

THE POPULATION OF ISTANBUL IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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While the Ottoman census system developed slowly through the 19th century, achieving accurate and comprehensive results only in the reign of Sultan Abdulhamit II¹, counts of Istanbul's population proceeded much more rapidly, giving a fairly accurate count of men at least beginning early in the century.

Between the start of the reforms of Mahmut II and the start of the Crimean War, four major census surveys of Istanbul were carried out, in 1826/1242, 1838/1254, 1844/1260, and 1856/1273, with population tables being drawn up in between on the basis of supplemental reports of births, deaths, immigration into and out of the city, and the like. Only males were counted, for tax and conscription purposes, with the *ihtisap* department carrying out the census as part of the effort to develop it into the nucleus of a municipal government which was made before the Crimean War. The *ihtisap* department itself was absorbed into the Ministry of the Interior in 1844, after which the census organization deteriorated, with the practice of drawing up annual population tables also being abandoned.

Just before the Crimean War, an effort was undertaken to make a new population survey of Istanbul by two departments of the imperial treasury, the *mürur tezkeresi kalemi*, which was in charge of issuing permits for travel within the empire, and the *esnaf tezkeresi*

1 Stanford J. Shaw, «The Ottoman Census System and Population,» IJMES, IX (1978), pp. 325-338; and Kemal H. Karpat, «Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/2-1893,» IJMES, IX (1978), pp. 237-274.

kalemi, which certified and issued permits for the operation of the artisan guilds. Census tickets (*nüfus tezkeresi*) were circulated widely within the city as the census began; but the former department was absorbed into the police (*zabtiye kalemi*), and the latter became preoccupied with collecting taxes owed by the guilds, so the effort was allowed to deteriorate without any final result².

Following the Crimean War, renewed attention was paid to the census as part of the efforts of Fuat Paşa to revive the financial bases of the empire³. A new Cadastral Department (*Tahrir-i Em-lâk Nezareti*) was established in the Ministry of Finance to register and count both property and male subjects, giving the latter in return a population tax certificate (*vergi nüfus tezkeresi*) which stated his tax obligation and served as an identity card. Bursa and Janina were used as model provinces, however, with the Danube Province added under Midhat Paşa, but nothing was done in Istanbul. It was only after the General Census Regulation of 1874 was introduced that a Census Department was created and made a permanent part of the Ministry of the Interior that the census was once again extended to all parts of the empire, including the capital Istanbul⁴. Work on the new census began late in the reign of sultan Abdulaziz. It foundered following his death, throughout the reign of Murat V, and it was only after Abdulhamit II prorogued the Parliament and established his autocracy that it was resumed. The new Regulation of Population Registration (*Sicill-i Nüfus Nizâmnamesi*), introduced in 1878, was the basis for all census activities throughout the remainder of the empire, with only minor changes in procedure being made in later years⁵. The Census Department, still in the

2 On the pre-Crimean war census efforts, see Istanbul University Library, TY 8949; the census of 1844 was used by A. Ubcini, *Lettres sur la Turquie* (Paris, 1853), and E. Boré, *Almanach de l'Empire Ottoman pour l'année 1849 et 1850* (Constantinople, 1849-1850).

3 Başbakanlık Arşivi, Buyuruldu defteri, II, 125; İrade Dahiliye 3507; and *Düstur*, I, 201.

4 Başbakanlık Arşivi, İrade Meclis-i Mahsus 2089. *Takvim-i Vekayi* no. 1678, 29 Cemazi II 1291/13 September 1874.

5 Başbakanlık Arşivi, Yıldız Esas Evrakı Kısım 14 no. 88/20; İrade Şurâ-yi Devlet 3148; Tanzimat defteri, VII, 97-104; *Düstur: zeyil* II, pp. 15-24; also Sicill-i Nüfus nizâmnamesi, Istanbul, 1300/1882-3.

