

HISTORY HAS A FACE

FIGURES OF 1821
IN OTHONIAN GREECE
BY THE BELGIAN DIPLOMAT
BENJAMIN MARY

Benjamin Mary

ATHENS 2021

Collective volume

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Detailed index available in: www.sylviaioannoufoundation.org and www.nhmuseum.gr

ISBN: 978-618-83044-6-8 (AdVenture SA)

ISBN: 978-618-5555-09-2 (Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece - National Historical Museum)

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History Has a Face

*Figures of 1821 in Othonian Greece
by the Belgian Diplomat Benjamin Mary*



NATIONAL
HISTORICAL
MUSEUM

Athens 2021

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The sole inhabitant of the island of Skantzoura in the Sporades (Diavolonia), 29 May 1840 ('Le seul habitant de l'île de Skantzoura. (Sporades - îles du Diable) 29 mai 1840'). Sketch cut on the right. In the right-hand corner, Mary's notes on the islander's costume can be seen.

Watercolour, 24 x 17 cm from Benjamin Mary's album 'Grèce. N° 4. Vues de Grèce ...'
Sylvia Ioannou Foundation, B.2378

Mary the Artist



Iphigenia Vogiatzi

Archaeologist-Museologist

Curator of the Permanent Exhibitions of the National Historical Museum

In order to form a correct assessment of Mary's work, we should consider these questions: what does he choose to depict, how does he depict it, what value did he himself attach to his works, what can we conclude about him from his works, and how can we benefit from them today?

In the present work the protagonists of the political, religious, intellectual, and social life of the newly-constituted Greek kingdom are depicted, together with persons whom Mary encountered in everyday life and on the journeys which he undertook by reason of the nature of his occupation. As can be seen from his diplomatic reports, his concern with art was high among his priorities and an important factor in his life in parallel with his official duties.

Thus Mary is to be added to the long procession of travellers of the pre-photographic era who had to rely on their ability to sketch in order to be able to return with pictures of the places they had visited. Mary himself was proud of his artwork and showed it off at every opportunity to royalty and rulers, such as Greece's royal couple, Otto and Amalia, or Muhammad Ali of Egypt among others. All of them could testify to his undisputed talent and congratulated him on the fidelity of the rendering of his subjects.

Although Mary himself stated that he preferred to depict landscapes, it is his portraits which are of greater interest, since they show him to have been an outstanding physiognomist. Those, in particular, which are accompanied by notes on the character and work of the individuals depicted serve, in a way, to complement his diplomatic reports and to illustrate them, as they provide a commentary, usually apt, on the people and situations which he encountered.

We can derive information from the notes which accompany Mary's works as to the way in which he worked. On most occasions, he asked his subjects to pose, but often he just sketched what he saw in order to pass the time. Moreover, sometimes, he sketched secretly or without being noticed (e.g., portrait of Rizos Neroulos,¹ Nikitaras sleeping²), while at others he strove to capture a fleeting moment by rapid lines, as in the case of the Deputies and spectators present at the National Assembly of 1843-1844. Those in the first category of the figures he depicted he asked to sign his work, thus giving it the value of a docu-

1. Iakovos Rizos Neroulos, portrait 94.

2. Nikitaras sleeping, portrait 77.



Portrait 8. Ioannis Makriyiannis, colonel (35 x 26.5 cm)



Portrait 9. Christodoulos Hatzipetros, colonel (35 x 26.5 cm)



