

= Ottoman ? Egyptian invasion of Mani =

The Ottoman ? Egyptian Invasion of Mani was a campaign during the Greek War of Independence that consisted of three battles . The Maniots fought against a combined Egyptian and Ottoman army under the command of Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt .

On March 17 , 1821 , the Maniots (residents of the central peninsula on the southern part of the Peloponnese) declared war on the Ottoman Empire , preceding the rest of Greece in joining the revolution by about a week . The various Greek forces won a quick string of victories . However , disputes broke out amongst the leaders and anarchy ensued . The Ottomans seized this chance and called for reinforcements from Egypt . The reinforcements came under the command of Ibrahim Pasha , the son of the leader of Egypt , Muhammad Ali . With the Greeks in disarray , Ibrahim ravaged the Peloponnese and after a four months siege he captured the city of Missolonghi in April . He then went back to the Peloponnese and turned his attention in June to Mani .

Ibrahim tried to enter Mani from the north @-@ east near Almiro on June 21 , 1826 , but he was forced to stop at the fortifications at Vergas . His army of 7 @,@ 000 men was held off by an army of 2 @,@ 000 Maniots and 500 refugees from other parts of Greece . Despite Egyptian and Ottoman artillery , the outnumbered Maniots managed to hold off the Ottomans . Ibrahim sent 1 @,@ 500 men to attempt a landing near Areopolis and go north to threaten the Maniot rear . This force was initially successful ; however the women and old men of the area fought back and repelled them with heavy losses . When the Egyptians at Vergas heard that Theodoros Kolokotronis was advancing on their rear they retreated .

In August , Ibrahim renewed the offensive and he sent a group of regular soldiers down the coast and they reached Kariopoli before they retreated . Ibrahim sent a force of 8 @,@ 000 men down to Polytsaravo and on the way they destroyed a tower that was opposing them . When they reached Polytsaravo , they were faced by the Maniots in their forts . The Egyptians and the Ottomans were forced to retreat with significant losses . This was the last time Mani was invaded during the War for Independence , as Greece was liberated in 1828 .

= = Prelude = =

The Greek War of Independence had started on the March 17 , 1821 , when the Maniots declared war on the Ottoman Empire at Areopoli . On March 21 , the Maniot army of 2 @,@ 000 men under the command of Petros Mavromichalis which also included Theodoros Kolokotronis , marched from Areopolis and headed for Messenia . The next day , they reached Kalamata , which had an Ottoman garrison and they captured the city on March 23 .

The rest of Greece joined the war when Bishop Germanos of Patras declared Greece in rebellion on March 25 . At Kalamata , the Greeks established the Messenian Senate which governed affairs in the southern Peloponnese . Kolokotronis wanted to attack Tripoli but Petros Mavromichalis convinced him to attack the smaller towns first . Petrobey also sent letters to the courts of Europe telling them of the Greeks ' plan . Petrobey finished off the letters by signing it with Petrobey Mavromichalis , Prince and Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief . On April 28 , the Maniot army joined Kolokotronis forces at Karytainia . From there they went to Tripoli and started to besiege the city . The city eventually fell on September 23 , 1821 and was sacked by the Greeks .

Due to the unrelenting losses and stories of Greek atrocities in Tripolis , the Sultan became desperate and in 1824 he called on his Viceroy in Egypt , Muhammad Ali , to aid him . Ali promised to aid him in return for cession of the island of Crete , Cyprus , as well as making his son Ibrahim Pasha , Pasha of the Peloponnese . After his offer was accepted , Ali sent his son in command of the expedition . Meanwhile , the Greeks were in disarray because of political rivalries which had caused a civil war . Kolokotronis was arrested , his son Panos was killed , and his nephew Nikitaras forced to flee .

Ibrahim used the confusion to land at Methoni in the Peloponnese . From Methoni , Ibrahim started pillaging the Peloponnese and taking many people as slaves . Ibrahim captured Tripolis but was stopped from capturing Nauplion by Kostantinos Mavromichalis and Dimitrios Ypsilantis . In

retaliation , Ibrahim burnt down Argos before returning to Tripoli . Ibrahim decided to go with his army and join Reshid Pasha at Missolonghi in Central Greece . The Egyptians reached the city on December 12 , 1825 and helped the Ottomans with the siege . On April 10 , 1826 , the city fell to the invaders and the city was sacked .

= = Battle of Vergas = =

Ibrahim sent an envoy to Mani demanding its surrender or else he would pillage it . He received the Maniotic reply of :

From the few Greeks of Mani and the rest of Greeks who live there to Ibrahim Pasha . We received your letter in which you try to frighten us saying that if we don 't surrender , you 'll kill the Maniots and plunder Mani . That 's why we are waiting for you and your army . We , the inhabitants of Mani , sign and wait for you .