Ministry of the Interior, was divided into three major bureaux, for correspondence (*tahrirat kalemi*), statistics (*ihsaiyat kalemi*), and archives (*evrak kalemi*), with a small despatches department (*ir-salat memuriyeti*) caring for correspondence. The basis of the system was the compilation of permanent population registers (*sicill-i nüfus*) in each village and town, and each quarter of the larger towns and cities. Places were provided for each individual's place and date of birth, residence, age, religion, and craft or occupation, marital status and health, and for men their military status and the style of their mustaches and beards. Women were included for the first time, and separate registers were provided for Muslims and the members of each recognized millet. Each person counted was given a population certificate (*nüfus tezkeresi*), which contained the information in the register and served both as a birth certificate and identity card. It had to be produced in all governmental and legal dealings, so most people were forced to have themselves counted, making the censuses undertaken under Abdulhamit II far more accurate and complete than the previous ones. All changes resulting from births, deaths, and permanent changes of residence were added subsequently, with information secured by Ottoman consulates abroad being regularly transmitted to Istanbul for entry into the relevant records. The result was the development of a permanent population record, brought up to date annually, which gave the state a reasonably accurate picture of the state that it ruled.

The actual registers compiled in the different quarters of Istanbul remain in the Başbakanlık Arşivi, Istanbul, but have not yet been consulted or studied in detail. However from several summary registers found there and in the Istanbul University Library, a reasonable depiction of the city's population and its changes in the last half-century of the empire can be made. Table 1 depicts the overall population figures found in five different reports between 1844 and 1914⁶. The substantial population increase between 1882

6 The figures for 1844 and 1856 come from Istanbul University Library, TY 8949; those for 1882 and 1885 are from *Bâ-İrade-i Seniyye-i Cenab-ı Pâdişâhi buda icra olunan tahrir-i sabık yoklaması mucibince der saadet ve bilâd-i selâse mevcud nüfusun istatistik Cedvelidir, Istanbul, 1302*. For 1895-1896 see Devlet-i Osmaniye, Nezâret-i Umûr: Ticâret ve Nâfia, *Devlet-i Aliye-i Os-*

and 1885 must be attributed to the huge number of refugees who flooded into the empire following the disastrous wars of 1876-1878, the peace treaty concluded at Berlin, and the large-scale persecution of Muslims which followed in all the territories turned over to the Christian states of Europe. The remaining tables break Istanbul's population down by place of residence (Table 2), type of domicile (Table 3), place of birth (Table 4), occupation (Table 5), and age (Table 6) for the only years for which such information is now available, 1882 and 1885.

maniyenin bin üçyüz onuç senesine mahsus İstatistik-i Umumisidir, Istanbul, 1316/1898. And for 1913-1914 see Dahiliye Nezâreti, Sicill-i Nüfûs İdâre-i Umumisî Müdüriyeti, *Memalik-i Osmaniyenin 1330 senesi nüfus İstatistiği*, Istanbul, 1919. See also the important new work of Kemal H. Karpat, «Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/2-1893,» *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. IX (1978), pp. 237-274.

7 Üç no.lu tablonun ikinci kısmındaki rakamlar karşısına da, birinci kısmındaki izahatların konulması lâzım gelirken, bu cedvel kişice olduğundan düzeltme yapılamamıştır.

TABLE 1. POPULATION OF ISTANBUL BY RELIGION

Year	Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics		Jews		Protestants	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1844	193692		102532		45780		47999		5126		12555			
1856	236092		112162		68516		45040		5410		13222		329	
1882	219945	161431	118535	96218	43752	24254	36867	24748	3323	2986	13212	13373	180	133
1885	508814	364751	201339	183571	91804	60937	83870	65730	3209	3233	22394	21967	488	331
1914	909978		560434		205375		72962		10305		52126		1313	
Year	Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners									
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female								
1844														
1856			1417											
1882	3247	48	829	671										
1885	3977	400	528	554	101205	28038								
1914	3239		2905		Not Listed									

TABLE 2. POPULATION OF ISTANBUL ET DISTRICT

District 1. Bayezit	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	47620	26429	30084	19923	7636	1773	9065	4657	14
1885	84882	67081	41967	40078	20613	9723	18308	15908	30	17
	Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	13	—	125	68	677	—	7	4	—
1885	429	240	325	185	899	36	13	7	2298	887

District 2. Fatih

	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	34170	25620	20150	15803	6372	3848	2958	2120	8
1885	64021	50524	32031	30670	16280	8977	8357	5124	43	31
	Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	4166	3814	—	—	503	16	13	15	—
1885	5290	4843	—	—	754	29	31	22	1236	828