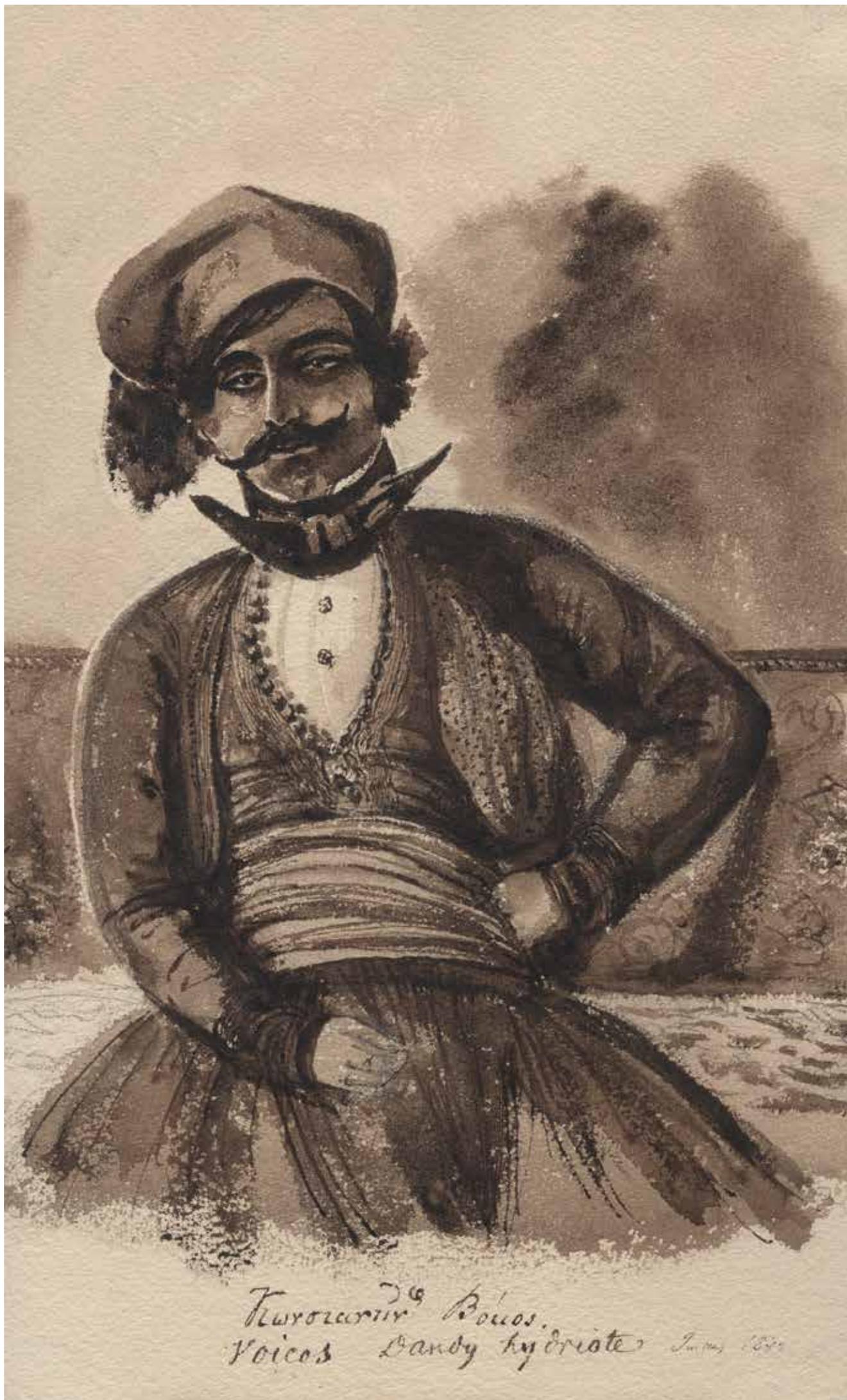
Portrait 42. Spyridon G. Karaiskakis, Athens (29.5 x 24.5 cm)



