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Demographic Policy and the Political Economy of Migration in the Ottoman Province of Jannina (1907-1912): A Case Study of Settlement on the Balkan Frontier

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Abstract The period preceding the First World War showed a general trend of population growth worldwide. However, during the same period, the population of the Ottoman Empire increased very little or remained stagnant due to continuous warfare. Nevertheless, mass migration from lost territories led to a significant change in the state's demographic structure, with the proportion of the Muslim population increasing rapidly. Nevertheless, non-Muslims continued to constitute more than half of the population of the Rumelian provinces. This naturally determined the state's migration and settlement policy. By settling migrants along the Balkan borders, the state aimed to bolster the defence capabilities of these regions and alter the demographic landscape in areas where the non-Muslim population was in the majority. This study uses the example of the Jannina Province to examine the aforementioned migration and settlement policy. Following the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877/78, Jannina became a border province, increasing the region's strategic importance. Through primary sources, this study aims to reveal the principles on which these policies were based and the significant difficulties encountered during their implementation. The study's findings reveal that the successes of this demographic operation were limited.

Keywords Ottoman Empire · Jannina Province · Migration and Settlement Policy · Balkan Frontier · Rumelian Population Dynamics

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Demographic Policy and the Political Economy of Migration in the Ottoman Province of Jannina (1907-1912): A Case Study of Settlement on the Balkan Frontier

Pre-industrial societies were subject to self-regulating population control through demographic shocks and economic constraints, which explains why population levels remained low for centuries (Clark, 2007, p. 19-21). Although there is no direct causal link between industrialisation and population growth, innovations associated with the industrialisation process, together with fundamental improvements in health and hygiene, contributed to rapid global population growth during the 19th century (Grossat, 1975, p. 4-5). From the early 19th century, the world population increased by nearly 70%, rising from 906 million to 1,56 billion, a trend closely linked to the dynamics of international migration (McKeown, 2004, p. 159; Güran, 2019, p. 181). According to Zürcher (2005), this period lasted until the mid-20th century and was an era of demographic engineering in Europe. The Ottoman Empire's experience during its late period was part of this broader trend, yet its demographic trajectory diverged significantly. Although demographic engineering became a global phenomenon, the Ottoman Empire displayed a distinctive demographic pattern. It experienced demographic stagnation and fluctuations throughout the 19th century. In the first half of the century, population growth remained limited, occasionally declining, mainly due to continuous wars. The empire also faced population losses associated with territorial contraction (Zürcher, 2005, p. 9; Arslan, 2001, p. 89-90; Karpat, 2002, p. 783-789).

Based on estimates by Issawi (1977), the Ottoman population decreased from roughly 29,5 million in 1804 to 24,1 million by the early 1820s, reflecting the demographic challenges of the period (Issawi, 1977, p. 152-165). Following the Tanzimat reforms, population censuses in the Ottoman Empire became more systematic, whereas earlier censuses focused primarily on land, military, and agricultural records rather than demographic data (Behar, 1996, p. XVIII).

The first modern-style census in the Ottoman Empire was conducted during Mahmud II's reign (1826-1828), aimed at regaining control over the provinces, improving tax collection, and establishing a new army to replace the recently disbanded Janissary Corps (Behar, 1996, p. 49; Akarlı, 1972, p. 30). The first modern Ottoman census, initially planned before 1831, was postponed due to the Greek Revolt and the war with Russia, and was eventually conducted under challenging circumstances, yielding results that fell short of expectations (Ahmed Lütfi, Hijri 1291 / 1874, p. 142-143; Shaw, 1978, p. 326). The 1844 census primarily aimed to determine the size of the male population in light of the new conscription law, whereas the 1858 census, conducted after the Crimean War, was primarily motivated by fiscal considerations as required by the Land Code of the same year. The Ottoman government did not officially publish the results of either the 1844 or the 1858 census, the latter of which was only completed in 1860 (Akarlı, 1972, p. 43; Şaşmaz, 1995, p. 295). Various factors, including territorial losses, border adjustments followed by migrations, and administrative changes under the Tanzimat reforms, prevented the Ottoman administration from conducting a comprehensive census. Additionally, the Ottoman state's primary concern with its population was mainly military and fiscal. The number of migrants arriving and departing could not be accurately reflected in the records, and population research was concentrated in areas with large Christian communities, due to the rise of ethnic nationalism. Therefore, systematic demographic data could not be collected consistently until the aftermath of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877/78 (Behar, 1996, p. XIX; McCarthy, 2010, p. 136; Karpat, 2003, p. 67). However, the first Population Registry Ordinance (Sicil-i Nüfus Nizamnamesi) was issued in 1881

