

## GREEK REVOLUTION 1821 - 1829

In 1821, the Greeks, after nearly 400 years of slavery under the Ottomans decided to take up the arms and fight for their freedom. The 25<sup>th</sup> of March in 1821 marks the beginning of the Greek Revolution and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March in 1829 is the day of the creation of the modern Greek state. Below some of the key figures of that revolt are presented.



**Theodoros Kolokotronis** (1770 - 1834). He came from a family of kleftes and escaped to Zakynthos where he served in the English Army. He returned to Peloponnese on the eve of the revolution and due to his military experience and knowledge he soon became the leading figure in organizing the Greek fighters. He led the siege of Tripolis and its surrender marked the first success of the Greek Revolution. The following year (1822) with his courage, determination, patience, and military acumen defeated the army of Dramalis. He was imprisoned by his political opponents but was freed when Ibrahim invaded Greece, against whom Kolokotronis applied guerrilla tactics and was able to inflict major blows to his army. Kolokotronis is considered as the most important figure of the Greek Revolution.



**Georgios Karaiskakis** (1782 - 1827). He grew up in poverty and was forced to the mountains as kleftis. He was one of the first to take part in the Greek Revolution and his military genius became apparent during the last years of the struggle. He was appointed by the first Greek government as chief marshal of Eastern Greece and made Elefsina as his headquarters. Following a clash with the Turks at Haidari, he was planning to cut off Kioutachis supplies, during the siege of Acropolis. His initial failures followed two famous victories at Arachova and Distomo. He was killed in a clash with the Turks at Faliro. Karaiskakis is considered the second most important military figure of the revolution, after Kolokotronis.



**Constantinos Kanaris** (1793 - 1877). He came from the island of Psara. He blew up the Turkish armada at Chios and at Tenedos and other Turkish ships at Mytilene and Samos (1824). He attempted to burn the Turkish ships at the port of Alexandria in order to destroy Mehmet Ali's preparations against Greece and failed only due to the fact that at the time the wind was blowing from the opposite direction. He became one of the important naval figures of the revolution. With the liberation of Greece he became involved with politics opposing King Othon. He served several times as a minister and became prime minister. He was a brave, courageous, and modest man.



### **Makriyannis**

General Makriyannis was born at Lidoriki, in Eastern Greece. In June of 1825, Ibrahim Pasha attacked the mills of Argos with a force of 4,000 foot-soldiers and 600 cavalymen from his regular army. Makriyannis, together with Ypsilantis, Mavromichalis and 300 men, defended the position, which commands the approaches to Naples of Romania. They had already repulsed four fierce attacks by Ibrahim when, towards evening, they were reinforced by a detachment of the first regular Greek regiment. Its arrival decided the outcome of the battle and the Turko-Egyptian forces retreated in great disarray, with heavy casualties. The gallant Makriyannis, who was gravely wounded in the fighting, was invited aboard the French Admiral de Rigny's frigate, where he was received by the admiral.

At the battle of Faliron on the 5th of February in 1827, Makriyannis commanded the corps of Athenians, under the orders of General Gordon. He distinguished himself again and again in the defense of his position, by bravery in number of minor engagements.

### **Manto Mavrogenous**



Amongst the heroines of the Greek Revolution was Manto Mavrogenous. She was educated at a college in Triestio and spoke Italian and Turkish. She studied ancient Greek philosophy and history. In 1809 her family returned to Mykonos, the island of their origin. She learned with excitement from her father that Philiki Etairia was preparing the Greek Revolution. When the news arrived that the struggle for freedom began, Manto invited the leaders of Mykonos to a meeting and persuaded them to join the revolution. This was declared in April of 1821.

### **Laskarina Boumboulina**



Yet another heroic woman of the Greek uprising for freedom. Boumboulina came from a rich family from the island of Spetse. This 'Archontissa' (Lady) of Spetse used her wealth to build a navy and became one of the most famous leading figures in the Greek War of Independence. After the success of the revolution in Peloponnese and Sterea Ellada, the uprising spread in the islands. Spetse was the first of the islands to join the revolution and this was mainly due to Boumboulina's leadership and courage. The example of Spetse was followed by many other islands and therefore the freeing of the Island of Spetse was one of the initial major steps towards victory for the Greeks. Thereafter Boumboulina, with her fleet took part in many naval battles and dominated the Aegean creating problems to the, by far superior, Turkish fleet.



### **Andreas Miaoulis (1769 - 1835)**

He was born in the Hydra. At the age of 17 he became captain of a commercial ship. During the Napoleonic wars he managed due to his courageous sea operations to accumulate considerable wealth. From the second year of the revolution he was appointed admiral of the Greek fleet. He defeated the Turkish navy near Patra and the Turko-Egyptian navy near Geronda, and on many occasions he was able to provide supplies for Greek cities besieged by the Turks (e.g. Mesologi).

### **Nikitaras**



He was born at Leontari, in Arcadia, the son of a poor peasant farmer. He was a nephew of Kolokotronis and he, too, served in the army of the Ionian Islands. In 1821 he became head of a band of pallikars. He fought Kiaya Bey at Kaki Scala and in March and April of 1822, at Ayia Marina, Nikitaras fought successfully under the leadership of Odysseus against Dramali, who was threatening Thermopylae. After Dramali's invasion of the Morea, Nikitaras took up a position commanding the narrow passes on his route back to Corinth. There the Greeks inflicted a terrible defeat on the enemy, killing 3,000 Turks. The result of this battle won for him the nickname of Tourkophagos. At the siege of Mesolongi, Nikitaras gave further proof of his pure and selfless patriotism. The sailors bringing reinforcements to the besieged town demeaned payment in advance. But there was no money. Then Nikitaras flung down his sword, a priceless weapon which he had won from a high-ranking Turk, and cried out, "All I have is this sword. I offer it to my country!" His fine example had an immediate effect. All present stepped forward eagerly to donate whatever they could afford.

### **Papaflesas or Gregorios Dikaios (1788 - 1825)**



Papaflesas was born at Messinia in 1788. In his teens he became a monk. The Turks, knowing his revolutionary character forced him to leave Greece. At Constantinople, where he went, he became one of the key members of "Filiki Etairia." Under Ypsilantis orders he returned to Peloponnese and started preaching the ideal of freedom, preparing the people for the revolution. He was a key figure of the Greek Revolution. In 1825, Ibrahim landed with thousands of Turkish army in Peloponnese, Papaflesas leading 2000 men who marched against him. During the battle which took place at a place called Maniaki, on May 20 of 1825, Ibrahim with 6,000 Turks attacked and killed 600 Greeks and their leader Papaflesas, who fought bravely to the bitter end.