neapolitan General so as to abandon the Egyptian camp standing on the side of the Greeks.⁵⁴ Scarpa was willing to abandon Egyptians immediately, in contrast with Romei, who was delaying in order to ensure his arrears.⁵⁵ Until then he – with Romei’s cooperation – takes the initiative to write to the former commander of the Greek regular army Gubernati – who, since his abandoning Greece, was offering his services to Muhammad Ali, Ibrahim’s father – in order to prevent him from his participation to new reinforcements against Greece.⁵⁶

Committee’s members were maintaining these contacts with their expenses and risks keeping all the conspiratorial rules (double letters – apparent and confidential⁵⁷ – secret codes, faithful persons) and they were asking by G. Kountouriotis to act in the same way in his contacts with them. A similar example of conspiratorial attitude is also revealed in Rosaroll’s correspondence with the Committee: when General asks Dragonas to send him Romei’s letters, he didn’t even mention the name of the «mutual friend».⁵⁸

The Committee, communicating through secret signs with Romei, was taking care of the secure intrusion to Navarino by the little boats which were carrying supplies.⁵⁹ Romei was leaving unattended the point of boats’ approach as soon as he received the pre-agreed signs. In parallel, the Italian officer was communicating with the Greeks of Navarino giving information about the raiding points of the Egyptian forces against the fortress.⁶⁰ He had

54 Actions’ Report of Zante Committee (DRA, cit., 2.5. 1824); Zante Committee’s Memorandum to Kountouriotis, 16/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/174). With Scarpa was corresponding also A. Mavrokordatos: Mavrokordatos to Zante Committee, Navarino 10/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/202) and to Santarosa (D. PATRAS, *Ιστορικά ημερολόγια των ελληνικών ναυμαχιών του 1821 εκ των Ημερολογίων του ναυμάχου Α. Τσαμαδού*, Athens, S. Kousoulinos, 1886, p. 145).

55 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 16/5/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/231).

56 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 12/5/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/228). Babis ANNINOS, cit., pp. 79–82) disprove the information for the Gubernati’s cooperation with Muhammad Ali attributing it to political feasibilities.

57 Mikhail SAKELLARIOU, *Η απόβαση του Ιμπραήμ στην Πελοπόννησο καταλύτης για την αποδιοργάνωση της ελληνικής επανάστασης*, Heraklion, Crete University Press, 2012 [2nd ed.], pp. 229–230.

58 Rosaroll to Dragonas, Zante 10/6/1825 (DRA, cit., 3.2./49).

59 Actions’ Report of Zante Committee (DRA, cit., 2.5. 1824).

60 Zante Committee to Kountouriotis, 30/3/1825; Directions to Navarino’s Commandant

even informed the Greeks about the exact point of Ibrahim's tent so as they could hit it, something which was surely not easy.⁶¹ The Zante Committee focused attention on Admiral Tsamados so as not to take notice of the fake letters between Romei and Rosaroll, but, on the contrary, to protect the communication between them.⁶² The «brave admiral of the Greek navy force in Navarino» was encouraged to pay attention to Romei's letters, which could guide Ibrahim even to disaster.⁶³

The steady faith of the Zantiot nobleman to the importance of spying for the development of the military operations is proved from his effort to organize the following year a similar conspiratorial net in Ibrahim's camp, during the period in which he was sieging Missolonghi, sending there as a secret agent his confidant Christoforos Zachariades,⁶⁴ who will arrive in Missolonghi and will engage himself to the collection of information about the Egyptian plans. The information had to do with the lack of foods in the Egyptian camp, the mutual mistrust between Ibrahim and Kutahi Pasha (the Ottoman General who was also besieging the city) and their plan for the seizure of the precious little islands in front of Missolonghi. Zachariades will take care of having a meeting with Greek admiral Andreas Miaoulis, giving information to the besieged Greeks and helping to the better organization of their defense through the fortification of the little islands.⁶⁵ Collaborator to all this effort will be again Romei (he appears in the Committees' correspondence with the liberal ideology's nickname of «Aristogeiton») who had, as it is stated, become suspect to Ibrahim.⁶⁶

(KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/184, 211). The Italian mason will continue to offer precious information, fortress' outlines and advices during the next year too, after the Egyptian army's return from Missolonghi [Romei to Dragonas, Methoni 20/11/1826 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. B/331)].