following the war, and a comprehensive household-level census was conducted in the subsequent period (Campos, 2018, p. 18).

The most significant and detailed population censuses of the Ottoman Empire were conducted in 1885 and 1907. According to estimates compiled by Eldem (1970), the population increased from approximately 17,1 million to around 20,9 million (an increase of 0,9% per year) over this period, before declining to 18.520.016 by 1914 due to territorial losses in the Balkan Wars (Eldem, 1994, p. 14). Regarding the religious composition of the population, the proportion of Muslims increased from 66,6% in 1831 to 73,4% in 1884, reaching 81,2% by 1914[1] 1914. In contrast, the proportion of Muslims in the European provinces of the Empire remained below 50%; one example is Jannina, which became a border province under the 1881 Treaty of Istanbul following post-Russo-Turkish War negotiations. The combined effects of changes in religious composition, insufficient population for fiscal and military sustainability, and mass migration from lost territories significantly influenced Ottoman migration and settlement policies (Karpat, 2003, p. 59; Eldem, 1994, p. 14-18; Shaw and Shaw, 1977, p. 117; Gökaçtı, 1999, p. 40-41). This dynamic also intersected with the emergence of strategic commercial corridors across the Balkans, where diplomatic-commercial networks played a shaping role in regional population movements (Serdaroğlu, 2025). In the late Ottoman period, managing and controlling the influx of millions of migrants into Ottoman territories became one of the government's most important tasks (Immig, 2023, p. 5). As part of a targeted resettlement policy, the state settled migrants from Rumelia in provinces with a high non-Muslim population to increase the Muslim population (Ağanoğlu, 2001, p. 104).

There is a considerable body of literature on migration and settlement policies in the Ottoman Empire after the nineteenth century. Some of these works, such as those by Şimşir (1968), Karpat (2002), Kırımlı (2008), İpek (1994, 2014), and Erken (2018), focus on migration and settlement policies that directed specific populations from one region of the empire to another. Other studies, however, concentrate more narrowly on the migration and settlement of particular ethnic or religious groups. Among these, Pinson (1973) examined the settlement of Crimean Tatars in Bulgaria in the mid-nineteenth century, while Şaşmaz (2002) focused on the resettlement of Circassians within Ottoman territories. Dündar (2001), Kale (2014), Tozoğlu and Akgün (2019), and Fratantuono (2023) discussed migration and settlement activities in the Balkans during the late Ottoman period more generally. Within the context of this literature, the present study aims to identify the main principles of the Ottoman bureaucracy's settlement policy in response to the demographic changes that emerged in Jannina and its districts in the early twentieth century, particularly those that unfolded to the disadvantage of the Muslim population.

Studies on migration and settlement policies in the Balkans during and after the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire have mostly remained at the macro level. Research that explores the social, economic, and administrative implications of these policies at the regional or provincial scale is still limited. Examining how migration and settlement processes unfolded locally therefore fills an important gap in the literature. The case of Jannina offers a distinctive perspective in this regard. By the early twentieth century, Jannina had gradually become a frontier province, where population movements acquired not only a demographic but also a strategic and bureaucratic dimension. This study approaches these developments through the lens of depopulation and Muslim–non-Muslim demographic asymmetry, analysing how the Ottoman administration sought to maintain demographic balance in a shifting borderland. In doing so, it contributes to a

[1]The wars fought between the Ottoman Empire and Russia from the late eighteenth century to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, most of which ended in Ottoman defeat, also contributed to the transformation of the empire's religious demography. Following these wars, the treaties signed between the two powers enabled Russia to consolidate its control over the conquered territories by forcing Muslim Turks to migrate to Ottoman lands, while at times compelling the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire to move into Russian territory. See, Hacısalihoğlu (2018).

deeper understanding of the late Ottoman migration and settlement policies in the Balkans from a multi-dimensional perspective.

