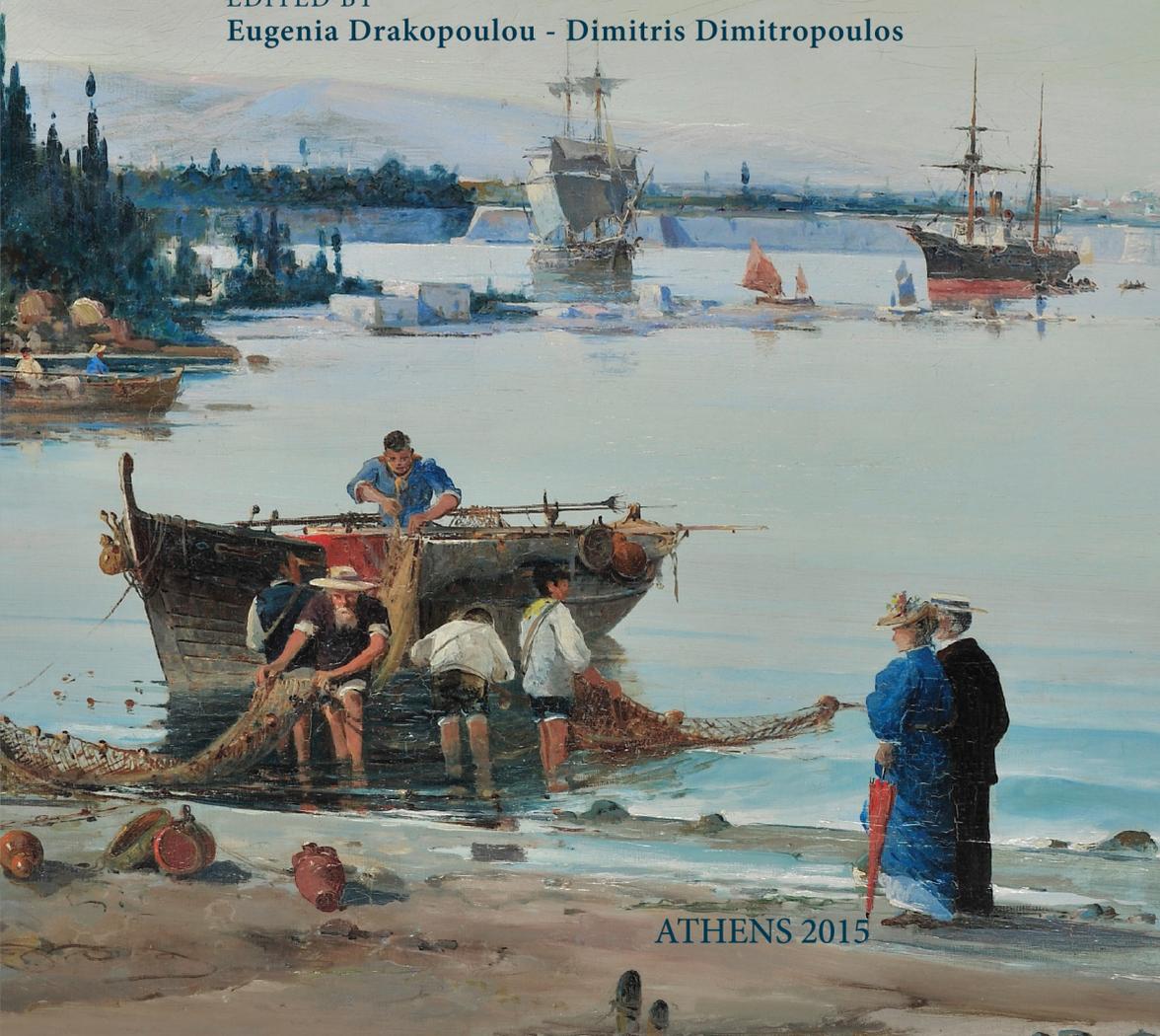


NATIONAL HELLENIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION  
INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH  
PIRAEUS PORT AUTHORITY

# Sailing in the Ionian with History at the helm

EDITED BY  
Eugenia Drakopoulou - Dimitris Dimitropoulos



ATHENS 2015





# Sailing in the Ionian

with History at the helm

© INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH / NATIONAL HELLENIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION

