

Prince Alexander Ipsilantis and Rigas Feraios (clarified)

Συντάχθηκε απο τον/την Χρήστος Μπούμπουλης (Christos Boumpoulis)

Σάββατο, 14 Ιανουάριος 2017 18:01 - Τελευταία Ενημέρωση Κυριακή, 15 Ιανουάριος 2017 00:06

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Romanian: Alexandru Ipsilanti; Russian: Александр Константинович Ипсиланти Aleksandr Konstantinovich Ipsilanti; 12 December 1792 – 31 January 1828), was a member of a prominent Phanariot Greek family, a prince of the Danubian Principalities, a senior officer of the Imperial Russian cavalry during the Napoleonic Wars, and a leader of the Filiki Eteria, a secret organization that coordinated the beginning of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire. He should not be confused with his namesake grandfather, a Prince of Wallachia and Moldavia at the end of the 18th century.

Early life

The Ypsilantis family hailed from the Pontian population of Trabzon. He was born on 12 December 1792 in Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, as the eldest of three brothers (the others being Nicholas and Demetrios).[1] His father Constantine Ypsilantis and grandfather Alexander were active in the Ottoman administration and highly educated, each with their own share of service as a dragoman in the Sultan's court and as hospodars of the Danubian Principalities.

Russian military service

Ypsilantis in the uniform of a senior officer of the Russian Hussars, 1810s.

With the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War in 1805, his father fled with family to Imperial Russia. The young Alexander had received a thorough education, becoming fluent in Russian, French, German and Romanian. At the age of 15, he was presented to the Russian Court, where he came under the patronage of Empress Maria Feodorovna.[1]

Monument of Alexander Ypsilanti, that contains bones, Champ de Mars, Athens, 1869

On 12 April 1808, he entered a commission in the prestigious Chevalier Guard Regiment with the rank of cornet. Moving rapidly up the ranks, he was promoted to lieutenant on 27 September 1810 and to Stabs-Rittmeister on 18 October of the same year.[1] During the French invasion of Russia, he fought in the battles of Klyastitsy and Polotsk. Promoted to full Rittmeister (captain) on 20 February 1813, he went on to participate in the Battle of Bautzen. On 6 July, he was transferred to the 6th Klyastitsy Hussar Regiment as lieutenant colonel, and participated with his new unit in the Battle of Dresden, where his right arm was torn off by a shell.[1]

Although he was immediately promoted to full colonel, it meant that Ypsilantis would not be able to see action again. However, he attended the Congress of Vienna, where he was a popular figure in society (see Auguste Louis Charles La Garde de Chambonas, Souvenirs), and earned the sympathy of Tsar Alexander I, who appointed him his aide-de-camp on 1 January 1816. In late 1817, at the age of 25, he became a major general and commander of the 1st Brigade of Hussars of the 1st Hussar Division.[1]

Preparations for the Greek insurrection

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Playing cards from 1829 depicting heroes of the Greek War of Independence with Ypsilantis as the King of Spades. Historical and Ethnological Museum of Athens.

In 1820, on the refusal of Count Ioannis Kapodistrias, the Russian foreign minister, to accept the post of leader of the Filiki Eteria, the post was offered to Ypsilantis, who was then elected as the leader of the secret society.[2] Following that, he processed and approved the general plan of the Greek war of independence, which was revised during May 1820 at Bucharest, with the participation of rebel captains from mainland Greece.

The main points of the plan were:

to aid the simultaneous revolt of Serbs and Montenegrins.

to provoke a revolt in Wallachia, by also enlisting rebels from the Serbian lands, battle-hardened from the first and second Serbian uprisings.

to provoke civil unrest in Istanbul through the use of agents, and burn the Ottoman fleet at the city's port.

to start the revolution in Greece in the Peloponnese, after Ypsilantis' arrival there.

Ypsilantis issued a declaration on 8 October 1820, announcing that he would soon be starting a revolt against the Ottoman empire.[3] Ypsilantis began his declaration by praising ancient Greece, writing: "Cast your eyes toward the seas, which are covered by our seafaring cousins, ready to follow the example of Salamis. Look to the land, and everywhere you will see Leonidas at the head of the patriotic Spartans".[4] Ypsilantis went on to say that the Greeks did not need foreign help as they could defeat the Turks on their own before going on to say that Russian support was assured.[5]

Campaign in Moldavia and Wallachia

Alexandros Ypsilantis crosses the Pruth by Peter von Hess, Benaki Museum, Athens.

