

## **The Democratic Eastern Federation and the Poems of Ossian: Albania**

*By Kathleen Ann O'Donnell\**

‘Greeks, Albanians, Serbs, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Hellenes, Slavs, Latins, Tatars ... Let  
us unite!  
‘England will never be civilised till she has added Utopia to her Dominions.’ Oscar Fingal  
O’Flahertie Wills Wilde

*This paper will demonstrate the aims and tenets of the Democratic Eastern Federation set up in 1868, in promoting unity among former foes in the Balkans and Anatolia as a counterweight to the threatened usurpation of the ‘divide and rule’ policy of Western Imperialism. The secular work of The Poems of Ossian by James Macpherson, promoted by the Irish scholar and lyricist Thomas Moore, exemplified the art of peaceful coexistence of former foes in their fight against tyranny, through the morally empowered warriors, Fingal, Ossian and Oscar. To combat this threat, the Democratic Eastern Federation endeavoured to introduce federalism without monarchy, whose inhabitants in the region would live in equality, fraternity and liberty. To what extent did Albanian intellectuals contribute to the Democratic Eastern Federation? Did they face opposition from religious clerics and Western European Imperialism?*

**Keywords:** 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Translations of Ossian, Hellenism, Unity, Democratic Eastern Federation, Albania, Balkans, Anatolia, Western Imperialism

### **Rigas Velestinlis and the Anatolian Confederation**

The Democratic Eastern Federation would embrace territory from Illyria to Asia Minor and Egypt. Its tenets were based on the work of the Greek Wallachian scholar, Rigas Velestinlis (Velestinlis, 1994) and those of P. J. Proudhon, the nineteenth century French scholar, socialist and philosopher (Hasiotis, 2001). Proudhon was also an adversary of Marx (Voyenne 2004). Both Velestinlis and Proudhon were supporters of federalism, who saw education as the key to progress: ‘No Revolution henceforward will be fruitful, if a recreation of public education is not its crowning feature...’ (Woodcock, 1972). Rather than capitalism, Proudhon also believed in mutualism, a system that called for justice based on reciprocity (Stanley, 1983). Proudhon was also a supporter of the 1848 Paris Revolution (Proudhon 1970); many Proudhonians participated in the Paris Communes of 1871 (O’Donnell, 2019).

As for Rigas, in order to counter the threat of intervention by the West, he set up a secret organisation in Bucharest in 1780 known as the Anatolian Confederation (Kordatos, 1983). In the nineteenth century, the term ‘Balkan’ was not in use

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(Svolopoulos, 2000). (However, 'Balkan' will be used in this paper as its meaning is understood in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.) In his long patriotic song that he composed when ninety-eight per cent of the indigenous people were illiterate (Koulouphakos, 1984) the first two verses became his 'Battle Cry' – with it he called on people of all creeds, including the Ottomans themselves, who were living under the rule of the despotic Sultan, to rise up and replace tyranny with federations that would introduce freedom, brotherhood and equality (Daskalakis 1963). Rigas proclaimed: 'Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians, Romaics, Arabs, Africans and ... Montenegrins. With one united leap, gird your sword for Freedom against the tyranny of the Ottomans.' [Velestinlis 'Patriotic Song'].

His works include a Constitution, a Declaration of Rights, and one of the first novels written in the Greek vernacular, among his other writings (Velestinlis, 2002). In order to boost the morale of the oppressed, Rigas wrote "School of Delicate Lovers", published in 1790; it is based on the work of Restif de la Bretonne. In another work, Restif de la Bretonne included translations from *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson (O'Donnell 2020). Rigas also published a textbook entitled 'An Anthology of Physics'. In 1802, this work was translated into Arabic in manuscript in Damietta, Egypt, in which he wrote: 'Whoever thinks freely, thinks well.' (O'Donnell 2017). Similarly, like Rigas, Proudhon would proclaim that: 'The law must be the first and only chief leader of the country.' (Proudhon, 1923).

Rigas's works, including his 'Battle Cry', were disseminated in Corfu, Zakynthos, Kephallonia, Kythera, Paxos, Lefkatha and Ithaca. Napoleon liberated them from nearly four hundred years of Venetian rule. These islands had undergone rule by the Russo-Ottomans until 1807, when they became part of the French Empire. From 1815 to 1864, they became a British Protectorate (O'Donnell 2023). Byron spent nearly three months on Kephallonia before his demise in Messolonghi in April 1824.