48 Vassileos Constantinou Ave., 116 35 Athens, Greece

T. +30.210.72.73.554

F. +30.210.72.46.212

E-mail : iie@eie.gr

ISBN 978-960-9538-33-6

INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH / NHRF

ISBN 978-618-81781-3-7

PIRAEUS PORT AUTHORITY

NATIONAL HELLENIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION  
INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

PIRAEUS PORT AUTHORITY

# Sailing in the Ionian

## with History at the helm

Edited by Eugenia Drakopoulou – Dimitris Dimitropoulos

Translated by Deborah Brown Kazazis

ATHENS 2015



## CONTENTS

### FOREWORD

Yiorgos Anomeritis, Chairman and CEO of Piraeus Port Authority SA ..... 9

### FOREWORD

Taxiarchis Kolias, Director, Institute of Historical Research ..... 11

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Eugenia Drakopoulou – Dimitris Dimitropoulos ..... 13

Maria Christina Chatziioannou

**Patras.** *Greeks and foreigners in the port of Patras during the 19th century* ..... 17

Katerina Dede

**Katakolo.** *Olympia-Katakolo: A forgotten history from 1948* ..... 27

Demetris Athanasoulis

**Pylos.** *Dead Man's Dagger* ..... 35

Charalambos Gasparis

**Methoni.** *Giacomo and Gerata: a story of medieval Methoni* ..... 49

Eugenia Drakopoulou

**Kalamata.** *English lessons in Kalamata, 1940* ..... 59

Myrina Kalaitzi

**Messene.** *A statue for Mnasareta* ..... 71

Sofia Matthaiou

**Kythera.** *Moments from the life of a group of friends* ..... 85

Ioannis P. Chouliaras <b>Nafpaktos.</b> <i>Epochs and events in medieval Nafpaktos (1153-1500)</i> .....	99
Ourania Polycandrioti <b>Messolonghi.</b> <i>The sacred city of the lagoon</i> .....	111
Dimitris Dimitropoulos <b>Parga.</b> <i>1819: Waiting for Ali Pasha</i> .....	123
Giorgos Riginos - Theodora Lazou <b>Igoumenitsa.</b> <i>Memories in black and white</i> .....	133
Eugenia Halkia <b>Nikopolis.</b> <i>Lucius' journey</i> .....	145
Maria Kamonachou <b>Corfu.</b> <i>Recent laughter</i> .....	157
Stamatios Th. Chondrogiannis - Haris N. Drimousis <b>Paxos.</b> <i>On the island of Poseidon's trident ... with a Prince</i> .....	169
Angeliki Stavropoulou <b>Lefkada.</b> <i>In the times of the Tocco</i> .....	181
Machi Paizi-Apostolopoulou <b>Ithaki.</b> <i>Journeying</i> .....	193
George Tolia <b>Kefalonia.</b> <i>A Mediterranean and continental isle</i> .....	205
Eugenia Drakopoulou <b>Zakynthos.</b> <i>An archaeologist in the 1953 earthquake</i> .....	217
<i>The contributors to the volume</i> .....	233

## Foreword

by the Chairman and CEO of Piraeus Port Authority SA

2015 is a significant year for the Port of Piraeus, the Greek port system, and for Greek shipping, a worldwide leader in the field. This is, first, because European Maritime Day will be celebrated this year in Piraeus, and secondly, because the General Assembly and annual Conference of the European Port Authorities (ESPO) will also be convening in Piraeus.

Ports are engines of development for every country's economy, and they play an important role in the expansion of the European economy, given that 90% of third-country transport to and from Europe is by ship.

From ancient times, ports were places where a multitude of activities were conducted, and important cities rose up around them. It is no accident that the great cities in world history were built on the banks of rivers and on sixteen seacoasts, lending strength and power to cities and states through transport and trade.

But ports were also bearers of culture with multicultural characteristics, given that their operation and the ships they served were based on a mix of many ethnic groups, religions, and knowledge.

Ports were the open gates to the entrance and exit not only of goods, but of also ideas. Along with the development of mathematics and astronomy, naval technology, seafaring, and cartography were among the first scientific fields that boosted navigation.