Ideas aimed at balancing the demographic composition between the Orthodox Greek and Muslim populations in the region began to emerge towards the end of the 19th century; however, these ideas were only translated into concrete initiatives in 1907. These initiatives came to an end with the outbreak of the Balkan Wars. Accordingly, the period between 1907 and 1912 was chosen as the time frame of this study. Moreover, settling refugees in Jannina was integrated into the broader land distribution policy for local farmers. In implementing these two policies concurrently, the government pursued several practical objectives, including increasing agricultural productivity and tax revenues, as well as strengthening the rural population. According to Fratantuono (2023), the logic behind the regulations enacted by the government to manage mass migration is consistent with these practical objectives. To this end, the following section first summarises the migration and settlement policies of the Ottoman Empire since its foundation. It then examines the political developments and demographic changes that influenced migration and settlement in Jannina during the period under consideration. The final section, which constitutes the main focus of this study, analyses the policies implemented by the Ottomans to shape the demographic composition of Jannina.

Principles of Migration and Settlement Policies in the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire adopted an outward-oriented settlement policy in its formative and expansionary phases (İpek, 1994, p. 155). The systematic migration and settlement measures pursued by the state during these periods were designed to augment tax revenues through enhanced agricultural production, to stabilise nomadic populations, and to mitigate potential threats by deporting politically problematic groups (Arslan, 2001, p. 266). One mechanism employed in this context was the relocation of Anatolian beys, figures of considerable political and social significance, to Rumelia, where they were granted estates. This strategy reinforced the military and administrative presence in the Balkans by installing loyal and dependable figures[2] (Barkan, 1953, p. 214). Additionally, the state introduced economic, fiscal, and administrative incentives to encourage migration and revitalise sparsely populated and economically stagnant regions (Arslan, 2001, p. 178).

Following the failure of the Siege of Vienna in 1683 and the subsequent territorial retreat, Muslim populations began to withdraw from the borderlands, marking a significant shift in migration and settlement policy (Ağanoğlu, 2001, p. 32). The migration of Muslims from the Balkans represented a reversal of the Empire's earlier expansion into Eastern Europe. This reverse migration was closely intertwined with the spread of capitalism in Eastern Europe, which simultaneously fostered the ideology of nationalism. The interests of the emerging bourgeoisie proved irreconcilable with the Ottoman bureaucratic-administrative framework. Moreover, the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, with their emphasis on constructing homogeneous national identities, undermined the functionality of the Empire's multi-ethnic and multicultural system (İpek, 1994, p. 155; Kirişçi, 2009, p. 175). The newly established bourgeoisie demanded an order that safeguarded property rights, enabled economic freedom, facilitated capital accumulation, and provided access to a national market. Under the leadership of this class, Balkan peasants revolted against Ottoman authority, compelling the departure of Turkish populations from their lands (Kazgan, 1970, p. 317). From the

[2] For local actors and debates in the Balkans, particularly in Bulgaria, see Güripek (2004).

last quarter of the eighteenth century onwards, successive migration waves ensued as the Empire's borders continued to contract (İpek, 1994, p. 155).