## **The Democratic Eastern Federation**

The Democratic Eastern Federation was a continuation of Rigas's dream. It was founded by Panayiotis Panas, a Kephallonian scholar and journalist, in Athens and Bucharest in 1868. Panas was head of the organisation in Athens, which was disguised as The Rigas Association. His friend and colleague, Thomas Paschides, an Epirot scholar, educator, and newspaper editor, was head of the organisation in Bucharest. The extracts from the secular *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson, propagated through the Irish scholar and lyricist Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*, were used to instil magnanimity and justice through their heroes, Fingal, Ossian and Oscar, whose skill in uniting former foes enabled them to conquer despotic usurpers (O'Donnell, 2020). To uplift the morals of the long-subjected people in the zone, education was to be based on the Hellenic renaissance and to include the wisdom of Socrates to Plato, the language of Isocrates, whose definition of Hellene suggested intelligence, but not race, applied to those sharing Athenian culture. It also included the works of Xenophon, the Gospels and John Chrysostom (Paschides 1974). Chrysostom was born in Antioch in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and was recognised by the Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican faiths. Chrysostom described the 'abuse' perpetuated by the

wealthy and property owners. By the eleventh century, most of these works were absorbed into the Arabic and Armenian cultures through translation (O'Donnell 2017). The Anglo-Scottish poet Byron translated 'Battle Cry' by Rigas; it was published in 1811 (Byron, 1919). Interestingly, in 1873, Panas translated and published 'On Hellenism' by Gustave Flourens, his secret friend; it was published in the Bucharest newspaper 'Iris' (in French and Greek), whose editor was Thomas Paschides. This indicates that the tenets of the Paris Commune, one of whose main leaders was Gustave Flourens (O'Donnell, 2019), continued through Panas, from Kephallonia, where many Albanians moved to in the nineteenth century.

### **Fratrions: James Macpherson, Thomas Moore and Lord Byron**

By 1809, Byron had visited Albania, which was at that time part of the Ottoman Empire. As his mother was Scottish, Byron spent his childhood in Scotland, thus enabling him to see many similarities between Albanians and Caledonians, especially in terms of the Celtic language; this reminded him of Morven (Byron, 1850). Morven was the seat of Fingal, the father of Ossian, whose feats were embodied in *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson, published in the 1760s. Macpherson was one of the first scholars to collect oral songs as well as some manuscripts to preserve his ancestral oral literature, which was in the Gaelic language. By translating his findings into English, Macpherson presented Celtic literature to the world, which proved to be a resounding success as it was translated into twenty-seven languages (Stafford, 1988). His work inspired many other European writers to do research into their own oral literature (Van Tieghem, 1917).

In fact, Byron himself translated two Albanian songs from the original, included in the notes attached to Canto Book II from 'Childe Harold' Pilgrimage'. Although *The Poems of Ossian* was later deemed to be a fraudulent work, Byron wrote an adaptation of Ossian based on the epic 'Fingal' Book III, entitled 'The Death of Calmar and Orla', after which he included a footnote stating that although he knew of the controversy as to the authenticity of the poems, he nevertheless believed them to be worthy. Byron's adaptation of Ossian was published in his 'Hours of Idleness' (Byron, 1919).

The Irish scholar, Thomas Moore, was a close friend of Lord Byron: in fact, Byron was godfather to his daughter. Moore wrote the lyrics and music to his 'Irish Melodies', which were translated into many languages. Byron knew them all by heart and included an epigraph from one of them in his poem 'The Giaour (1813). Moore wrote a biographical account of Byron's life, which is regarded as a literary masterpiece (Thomas Moore Poetry Foundation). After having written 'In imitation of Ossian' in October of the same year, Moore had it published in *The Press* in Dublin in the same year, for which he was summoned to court before the Irish Revolution in 1798 (O'Donnell 2020). Ireland, a Catholic country, had been colonised by the English since the 16<sup>th</sup> century when Henry VIII, a Protestant, took over Ireland. (Key, 1982) This imitation is the first example of how *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson was used as a political tool. This is known as fratricism (Pitcock, 2011), whereby literature is used to oppose the tyranny of Western

monarchy. The editor of *The Press*, Thomas Emmett, supported the union of the nation's different religions. Here is an excerpt:

'But Britannia commands and Oppression is joined to *your* fate! Armies are bound to oppose your peace, and their ranks are filled from the land of strangers; even your brethren of the soil are against you: ...Not so was the court of Fingal – not so were the Halls of Selma! ...for just was the soul of Fingal, and noble were the heroes of Morven' (Clifford, 1984).

Moore's 'Imitation' was republished in 'The Celt' in Dublin and New York in 1857 (O'Donnell, 2020). After that, translations into Greek of *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson were usually translated from Italian or French texts in the nineteenth century, at a time when injustice by foreign oppressors occurred in the Greek-speaking world, which included the Balkans and Anatolia.

Byron's adaptation of 'The Death of Calmar and Orla' is a call for unity and justice. It was translated from French into Greek in 1850 in the journal 'Evterpe', circulated throughout the zone in the year when England blockaded Greece. Without informing Russia or France, who were part of the three 'joint guarantors' after the Greek Revolution, England demanded that the Greek government pay for the loss incurred to the Portuguese Jew Don Pacifico, a money lender, a resident of Gibraltar and thus an English subject for damages caused to his property in Athens to the value of 886,737 drachmas and 67 lepta (O'Donnell 2017). The veteran Macriyiannis wrote: 'They took all our boats, stamped on our flag and people of the islands died of hunger and boat owners cried bitter tears.' (Korthatos, 1973). Whenever a blockade occurred, the power of the Greek Parliament was handed over to the king (O'Donnell 2017).