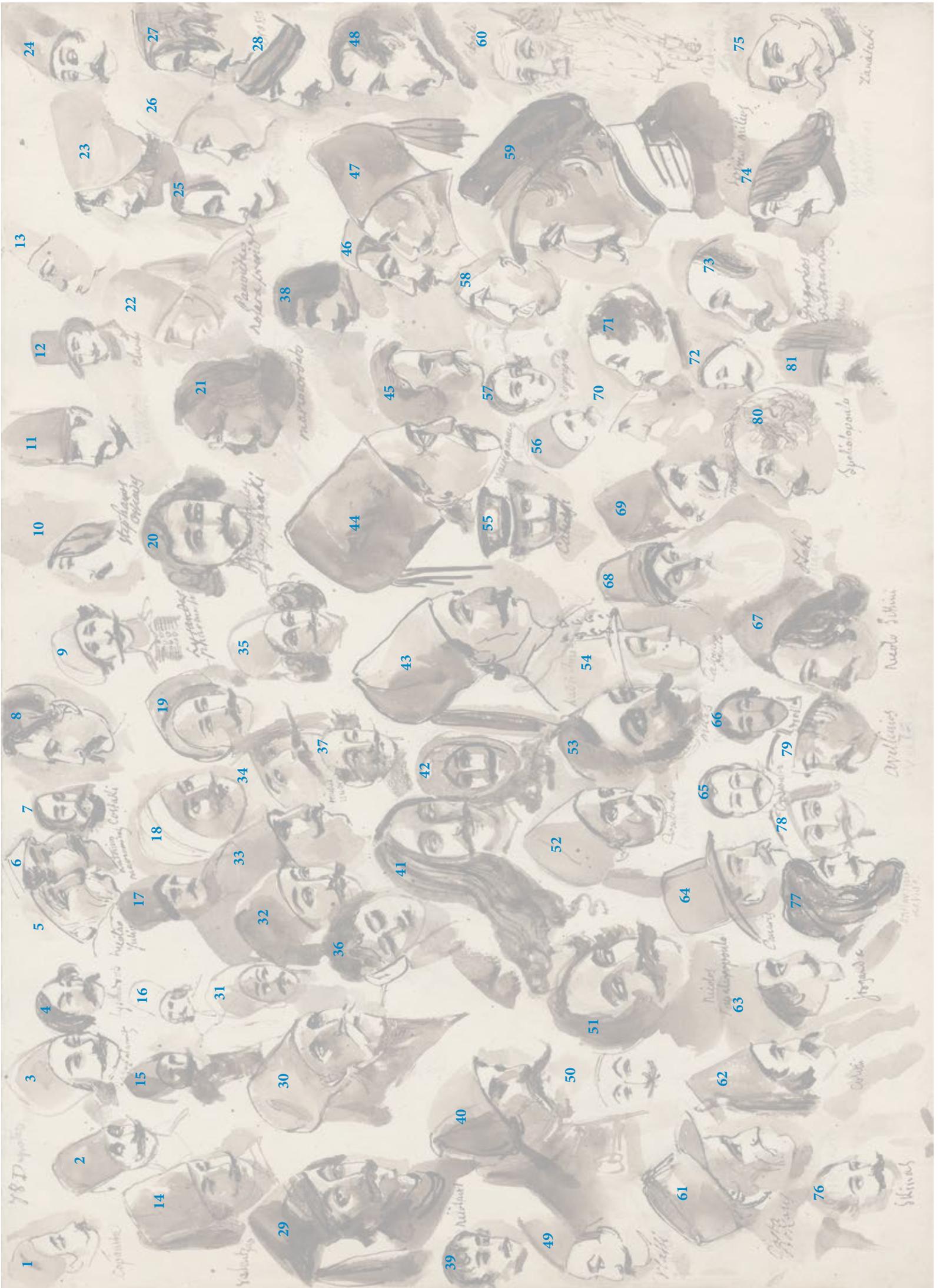
Portraits 43. Anastasios Mavromichalis and Ilias Salafatinos, Athens (34 x 26 cm)



Portrait 66. Lazaros Koundouriotis, Hydra (34.5 x 24.2 cm)



Portrait 67. Constantinos Vokos, Hydra (31.5 x 18.7 cm)



Portraits 111. Portrait key



Papa Yiannis, Sikyon

[Portrait 40]

The subject's headgear is most unusual, particularly for a priest. It cannot be regarded as a priest's hat, nor does it resemble a

fez, although a short tassel can perhaps be made out on the left. CGD

❖ **Notes:** [B. Mary or another hand:] Papa Gianni / à Sycione / 9^{bre} 1841



Hadji

[Portrait 41]

Here Benjamin Mary has portrayed a hadji – a Muslim who has gained this honorific title because he has made his pilgrimage to Mecca. This pilgrimage, one of the five obligations of every follower of Islam, has to be carried out once in the lifetime of every Muslim. He then acquires the title of hadji, which is prefixed to his name and bequeathed to his children.

The title is also used in the case of those Christians who have performed a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The presence of this Muslim in Athens serves as evidence of the transitional phase in Greek society. A considerable number of Ottoman Muslims continued to live in Athens in the Othonian period. IV

❖ **Notes:** [Title:] Hadgi [B. Mary:] d'après nature / à Athènes / 27 X^{bre} 1841



Spyridon G. Karaiskakis

[Portrait 42]