Despite continuous migration into its territories, the Ottoman Empire experienced depopulation and faced a demographic shortage from the early nineteenth century due to epidemics, famine, wars, and territorial losses. In response, the government implemented measures to increase the population[3] while adopting a relatively liberal migration and settlement policy. The 1857 Decree, for instance, imposed no conditions regarding nationality, race, or religion on foreigners wishing to settle in the Empire. Instead, it required only allegiance to the Sultan and compliance with imperial laws, while offering privileges such as exemption from taxation, military service, and freedom of religion (İpek, 1994, p. 155; Karpat, 2003, p. 103; Karpat, 2002, p. 785, 798). The insufficient population for agricultural production created an impasse in the Ottoman modernisation process. Unlike its European counterparts, the Ottoman Empire's rural areas were sparsely populated. The practical consequence of this for the treasury was that the taxable arable land, which constituted the majority of revenues in the pre-industrial economy, was significant (Tozoğlu & Akgün, 2019, p. 3). The Ottoman Empire's policy of settling migrants in the rural areas of the Balkans, Anatolia, and Syria was part of the 19th-century global process of agricultural expansion and frontier settlement. However, the Ottoman case differed from other countries in two significant ways. First, throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, a large share of rural migrants entering the empire were refugees. For most Russian Muslims, migration to Ottoman lands and the transition to farming were not voluntary. Second, the Ottoman state exercised a more direct control over the resettlement process by designating specific settlement locations and explicitly prohibiting migrants from moving to urban areas. These policies were crucial for the economic integration of migrants (Hamed-Troyansky, 2018, p. 18).

However, as the drive to establish ethnically and religiously homogeneous nation-states in the Balkans intensified and as the influx of Muslim migrants into Ottoman lands increased, the central administration began to impose restrictions on migration and settlement. The underlying objective was to prevent any non-Muslim group from becoming demographically dominant. To manage the growing influx of refugees and migrants, the government established the Commission for the Settlement of Migrants (İskan-ı Muhacirin Komisyonu) in 1860, which became a permanent body under the Ministry of Trade (Karpat, 1996, p. 88; Karpat, 2002, p. 794). The General Migrant Commission (İdare-i Umûmiye-i Muhâcirîn Komisyonu) succeeded this institution, created after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877/78 and dissolved in 1882. Following the Ottoman-Greek War of 1897, the High Migrant Commission (Muhacirin Komisyon-ı Âlisi) was established to address the resettlement of Balkan migrants. However, it was dissolved in 1909 because of declining migrant numbers. In 1913, settlement activities were reorganised and systematised under the Regulations on the Settlement of Migrants (İskan-ı Muhacirin Nizamnamesi), which created new commissions and directorates (Dündar, 2001, p. 57-62). These bodies oversaw long-distance resettlement efforts and provided support for migrants, serving as instruments of the Ottoman administration's broader social engineering strategies. Their activities reflected the centralisation and bureaucratisation policies pursued since the mid-nineteenth century (Ljuljanovic, 2023, p. 5-6). After 1878, Ottoman officials took immigrants' ethnic and religious affiliations into consideration when resettling them (Şeker, 2013, p. 3).

[3]The decline in the Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire was discussed in the European press. The German newspaper Neue Preußische Zeitung suggested that the high cost of weddings discouraged Muslims from marrying and having children (BOA. HR. SYS. 27/13, February 11, 1893). To address this demographic decline, the state undertook various measures, such as identifying and punishing those who deliberately procured abortions, as well as relatives who prevented their daughters from marrying. Other policies included issuing orders to limit costly wedding ceremonies and granting salaries to families with six or more children who had completed military service (See BOA. Y. PRK. AZJ. 46/19, 29 March 1903; BOA. HR. SYS. 27/13, 16 February 1894; BOA. C. SH. 7/306, 11 January 1839; BOA. C. ADL. 13/825, 10 July 10 1844).

The most significant turning point leading to the centralisation of migration and settlement policies was the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877/78. The subsequent Berlin Congress resulted in the cession of vast territories, predominantly inhabited by Muslims of Turkish origin, to Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, while Bosnia was placed under Austrian occupation. In the thirty years following 1877, approximately two million migrants entered Ottoman territories, with McCarthy estimating that 1.253.500 individuals were displaced as a direct consequence of the war (McCarthy, 1995, p. 82-85). Initially, the Ottoman authorities discouraged migration from Bosnia and attempted to prevent it in order to preserve legal legitimacy in the region and to forestall Austrian encroachment on Salonica. However, Ottoman administrators eventually recognised that the Balkan provinces could not be retained. The political, economic, and social transformations that followed the war played a decisive role in shaping the principles of migration and settlement policies in the subsequent period (Eraslan, 1992, p. 177-178). As the Christian population declined and the Muslim population increased, the Empire's ethnic and religious composition was significantly altered, directly influencing state policy (Kale, 2014, p. 254).