In 1854-7, Western powers imposed a blockade ostensibly because of the Crimean War (1855-6), but it was mainly because there were uprisings in both Thessaly, Epirus and Crete. The Kephalonian poet and judge Julius Typaldos, whose mother was the famous Italian poetess, Tereza Ringetti, published a book of poetry on Zakynthos in 1856. The first poem is an epic, influenced by Ossian, entitled 'Rigas the Inspirer'. Typaldos also translated from Cesarotti's version of *The Poems of Ossian* (O'Donnell, 2014), two poems from the fragments attached to 'Croma' entitled 'Two Nights', in which he changes the word 'friend' to 'brother' in both poems to cement unity. He was forced to leave the Seven Islands when the English spread the lie that Typaldos had insisted that the Seven Islands, except for Corfu and Paxos, be united to Greece in 1861. This he strongly denied (O'Donnell, 2023). Three Greek patriots took part in the uprising in Thessaly; they would become united in their aspirations, and they were: Dionysius Economopoulos, a Zakynthian, who would become the father of Greek-Egyptian journalism in Alexandria (Nikitaridis 2015), Panayiotis Panas, and Thomas Paschides (Stavropoulou 1987). Their scholarship under the banner of the Democratic Eastern Federation would spread their political and cultural aspirations via the media into the Greek-speaking world. At this time, both Egypt and Romania were self-governed although Ottoman tributaries (O'Donnell, 2017).

## **Balkan Intellectuals**

Evangelos Zappas, born in Albania, was a wealthy landowner and veteran of 1821, who resided permanently in Romania. He bequeathed a huge sum of money to the Rumanians on the understanding that it would be used to further Hellenism in 1860. His cousin, Constantine, continued with his legacy after his death (Neo Domi, n.d.). The uniting of people through the Greek language in the area is evident when the Bulgarian medical student, Gregory Parlitsef (Gregory Stavridis), won the Ambrose Ralli Poetry Prize in Athens. He dedicated his poem 'Armatoli' to Evangelos Zappas in 1860 (Moullas, 1989). In the fifties, he had taught at a Greek school in Tirana. Ten years later, Parlitsef would translate 'Skenderbeg', the Albanian 15<sup>th</sup>-century hero, from Greek into Bulgarian (Parlitsef, 2000). Moving to Bucharest in 1860, Thomas Paschides could write in Greek, Romanian and Albanian.

Born in Janina, in the Ottoman Empire, Paschides attended the Zoisimia School (whose name Byron refers to in 'Childe Harold') there in 1852. Paschides then taught at a Greek school in Berat, Albania. After completing his education at Athens University, he acquired his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Naples. (Hatziphotis, 1974). It is noteworthy that both the Albanian scholars Sami and Naim Frasheri (Frasheri Web) and Jani Vretos (Vretos Web) would attend Zoisimia School a decade later. Like Sami Frasheri, Paschides believed that Albanians were descended, like Greeks, from Pelasgians. Significantly, Thomas Moore states in his 'History of Ireland' that the Japhetan or Pelasgian language was the oldest European language spoken in Ireland, the Highlands of Scotland and Wales (Moore, 1835). In 1860, Paschides published his first work in Bucharest entitled 'The Mass of the Albanian martyr Saint Cosma' (Hatziphotis 1974). He published his own newspaper, 'Decebal Brotherhood of the people of Anatolia' in Greek and French. He was a joint publisher of 'Iris, the newspaper for the people of Anatolia', printed in Bucharest. He was also the editor of several Romanian periodicals. Dedicating his play 'Japhet' to Costas Zappas and the Pelasgians, Paschides translated extracts from Byron's impressions of Epirus. Paschides travelled widely on occasions to many places, including Italy, Spain, Palestine, Syria and Egypt (Hatziphotis, 1974).

## **Monarch, Republicanism and Revolution**

Panayiotis Panas published 'Dar-thula-Lathmon' in Kephallonia, in August 1862, which he dedicated to three Greek heroes who were fighting for a republic in the Cycladic Revolution in March 1862. They had been mown down cruelly by Greek Royalist soldiers in what is recorded as a bloodless coup (O'Donnell, 2023). His dedicatory poem before the translation was influenced by Moore's 'Irish Melodies', published in French by Louise Swanton Belloc (Belloc, 1841). A native of Kephallonia, Panas, after having been tortured and imprisoned under the British Protectorate, travelled to Bucharest and other places in the 1850s (O'Donnell 2020). His compatriot, the radical Kephallonian scholar and journalist, Gerassimus Mavroyiannis, who chose self-exile in Athens after the English atrocities inflicted on Kephallonians in 1848 (O'Donnell, 2023), published 'On Ossian' in Chrysalis in