61 SAKELLARIOU, cit., pp. 336–338.

62 Zante Committee to Tsamados, 30/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/186).

63 KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A, p. οε'.

64 Zante Committee to Kolokotronis, 29/11/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/361).

65 A. Miaoulis to Romas, Scrophes 23/1/1826; Romas, Dragonas to Kolokotronis, A. Zaimis, .../2/1826 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. B/17, 44); Konstantinos DIAMANTIS, «Ημερολόγιον της πολιορκίας του Μεσολογγίου του Χρίστου Ζαχαριάδου», Στερεοελλαδική Εστία, 1 (1960), pp. 12–21.

66 For the opponent spying net of the Egyptian raider, see Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 8/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/199).

Active Romei proved, moreover, his philhellenism and philanthropy when – as eyewitness of the enslaved Greeks’ trading– saved through acquisition women and children, while he continued the same activation after his return to Methoni (he had adopted a Greek young woman sending her to Alexandria and had redeemed an infant with two women who would raise it).⁶⁷ The mason K. Kanaletis from Anatoliko asked, in this frame, Dragonas and Romas for his family’s redemption from the prisoners’ camp in Methoni, a case that the Committee assumed to forward through Romei.⁶⁸ At the end, the Italian officer begged the Committee to take care of the wife of his friend David, who was living deprived in Zante.⁶⁹

Regular army and regularization of the unruly army

In direct connection with the information coming from the Egyptian camp and the Committee’s cooperation with Romei and Rosaroll is the Zantiot’s effort to promote the idea of foundation of Greek regular military forces. Romas had understood the necessity of the organization of a regular army, which would be able to oppose in close combat against the disciplined Egyptian lancers, because the fragmentation of the Greeks’ military action couldn’t offer anymore. The military organization which Romas was planning can be described as the creation of regular military units which, with fast training, would be able to conflict against Ibrahim’s infantry and mounted military units.

Romas had reached to these aspects influenced by General Rosaroll’s thoughts, which were declared in a report towards the «Triumvirate of the Greek Liberty» in Zante. In this report Rosaroll was defending the capabilities of the organized army: «there can’t be carried out a revolution without war, nor a military result without combats, nor combats without army, nor army without technical preparation of all corps, which constitutes an army, nor martial art without a General who will apply it so as to win, nor, finally, victory if

67 Romei to Dragonas, Methoni 22 and 24/5, 5/9, 20/10, 20/11/1826; Act of slave’s deliverance, Methoni 25/5/1826 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. B/141, 144, 305, 330, 368, 385).

68 K. Kanaletis to Dragonas and Romas, Nafplion 1 and 2/11/1826; Dragonas to Romei, 30/11/1826 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. B/317, 318, 393).

69 Romei and P. David to Dragonas, Methoni 21, 23/10 and 20, 26/11/826; Dragonas to Romei, 30/11/1826 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. B/305–306, 308, 330, 334, 393).

the head of the army doesn't have faith and learning».⁷⁰

Earlier, in a Romei's letter to Zante Committee, it was becoming clear how it would be significant and substantial for the Greeks if they equipped themselves with guns and bayonets in order to be able to resist the raids of the cavalry but also the collisions with the infantry.⁷¹ The eyewitness of the facts in Navarino, Romei, was emphasizing repeatedly, as a big lesson from the hostilities, on the urgent and important emergency for the Greeks to organize battalions of regular infantry, artillery, engineers, even if they were small, so as to be able to win Egyptians, «who in fact do not worth but only to the degree that the inexperience of the Greeks permit them to».⁷²