Because information regarding the existence and the activities of the Filiki Eteria had leaked to the Ottoman authorities, Ypsilantis hastened the outbreak of the revolt in Wallachia and participated personally in it. Beginning the revolution in the Danubian Principalities had the added benefit that they, being autonomous under the joint suzerainty of Russia and the Ottoman Empire, did not have Ottoman garrisons, while in turn the local leaders were entitled to maintain small armed retinues for their own protection. Legally, the Ottomans could not move their forces into Wallachia or Moldavia without Russia's permission, and if the Ottomans sent their forces in unilaterally, Russia might go to war.[6] The hospodar (governor) of Moldavia, Michael Soutsos was a Phanariot Greek who was secretly a member of the Filiki Eteria.[7] However, Soutsos was an opportunist who hedged his bets by secretly informing the Sublime Porte of the planned invasion.[8] Therefore, on 22 February 1821 (O.S.) or March 25 (N.S), accompanied by several other Greek officers in Russian service, he crossed the Prut river at

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Sculeni into the Principalities. Two days later, at Iași he issued a proclamation, announcing that he had "the support of a great power" (meaning Russia).

Ypsilantis hoped that a revolt would ultimately lead to a Russian intervention: since the Ottomans would have to invade and quell the rebellion, the Orthodox Russians would certainly intervene in favour of their fellow Orthodox. In this hope he was justified, since eventually, the Greek rebellion led to the Russo-Turkish War of 1828 in which Russian troops marched to the outskirts of Constantinople and forced the Sultan to recognize the autonomy of the new Greek state. In 1821 however, Tsar Alexander was still a committed member of the Holy Alliance, and acted swiftly to disassociate himself from Ypsilantis: Count Capodistria denounced Ypsilantis for having misused the Tsar's trust, stripped him of his rank and commanded him to lay down arms. Soon after, Capodistria himself had to take an "indefinite leave of absence" from his post.

These moves emboldened the Turks, who began assembling a large number of troops to quell the insurrection in Wallachia. Ypsilantis marched from Iași to Bucharest, trying to enlist volunteers. Ypsilantis was constantly short of money and his men turned to plundering the region.[9] At Galatz, one of Ypsilantis' officers, Vasilios Karavias murdered the local Turkish merchants to raise funds while in Jassy the local Ottoman guard of 50 men were killed after surrendering and received promises that their lives would be spared.[10] It was then that the Sacred Band was formed, comprising young Greek volunteers from all over Europe.[11] Ypsilantis advanced slowly, not entering Wallachia until early April, by which time Tudor Vladimirescu had seized Bucharest.[12] A further problem aroused when the Patriarch Grigorios placed an anathema on Ypsilantis as an enemy of the Orthodox faith, called on true believers to remain loyal to the Sultan, and denounced Ypsilantis for "a foul, impious and foolish work".[13]

In Bucharest, where he had arrived after some weeks' delay, it became plain that he could not rely on the Wallachian Pandurs to continue their Oltenian-based revolt for assistance to the Greek cause; Ypsilantis was met with mistrust by the Pandur leader Tudor Vladimirescu, who, as a nominal ally to the Eteria, had started the rebellion as a move to prevent Scarlat Callimachi from reaching the throne in Bucharest, while trying to maintain relations with both Russia and the Ottomans. He further took the Russian renunciation of Ypsilantis to mean that his commitment to the Filiki Eteria was over, and as result, a conflict erupted inside his camp. In the end, Vladimirescu was tried and executed by the pro-Greek faction and the Eteria.

Flag of Ypsilanti's Sacred Band

In the meantime, the Ottomans crossed the Danube river with 30,000 tactical troops, and Ypsilantis, instead of advancing on Brăila, where he arguably could have prevented the Ottoman armies entering the Principalities and might have forced Russia to accept a fait accompli, retreated and organized his defense at a semi-mountainous area close to Iași. There followed a series of major battles that lead to the defeat of the Eteria's forces, culminating in the final defeat at Drăgășani on 19 June. After a long march in the rain, Ypsilantis's army was exhausted, but Karavias, who was drunk led the Sacred Band into a charge against the Ottomans.[14] As the inexperienced and ill-trained men of the Sacred Band did not form squares, which allowed them to pack enough firepower together, the Ottoman cavalry had no difficulty in cutting down the rebels.[15] After the defeat, Ypsilantis fled north. Ypsilantis in his

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final declaration to his men refused to accept responsibility for his failure and blamed his men for all his failures, writing:

"Soldiers! No! I will no longer pollute that sacred and honourable name by applying it to you. You are a cowardly rabble!...You have broken your oaths, you have betrayed God and your country, you have betrayed me too at the moment when I hoped either to conquer or to die with honor among you...Run off to the Turks, who alone are worthy of your support...run off to the Turks, and kiss their hands from which still drips the blood of those they have inhumanly slaughtered. Yes! Run off to them, buy slavery with your lives and with the honor of your wives and children!"[16]

Ypsilantis's army booed him when he read out this declaration.