July 1863. Mavroyiannis's use of parts of the preface to Belloc's 'Irish Melodies', written by D. O'Sullivan on the history of Bards in Wales and Ireland, depicts how the English monarchy had silenced them (O'Donnell, 2013). The civil war in Athens, recorded as the 'June events' (Loukatos, 1984), resulted from the foreign Catholic king Otto abdicating after the Cycladic Revolution at the instigation of the English and being replaced by yet another monarch. In return, the English donated the Seven Islands and allowed them to unite with Greece. It was hoped that a republic would replace the rule of a foreign monarchy (O'Donnell 2014). Many Albanians moved to both Kephallonia and Zakynthos in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Dandrakis 1956). The Eptanesian, Panayiotis Materanghas, of Albanian descent, a scholar, poet and consul, translated 'Come away with me' from Irish Melodies by Thomas Moore in 1864 (O'Donnell, 2020).

The Albanian Anastasios Koulouriotis (Anastas Kullurjoti), a native of Athens, whose Albanian father had died fighting in the 1821 Greek Revolution, left for the United States in his early twenties and returned having made a fortune. A polyglot, he went to London in 1863 and complained about the rule of the Bavarian king Otto (Othon). In his petition, which was published, he described the neglect in education and the corruption that had existed under Bavarian rule in Greece. He stated: 'We want political and religious freedom.... Religious liberty is one of the greatest privileges that man can possess.' Koulouriotis, however, wished to have Prince Alfred as the new monarch (Skoulidas, 1992), unlike Panas, who regarded this move as a transfer of power by the English from Corfu to Athens, which it became. Soon after, Greece was regarded as a Protectorate after another foreign monarch, a Dane, was selected.

In 1865, Panas moved to Alexandria (O'Donnell 2017). The Albanian journalist and folklorist Thimi Mitko emigrated there in the same year (Elsie, 2010). In 1862, Dionysius Economopoulos worked together with Spiro Ferendinos in publishing the first Greek journal, 'Egyptos' in Alexandria (Nikitaridis 2015). Panas set up the newspaper 'The Egyptian Eagle' with his fellow pupil Spiro Pherentinos (Stavropoulou, 1987), who wrote the epic poem to the first Viceroy entitled 'The erecting of the Statue of Muhammad Ali' (Pherentinos, 1872). Muhammad Ali, the first Viceroy of Egypt, was Albanian. His father was Albanian, and his great-grandfather was from Korca, where Mitko was born and educated (Elsie, 2010). The book of poetry 'Memnon', written by Panas, with an epigraph by Byron, was published by Nile Press in 1865, and owned by Ferdinand Oddi, a former classmate. It was distributed to towns along the Nile and included an extract taken from the epic 'Temora Book IV', which describes two brothers, Cairbar, a tyrant and Cathmor, a just and honest leader. This poem is implicit in its reference to Ismail and Halim. At this time in Egypt, there was turmoil when Ismail, the viceroy and tyrant, sought to install primogeniture by lavishing huge gifts on the Sultan at the expense of his people, so his son would inherit the Khedivship rather than Halim Pasha, his uncle, the rightful heir and son of Muhammad Ali of Albanian descent. After a failed coup d'état in 1866 (O'Donnell, 2017), Halim Pasha fled, hounded by Ismail. Halim was aided in his flight to Istanbul by former classmates of Panas, Oddi and Economopoulou (Hatziphotis, 1999).

In 1866, there was a Cretan uprising. Paschides donated all his inheritance to the cause (Hatziphotis, 1974). Having participated in the revolt after the slaughter at Arcadi in November 1866, the French scholar and revolutionary Gustave Flourens was chosen as President of the Cretan delegation for unity with Greece (Flourens 1868). Flourens was kidnapped by the Greek Government and deported for holding a public meeting on Hellenism (Hugo, 2002). A colonel in the Paris Communes, Flourens was murdered by Royalist soldiers in captivity in April 1871. Panas was a reporter for *Mellon* in Calafat, Romania. Demos Papathanassios was a supporter of Proudhon. When Papathanassios defended the Paris Commune, Panas was the only reporter of the paper who rushed to his aid to help him in the confrontation with those who attacked him for his beliefs. Panas translated Flourens' article 'On Hellenism', which he published in 'Iris' in Bucharest in 1873 (O'Donnell 2019). Extolling Athenian democracy, Flourens projected the superiority of the federal system, which in his view united the ancient city-states, political freedom and liberation from its religious precepts.

### Hellenism and Christianity

Koulouriotis's next publication appeared in *Mellon* in 1875-6, which was a translation of the Gospels into Modern Greek, and this was the choice of reading matter to support the tenets of the DEF. He tried to defend the British and Foreign Bible Society against the prohibitory circulars of the Church of Greece and the Greek Government. In the introduction to this work, in an ironic vein, he criticises the Greek government, accusing it of being more occupied with material questions such as armaments and economic recovery, while, in his opinion, the strength of a country comes from the introduction of ideas contained in books and newspapers (Skoulidas, 1992). His viewpoint is supported by the following works, recommended in support of the Democratic Eastern Federation, that were translated into Greek.