The foundation of regular army had been impugned until then from the traditional socio-political forces of the revolution, which had caused many obstacles to this corps. The efforts did not cease throughout the war.⁷³ The first national army had had the protection – and the economic support – of Dimitrios Ypsilantis. The army had had as a commander the French officer Joseph Baleste, but its men were untrained and ragtag and had not even the support of the basic logistics. The situation will not improve the following years when the leadership was assigned to the Italian officer Pietro Tarella.⁷⁴ For the first time the Greek troops fought the enemy according to the rules of the modern European tactics under the leadership of Mavrokordatos, but they were crushed in the unlucky battle in Peta (July 4, 1822).⁷⁵ A second effort of maintenance of a regular army during 1823 under the leadership of the Italian colonel Gubernati had an inglorious end due to the lack of payroll, the involvement of the corps into the party quarrels and their inner confrontations.⁷⁶ Only in the middle of 1824 Panagiotis Rodios achieved to take approval from

70 Rosaroll's report to Zante Committee, 18/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/208).

71 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 8/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/199).

72 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 29/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/218).

73 Panagis ZOUVAS, *Η οργάνωσις στρατού κατά την επανάστασιν του 1821*, Athens, 1969.

74 Law H'/1–4–1822 and IA'/29–4–1822 about the founding of the philhellenes' battalion; Christos BYZANTIOS, *Ιστορία του τακτικού στρατού της Ελλάδος*, Athens, K. Rallis, 1837, pp. 4–31.

75 For a description of the Peta's battle where the best philhellenes were killed and the regular army's prestige collapsed, see «Information from Missolonghi», 17/3/1822 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/58).

76 Vacalopoulos, cit., Vol. 7, pp. 445–446.

the Greek government for the training under his orders of a small corps of 300 Greek soldiers,⁷⁷ without enjoying appreciation for his abilities.⁷⁸

The Zantiot's thought was to propose to the Greek government the recruitment of Rosaroll as «General Teacher of Greek troops», as the General was able to «renew lessons and teach from the beginning troops totally deprived and ignorant about the military training».⁷⁹ The Committees' members had early approached the General from Naples, who had accepted to come in Greece on condition that he would acquire citizenship as a Greek citizen so as to be safe from the danger of being arrested by any European country. The conversations with the General had proceeded to the point of his payroll's details.

The Zante Committee informed Greek President G. Kountouriotis about all that and volunteered to contribute a loan of 2.000 thalers to the Greek government so as to achieve this cooperation. Zantiot patriots were attaching extraordinary importance to the recruitment of General Rosaroll and so they were worrying about the possibility of their proposal's rejection.⁸⁰ But meeting the initial reservations of the Greek administration they declared, in their memorandum of March 31, 1825, their disappointment «because the administrative issues had been advised badly and worse guided». This fact was obliging them to declare that «the political and secret news we don't trust anymore to somebody of the bad administrators of the Greek issues».⁸¹

Their criticism possibly was addressing to Mavrokordatos, who didn't trust from the beginning Rosaroll's candidature, because he had had controversial information about the sincerity of the intentions of Rosaroll himself but mainly of his informer, Romei. This information was showing Rosaroll to negotiate with Ibrahim the possibility of his recruitment to Egyptian ar-

77 Αρχεία της Ελληνικής Παλιγγενεσίας (ΑΕΠ), Vol. 3, Athens, Parliament's Library of Greeks-National Bank, 1971-1974, pp. 188, 244-248.

78 Chr. Zachariades to Zante Committee, Nafplion 7/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/172).

79 Zante Committee's Memorandum to Kountouriotis, 16/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/174).

80 Zante Committee to Kountouriotis, 30/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/184).

81 Zante Committee to A. Miaoulis and A. Tsamados, 31/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/188).

my.⁸² The Committee's confirmations that these negotiations were proceeding just for covering the unimpeded exchange of information with Romei⁸³ were not persuading suspicious Mavrokordatos who – fearing a conspiracy and knowing that Romei had some participation, due to his duties, to Navarino's capture – bitterly noted: «Romei seems very happy for all except for his eyes illness which bothers him [...] Unfortunately he was seeing very well so as to prepare the plan of the canons which ceaseless hit Navarino».⁸⁴