Ibrahim , furious with the response , ordered an attack on northwestern Mani from Kalamata on June 23 , 1826 . Under his command was a force of 7 @, @ 000 men , a mixture of infantry and cavalry . The invaders were forced to stop at the fortifications of the Maniots at Vergas near Almiro . Defending the walls were 2 @, @ 000 Maniot soldiers and 500 Greek refugees .

The Egyptian artillery failed to breach the walls , so Ibrahim decided to launch two ships with cannons and have them bombard the Maniot defences from the sea . He also combined this attack with infantry assaults , however these failed as the invaders were driven back from the walls eight times . The attacks lasted for a few more days before the Egyptians and Ottomans were forced to retreat when news arrived that Kolokotronis was approaching their rear with 2 @, @ 000 men . The Maniots chased the Egyptians up to Kalamata before withdrawing . Ibrahim lost 2 @, @ 500 men at Vergas and the Greek losses are unknown .

= = Battle of Diro = =

During the Battle of Vergas , Ibrahim decided to attack the Maniots from the rear . His plan was to send a small fleet with a few soldiers to land at the Bay of Diros , 2 kilometers south of Areopolis . The aim of this was to capture the unguarded Areopoli , which cut the communication lines of the defenders at Vergas and demoralize them as well . He would then be able to attack the Maniots from the rear and control the mountain passes to eastern Mani and Gytheio . Authors Peter Greenhalgh and Edward Eliopoulos describe this plan as excellent .

On June 23 , he sent a small fleet carrying 1 @, @ 500 to land at the Bay of Diros and to capture Areopolis . Aid came from other villages . On June 26 , the surviving Egyptians were rescued by Ibrahim 's fleet from the beach and those who were not rescued had to swim to the ships or be killed by the Maniots . This battle cost Ibrahim 1 @, @ 000 men and he was forced to retreat from Mani after being defeated at Vergas .

= = Battle of Polytsaravo = =

After his retreat from Mani due to the defeats at Vergas and Diros Pasha renewed his offensive in August . Ibrahim 's army was led by a Laconian from Bardounia named Bosinas who had assistance from the Egyptian fleet . On August 27 , he reached Kariopoli in an attempt to take a safe path through the mountains . Before he reached the town of Polytsaravos , his army of 8 @, @ 000 Egyptians was delayed by Theodoros Stathakos and his family of thirteen men who refused to let the invaders past their tower . Bosinas tried to negotiate with Stathakos . Stathakos , feigning surrender , told Bosinas to come and take his family 's guns . As Bosinas came to retrieve the guns , the Stathakos family killed him . In retaliation , the Egyptians used their two cannons and blew up the tower .

The Egyptians then proceeded towards the town of Polytsaravos and reached it on August 28 . Awaiting them there were 2 @, @ 000 Maniots behind their fortifications . The Maniots had chosen Polytsaravos as their position of defence as it was on high ground and was surrounded by rocky

slopes . This would have meant that the Egyptians could have been stopped before they arrived at the town . As part of their defence plan the villages sent all the women and children to the mountains before improving the fortifications . As the Egyptians arrived at the walls , the Maniots sallied out and caught the Egyptians by surprise . The Egyptians , suffering losses , withdrew from Mani and back into the Laconian plain . The Egyptians had lost 400 men during the battle and the Maniots only lost 9 . This was the last invasion launched against Mani .

= = Aftermath = =

Even though this campaign is overshadowed by other battles of the revolution , it was one of the most important . The Maniates stopped the Egyptians and Ibrahim Pasha who had not been defeated this decisively before . The women who defeated the Egyptians at Diros have been given the name of ' The Amazons of Diros ' . This was the last invasion of Mani as Ibrahim abandoned any ideas of conquering it . On the April 26 , 1827 the Turkish navy bombarded Oitylo with over 1 @, @ 700 cannonballs hitting the town .

In 1827 , the combined fleets of France , England and Russia defeated the combined Ottoman ? Egyptian fleet in the Battle of Navarino . In 1828 , under the terms of the Treaty of Constantinople , Greece became an independent state which was recognized by the Ottomans in 1829 . When Ioannis Capodistrias was made president of Greece , he had Petros Mavromachalis imprisoned . The Mavromichalis ' reacted by assassinating Capodistrias in Nauplion as he went to church . The Maniots continued causing trouble and defeated two Bavarian armies King Otto sent against them before they were subdued only after some of the leaders were bribed . This ended the Maniots ' independence and they were forced to pay taxes .