The writers on Hellenism mentioned above began to be translated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the periodical 'Byron', founded in the same year as the Democratic Eastern Federation in 1868, Kephalonian T. Karousos, Panas's former high school teacher, translated 'The Philosophy of Socrates' by Alfred Fouillee. (*Byron*, 1876). In 1875, 'Isocrates' was translated by Vasilis G. Vithoulas and published in Athens. In 1862, 'Economia' by Xenophon was translated into both Modern Greek (Legrand, 1912) and Serbian (J. Koumandidis, 1862). The Kephalonian A. Lascaratos translated 'The Life of John Chrysostom' from English in 1866 (Legrand, 1912). Translations in Romanian were done by the Hellenist Greek-Romanian Heliade Radulescu, who translated Isocrates and Plato by Vasilie Bumbac and 'The Apology of Socrates' by Plato by Filaret Scriban (Dictionarul Literaturii Romane, 1979). The first three books of 'The Republic' by Plato were translated into Arabic by the Egyptian scholar Muhammad Abduh in the 1870s (O'Donnell, 2017). Byron refers to Chrysostom in his epic poem 'Don Juan'.

Disunity was also created by ecclesiastics. Nicholas Politis, the Greek folklorist and member of the Rhigas Association, was editor of the periodical 'Illysos'. Politis uses examples from 'The Poems of Ossian' in his article 'Superstitions about Ghosts

by the People of Greece', including excerpts from 'Darth-thula' among other excerpts, by Panas (Politis, 1870). Politis chose a folk song that was sung all over the Balkans in his comparison with extracts taken from 'The Poems of Ossian' with the Modern Greek oral song 'The Dead Brother', which was composed in Anatolia. In Serbian, it is known as 'Giovan and Gelitsas'. There are four different versions in Bulgarian, and it was known as 'Constanti and Garendina' in Albanian (Koulouphakos, 1984). The song showed the connection with the East, when daughters were matched in marriage to families as far afield as Babylon, in an area also under Ottoman rule. The metaphorical message of marriage symbolised the quest for unity in the area. It was by pointing out the connection of this folk song, using the symbolism of unity through marriage and comparing it to 'The Poems of Ossian', that a sense of harmony was retained among the ordinary Balkan people, which had been greatly harmed through the machinations of the Orthodox Church, which led to the Bulgarian schism on 18 February 1870 (O'Donnell 2019). To combat this rift, in collaboration with Albanians and Bulgarians, the article 'The Traps of Panslavism' appeared in the media in Constantinople, published anonymously one month later, written by Paschides (Hatziphotis, 1974).

When Francis Joseph, an Austro-Hungarian Catholic monarch, deliberately spread turmoil among the minority of Catholics after he visited Herzegovina in the spring of 1875 - the population of Herzegovina at the time consisted of forty per cent Muslim, forty-two per cent Orthodox and eighteen per cent Catholic – his troops were on standby ready to occupy both Bosnia and Herzegovina after his tour was completed (Stavrianos, 2000). In 1875, Panas, alluding to Western monarchical tyranny through Cairbar, published 'The Death of Oscar' from the epic *Temora* Book I, connecting it to his previous translation in 1862. Usnoth, the father of the three slaughtered sons from 'Darthula', volunteers to fight Cairbar, under Oscar, son of Ossian, which serves as a reminder of an example of courage in the face of tyranny in 1862. When Cairbar murdered Cathol, Oscar's friend, who had accompanied him in the War of Inisthona (O'Donnell 2019), Oscar then sought to challenge Cairbar in single combat. Having refused to participate, Cairbar plots to kill him as Oscar dines as his guest. There is a reference to Cathmor, connecting this translation to the 1865 translation of *Temora* Book IV, in italics: 'Brave Cathmor came, we said, friends of foreigners, the great brother of gloomy Cairbar... ' (Panas 1875). Panas is hinting at Halim Pasha, a possible supporter of the Democratic Eastern, resident in Istanbul. In July 1875, an uprising broke out in Herzegovina. This resulted in a two-month armistice, which would end on 30 May 1876 (Stavrianos, 2000).

### **Unity versus Western Intervention**

In March 1875, Panas translated and published 'The Death of Oscar' in his newspaper 'Exergesis', circulated throughout the Greek-Speaking world, in remembrance of Rigas, celebrated on the national day and as a call to unite against the threat of usurpers. In September 1875, Panas proclaimed, similar to Rigas's call in the previous century: 'Greeks, Albanians, Serbs, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Hellenes, Slavs, Latins, Tartars, all who live in this wide region in the inclusivity of the three seas, the Black,

the Mediterranean and the Adriatic and the open lands from the Alps and the Carpathians until Crete and Cyprus. Let us Unite'. This was published in the same journal as 'The Death of Oscar' six months previously. However, Panas changed the name of the journal from 'Exergesis' to 'Ergatis', which became the nonofficial mouthpiece of the organisation. He pointed out the danger of division of the Balkan people from the Great Powers and the threat of Greece being isolated from other Balkan Countries: 'Our natural allies are the Balkan people, including the Turkish people themselves' (Varban 1995).