Today, when the rules of competitiveness, transparency, environmental protection, security, and the quality of services reign preeminent in European port policies, in addition to corporate social responsibility and a respect for the local and regional authorities of port cities, it is our duty to promote culture and cultural activities within the land areas of our ports.

In these volumes, entitled *Sailing in the Aegean / Ionian with History at the Helm*, which are being published on the occasion of the two above-noted events, the National Hellenic Research Foundation's Institute of Historical Research has prepared with its usual high sense of responsibility a superb journey through myths and events in Greece's ports, demonstrating once again their historical role in the country's development and culture.

Yiorgos Anomeritis

## Foreword

by the Director of the Institute of Historical Research

The main part of the Greek mainland and the islands of the archipelago to the East and of the Ionian Islands to the West which surround it have many ports, ports which from antiquity down to the present play a critical role in the movement of people, goods, ideas and culture generally.

Dealing with the history of the Greek ports is at one and the same time the study of one of our oldest civilizations. A simple visit to Greece's mainland or island ports is sufficient to stimulate an interest in investigating their past and following their development over the course of centuries.

The Institute of Historical Research, the chief body for carrying out organized and targeted historical research on Greece and which emerged from the uniting of three established institutes of the National Hellenic Research Foundation (Greek and Roman Antiquity, Byzantine Research, Modern Greek Research) two years ago, within the framework of its policy of approaching the wider society, in parallel with and through its main work, gladly assumed the role of "helmsman" to this history of Greek ports.

Knowing that the Chairman and CEO of the Piraeus Port Authority, Mr. Yiorgos Anomeritis, is particularly interested in culture, our Institute proposed the publication of two volumes devoted to the ports of the Aegean Sea and Ionian Sea, respectively. Eugenia Drakopoulou, research director at the Institute of Historical Research –who had the initial idea– collaborated with her colleague and fellow Institute research director Dimitris Dimitropoulos to form a team of scholars –historians, philologists, and archaeologists– to write the texts. The fact that contributors came not only from the Institute of Historical Research, but from universities and Ephorates of Antiquities throughout Greece ensured both a broad chronological framework and

multidisciplinarity. The texts, which combine documented historical knowledge with free narrative and literary inspiration, are addressed in an original and comprehensible way to the wider public visiting the Greek ports.

We hope that the present volume will become a travelers' *vade mecum*.

Taxiarchis Koliass

## Introductory note

History as it actually happened and fiction as History which might have happened are the protagonists in this volume. Thus, we have eighteen destinations and eighteen actual histories and fictions-as-history dealing with the ports of the Ionian. Today, these ports are reception centers for travelers, constituting open gateways to the region's natural beauties and to its products, culture, and history.

The Ionian Islands and its neighboring coasts of Epirus and the western Peloponnese form a natural unity. They were the gateways of the Greek world to the Ionian Sea and thence to the Adriatic and Italy, and from which people, goods, merchandise, ideas and cultures were channeled. They form a geographic zone where the islands' proximity to shores opposite them, the close bonds of communication and easy movement of residents, the gentle sea, and the place's natural beauty created a common environment with its own special characteristics. A fixed parameter was the area's westward orientation –preferably towards Italy, but also to other regions in Western Europe– which is reflected in the residential setting, **architecture, art, language**, economic practices and trade, customs, and mindsets of residents. At the same time, at least in recent years, the region was the border between East and West, between the Ottoman Empire and occasional European rulers of the Ionian Islands, that is a point of separation but also assimilation of people and cultures.

It was in searching out this history, not as a successive narrative of events and eras but as a flash of illumination on important or insignificant moments from the history of specific places, that we started this undertaking. As regards the style of writing and approach to various places, we attempted an experiment. Authors were asked to choose a topic anchored in a place and port, and to tell a story, that is, to recreate an incident involving “major” or “minor” history as they themselves would consider it most attractive and appropriate–i.e., by employing traditional historiographical

narrative or fiction—but with a commitment to scholarly validity and documentation.

Our decision to respect authors' preferences not only as regarded style and the immediacy of the narrative, but also with respect to spelling and punctuation, method of bibliographical documentation, and illustration was deemed necessary, since this endeavor was for us all an experiment which required freedom of choice.