District 3. Cerrâh Paşa

	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	34342	29491	22602	21271	5763	4776	5153	4339	93
1885	63541	59496	34839	34020	11313	9618	15292	15252	154	147
	Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	—	—	—	—	727	6	4	3	—
1885	5	7	10	6	1142	10	5	6	1221	791

District 4. Beşiktaş and Bosphorus to Rumeli Hisar

	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	15910	12870	5841	4912	5344	4004	2800	2097	292
1885	39935	30672	16797	13658	12423	8789	4838	3717	491	515
	Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	1534	1523	—	—	189	14	10	8	—
1885	2233	2358	—	—	171	50	6	5	4546	2966

POPULATION OF ISTANBUL BY DISTRICT (2)

District 5. Yeniköy and Upper Bosphorus

	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	4582	4066	2485	1451	2201	1802	787	713	31
1885	7497	6353	2268	2089	3520	2874	1244	982	57	86
	Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	77	57	—	—	—	—	1	3	—
1885	93	100	25	15	99	—	—	—	191	207

District 6. Beyoğlu/Pera and Dolmabahçe

	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	49268	32294	20460	14927	8470	3718	10384	5989	2590
1885	156905	80388	28133	23615	9157	8432	15622	12837	1462	1576
	Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	5621	4906	—	—	1034	12	709	580	—
1885	11296	11469	34	9	872	273	345	416	89884	21661

District 7. Büyükdere, Bosphorus From Dolmabahçe To Golden Horn, And Golden Horn.

	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	4590	3462	1472	1126	1126	2273	433	313	277
1885	8694	5951	2070	1558	4377	2931	1050	599	420	410
	Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1882	124	148	—	—	—	—	11	8	—
1885	96	132	5	7	7	—	44	34	625	280

POPULATION OF ISTANBUL BY DISTRICT (3)

District 8. *Kanlica and Upper Anatolian Bosphorus.*

	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1882	5622	4350	3329	2766	1819	1234	375	333	15	26	
1885	16070	13088	9727	8004	3873	2909	1918	1680	158	175	
		Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1882		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1885		30	38	—	—	5	0	7	6	352	286

District 9. *Üsküdar*

	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1882	19987	19925	11610	12794	2722	1923	3923	3345	—	—	
1885	53212	42455	26892	25913	6831	3715	13691	8469	38	29	
		Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1882		1588	1786	55	65	89	—	16	12	—	—
1885		2621	2576	87	106	39	2	—	—	2517	1645

District 10. *Kadıköy*

	Grand Totals		Muslims		Greek Orthodox		Armenian Orthodox		Catholics		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1882	3854	2924	1498	1242	1171	651	989	842	3	13	
1885	14053	8743	6615	3966	3907	2969	2550	1052	356	247	
		Jews		Protestants		Bulgars		Latins		Foreigners	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1882		110	139	—	—	28	—	55	37	—	—
1885		201	204	2	3	—	—	135	77	599	345

TABLE 3
POPULATION OF ISTANBUL BY DOMICILE
1882

DOMICILE	GRAND TOTALS		MUSLIMS		GREEK		ARMENIAN		CATHOLIC		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1) Private homes	133721	145283	87976	80217	25579	24243	25513	24684	2869	2986	
2) Mosques and tekkes	1259	869	1259	869	—	—	—	—	—	—	
3) Refugees without permanent residence	15617	15063	15545	14991	—	—	—	—	—	—	
4) Muslim religious students living in schools	5560	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
5) Artisans living at their shops	53018	—	24934	—	16988	—	7675	—	449	—	
6) Artisans and merchants living in hans	8720	216	3261	161	1185	11	3679	64	5	—	
	219983	181431	118935	97718	3772	24234	76867	24748	3323	2986	
		BULGAR		LATIN		PROTESTANT		JEWS			
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
1)		62	48	809	671	120	133	12793	12301		
2)		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
3)		—	—	—	—	—	—	72	72		
4)		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
5)		3057	—	20	—	60	—	335	—		
6)		128	—	—	—	—	—	12	—		
		3247	48	829	671	180	133	13212	13373		