Romas, in a letter to Frederick Adam, High Commissioner of Great Britain in the Seven Islands was suspecting that Mavrokordatos was reacting to Rosaroll's candidature, in order to promote his friend Panagiotis Rodios.⁸⁵ Romas also was revealing to Adam that Mavrokordatos was arousing the jealousy of ignorant to military issues Rodios so that Rosaroll's candidature will be undermined. But Romas later, when the historical causality had changed (Rosaroll had stopped to be his chosen) will understand that the reservations of the Greek government were justifiable.⁸⁶

The Zantiot's fears about Rosaroll's issue will be intensified as, in the same letters of the Greek government, it was declared that Rosaroll's recruitment couldn't be improved currently due to the lack of sufficient funds for General's payroll (150 thalers monthly) and men for training. Kountouriotis – by hand of Mavrokordatos – was suggesting instead a much lower monthly fee for the General and was declaring that he wasn't able to invite him publicly or to offer him the Greek citizenship; however he was guarantying that under no circumstances should anyone inform the Great Powers about his arrival in Greece if he accepted to come with a nickname. He was also declaring that Rosaroll would be «very useful to pull his patriots and friends who are between Canaanites».⁸⁷ Furthermore, in an almost contemporary let-

82 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 21/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/177).

83 Zante Committee to Kountouriotis, 30/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/184); Rosaroll to Romei, Zante 16/3/1825 (DAKIN, cit., p. 82).

84 Answering Letter of Kountouriotis and Mavrokordatos to the Memorandum of 16/3/1825, Tripolitsa 2/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/190–191). For the Romei's contribution to the Navarino's siege, see SAKELLARIOU, cit., pp. 181, 206–207.

85 Romas to Fr. Adam, 16/4/1825 (DAKIN, cit., p. 95).

86 Romas' Memorandum to J. Zaimis, Eleftheroupoli 4/9/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/317).

87 Answering Letter of Kountouriotis and Mavrokordatos to the Memorandum of 16/3/1825

ter, President – apparently prevaricating – was telling the Committee that he wasn't able at this time to respond to the Zantiot's burning topic «due to the fact that he was very busy».⁸⁸

Very frustrated for the reluctant attitude of Mavrokordatos was also General Rosaroll himself, who was accusing directly – and without foundation too – the Phanariote political man that he was planning to subject Greece to Holy Alliance and that he was preparing his country's catastrophe (he was calling him «egotistical, extortioner, insolent and famous opportunist»). He was also putting him the blame that he was aspiring to be the absolute dominant of Greece, leaning on a controlled army, and that he was rejecting his recruitment as a commander of the Greek troops because Rosaroll was not willing to be subject to his plans.⁸⁹ In another Romei's letter to Rosaroll there were allusions even for treasonous cooperation of «evil» Mavrokordatos with Ibrahim.⁹⁰ The General's aspects didn't vary from those of the Committee's members who were considering Mavrokordatos as the man who was badly consulting President, causing reasonably the discontent of all «the dissatisfied good citizens who fairly suspect President of their administration to be badly advised into the issues». Moreover, the Zantiots were reserving for the mission to the Greek government of the Turk-Egyptian plans that they had to their possession until to be sure that «some others cannot protrude into them» and were requiring an answer from President's hand without evasive diplomacy.⁹¹

Few months later, Zachariades will transfer to Dragonas the complaints and the sorrow of Kountouriotis (and Mavrokordatos) «because the Zante Committee doesn't write clearly and extensively as His Excellency wrote before it with all the sincerity». It's of course the confirmation of the Committee's silence towards the government after the failure of their contacts during the previous months. Ending this letter Dragonas wrote the answer focusing on Kountouriotis' and Mavrokordatos' unfair accusations. Not they but we demand, Dragonas declares with excitement, «answers from them about the

(KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/190–191).