In any case, the ultimate objective of our effort was not so much for readers to enrich their encyclopedic knowledge as it was for them to catch a whiff of vibrant moments from the past, to absorb something of an era's atmospheric quality, especially if the volume happens to be accompanying them during a tour of the Ionian. For this reason, we sought a chronological span for the texts hosted in the volume that would extend from prehistoric times to more recent ones. As regards its spatial development, the volume follows that of the ports visited by today's travelers.

Earlier we spoke of a publication experimental in its conception, and this increased the risks of an undertaking which in one way or another had its own idiosyncrasies. It required the participation of a large number of scholars coming from different specializations as well as collaboration by a public research institution with a major company on a shared program of mutual interest. We believe that the outstanding ensuing collaboration offers tangible proof that collaborations between research foundations and businesses are both feasible and productive even in the humanities, which are often (and with inexcusable levity) reproached as being economically unprofitable. And it is especially enterprises like the Piraeus Port Authority, which by virtue of their position and size play a crucial public role, which can assume the responsibility for interventions that while not directly profitable, represent an investment in longer-term interventions that can contribute generally to an improvement in the quality of services offered.

It is of course for readers to judge the final result. For our part, we feel the obligation to offer the many thanks owed to the many individuals whose contributions made this publication possible within a scant twelve months.

First, we owe wholehearted thanks to the President and CEO of the Piraeus Port Authority SA, Mr. Yiorgos Anomeritis, who along with his long service in politics and the administration of large public and private

organizations is a lover of history and has authored a large number of studies, particularly on his native Cyclades. His immediate acceptance of our proposal, rapid implementation and active though discreet participation throughout the project were decisive factors for both its start and completion. Thanks are also owed the PPA's administration and the head of its historical archive, Manolis Georgoudakis, for their first-rate cooperation.

The project was also exceptionally well-received by our own organization, the Institute of Historical Research and National Hellenic Research Foundation. And so we first extend warm thanks to the Director of the Institute of Historical Research, Professor Taxiarchis Kolias, who embraced the project and included it among the Institute's activities. Thanks are also due for their support to the Director and Chairman of the NHRF Board of Directors, Dr. Vasileios Gregoriou, and to the foundation's administrative services, especially Central Administration Director Ioanna Petrohilou. We are grateful to our colleague Ourania Polycandrioti for her substantial contribution to this edition. Katerina Dede has supported us in multiple ways—moreover, the “history” about Katakolo which she spontaneously narrated to us one midday while we were improvising, in search of a guiding “compass” for *Sailing in the Aegean/Ionian*, persuaded us to launch the project. Konstantina Simonetatou readily and patiently contributed to the edition's typographical appearance in both Greek and English; Dimitra Pelekanou did the cover design, Filippa Chorozi provided secretarial support and Evi Delli edited the English edition; our thanks go to each of them. The texts' parallel translation into English for foreign visitors to the Ionian Islands presented its own challenges. Deborah Brown Kazazis, an experienced translator of historical and archaeological texts, carried out this difficult task with especial enthusiasm. We thank her for an admirable collaboration, together with Fanis Rigas, who volunteered to assist us in comparing the Greek and English texts.

We also thank the National Art Gallery of Greece for granting publication rights to the photo of Vasileios Chatzis' painting, as well as local Ephorates of Antiquities for their ever-willing response to our search for photographic material. Special thanks go to Andreas Rigas for the drawing of Paxos, and to Demetris Athanasoulis, Zisis Melissakis, Evripidis Kleopas, Machi Marouda, Pia Tolia and Athina Chatzidimitriou for their photos of Kalamata, Messolonghi, Corfu, Patras, Kefalonia and Parga.

In closing this introductory note, we express our heartfelt gratitude to the authors who entrusted us with their texts: Demetris Athanasoulis, Maria Christina Chatziioannou, Stamatis Chondrogiannis, Ioannis Chouliaras, Charalambos Gasparis, Katerina Dede, Haris Drimousis, Eugenia Halkia, Myrina Kalaitzi, Maria Kamonachou, Theodora Lazou, Sofia Matthaiou, Machi Paizi-Apostolopoulou, Ourania Polycandrioti, Giorgos Riginos, Angeliki Stavropoulou, and George Tolia. Each writer met the strict time constraints imposed by the contractual obligations of this sui generis project, working with pleasure, creativity, and imagination on a publishing venture which required us all to surpass (and at the same time, safeguard) scholarly rigor in our narrating of incidents, phenomena, ways of thinking and social conditions in Ionian ports in a manner reflected by our sources.