As new nation-states emerged in the former Ottoman territories, the Empire evolved into a religiously homogeneous polity, though still ethnically diverse. The rise of Balkan nationalism and the loss of non-Muslim lands reinforced the appeal of Pan-Islamism within the Ottoman realm (Kale, 2014, p. 260-261). In 1887, Sheikh al-Islam issued a fatwa urging Muslims from the ceded regions to migrate and resettle within the Ottoman borders. During Sultan Abdülhamid's reign, a systematic recall policy was institutionalised, enabling the government to repatriate Muslims from abroad when necessary (Dündar, 2021, p. 117-118). Mass migration was used as a tool to reconstruct the Ottoman society. The settlement of migrants was a comprehensive strategy used to implement the Ottoman Empire's policy of changing traditional land use practices, as set out in the 1858 Land Code. By settling vacant lands ready for reuse, known as arâzî-i hâliye, migrants were linked to a taxpayer for each piece of land in a detailed and thorough manner. Ottoman migration policies in the second half of the nineteenth century reveal that Ottoman social engineering was not solely based on ethnic origin, nationality or religion. In fact, the Ottoman authorities, in their management of a diverse and heterogeneous population, interacted with colonists and immigrants based on their potential economic contributions (Fratantuono, 2018, p. 5-6).

Following the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877/78, the state was compelled to confront the challenge of accommodating the massive influx of immigrants under a newly prioritised policy framework. Balkan migrants were deliberately welcomed to strengthen the Empire's defensive capacity in the Balkans and stabilise other frontier regions (Ljuljanovic, 2023, p. 52). Indeed, following 1878, the principle of reciprocity was adopted in migration matters, and population exchange schemes were brought onto the agenda in regions where they were considered feasible (Dündar, 2021, p. 120). To this end, the Ottoman administration sought to create a military cordon by placing immigrants primarily in Rumelia, on vacant land and in villages stretching from Jannina and Tirhala to Salonica, Edirne, and Istanbul. This policy aimed to secure a military presence and recalibrate the region's demographic composition along ethnic lines. To ensure its success, Sultan Abdülhamid II prohibited the transfer of migrants from Rumelia to Anatolia. Beyond strategic considerations, resettling migrants in nearby areas proved inexpensive and socially disruptive for both the state and the migrants themselves. Nevertheless, administrative negligence and poor coordination left many settlements unprepared, and unfulfilled promises eventually forced some migrants to return in hardship (Ağanoğlu, 2001, p. 101-107).

Political and Demographic Dynamics in Jannina from the 19th to the 20th Century

This section analyses the political developments that influenced the Ottoman Empire's migration and settlement policies regarding Jannina, alongside the transformations in its ethnic and religious composition that provided the rationale for such policies. It explores the intertwined political and demographic dynamics that shaped the province from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century, demonstrating how shifting administrative structures, regional power struggles, and competing nationalist agendas intersected with long-term population patterns. While Section 3.1 examines the evolving political landscape, including provincial governance, interstate rivalries, and the interventions of emerging Balkan states, Section 3.2 focuses on demographic change, highlighting the ethnic and religious composition of the population and its implications for Ottoman policy. Together, these subsections reveal how political instability and demographic pressures mutually reinforced one another, ultimately determining Jannina's strategic significance on the Balkan frontier.

Provincial Political Developments

Despite subsequent changes to its administrative boundaries, Jannina has historically served as the administrative and cultural centre of southern Albania (Erken, 2021, p. 1). The city came under Ottoman rule in 1430, during the reign of Murad II, and remained a sub-province (liva) of the Province of Rumelia until it was elevated to the status of a province in 1847. Following the extension of the 1867 Regulation of the Danube Province (Tuna Vilayeti Nizamnamesi) to Jannina in 1867, it became a province (vilayet) comprising the central sanjak of Jannina and the sanjaks of Tirhala, Volos, Berat, Ergiri, Preveza, and Narda (Arta) (Kokolakis, 2003, p. 128; Erken, 2021, p. 54; Kiel, 2013, p. 317-321; İnalcık, 2013, p. 235).