Spyridon was the only son of the renowned military chief Georgios Karaiskakis and Enkolpia Skylodimou, who came from a family of *armatoles*. He was born during the War of Independence, in 1826, on the island of Kalamos in the Ionian sea, which was at that time under British occupation. Orphaned at the age of nine, he was placed under state protection 'because of his father's illustrious services to the homeland'. Under Otto, he was sent together with 60 other orphans to Munich, where he studied at the Greek Lykeion and the Preparatory Military School. He returned to Greece in 1842 to study at the Evelpidon Military Academy in Piraeus, but was expelled in 1846 for participating in a revolt at the school. In 1848, he joined the *Orophylaki* (Border Guard) and gradually rose in the military hierarchy. In 1854, he took part in the Greek-

Turkish skirmishes which occurred during the Crimean War, and subsequently devoted himself, successfully, to the suppression of banditry. In 1856, he was appointed *aide-de-camp* to King Otto, whom he followed into exile, remaining with him until the arrival of George I in Greece. Returning to Greece in 1864, he was voted one of the candidates for the post of Commander of the National Guard of Athens – another corps of the Greek army whose purpose was the maintenance of order. At the same time, he became active in politics. He served in 1865 as member of Parliament for Valtos, in 1875 for Evrytania, and then for Karditsa, after the incorporation of Thessaly by the Royal Decree of 31 March 1883. He was vice-president of Parliament in 1867-1868, and war minister in various governments from 1875 to 1882. In 1884, he resigned from his seat in

Parliament and devoted himself to his military career. By the time of his retirement – in 1886 with the rank of lieutenant-general – he had served in a number of important posts. He was appointed garrison commander of Corfu, and, later, to the command of the Third Army Corps, with its headquarters in Arta. During the conflicts of 1886, he was in command of the army in Epirus, and, immediately afterwards, sometimes of the First and sometimes of the Second Army Command with transfers to their headquarters, in Missolonghi or in Athens.

❖ **Notes:** [Signature:] Σ. Γ. Καραϊσκάκης [Another hand:] Le fils de Karaiskaki [B. Mary:] d'après nature / à Athènes 19 Janvier / 1842 ❖ **Sources:** *To Asty* newspaper, 12 January 1886, No. 16.



Anastasios Mavromichalis and Ilias Salafatinos

[Portraits 43/1, 43/2]

It emerges from a comparison of the signature here and documents kept in the Archive of Historical Documents at the HESG that the subject is Anastasios Mavromichalis. Benjamin Mary is mistaken in referring to him as Antonios and as the eldest son of Petrobey Mavromichalis.

Anastasios Mavromichalis, born in 1799, was the third son of Petrobey Mavromichalis. He came from this powerful Maniot family and was a prominent figure in war and peace. He was initiated into the Philiki Etaireia in 1818 by his brother Georgios in Constantinople, where he had gone for his general education. When the War of Independence broke out, he returned to the Peloponnese and took part in the hostilities. Almost immediately, his father sent him to Tripolitsa as a hostage, together with other notables. In September 1821, after the taking of the city, he was liberated and returned to the Mani. He subsequently took part in many battles, and distinguished himself particularly in 1826 fighting against Ibrahim at Verga and at Diros. Under Capodistrias, he joined the opposition as did the rest of the members of his family and took part in the anti-Capodistrian movement at Limeni in the Mani. After the assassination of Capodistrias, however, he adopted a moderate and conciliatory stance. Under Otto, he joined the army, rose in the hierarchy, and was finally promoted to major-general. At the National Assembly of 1843-1844, he was elected delegate for Oitylo, and in 1844 a member of Parliament. In 1848, he served as Minister of Education in the government of Georgios Koundouriotis, and from October of the same year until April 1849 as war minister in that of Constantinos Kanaris. From 1850 to 1861, he was a senator. He was also elected a delegate at the National Assembly which was convened after the deposing of King Otto in 1862. Anastasios Mavromichalis married Chryseida Pagoni from Kalamata, sister of Metropolitan Gerasimos Pagonis. He had seven children and died in 1870.

According to publications of the time, he was a brave, honourable, and modest man, worthy of his father's name. In 1860, he married Evdokia, daughter of Georgios Varvakis, and had a son and two daughters. He died in Athens in 1898.

Benjamin Mary depicted him in 1842 in a richly ornamented uniform and in a heroic stance which fitted the image which Spyridon Karaiskakis had of his father. DK

Benjamin Mary drew all the members of Anastasios Mavromichalis's family apart from his son Kyriakoulis. They are included in the 'Women's Album'. Anastasios is shown here with the devoted friend of the family Ilias Salafatinos.