On 14 February 1876, Panas translated 'Oina-morul' in which Ossian, aiding a friend in battle against a usurper, forfeits his reward in order to cement peace between former enemies. In this poem is a footnote which implicitly refers to the Democratic Eastern Federation. It is a blueprint for depicting how former enemies can become friends. This poem was published in 'Byron' on the same day as a peaceful agreement between all parties, including Midhat Pasha, the Grand Vizier and possible head of a similar organisation like the Democratic Eastern Federation in Constantinople (Varban 1995); Namık Kemal and Halim Pasha were included in the negotiations (O'Donnell 2016). The agreement was reached, known as the Andrassy Note, named after the Austro-Hungarian Empire's foreign minister, in a meeting in Constantinople after the uprising in Herzegovina the previous year, whereby Christian, Jew and Muslim in the zone would live in harmony as equals (Stavrianos, 2000).

In 1876, furthering the interference of British Imperialism in the zone, Disraeli had obtained the Suez Canal shares via the Rothschild in Paris, sold to the latter by the Khedive Ismail (Bouvier, 1967). Disraeli announced in Parliament that the purchase of these shares would bring peace and security to the zone. But Disraeli, the British Prime Minister, objected to the peaceful agreement reached in Istanbul under Midhat Pasha (O'Donnell, 2017). Disraeli's refusal to sign the Berlin Memorandum brought not only war to the zone, including the massacre of Bulgarians, but also war between Serbian, Herzegovinians and Montenegrins against the Turks, resulting in many deaths fought over 'race and religion' (Stavridis, 2000). Again, Disraeli, while reiterating in Parliament that he wished for peace, he then sent ships to the Hellespont, threatening war. Both Typaldos and Panas wrote scathing poems entitled 'Disraeli'. The former suggested that Disraeli be hanged from a fig tree for destroying peace in both the East and the West. Panas, who first published 'Disraeli-Efendi' in September, 1876 in Rumania, referred to the English treatment of the Irish and challenged Disraeli regarding peace: 'We leave the willing tiger to bully us, having the conviction that it will not delay, when in the East peace will blossom, Statues will be raised in memory of us, - of Disraeli and Midhat to always bless them'. Panas translated four verses from Byron's 'Childe Harold' Book II, which imply that only by fighting unaided can you really be free. These were included in his translation of Angelo Brofferio's 'Greek Scenes' serialised in the 'Telegraph' in July 1877 (O'Donnell 2017). The 'Telegraph' also contained an article written by A. Oikonomidos, a Professor of Law, entitled 'The Democratic Association of Rhigas' in April: The Association had at least five hundred members (O'Donnell 2016).

After the Russo-Ottoman war, which ended in the Treaty of San Stefano in March 1878, Western powers took control, and the treaty was superseded by the Berlin Congress at the instigation of Disraeli (July, 1878), led by Bismarck, the

German chancellor. Egypt was on the agenda. This was because of a secret deal whereby Britain, under Disraeli, the Prime Minister, had obtained Cyprus, which was to have been included in the Democratic Eastern Federation, in return for providing mobile consular services to Ottoman Christians in Anatolia. When it was made public, the infuriated French delegate, Waddington, was ready to walk out. In order to appease his anger, Bismarck suggested that France take Tunisia whenever possible, assured of no objection from the Great Powers, and that both France and England become Dual controllers known as the Condominium of Egypt. Ismail had been deposed for incurring huge debts and thus not keeping to the rules laid down in the Firman. In his place, Halim Pasha, the direct descendant of Muhammad Ali, was chosen as Khedive to instil peace by the Sultan in 1879. This replacement was refused as the English insisted on the son of Ismail, Tewfik, a puppet, remaining as Khedive. The Sultan would make several more attempts at having Halim Pasha made Khedive, but to no avail. As someone who had fought at the 1848 Paris Barricades, who completed his studies at the Military Academy in Paris, had been commander in chief when in power in Egypt, and was of Albanian and Bedouin ancestry, his father's last wife being a Bedouin (O'Donnell, 2017), he was an ideal choice as his rule would have been more democratic and powerful especially when, at the Congress, Bismarck stated that there was no 'Albanian nationality' (Stavrianos, 2000).

### **Banning of the Albanian Language**

In Alexandria in 1875, the Albanian Society of Egypt was founded, named 'First Brotherhood', presided over by Thimi Mitko. (Mitko Web) When the banning of teaching and publication in the Albanian language had been lifted by the Turks in 1878 (Stavridis, 2000), Mitko published the newspaper 'The Albanian Bee' in Greek and Albanian (Elsie, 2012), which coincided with the setting up in July in Istanbul of the 'Albanian League for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian Nation', whose founding members included the Orthodox Jani Vreto, the Catholic Pashko Vasa, Sami and Abdyl Frasheri and Hasan Tahsini, who were Muslims. Other members included Pandelis Sotiri and Koto Hoxhi (Elsie, 2012). There was also another organisation set up in Istanbul called 'Society for the Printing of Albanian Writing', which was supported by Albanian Muslims, Orthodox and Catholic Christians, founded by Sami Frasheri (Semsettin), writer, philosopher, and playwright, who had worked with Namik Kemal, the Ottoman scholar. (Sami-Frasheri Web) Frasheri believed that Albanian should be written in Greek script as both Greeks and Albanians were descended from the Pelasgians (Elsie, 2012).