88 Answering Letter (Skala, 14/4/1825) to the Committees' letter of 30/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/205).

89 Rosaroll's report to Zante Committee, 18/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/208).

90 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 16/5/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/231).

91 Zante Committee to Kountouriotis, 19/4/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/210).

miserable period of Messenian gulf» and the rejection of General Rosaroll's invitation.⁹²

The rejection is characterized by a strong background and can't only attributed to the fears of the Greek government for his possible cooperation with Ibrahim or to the undoubtedly big lacks of the public treasury. Rosaroll wanted to fight in favor of the Greek freedom but mainly to use after this Greek troops for the liberation of his country Naples.⁹³ The Italian officer constitutes a characteristic example of the second generation's philhellenes who – less enthusiastic for ancient Greece's glory than romantic philhellenes of Greek struggle's first years – were coming to fight combining the offer to Greece with their personal and national interests.⁹⁴

Furthermore, Rosaroll had thought, as an alternative solution to his plans for the liberation of his country, a trip to America and the recruitment of mercenaries, if his pursues in Greece weren't achieved.⁹⁵ Foreign mercenaries were also attracted easily by the offering of material rewards, which were acting equally with their liberal beliefs to their decision-making.⁹⁶ That's why the Zantiots were not omitting the advice that the foreigners and the Greeks who could be perfidious towards the Greek government should be put under strict surveillance.

Earlier, Romas had informed Kountouriotis about Rosaroll's plans and had proposed the ways according to which the Greek government should handle him in order to earn the greatest profit.⁹⁷ By now the General's revolutionary

92 Ch. Zachariades to Dragonas, Nafplion 14/8/1825 (DRA, cit., 3.2./71).

93 Romas' Memorandum to J. Zaimis, Eleftheroupoli 4/9/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/317).

94 Kostas SIMOPOULOS, Πώς είδαν οι ξένοι την Ελλάδα του '21, Vol. 4, Athens, Stachi, 1999 [5th ed.], pp. 235–252; «Το “Ημερολόγιο της πολιορκίας του Ναυαρίνου” του Giacinto Provana di Collegno (1824-25): συμβολή στη μελέτη των ιδιαιτεροτήτων της ιταλικής συνιστώσας του μαχόμενου φιλελληνισμού». Published in the site of the Society about the Hellenism and the Philhellenism, 5/10/2019: <https://www.eefshp.org/to-imerologio-tis-poliorkias-toy-nayarinoy-toy-giacinto-provana-di-collegno-1824-25/>

95 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 12/5/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/228).

96 Zachariades to Dragonas, Nafplion 7/3/1825; Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 21/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/172, 177).

97 Zante Committee' Memorandum to Kountouriotis, 16/3/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/174).

past was causing the Greek government the usual fears for the possible exploitation of his presence by the foreign conservative governments, so as to become apparently another proof of the “subversive” character of the Greek struggle. In this way we can explain Kountouriotis’ proposal for the change of the General’s name on his arrival in Greece, as it had happened with Santarosa too.⁹⁸

On to this background there had been added the British government’s reaction to the presence of all these European liberals in Greece. We are in the area in which England begins to obtain control of the inner political developments in Greece and doesn’t want to lose its dominance from competitor powers. Rosaroll’s case was arising this concern, as his plans were known to English secret services from the interception of his mail in Seven Islands. Englishmen knew very well that they cannot control the impetuosity of men like Rosaroll. They had already been disturbed from the presence of these liberals in Nafplio and they had shown their discontent to the Greek government through the London Committee of Philhellenes. Within this framework also there is normally included the reaction of anglophile Mavrokordatos.