Eugenia Drakopoulou – Dimitris Dimitropoulos

# Parga

## Parga 1819: Waiting for Ali Pasha

For centuries, Parga lay on the border between the Venetian and Ottoman dominions. It is a small city built amphitheatrically on the hill of Pezovolos, which rises to a height of 140 meters. The hill's peak is decorated by the imposing old Venetian fortress, stamping its own harmonious seal on a scene of incredible natural beauty. The city has access to the sea via a small, closed harbor. At its entrance lies the Island of Panagia, a symbol of this landscape. Parga's agricultural hinterland is small, but rich in olive trees and fruit orchards. In the eyes of the enormous Ottoman Empire, Parga was just another small settlement on its far Western border, but Ali Pasha, the Vizier of Ioannina, saw things differently. Ali Pasha ruled Epirus and the surrounding region for nearly half a century (from 1789 to 1822), and found that Parga was a constant thorn in his side. Parga lay only a few dozen kilometers from his capital, and frequently served as a place of refuge for his enemies from Souli and elsewhere. Therefore, Ali Pasha decided that it was imperative to take over this city. Over time, this became an obsession that disturbed his mind and soul.

The treaty of Campo Formio, signed between the French and the Austrians in October 1797, sealed the end of the Serenissima Republic of Venice and her conquests. For the citizens of Parga, this meant a long and painful period filled with suspense and disorder, which was now drawing to its tragic conclusion. The forces of Napoleon took over the Ionian Islands, along with Venice's holdings in continental Greece (Vouthroto, Preveza, Vonitsa, and Parga), where they installed French garrisons. Ali Pasha, who had long been eyeing these territories, took action in 1798. During the famous battle of Nikopoli in October 1798, Ali Pasha took over Vouthroto and Preveza, defeating the French garrison despite the heroic resistance of the defenders. Next, Ali Pasha planned to enter Parga.

In the first years of the dawning 19th century, Parga lived in a state of uncertainty and insecurity. With the Treaty of Constantinople in March 1800, the cities formerly held by Venice in continental Greece were ceded

to the Sublime Porte. In 1806, however, encouraged by the Russo-Turkish War, the citizens of Parga rose and expelled the local representative of the Ottoman administration, and requested Russian protection. Ali Pasha now saw an excellent opportunity to intervene, but his hopes would once more be frustrated. He was also disappointed in 1807, when Parga passed to the hands of Napoleon under the Treaty of Tilsit. In 1814, given Napoleon's isolation and the overall instability of Europe, Ali Pasha decided that the time was ripe to realize his long-time dream. With one sudden assault, he took over the village of Agia, which lay on the outskirts of Parga, but vehement opposition by the citizens of Parga prevented him from progressing any further. The danger was temporarily delayed, but not defeated. On March 22, 1814, the citizens of Parga decided to hoist the British flag at the castle, inviting the British as their protectors. The French military detachment that governed the city gave way to a British one. However, the Treaty of Paris, which was signed in May 1815 between Russia and the British Empire to agree on the fate of the Ionian Islands, made no mention of Parga.

Finally, Ali Pasha's unrelenting pressure produced the desired result. In March 1817, the British agreed to cede Parga to the Ottoman Empire. Painstaking negotiations began. The citizens of Parga did all they could to prevent this upcoming calamity, but the decision had been made. Despite the international outcry once the terms of the agreement were made public, Parga passed to the Ottoman Empire. Its citizens were given a stark choice: to remain in their ancestral lands under Turkish rule, or to follow the path of exile.