Koulouriotis collaborated with Panayiotis Koupitouris, an Albanian from Hydra, in publishing the newspaper 'The Voice of Albania' in Greek from July 1879 until September 1880 (Koulouriotis Web). Koupitouris was a headmaster in Patras, who taught Albanian at institutes in the evenings. His long, erudite thesis entitled 'Albanian Studies – An Historical and Literary Essay about the Albanian Nation and Language' was serialised in *Byron* from March until June 1879 (Koulouriotis, 1879). It was first published and serialised in 'Ephimeris ton Philomathon' (The Journal of the Philomath) in 1867 in Athens. His book, the 'Albanian Alphabet',

was also published in the ‘Syllogue philologique grec’ (The Greek Philological Association) in 1868 (Legrand, 1912). Anastasios Koulouriotis also set up an Albanian political party in Athens, as well as publishing an Albanian Primer in Athens in 1882 (Kulluriots Web). From a letter he received from Constantine Zappas, who informed him about the formation of the Democratic Eastern Federation, which was more cosmopolitan than just a united Greece-Albania, Koulouriotis writing in December 1878 in ‘The Voice of Albania’ declared that ‘We, consequently, are not willing to divide Albanians from Greeks, but perhaps we will unite them with the unbreakable affiliation of the Eastern Panethnic Federation (the DEF). In February 1880, ‘The Voice of Albania’ included articles from Thimi Mitko on the language. From February until May, 1880, two literary articles were published, namely that of Wassa Pash (Pashko Vasa) entitled ‘La verite sur l’Albane et les Albaniens (The truth about Albania and the Albanians) and the story of Scanderbeg by Camille Paganel translated by N. Dragoumi in 1861 (Skoulidas, 1992).

Thomas Paschides, who was the official representative in the uniting of Epirus with Greece, under discussion in the Congress of Berlin (1878-81), drafted a petition to present to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Waddington, in Paris. In 1879, Paschides wrote a paper entitled ‘On Epirus and the Greek Question by an Epirot’ in French, published in Paris in the same year, which was banned in Epirus. It was translated into Greek and Romanian. In March 1879, Paschides also published two books in Athens. The first was entitled ‘The Pelasgians under Hellenism together with Wallachians and Bulgarians’, including a chapter, translated into Romanian, into Albanian in Greek script, addressed to the Muslim Skiptarians (Greek-Pelasgians). The second was entitled ‘The Anatolian People, including Hebrews, Armenians and Muslims under Hellenism’ with an epigraph by Isocrates mentioned above, in Greek, French and Romanian (O’Donnell 2016). The latter was advertised to be presented in a lecture given by Paschides to the literary association of *Byron* in its periodical (Hatziphotis, 1974).

Employed by the Ottoman Empire, Pashko Vasa would become the Governor General of Lebanon from 1882, after France invaded Tunisia. His poetry, written in French and Italian, was greatly influenced by Leopardi, Lamartine and de Musset, who were in turn inspired by ‘The Poems of Ossian’ (Van Tieghem, 1917). He believed that the Albanian language should be written in the Latin script (Elsie, 2012). There were four types of script used in the Albanian language: Arabic, Greek, Latin and Cyrillic. By the 1880s, this struggle became intense as to which one would be chosen in order to unite all Albanians. This problem was definitively resolved at the beginning of the twentieth century (Skoulidas, 1992).

In the archives of Thimi Mitko in Alexandria, Pashko Vasa’s famous poem ‘Oh Albania poor Albania’, written in Albanian, was found in 1881, when the Albanian league was suppressed. An extract which follows, entitled ‘Albania poor Albania’ (Elsie, 2012), sums up the plight of all the people who wished for peace in the region:

Some say ‘I believe in God’, others say ‘I believe in Allah’,  
 Some say ‘I am Turk’, others ‘I am Latin’,  
 Some ‘I am Greek, others I am Slav’,  
 But you are brothers, all of you, my hapless people!

The priests and the muezzins have deceived you  
To divide you and keep you poor.' [Pashko Vasa]

While the Albanian League wished to remain under Ottoman rule, the Democratic Eastern Federation sought equal union with the Turks. Although the Turks had banned the Albanian League in 1881, the Albanian language continued to be taught and read (Stavridis, 2000).