At the same time, the famous «Act of Submission», the Greek petition to Great Britain for protection written by Romas, to which General Rosaroll was negative, led to the severing of his relationship with the Committee.⁹⁹ General hastened «to disperse abusive protests, letters and threatening words against the crowned kings of Europe», a fact that enforced English administration of Seven Island to deport him. This attitude of «unquiet, unstable and impatient» General led, also, Romas to accuse him of «brutal rivalry, jealousy and hate» caused from his envy for the fall of the Italian revolutions in contrary to the Greek struggle’s resistance as well as to the traditional defiance between Catholic and Orthodox Church. In particular Romas was afraid that Rosaroll’s fanatic and radical ideas would be proved disastrous for the case of the approach to England, mainly after the General’s arrival to Peloponnese in September 1825. That’s why he was consulting the anglophile Greeks to

98 Panagis ΖΟΥΒΑΣ, Σανταρόζα (ιταλός φιλέλληνας). Ο Ρομαντικός Ήρωας της Σφακτηρίας (1825), Athens, without edition, pp. 39–40.

99 Dionysios ΚΟΚΚΙΝΟΣ, Η Ελληνική Επανάσταση, Vol. 5, Athens, Melissa, 1974 [6th ed.], p. 127.

watch carefully every movement of him and – without losing any opportunity for exploitation of his unambiguously military virtues – to take care of the inactivation of every dangerous action by him.¹⁰⁰

Rosaroll, anyway, arrived in Peloponnese and began informally to train the young Greeks to the equestrian art with remarkable results.¹⁰¹ The Officer from Naples was considering that a speedy basic training of the studious Greeks could give promptly an embattled semi-tactical corps, capable to confront Ibrahim's hordes. It's reasonably certain that these ideas had influenced General Chief Theodoros Kolokotronis, who proposed P. Rodios for the leadership of this corps and had already, from November 26, 1825, submitted with a memorandum his proposals to the government.¹⁰² In parallel, Scarpa sent a report proposing the Rosaroll's tactic as the only means of the Egyptian troops being destroyed. The Parliament was mobilized through the sending of a copy to the tactic army's leader Charles Fabvier so as to receive his approval (December 30, 1825).¹⁰³ These ideas didn't proceed, however, after Rosaroll's death due to typhoid in Nafplio (November 21, 1825) but also after Mavrokordatos' reaction, who was considering that the formation of this corps would enforce his political opponents.¹⁰⁴ The care for Rosaroll's family in Zante was taken by Romei and Dragonas.¹⁰⁵

Regarding to Mavrokordatos' reaction to the plan of the regularization of the unruly army, Fotakos alleged that the Phanariotes had the fear that through the formation of this corps all the power would fall into the hands of the military officers and so the politicians would lose their entity.¹⁰⁶ Apostolos

100 Romas' Memorandum to J. Zaimis, Eleftheroupoli 4/9/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/317). For the action of the carbonari's chief Rosaroll in Peloponnese and his death, see Antonios LIGNOS, *Ιστορικών Αρχείων Ύδρας. Αρχαία Λαζ. και Γ. Κουντουριώτου 1821–1832*, Vol. 5, Piraeus, Zanneio Orphanage, 1927, pp. 346–348 (G. Stavrou to Kountouriotis, 24/10/1825); Fotios CHRISANTHACOPOULOS, *Απομνημονεύματα περί της Ελληνικής Επαναστάσεως*, Vol. 2, Athens, P. Sakellariou, 1899, pp. 249–255.

101 G. Sisinis to Dragonas; and Rosaroll to G. Sigouros, Gastouni 24 and 28/9/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/329, 322).

102 FOTAKOS, cit., pp. 254–255, 59–62.

103 ΑΕΠ, cit., Vol. 5, p. 391.

104 Vacalopoulos, cit., Vol. 7, p. 325.

105 Romei to Dragonas, Methoni 22/5/1826, 17 and 24/6/1826, 3/7/1826 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. B/141, 158, 170, 181).