By an agreement signed in May 1817 in Ioannina between representatives of the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire, it was ultimately decided to appoint six appraisers –three from Ioannina and three from Corfu– to evaluate the urban and agricultural property in Parga for purposes of estimating compensation. The two teams of appraisers came to divergent results. The Muslims from Ioannina calculated the value of the real estate (including farms, homes, and other property) at 1,025,700 thalers, while the Christians from Corfu arrived at a figure of 2,300,000 thalers (Spanish silver coins). The root cause of this disagreement lay in the refusal by the former group to include communal and church property in their estimates, on the grounds that under the agreement, compensation was available only for private property. After complaints and pressure from Ali Pasha, even



View of the castle of Parga (photo: Athina Chatzidimitriou).

the figure provided by the appraisers from Ioannina was rejected. The price was brought down to 150,000 pounds sterling (about 666,666 thalers), and subject to the limitation that if any citizens remained in Parga, it would be reduced further<sup>1</sup>.

On the afternoon of Thursday, March 27, 1819, Manthos Oikonomou was writing to his master in Ioannina. Manthos, born in 1758 in Koukouli, Zagori, was Ali Pasha's scrivener, counselor, and confidential secretary. He was his master's right hand in the management of sensitive and complex affairs, chiefly concerning the region's Christians. He occupied this post until his death in August 1820, when Ali Pasha was clashing with the Sultan's forces<sup>2</sup>. But in March 1819, Manthos was in Parga. This was a critical point in the negotiations. At any moment now, Ali Pasha's demand to the lords of the Ionian Islands and the Venetian holdings in Greece –a demand that had almost become an obsession, but had so far been unsuccessful– was

1. Sp. Minotos, *Η παραχώρηση της Πάργας στον Αλή*, Athens 1935, p. 14-16 and C. P. de Bosset, *Parga and the Ionian Islands*, London<sup>2</sup> 1822, p. 297-299.

2. For a laudatory biography, see M. Oikonomou, "Μάνθος Οικονόμου", *Epeirotiki Estia* 8 (1959), p. 617-639.

about to be met. Ali Pasha's demand, of course, was Parga, and Manthos was his agent in the final stage of negotiations with the British for the handoff of the city. Just as he sat down to compose his report, Manthos was interrupted by a British officer, who had arrived with his interpreter. The officer notified Manthos that General Frederick Adam, representative of Thomas Maitland, Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, would be arriving by ship the next morning. Once the last details were fixed, Manthos would notify Agos Mouchourdaris, the leader of Ali Pasha's military forces. Agos and his army were camped at the foot of Mount Pezovolos, waiting to enter Parga and install a Turkish garrison. Manthos also provided information regarding the few citizens of Parga who had chosen to remain in the city, as the population was declining. About 500 souls wished to leave, and the leading British officer would arrange for them to embark with him and depart at once<sup>3</sup>.

A week later, at noon on Wednesday, April 3, 1819, Manthos once again wrote to update Ali Pasha on recent developments<sup>4</sup>. The ledger tallying the property of Parga's citizens would be complete in a day or two, but negotiations between the British governor of Parga, Lieutenant-Colonel R. Gubbins, and the special envoy of the Sublime Porte, Hamid Bey, were proceeding with difficulty. Even the translation of this ledger into Turkish proved impossible at such short notice. Manthos arranged for the ledger to be sent to Ioannina, where scholars capable of preparing a high-quality official translation could be found.

But this was the least of Manthos' problems. What troubled him was that the handoff of the city could not be completed in accordance with his master's plan. Manthos believed that the British were insisting on demands contrary to the initial agreement, while the Ottoman administration seemed to view the matter with indifference. Hamid Bey was accompanied by a small group of appraisers, but his stance towards the British negotiators was accommodating. He failed to strenuously object to the constant demands by the British to revise the agreement, as Ali Pasha felt was the

---

3. *Αρχείο Αλή πασά Συλλογής Ι. Χώτζη Γενναδείου Βιβλιοθήκης της Αμερικανικής Σχολής Αθηνών*, ed.: Vas. Panagiotopoulos with the collaboration of D. Dimitropoulos and Pan. Michailaris, vol. III, Athens 2007, p. 246-247, doc. 1184.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 252-255, doc. 1188.

Ottoman envoy's duty. In particular, the British demand that the appraisers from the Ionian Islands be replaced by local appraisers, supposedly in order to control costs and speed up the process, infuriated Manthos. How could the owners themselves objectively appraise the value of their own farms and homes? And how could they demand recognition of their claims to ownership, when they had no written documents to support them? In Manthos' view, the Sublime Porte should either enter the negotiations actively and forcefully, or step back and allow Ali Pasha to take control of the process using his own methods, which had often been successful. After all, Manthos' master was the one who would be called on to pay the compensation to the citizens of Parga for the land, the houses, and even the stones.