### **Demise of those seeking Peaceful Unity**

Paschides's final publications were: an article on the hero of Albania, the Pelasgian George Kastrioti Skenderbeg; the Great Map chartered by Rigas Velestinlis and 'The Greek-Turkish Question' published in French and Greek in 1886 (Hatziphotis, 1974). Paschides endeavoured to show similarities among different peoples to promote peaceful brotherhood in the face of destructive control of Western powers as they replaced former Ottoman sovereignty with foreign monarchy: Greece (German 1822; Danish 1864), Bulgaria (Russian 1878; German 1882); Rumania (German 1868 and 1882), Bosnia Herzegovina (Austro-Hungarian 1878) a local monarch in Serbia (1882) (Stavrianos, 2000), Tunisia (France 1881), and Egypt (Britain 1882) (O'Donnell 2017). In his article on the Greek-Turkish Question, Paschides exhorted that the hatred and repugnance among Greeks, Muslims and Jews must cease and be replaced by extending a brotherly hand and that all past grievances of yesteryear be buried (Hatziphotis, 1974). Paschides borrowed this exhortation from a poem entitled 'Besa for Besa' written by the French-Cypriot scholar, polyglot and French consul Gustav Laffon, born in Cyprus, in the Ottoman Empire, who dedicated his book of poetry 'My Songs' to the Greek women of Alexandria in 1896 (O'Donnell 2016). This same message was inculcated by Naim Frasher, who declared that the 'Bektashis are brothers not only among themselves but with all humanity as well. They love the rest of the Muslims and the Christians as their soul, and they get along well with all men' (Elsie, 2012). Albanians demonstrated how their three religious groups could participate with enthusiasm in their culture and literature, writing their language in different scripts until 1886. That year, their language was banned by both the Turks and the Greek Patriarch, with the threat of excommunication to anyone using Albanian (Stavrianos, 2000). In fact, having been deported to Corfu by the Ottomans, Jani Vreto was unchurched by the Orthodox Metropolitan in Gjirokaster for having committed heresy by 'creating an Albanian Question' (Elsie, 2010).

The first victim of those seeking peaceful unity was Midhat Pasha. In exile, he was strangled by Ottoman government henchmen in 1883 (Hasiotis 2001)

In June 1888, Paschides, who had been residing in Constantinople, was arrested on trumped-up charges of slander and was imprisoned there (Hatziphotis, 1974). Similarly, in 1885, Sami Fraseri had to flee from Constantinople, fearing for his life; he eventually died in exile (Elsie, 2010).

Paschides was later exiled in chains to Fezan in Libya, where he was tortured and then murdered in the desert in May 1890 (Hatziphotis, 1974). At this time, Panas translated 'Minvane', a lament published in 'Evdomas'. Minvane, Gaul's sister and

daughter of Fingal's former enemy, Morni and now a friend, laments Ryno, her lover and the son of Fingal, who dies in battle against the Danish foe, Swaran. There are several differences in this translation: the first is that the blood covering Ryno's armour lying at his feet is described as 'Covered in blood, loving blood'. In Macpherson's version, we read 'The bloody spear of Ryno!' Moreover, 'barbaric' instead of 'mossy' is used to describe where Ryno died. Panas lamenting Paschides's murder, which is emphasised in his translation in a footnote, states that Ryno was murdered. In Macpherson's version, 'died in battle' implicitly refers to Paschides as son of Fingal (Rigas), who was killed in 'barbaric' Ullin, i.e. Fez, Barbary (O'Donnell 2017).

It is noteworthy that while various scholars of the Albanian organisations were murdered or died in exile, several by religious fanatics, although Anastas Kulluriot died of poisoning during his incarceration in prison in Greece in 1887 (Elsie, 2012) the four principal men of letters and leaders of the Democratic Eastern Federation 'committed suicide' in 1889 and 1890 (O'Donnell, 2016), including Panayiotis Panas in 1896 (O'Donnell, 2023).

## Conclusion

The dream of Albania being part of the Anatolian Confederation, set up by Rigas Velestinlis in 1780, was revived when Panas set up the Democratic Eastern Federation in 1868. To propagate unity among people of different religious creeds, including former foes, Panas injected an ethical precept in his translations from the nonreligious 'The Poems of Ossian', depicting the high moral order of its warriors. This strengthened the support of the organisation. and encouraged his supporters to emulate them. Panas's call also included Albanians, whose intellectuals sought to spread knowledge of their culture through the Greek Press, some of which supported the Democratic Eastern Federation. They strove to find a solution to unite the people, even though the religion of the Albanian people included both Muslims and Orthodox and Catholic Christians. Unfortunately, they faced opposition, like the Democratic Eastern Federation, from Western Imperialism, which claimed that there was no Albanian nationality, and later, the Greek Patriarch would ban the Albanian language. In the poem 'Albania! Poor Albania!', written by the Albanian scholar Pashko Vassa, who was indirectly influenced by Ossian, clearly shows that those seeking peaceful unity so that Balkan and Anatolian people could live in liberty, equality and brotherhood, without monarchy, were betrayed by Western Monarchy and both Muslim and Christian organisations.

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