Alexander Ypsilantis and the Greek Revolution in Romania:

Alexander Ypsilantis (1792–1828) was a Phanariot Greek who saw action in the Napoleonic Wars, fought in the battles of Klyastitsy and Polotsk and at the age of 25 he became a Major General of the Russian Empire and commander of the 1st Brigade of Hussars of the 1st Hussar Division. Alexander was a Greek patriot who believed that the Greeks should rise up in revolt and end the Ottoman tyranny.

So, when Emmanuel Xanthos, one of three founders of the Filiki Eteria ("Society of Friends"), a secret organization with the goal of creating a free Greek State, went to Saint Petersburg in 12 April 1820, and asked Alexander if he wanted to become leader of the Eteria and the one who would plan the revolution, he accepted. The Filiki Eteria had many members both in Greece, Romania and from European countries were Greeks lived, mainly in Russia.

Alexander's plan was to start a revolution in Romania, Constantinople and the Peloponnese. Romania at that time was divided into two principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia. Those principalities were under Ottoman control, but they were autonomous and ruled by Greek Aristocrats.

- Blessing of Greek Rebels
In 21 February, the Greek military leader Vasileios Karavias, under orders from Ypsilantis, attacked with 150 men the Turks in Galati, killing their commander and 30 Turkish civilians, which worried the Moldavians, who feared the revenge of the Turks. In 22 February, Alexander came to Iaşi, wearing his Russian uniform, that of a Russian Major General, and declared that he had the support of a Great Power (He did not say of which, but everyone can understand that those who saw him in Russian uniform thought he had the support of Russia) and he also declared to the Moldavians that his goal was to head to Greece and pledged to protect the country from the Turks. He also declared the "Fight for the Faith and the Nation", in which he called all Greeks to revolt against the Ottoman Empire.

In 24 February, Alexander send a letter to Tsar Alexander I, in which he resigned from the Russian Army, told him about the revolution and called him to help the fellow Orthodox people of the Balkans in their fight against the Turks. In 26 February, in the Church of Iasi, the bishop Veniam Kostakis blessed a flag, in which one side had a cross and it said "Εν τούτο Νίκα" (With that we will win - by the way this phrase was also used against Justinian in the Nika Revolution), and in the other side of the flag, it had a Phoenix and it said "έκ της στάκτης μου αναγεννάται" (From my ashes, it (Greece) is reborn).
Alexander, at the start of the revolution, had a force of 2,000 men, who, except for Greeks, also included Serbs, Bulgarians and a few Moldavians. In 1st March, he headed with his army to Bucharest, where he entered in 28 March. There, he created the Sacred Band (taking inspiration from Pelopidas, the ancient Theban General) from young educated Greek volunteers. The Sacred Band was mainly an infantry unit and their first commander was Georgios Katakouzinos. Alexander also created a small unit of cavalry, thanks to the support of the Hegemon of Moldavia, Michael Soutsos.

Alexander also had the support of the Wallachian anti-Phanariote military leader, Tudor Vladimirescu, who wanted to free Romania from both the Turks and the Greek aristocracy. Alexander also had alongside him able Greek Klephts, like Giorgakis Olympios. Vladimirescu was given the task of taking over Wallachia, which he did. He also managed to create an army of 3,000 well trained men and other 3,000 local villagers. But then he turned against the Greek rebels and Alexander, forcing Alexander to leave Bucharest.
Meanwhile in Constantinople, in 23 March, the Greek Orthodox Church was forced by the Ottoman Sultan to excommunicate Alexander and his army. Meanwhile, Tsar Alexander made sure to Metternich that in no way did he support the revolution of Alexander. Also, on Easter Sunday, April, 22, the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church, Gregory V, was grabbed by Ottoman soldiers during the liturgy and hanged at the central gate of the Patriarchate. His body remained suspended at the gate for three days, and was then handed to a Jewish mob (there had been animosity between the Greek and Jewish communities of Constantinople at the time), dragged through the streets before being thrown into the Bosphorus.

The Turks also massacred hundreds of Greek civilians. According to foreigners, mainly Europeans, like W. Aug. Streit, the Turks impaled 44 Greeks, both men and women, and killed 4,000 people in just one day. The Great Powers, and especially Russia, made known to the Ottomans of their displeasure, but because of their hostility to revolutions, they did not act.

The morale of Alexander's army was getting worse and worse. Only the Sacred Band fully supported Alexander now. At the same time, the Ottomans send a force of 30,000 men against the rebels, led by the fanatical Muslim Yiousouf Pasha. The first great battle was fought in Galați, where Yiousouf made a surprise attack against the far smaller Greek force of 900 men (600 infantry and 300 cavalry).

After the fall of Galati, Alexander send Georgios Katakouzinos to protect the city of Iasi from the Turks. In 22 May, Katakouzinos entered Iasi, but he was unable to restore order in the city and fled to Russia. In 14 June, Iasi was taken over by the Turks. Three days later, the Greek Army, under the commander of Karpenisiotis, fought the Turks in Sculeni, where with 420 men he managed to hold a much superior Turkish force for 8 hours.

However, after the Turks started using their cannons, most retreated and fled to Russia, but Karpenisiotis remained in his position, along with a few loyal men, and fought to the last man. Meanwhile, a Turkish army had entered to Bucharest in 16
May. Vladimirescu was given to the Greeks by his own men and he was executed in
23 May, for treason.

The Turks, who had been reinforced with 1,000 cavalry from Savas, a Greek rebel
who betrayed Alexander and now was send by the Turks to hunt him down, met
Alexander at the Battle of Dragashani in June 19. The Turks had 5,000 soldiers, 2,500
cavalry and 4 cannons. Alexander had only 300 men of the Sacred Band and 800
cavalry. The Greek Army was crushed, when Vasileios Karavias made a charge with
his cavalry against the Ottomans, despite orders from Alexander not to do so. From
the 300 men of the Sacred Band, 200 died. The life of Alexander was now in danger.
So Alexander, who said to his men that Austria had declared war on the Ottomans and
that he needed to see the Austrian commander who was ready to invade and help them (which was a lie, of course), fled to Austria, where he was arrested by the Austrian police and died in 1828, because of the bad conditions in which he was held by the Austrians.

Meanwhile, Giorgakis Olympios united his small force with the Greek military leader Giannis Farmakis, and decided to make a last stand. But when the Turks offered to let Farmakis free if he surrendered, in 22 September, he surrendered to the Turks, who did not keep their promise and executed him after many days of brutal tortures. Meanwhile, Giorgakis had refused to surrender and declared "Come brothers!! Let's die looking the death with no fear. For our religion and the freedom of Greece! Death to the Barbarians!". Giorgakis, along with just 11 men, fled to the Secu Monastery, where they blew themselves up in 29 August. Only one of those brave men survived. While the revolution in Romania had failed, it opened the way for the Greek Revolution in Rumeli (Central Greece) and the Peloponnese against the Turks.

That is because the Turks thought that the revolution in Romania had Russian support, despite Russia claiming that it did not supported the revolution, so the Turks kept valuable forces to Romania when they could have send them against the Greek rebels in Southern Greece. And if they indeed had send those forces in Greece, it would have been possible to crush the Greek revolution once and for all. On the other hand, the revolution in Romania ended the tradition of the Ottomans appointing Greek aristocrats as Hegemons of the region.

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