Such were the thoughts plaguing Manthos' mind, and he conveyed them by letter to his master in Ioannina. His heart showed no compassion for the unfortunate residents of Parga, who were losing their homes; he expressed only annoyance and anxiety that their mass exodus might increase the price that Ali Pasha would have to pay.

Meanwhile, the Christian inhabitants of Parga were experiencing altogether different emotions. On April 4, 1819, Fr. Hankey, confidential secretary to Thomas Maitland, addressed a letter to Parga's notables, clearly emphasizing that all decisions taken, even without the citizens' input, were final<sup>5</sup>. There would be no preventing Ali Pasha's troops from entering the city. The citizens of Parga were being offered British protection, on condition that they showed themselves worthy by their behavior – that is, so long as they accepted their fate without complaint. Those citizens who wished to depart at once were called upon to declare their intentions to the British governor, so that he could prepare the boats to carry them to the Ionian Islands. The epistle concluded with an exhortation to the citizens “not to hastily abandon their homes,” but rather to be patient until all necessary steps for the orderly handoff of the city were concluded.

Two days later, on April 6, 1819, the residents of Parga, by common agreement, sent their own response. This letter expressed the citizens' grief at this forced migration in exchange for such meager compensation. It was

---

5. Christophoros Perraivos, *Ιστορία του Σουλίου και Πάργας*, vol. 2, Athens 1857, p. 42-43.

also full of indignation and despair that the troops of their longtime enemy, Ali Pasha, in violation of the treaties and of British assurances, were camped on the border of their land. The citizens of Parga begged Maitland to take pity on them and to arrange for their swift transportation before the Turks entered the city, for the danger to their lives and families was immediate<sup>6</sup>.

This tug of war continued for days. The British urged the citizens of Parga not to leave until the ratified agreement was returned from Constantinople, and certainly not before Ali Pasha had paid the full price for city. On the other hand, the community leaders, totally exposed, unarmed, and helpless, begged to be allowed to abandon the city at once, for they could feel the Turkish army breathing down their necks.

Finally, fearing the worst, the community leaders notified ships from nearby cities to hurry to the harbor of Parga and evacuate its citizens. Only one man stayed behind, though his family had departed; rumor has it that he was drunk. All icons of saints were removed from the churches and icon stands. The reliquaries holding the saints' remains were moved for safe-keeping to caves in the seaside region of Kryoneri, very near the settlement. Other residents loaded their few belongings onto the boats they would use to escape with their families. The wealthier citizens parceled out grain to the poor, to help them survive the first difficult days of exile, for the exodus was taking place just a few days before harvest. Some citizens dug up the bones of their ancestors to prevent them from being defiled by the conquerors, then proceeded to cremate them, re-bury them in secret places, or bundle them with the intention of throwing them into the sea during the voyage to Corfu or Paxos. Most citizens, before embarking, knelt and kissed the ground, taking a fistful of earth with them<sup>7</sup>.

The citizens of Parga were departing. Three hundred of Ali Pasha's armed men set up their barracks in the Byzantine monastery of Theotokos Vlacherna, in the region of Valtos, and still the vizier of Epirus had not yet paid the compensation money. Ali Pasha offered to pay the price in commodities, such as lumber from the mountains of Epirus, but the British

---

6. *Ibid.*, p. 44-45.

7. C. P. de Bosset, *op.cit.* p. 115-117, Christophoros Perraivos, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 46; A. Duval, *Exposé des faits qui ont précédé et suivi la cession de Parga*, Paris 1820, p. 55-58.

rejected this proposal, insisting on cash. In early May, Thomas Maitland arrived in Preveza to meet with Ali Pasha and seal the deal: bags of coins in exchange for Parga. But which would be turned over first: the money, or the land? The impasse was finally resolved when Ali Pasha took two British officers hostage, Lieutenant-Colonel Hankey and Lieutenant-Colonel Robinson, and held them captive until Parga was surrendered. The money was loaded onto Maitland's frigate, the *H.M.S. Ganymedes*, which was docked in Preveza, and on May 9, 1819, the Lord High Commissioner, believing his work to be finished, returned to Corfu. On May 10, the British governor of Parga turned over the castle of Parga to Ali Pasha, and on May 12, the two hostages were released. Ali Pasha hurried to the deserted city, and immediately gave instructions to reinforce the fortifications at the castle. During his brief stay in Parga, he found himself enchanted by the scenery, and was continually moving his tent from place to place in order to experience as many vistas as possible of the city he had so desired to conquer<sup>8</sup>.