106 CHRISANTHACOPOULOS, cit., p. 255.

Vacalopoulos considers this view as naive because modern Mavrokordatos was one of the most ardent believers of the formation of the regular army, «which will be the true support of our liberty» as he was mentioning.¹⁰⁷ The explanation for his attitude was, according to the same historian, that «the proposals of Rosaroll and Kolokotronis were leading to the formation of semi-tactical local corps [...] not of national army. And that's what was deploring Mavrokordatos, as he through the absolute generalization of regular army's institution was aiming on the one hand to exhaust the force of the traditional local troops and on the other to Europeanize the Greek army».¹⁰⁸

Conclusions

Romas' exemplary case shows finally the long history of the origins which his actions had had for the sake of the Greek revolution. The Zantiot count bridges through his action the Venetian past of Seven Islands and their narrow vicinity to Europe with the Greek reality of the struggle of independence. His manhood into this fluid and dynamic environment drives out to a series of organized actions, when the conditions demanded it. This accumulated experience proved finally useful to the processes for the diverse forwarding of the Greek issue.

In an overall judging of the Committee's correspondence with the Greek administrators we can focus on the Zantiots' remarkable insistency and concentration on their aim. They weren't tired repeating their plans, arguing as convincingly as they could, using indirect means so as to reintroduce their requests. Moreover, they were often moving faster than the facts, aiming to conform them. It's apparent that they weren't willing to lose time. That's why the Greek government's obstruction embitters them at the beginning and infuriates them then: the advisory tones of the first letters progressively give their position to an irritation, because of the administrator's delay to answer and also of the government's hints about the honesty of their intentions. Greek administrators were judging the Committee under the semidarkness of the inner confrontations. But this was unfair for them and it was the greatest obstacle to

107 Mavrokordatos to F. Karvelas, Nafplion 7/4/1826 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. B/78).

108 Vacalopoulos, cit., Vol. 7, p. 323.

the access which they wanted to have to the developments.

As it's obvious from the study of these letters and memoranda, Zantiot patriots were practically acting as secret agents achieving access into Ibrahim's confidential plans and informing in utmost secrecy the Greek leaders for the enemy's movements. Romas organized a net of faithful missionaries who were trying, on the base of a conspiratorial attitude, to have access to the most confidential information. So he offers us an additional example of the usage of the masonry connections for the benefit of the Greek national struggle.

The visible profit, however, was what Romas himself was later confessing: this information permitted the prolongation for two months of Navarino's siege, a fact that allowed the Greeks to realize the Egyptian danger and find time to organize their defense.¹⁰⁹ In parallel Romas' contacts highlight the reciprocation of Italian Philhellenes to the challenges that were being put for them too by the struggle of the Greeks to shake off the Ottoman oppression.

Romei even if he was worrying about the revealing of his actions and he was quarrelling continuously with Ibrahim, continued to serve him until the end of his life.¹¹⁰ This wasn't an obstacle for him, in the middle of 1826, to plan his permanent establishment in Zante after Romas' invitation¹¹¹ and at the end of 1828 in Greece, when he is introduced ardently by Zantiots to the Greek leaders Zaimis and Mavrokordatos.¹¹² Scarpa, finally, resorted to Zante and from there he followed Rosaroll to Peloponnese (September 1825) where he remained combating with the Greeks.¹¹³ Unfortunately, we will never learn what would be the consequences if General Rosaroll was continuing to offer in the military education of the Greeks.

109 Romas' Memorandum to J. Zaimis, Eleftheroupoli 4/9/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/317).

110 Giannis KORINTHIOS, «Τ' Απομνημονεύματα του Ιωάννη Ρωμαίη για τη δεύτερη πολιορκία του Μεσολογγίου», *Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας της Ελλάδος*, 25 (1982), pp. 15–121.

111 Romei to Dragonas, Methoni 17 and 24/6/1826; Romei to Romas, Methoni 26/6/1826 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. B/158, 170–171).

112 Romas to Zaimis, 10/12/1828 (DRA, cit., 6.1./23); Romas, Dragonas to Mavrokordatos, 10/12/1828 (SGA, Al. Mavrokordatos' Historic Archive 4437).

113 Romei to Rosaroll, Methoni 5/8/1825 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. A/270); N. Nikitopoulos to Romas, Salamina 20/10/1826 (KABOUROGLOU, cit., Vol. B/304).

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