Following a series of uprisings against Ottoman rule, the Greek state was formally established in 1832. Owing to its limited geographical size and the fact that it did not encompass most of the Greeks who remained Ottoman subjects, the newly established state sought territorial expansion into the Balkans and the Aegean Islands. Greece's claims to Ottoman territories were officially based on the categorisation of the Orthodox population as Greeks within the Ottoman millet system (Erken, 2021, p. 302-303). As a result, the Greek state and the Ottoman Empire were often brought into conflict. While the Greek government supported the idea of an independent Albania and assisted rebel elements in the north, it did not endorse similar movements in the south, including in Jannina. Instead, the government expected incorporating Jannina and its Orthodox population into the Hellenic Kingdom (Tallon, 2012, p. 41). Political turmoil in the Balkans throughout the nineteenth century facilitated Greece's efforts to annex the southern Albanian sanjaks, particularly Jannina. During the Crimean War, Greece sought to capitalise on the Ottomans' preoccupation with the conflict to instigate a revolutionary movement in the Epirus region. The Greek government justified this movement by citing the heavy tax burden, the concentration of Ottoman troops in the area, and the raids conducted by Albanian groups (Floros, 2009, p. 22).

The Greek state, which had not actively participated in the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877/78, sought to exploit the Ottomans' preoccupation with the conflict by abandoning its neutrality and attempting to occupy Jannina. Although this attempt was unsuccessful, it provoked discontent among the local population (Pollo & Puto, 1981, p. 117). Once peace was restored in the province, the Ottoman government issued a declaration in April 1878 announcing the initiation of reform measures in the region. The declaration pledged to guarantee security, establish a new administrative structure based on civil and political equality irrespective of religion, language, or nationality, regulate taxation, and ensure justice and impartiality. It also called

upon the population, regardless of religion, to remain loyal to the Sultan and the government and to resist rebel groups inciting unrest under the pretext of freedom (Skendi, 1967, p. 40-41; FO, 1878, p. 1104-1106). The Romanian state, which gained independence in 1878, likewise sought to influence local politics by establishing associations and financing schools in Jannina, thereby actively opposing the Hellenisation policies pursued by Greece (Mitrojorgji, 2016, p. 44). A considerable portion of the local population expressed strong opposition to the annexation by Greece. The regional notables, particularly the Albanians, cautioned the government about the possibility of an uprising[4]. Following the Greek King's visit to Preveza and Narda in February 1881, Muslim protests in the region became widespread (Ortaylı, 1993, p. 143). The decisions of the 1881 Congress of Berlin, which ceded Tirhala and part of Preveza to Greece, transformed Jannina into a strategic base for the defence of both the border and Epirus (Gökaçtı, 1999, p. 40; Ertuna, 1983, p. 62)[5].

By the end of the nineteenth century, only the provinces of Edirne, Shkodra, Kosovo, Monastir, Salonica, and Jannina, together with the sanjaks and districts (kaza) attached to them, remained under Ottoman direct administration in the Balkans (Bayraktar, 2014, p. 3). Within the framework of the Eastern Question, however, Western powers, seeking to diminish Ottoman influence and incorporate its Balkan provinces into their own spheres of influence, began to play increasingly active roles in the region. In 1897, Austria-Hungary and Russia agreed that the eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula would fall within Russia's sphere of influence, while the western part, including Albania, would fall under Austria's. Italy, frustrated in its expansionist ambitions in Africa, also entered the equation in pursuit of its economic and political interests in Albania. In response, Albanian leaders formed the Leauge of Peja in 1899 and, in a special memorandum prepared in Bucharest, demanded that the provinces of Jannina, Shkodra, Monastir and Kosovo be united into a single administrative unit, with Albanian recognised as the official language (Pollo & Puto, 1981, p. 136).