TABLE 4
POPULATION OF ISTANBUL BY PLACE OF BIRTH, 1885

MILLET	THOSE BORN IN ISTANBUL				THOSE BORN OUTSIDE ISTANBUL					
	TOTAL	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
Muslim	143586	55300	27.5	88286	48.1	241324	146039	72.5	95285	51.9
Greek Orthodox	68764	23292	25.4	45472	74.6	83977	68512	75.6	15465	25.4
Armenian Orthodox	78679	24995	27.7	53684	81.7	70911	58675	71.2	12036	18.3
Bulgarian	46	22	5.5	24	60.	4331	3955	99.5	376	94.0
Catholic	3722	1533	47.8	2189	27.7	2720	1676	52.2	1044	32.3
Jews	42363	21029	93.9	21334	97.1	1998	1365	61.0	633	29.0
Protestant	225	118	24.2	107	32.3	594	370	75.8	224	57.7
Latins	609	261	48.5	348	62.9	473	267	51.5	206	37.1
	337994	126550		211444		406328	281059		125269	

TABLE 7. FEMALE POPULATION OF ISTANBUL BY AGE, 1885

NILET	1-5		5-10		10-15		15-20		20-25		25-30		30-35		35-40	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Muslim	13975	7.61	14802	8.06	16993	9.26	16082	8.76	15166	8.26	16435	8.95	16630	9.06	15453	8.42
Greek	5889	9.66	5523	9.06	5352	8.78	5333	8.75	5255	8.62	5135	8.43	4766	7.82	4358	7.15
Armenian	2839	4.32	5244	7.98	5636	8.27	5692	8.66	5321	8.10	5472	8.83	5285	8.04	5953	9.06
Bulgarian	39	9.75	39	9.75	39	9.75	26	6.00	37	9.25	47	11.75	40	10.00	54	13.50
Catholic	243	7.49	258	7.96	269	8.29	252	7.77	338	10.42	205	6.32	231	7.12	186	5.74
Jews	2248	10.23	2208	10.09	2894	13.17	2988	13.60	2739	12.47	2396	10.91	1550	7.06	1225	5.58
Prot.	23	6.95	29	8.76	36	10.88	43	12.99	36	10.88	36	10.88	26	7.85	24	7.25
Latin	38	6.86	38	6.86	55	9.93	53	9.57	52	9.39	85	15.34	85	15.34	58	10.47
TOTAL	25304	7.50	28141	8.34	31074	9.21	30468	9.03	28944	8.58	29811	8.86	28603	8.48	28311	8.39
	40-45	%	45-50	%	50-55	%	55-60	%	60-65	%	65-70	%	70-75	%	75-80	%
Muslim	15598	8.50	9481	5.16	9901	5.39	8037	4.38	7238	3.94	2847	1.55	3268	1.78	551	.30
Greek	4242	6.96	3559	5.86	3573	5.86	2937	4.82	2362	3.88	1571	2.58	681	1.12	160	.26
Armenian	5950	9.06	4733	7.20	4569	6.95	3912	5.95	3029	4.61	1425	2.17	466	.71	150	.23
Bulgarian	29	7.25	18	4.50	19	4.75	3	.75	5	1.25	2	.50	2	.50	2	.50
Catholic	218	6.72	200	6.17	184	5.67	186	5.74	223	6.88	85	2.62	94	2.90	29	.89
Jews	1046	4.76	747	3.40	589	2.68	408	1.86	361	1.64	256	1.17	177	.81	65	.30
Prot.	28	8.46	22	6.65	10	3.02	8	2.42	3	.91	3	.91	3	.91	3	.91
Latin	36	6.50	19	3.43	13	2.35	6	1.00	10	1.81	3	.54	2	.36	2	.36
TOTAL	27148	8.05	18779	5.57	18858	5.59	15488	4.59	13231	3.92	6191	1.84	4693	1.39	557	.17
	80-85	%	85-90	%	90-95	%	95-100	%	TOTALS							
Muslim	728	.40	142	.08	183	.10	71	.04	183	.581						
Greek	147	.24	32	.05	51	.08	11	.02	60	.937						
Armenian	152	.23	26	.04	38	.06	18	.03	65	.708						
Bulgarian	--	--	--	--	1	.25	--	--	400							
Catholic	30	.93	7	.22	5	.15	--	--	3,243							
Jews	38	.17	19	.09	9	.04	4	.02	21,967							
Prot.	1	.30	---	---	---	---	---	---	331							
Latin	1	.18	---	---	---	---	---	---	554							
TOTAL									337,313							