Refuge

Ypsilantis, accompanied by what remained of his followers, retreated to Râmnic, where he spent some days in negotiating with the Austrian authorities for permission to cross the frontier. Fearing that his defeated followers might surrender him to the Turks, he gave out that Austria had declared war on Turkey, caused a Te Deum to be sung in the church of Cozia, and, on pretext of arranging measures with the Austrian commander-in-chief, crossed the frontier. But the reactionary policies of the Holy Alliance were enforced by Francis I and Klemens Metternich, and the country refused to give asylum for leaders of revolts in neighboring countries. Ypsilantis was kept in close confinement for seven years (1823 to 1827 in Terezín), until he was released at the insistence of the emperor Nicholas I of Russia.

Death

Commemorative plate at St. Marx Cemetery in Vienna

A bust of Alexandros Ypsilantis in Nea Trapezounta, Pieria

After his release, he retired to Vienna, where he died in extreme poverty and misery on 29 January 1828. His last wish that his heart be removed from his body and sent to Greece was fulfilled by Georgios Lassanis, and it is now located at the Amalieion in Athens. His appearance in likenesses and the accounts of his life suggest he had dystrophia myotonica, a congenital multi-system disorder. (see Caughey J. E., *Dystrophia Myotonica and Related Disorders*. 1991)

His body was originally buried on St. Marx cemetery, and later on his remains were transferred to the Ypsilanti-Sina estate, Schloss Rappoltenkirchen, Sieghartskirchen, Austria, by members of his family on 18 February 1903. His last transfer occurred on August 1964, when he was finally relocated to the Taxiarches Church in Pedion tou Areos, Athens, Greece, 136 years after his death. Ypsilanti Township, Michigan, in the United States of America is named in honor of him. Later the city of Ypsilanti, located within the township, was named after his brother Demetrius.

Cultural references

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Alexander Ypsilantis is mentioned in Russian literature by Alexander Pushkin in his short story "The Shot". The hero of Pushkin's story, Silvio, dies in a campaign under command of Ypsilantis.

See also

[Wiki]

Rigas Feraios

Rigas Feraios (Greek: Ρήγας Φεραίος, or Rhegas Pheraeos, pronounced [ˈriˈas fɛˈrɛɔs]) or Velestinlis (Βελεστινλής, or Velestinlis)) ; 1757 – June 24, 1798) was a Greek writer, political thinker and revolutionary, active in the Modern Greek Enlightenment, remembered as a Greek national hero, a victim of the Balkan uprising against the Ottoman Empire and a pioneer of the Greek War of Independence.

Early life

Antonios Kyriazis (Αντώνιος Κυριαζής, pronounced [anˈɔniɔs ciˈɾiˈas zis]) was born in 1757 into a wealthy family in the village of Velestino in the Sanjak of Tirhala, Ottoman Empire (modern Thessaly, Greece). He was at some point nicknamed Pheraeos or Feraios, after the nearby ancient Greek city of Pherae, but he does not seem ever to have used this name himself; he is also sometimes known as Konstantinos or Constantine Rhigas (Κωνσταντίνος Ρήγας).[citation needed] He is often described as being of Aromanian ancestry,[1][2][3][4] with his native village of Velestino being Aromanian.[5][6][7] Rigas' family had its roots in Perivoli, another Aromanian village,[8] but it usually overwintered in Velestino.[9] Some scholars question whether there is good evidence for this.[10]

Rigas was educated at the school of Ampelakia, Larissa. Later he became a teacher in the village of Kissos, and he fought the local Ottoman presence. At the age of twenty he killed an important Ottoman figure, and fled to the uplands of Mount Olympus, where he enlisted in a band of soldiers led by Spiros Zeras.

He later went to the monastic community of Mount Athos, where he was received by Cosmas, hegumen of the Vatopedi monastery; from there to Constantinople (Istanbul), where he became a secretary to the Phanariote Alexander Ypsilantis (1725-1805).

Arriving in Bucharest, the capital of Ottoman Wallachia, Rigas returned to school, learned several languages and eventually became a clerk for the Wallachian Prince Nicholas Mavrogenes. When the Russo-Turkish War (1787-1792) broke out, he was charged with the inspection of the troops in the city of Craiova.

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Here he entered into friendly relations with an Ottoman officer named Osman Pazvantoğlu, afterwards the rebellious Pasha of Vidin, whose life he saved from the vengeance of Mavrogenes. [11] He learned about the French Revolution, and came to believe something similar could occur in the Balkans, resulting in self-determination for the Christian subjects of the Ottomans; he developed support for an uprising by meeting Greek bishops and guerrilla leaders.