Ilias Salafatinos was born between 1780 and 1785 and came from Oitylo in the Mani. One of the most upright and disinterested fighters in the War of Independence, he descended from the ancient Stefanopoulos family. Its members were forced to leave their birthplace in the mid-seventeenth century because of local antagonism. They returned many years later, changing their surname to Katsanos. This surname, like the Salafatinos name, is explained by some scholars as a nickname given to family members with reference to some bodily defect or peculiarities of character. This argument has not been adequately documented historically, but it remains a fact that Salafatinos signed with this name and that as such he was known to his contemporaries. He was a faithful companion of Petrobey Mavromichalis and was devoted to all the members of that old family. From the beginning of the War of Independence he played a leading part in the military operations with rare zeal and courage.

On 17 March 1821, he and Ilias Mavromichalis swore an oath that they would not return to their homes until their homeland was liberated. To reinforce their oath, they decided not to shave their beards before the end of the Struggle, in accordance with local custom. Ilias Salafatinos – sometimes with his own small band of soldiers and sometimes under the orders of Theodoros Kolokotronis, Kanellos Deliyiannis, and the Mavromichalis clan – fought with distinction in all the battles he took part in, urging on his companions like a true Spartan. He fought in the battle of Karytaina, served gallantly at Valtetsi, and then hastened to Roumeli to assist Odysseas Androutsos. He returned

He was a delegate for Hydra at the National Assembly of Astros in 1823, while his son Dimitrios was a delegate at the National Assembly of 1843-1844. With his wife, Panaghioula, he had six sons and at least one daughter, who was called Marousa and was the wife of Dimitrios A. Miaoulis. He died in 1853.

Benjamin Mary met him on his island when he was around 75, and portrayed him with his grandson of the same name, most probably the child of his son Eleftherios (1819-1899). ^{IV}

❖ **Description:** Cut on the left and right sides ❖ **Notes:** [Signature:] ζαμάτης Ν. μπουντούρη [Another hand:] Stamati Nikolaos Boudouris – Σταμάτης Ε. Σ. Ν. Μπουντούρ<ης> / Stamati E. S. N. Boudouris. [B. Mary:] d'après nature / à Hydra 29 Juillet 1842 ❖ **Sources:** Varda, *op. cit.*



Efthymios priest-monk

[Portrait 65]

Efthymios was born around 1781 and came from Constantinople. He was poorly educated, and this is apparent from his signature. He was entered on the register of the Prophitis Ilias Monastery on Hydra in 1813. He was one of the 'Kolly-

vades', traditionalist monks who came from Mount Athos, and formed the community of the monastery which was founded that year. He was Abbot of the monastery when Theodoros Kolokotronis was imprisoned there. ^{CGD}

❖ **Notes:** [Signature:] ήγουμενος τής εν ύδρα μονής του προφίτου / Ηλιοῦ εὐθήμιος ἡ έρομοναχος [Another hand:] Euphémios Supérieur du monastère de S' Élie / à Hydra. [B. Mary:] d'après nature / à Hydra 31 Juillet 1842 ❖ **Sources:** Tombros 2019, *op. cit.*, p. 207.



Lazaros Koundouriotis

[Portrait 66]

Born in 1769, Lazaros Koundouriotis was one of the most important political figures of the War of Independence, though he never took part in any battle, never openly engaged in party politics, and never held public office. A shipowner – among the wealthiest on Hydra – he emerged as one of the main financial backers of the Struggle. He was recognised by the Hydriots as first among the notables, and he enjoyed the general respect of his contemporaries, while he influenced the political life of his country through his brother Georgios. When the War of Independence was declared on Hydra, it initially met with the opposition of Lazaros Koundouriotis and the rest of the notables, but he soon changed his mind. Together with his brother Georgios, he accepted and supported the War of Independence with all his resources, both with generous financial contributions and the provision of vessels for the strengthening of Greek sea power. In the end, he spent the greater part of his fortune on the aims of the Struggle. In the course of the civil conflict, he found himself in direct opposition to Theodoros Kolokotronis. His part in the management of the British loan of 1824 increased his power and influence beyond the narrow

bounds of Hydra. He was one of the protagonists in the anti-Capodistrias movement, as Hydra developed into a nucleus of opposition whose purpose was to overthrow the president. In 1844, Otto appointed him a senator, an honorary office which he retained until his death in 1852.