On May 18, the community leaders of Parga, resettled in Corfu, wrote a letter of protest to Maitland. They pointed out that, although Ali Pasha and his forces were occupying their homes and enjoying their property, the citizens of Parga had yet to receive any compensation. Indeed, the refugees were living in abject poverty, unable even to purchase enough food to feed their families<sup>9</sup>. On May 22, 1819, the Parliament of the Ionian Islands issued a brief formal announcement that its concession of Parga to the Ottoman Empire did not imply a surrender of the citizens' political rights. The announcement affirmed that the citizens of Parga had the same rights and obligations as other citizens of the United States of the Ionian Islands, and pronounced that they had the right to settle on whichever of the seven islands they desired<sup>10</sup>.

Ultimately, the refugees from Parga became involved in a lengthy conflict with the British Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, trying to claim the compensation they were owed, discounted though it may have been, for their lost property. In the meantime, Ali Pasha installed a garrison

---

8. C. P. de Bosset, *op.cit.*, p. 117-119.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 301-302.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 302-303.



The islet of Agios Georgios in the bay of Parga (photo: Athina Chatzidimitriou).

in the abandoned city, appointed his grandson Mehmed Pasha as its leader, and endeavored to attract young Albanian settlers. However, Ali Pasha's delight at conquering Parga would not last. It was not long before the Sublime Porte declared him a *firmanlee* ("outlaw"), and the Sultan's forces invaded Epirus. In August 1820, Mehmed Pasha surrendered the castle of Parga to Ali Bey, the leader of the Ottoman fleet, who then appointed Sahin Bey as commander of the garrison. Sahin Bey, it should be noted, was the son of Mustafa Pasha of Delvine, who had been Ali Pasha's mortal enemy until his death in 1812<sup>11</sup>.

Was this irony, or merely the ordinary revolution of the wheel of history? Was Ali Pasha the victor, or the loser in Parga? Did the British give in to his forceful demands, or were they merely taking advantage of his overpowering desire for Parga in order to lead him to financial devastation, and

---

11. P. A. S[alapantas], *Η Πάργα ήτοι μονογραφία από της κτίσεως μέχρι της παρά των Αγγλων πωλήσεώς της εις τους Τούρκους*, Athens 1861, p. 338-340.

ultimately to utter ruin?<sup>12</sup>. For historical researchers, this remains a wide open field for inquiry, but Ali Pasha's Pyrrhic victory had one undisputable victim: the citizens of Parga, who found themselves penniless, homeless, and utterly abandoned, and searching for a new fate far from their beloved homeland.

### *Selected Bibliography*

A. Duval, *Exposé des faits qui ont précédé et suivi la cession de Parga*, Paris 1820.

C. P. de Bosset, *Parga and the Ionian Islands*, London<sup>2</sup> 1822.

Chr. Perraios, *Ιστορία του Σουλλίου και Πάργας*, v. 1-2, Athens 1857.

P. A. S[alapantas], *Η Πάργα ήτοι μονογραφία από της κτίσεως μέχρι της παρά των Αγγλων πωλήσεώς της εις τους Τούρκους*, Athens 1861.

Sp. Minotos, *Η παραχώρηση της Πάργας στον Αλή*, Athens 1935.

*Αρχείο Αλή πασά Συλλογής Ι. Χώτζη Γενναδείου Βιβλιοθήκης*, edition: Vas. Panagiotopoulos with the collaboration of D. Dimitropoulos and Pan. Michailaris, vol. I-IV, Athens 2007-2009.

Dimitris Dimitropoulos

---

12. For more on this question, see V. Panagiotopoulos, "Εισαγωγή", *Αρχείο Αλή Πασά*, *op.cit.*, vol. IV, Athens 2009, p. 82-85.