After the death of his patron Rigas returned to Bucharest to serve for some time as dragoman at the French consulate. At this time he wrote his famous Greek version of La Marseillaise, the anthem of French revolutionaries, a version familiar through Lord Byron's paraphrase as "sons of the Greeks, arise".[11]

In Vienna

Around 1793 Rigas went to Vienna, the capital of the Holy Roman Empire and home to a large Greek community, as part of an effort .[11]

He also published Greek translations of three stories by Retif de la Bretonne, and many other foreign works, and he collected his poems in a manuscript (posthumously printed in Iași, 1814).

Death

He entered into communication with general Napoleon Bonaparte, to whom he sent a snuff-box made of the root of a Bay Laurel taken from a ruined temple of Apollo, and eventually he set out with a view to meeting the general of the Army of Italy in Venice. While traveling there, he was betrayed by Demetrios Oikonomos Kozanites, a Greek businessman, had his papers confiscated, and was arrested at Trieste by the Austrian authorities (an ally of the Ottoman Empire, Austria was concerned the French Revolution might provoke similar upheavals in its realm and later formed the Holy Alliance).

He was handed over with his accomplices to the Ottoman governor of Belgrade, where he was imprisoned and tortured. From Belgrade, he was to be sent to Constantinople to be sentenced by Sultan Selim III. While in transit, he and his five collaborators were strangled to prevent their being rescued by Rigas's friend Osman Pazvantoğlu. Their bodies were thrown into the Danube River.

His last words are reported as being: "I have sown a rich seed; the hour is coming when my country will reap its glorious fruits".

Ideas and legacy

Rigas, using demotic rather than puristic Greek, aroused the patriotic fervor of his Greek contemporaries. His republicanism was given an aura of heroism by his martyrdom, and set liberation of Greece in a context of political reform. As social contradictions in Ottoman Empire grew sharper in the tumultuous Napoleonic era the most important theoretical monument of Greek republicanism, the anonymous Hellenic Nomarchy, was written, its author dedicating the

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work to Rigas Feraios, who had been sacrificed for the salvation of Hellas.[12]

His grievances against the Ottoman occupation of Greece regarded its cruelty, the drafting of children between the ages of five and fifteen into military service (Devshirmeh or Paedomazoma), the administrative chaos and systematic oppression (including prohibitions on teaching Greek history or language, or even riding on horseback), the confiscation of churches and their conversion to mosques.

Rigas wrote enthusiastic poems and books about Greek history and many became popular. One of the most famous (which he often sang in public) was the Thourios or battle-hymn (1797), in which he wrote, "It's finer to live one hour as a free man than forty years as a slave and prisoner" («Ως πότε παλικάρια να ζούμε στα στενά.... Καλύτερα μίας ώρας ελεύθερη ζωή παρά σαράντα χρόνια σκλαβιά και φυλακή»).

In "Thourios" he urged the Greeks (Romioi) and other orthodox Christian peoples living at the time in the general area of Greece (Arvanites, Bulgarians, etc.[13][14]) to leave the Ottoman-occupied towns for the mountains, where they might experience more freedom.

It is noteworthy that the word "Greek" or "Hellene" is not mentioned in "Thourios"; instead, Greek-speaking populations in the area of Greece are still referred to as "Romioi" (i.e. Romans, citizens of the Christian or Eastern Roman Empire), which is the name that they proudly used for themselves at that time.[15]

Statues of Rigas Feraios stand at the entrance to the University of Athens and in Belgrade at the beginning of the street that bears his name (Ulica Rige od Fere).

Rigas Feraios was also the name taken by the youth wing of the Communist Party of Greece (Interior), and a branch of this youth wing was Rigas Feraios - Second Panhellenic. But there is nothing in Rigas's own writings that supports Communism, as his political vision was influenced by the French Constitution (i.e. democratic liberalism) [16][17][18] Rather, use of his name indicates the Communists' aspiration to link themselves with the heroic past of Greek Nationalism.

Feraios' portrait was printed on the obverse of the Greek 200-drachmas banknote of 1996-2001.[19] A 50-drachmas commemorative coin was issued in 1998 for the 200th anniversary of his death.[20] His image is stamped on the 0.10 Euro Greek coin.

[Wiki]

P.S.: During this current downfall of the supposed international peace one, can find people who managed to remain honest and decent, everywhere; in the security authorities also. Furthermore, as the international relationships having become so complex, I am not in a position to exclude the theoretical possibility of, the "survival" of those honest policemen to depend upon their involuntary ignorance about the real, present and worst threats within our

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societies. This, supposed ignorance, "rescues" those honest people, on the one hand, but, it is, potentialy, even "catastrophic" for those which might need legitimate protection, from those worst threats. In any case, I pray for all honest and decent people to remain lucky enough, not only to "survive" themselves, but also, not to, ever, become involuntarily abused in order to harm innocent human beings, without realizing it.