Lazaros Koundouriotis spent his life together with his family at his home on Hydra. It was there that many important meetings were held to discuss serious issues in the War of Independence, and it was there that he received visits from prominent figures of the period, travellers, philhellènes, the royal couple Otto and Amalia, and many others. It was there, clearly, that he was also visited by Benjamin Mary, who portrayed him *en face*, in contrast with all the other portraits of Koundouriotis which are known to us. In all his portraits he is shown with a patch over his right eye. According to one source, he was in fact one-eyed as a result of a family conflict having to do with a love affair. According, however, to the testimony of the late ambassador Andreas L. Koundouriotis, great-grandson of Georgios Koundouriotis and also of Dimitrios Kallerghis, he

was not one-eyed, but had been born with a congenital anomaly whereby his eyes were of different colours, something which is not uncommon, particularly among northern peoples. One of his eyes was brown and the other blue-green, that is, he had *heterochromia iridis*, a phenomenon which has been known since antiquity, and it is said that Alexander the Great and Aristotle shared it. However, in seafaring circles, known for their superstitions even in the nineteenth century, this was considered ‘ill-omened’ or bad luck for the fate of a vessel – a superstition not confined to Greece. He therefore chose to appear

one-eyed so that this natural oddity would not have a negative effect on the course of his shipping activities. In some portraits he is shown with a patch over his left eye, but it seems that this is probably owing to a mirror copying of the well-known oil painting by Dimitrios Tsokos.

The comment – probably that of the Belgian diplomat himself – that Lazaros Koundouriotis was an introverted and ‘closed’ character is of interest. IV

❖ **Notes:** [Signature:] λάζαρος κουντουριώτης [Another hand:] Lazaro Conduriotti / l'un des principaux meneurs pour l'indépendance / de la Grèce n'ayant voulu occuper aucun emploi / et n'étant jamais sorti d'Hydra, caractère / en dedans. [31?] Juillet 1842 ❖ **Sources:** *Koundouriotis Archives, op. cit.* – HESG, *Η ιστορική οικόια Λαζάρου Κουντουριώτη Ύδρα* [The Historic House of Lazaros Koundouriotis, Hydra], Athens 2002.



Constantinos Vokos

[Portrait 67]

Vokos was a Hydriot from a large seafaring family which was made famous by its renowned member Andreas Miaoulis. Benjamin Mary met Constantinos Vokos in July 1842 on Hydra. He was impressed by his appearance – and probably also by his behaviour – and depicted him in every detail as a ‘Hydriot dandy’. He stressed both his islander’s costume – with the fez, the wide breeches, the sash, and the kerchief – and his manner.

Closely associated with the family of Miaoulis’s father, Dimitrios Vokos, was their adopted son Mitros (Dimitris) Yerakitis-

Vokos, an experienced seaman. In the island’s archives, among Mitros’s children, Constantis is mentioned, and he is probably the individual depicted here.

It is equally likely that the subject is to be identified as Constantinos, son of Dimitris Vokos (1801-?), the grandson of Athanasios, brother of Andreas Miaoulis. He fought at sea as a chief mate and served under Georgios Sahinis (1789-1864), Emmanouil Miaoulis (1812-1871), and others. IV

❖ **Notes:** [Signature:] Κωνσταντίνος Βόκος [Another hand:] Voicos Dandy hydriote [probably B. Mary:] Juillet 1842 ❖ **Sources:** K. Adamopoulou and A.N. Prassa, *Άνδρέας Μιαούλης (1769-1835). Από την υπόδουλη ως την ελεύθερη Ελλάδα* [Andreas Miaoulis (1769-1835). From Enslaved to Free Greece], Athens 2003, p. 98. Also, family tree of the Vokos-Miaoulis family, *ibidem* between pp. 112-113.



Frà Giovanni Batista

[Portrait 68]

As far as we know, the Carmelite mendicant religious order was not particularly active in the Greek world. The order of Carmelitani Scalzi or Discalced Carmelites had existed since the baroque era. Founded by St Teresa of Avila, it consisted of two independent groups and, subsequently, of two independ-

ent orders. The Carmelitani Scalzi were recognised as an independent order in 1593, by a bull of Pope Clement VIII. The first leader of the order was Nicolò di Gesù Maria Doria. It continues to exist today.



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ISBN: 978-618-83044-6-8

ISBN: 978-618-5555-09-2