However the Ottoman government suppressed the movement, was suppressed by the Ottomans in 1900. Although the deployment of troops to Jannina, owing to its sensitive geographical position, could not be achieved in a short period of time, the proximity of Greek military positions and the experience gained from the 1897 War raised expectations that Greece might occupy the region by a fait accompli and subsequently secure European approval (BOA. Y. MTV. 220/96, August 28, 1901). Despite warnings from Britain and Russia, Greece covertly supported the smuggling of arms to Jannina via Corfu through clandestine committees (BOA. HR. ID. 2125/97, November 14, 1908; BOA. HR. ID. 2125/99, November 26, 1908; BOA. HR. ID. 2125/95, November 22, 1908; BOA. HR. ID. 2125/ 102, December 3, 1908; BOA. HR. ID. 2125/96, November 21, 1908; BOA. HR. SYS. 1717/61, November 16, 1908). The Epirot Society, established to prevent the Orthodox population of Epirus, many of whom spoke Albanian and Vlach, from coming under Albanian or Romanian influence and to instil Greek nationalist values, operated with support from the Greek War Ministry. It facilitated the infiltration of armed bands into Ottoman territory and engaged in activities including arms smuggling, aimed at encouraging the Greek Orthodox population to resist Ottoman authority (Ploumidis, 2011, p. 150-153). The expansionist ambitions of the newly established Balkan states, combined with the interventions of the

[4] In 1877, under Abdyl Frashëri's leadership, Albanian intellectuals convened in Jannina, paving the way for establishing the Prizren League. They adopted the Jannina Manifesto, declaring that if the Ottoman Empire failed to protect the Albanian territories, they would establish an autonomous administration for their defence. The resolutions further demanded the unification of Albanian-inhabited lands, then divided among several provinces, into a single province governed by Albanian officials, with Albanians recognised in education and the judiciary. The demands of the Prizren League were eventually rejected. In 1899, during the growing influence of the Western powers, the League of Peja was founded with similar aims (See Bozbora, 1997, p. 190).

[5] Following the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy, German General von der Goltz, who was recalled to service, drafted the Jannina Fortification Project. He argued that the defence of Epirus depended on holding Jannina, which should therefore be transformed into a fortified camp (See Ertuna, 1983, p. 63).

Western powers, created an atmosphere of insecurity in Jannina. With growing poverty, this environment gradually prompted segments of the local population to emigrate (The Times, 1902, p. 8).

In shaping its regional policies, the Ottoman Empire considered bandit incursions and crossborder attacks affecting the frontiers of the Jannina Province from the Greek side. Measures were introduced to prevent popular discontent and thereby avert external intervention by Greece and the Western powers, particularly concerning the creation of administrative units, delineating borders, and selecting and appointing officials. The rationale for these measures was not confined to security considerations; the welfare of the population and the reinforcement of their ties to the state were also important factors (Erken, 2021, p. 302-303). Efforts were made to promptly discipline tax collectors and local officials who, through the pressure they exerted, had prompted segments of the Christian population to emigrate to Greece and adopt Greek nationality, and who were the subject of numerous complaints from local inhabitants (BOA. BEO. 2018/151348, 10 March 1903). Moreover, to counter the spread of Hellenism in the region, Muslim migrants were temporarily settled in the districts of Jannina Province bordering Greece (Dorlhiac, 2023, p. 61).

Demographic Developments

The ethnic composition of the Balkans did not change fundamentally during the Ottoman period. Although some Asian Muslim communities settled in significant numbers across the region, economic necessity and historical events constantly displaced the indigenous Balkan populations. The Turks settled in a relatively small area of the Balkans. A similar situation applies to Jannina (Stavranios, 2000, p. 97). The Ottoman Empire did not resettle the Turkish population in Jannina during the early period, as the region had come under Ottoman administration without war, in exchange for certain privileges. Consequently, Christians remained numerically dominant in the area for several centuries. Over time, however, the situation began to change due to uprisings, and while Muslim migration was encouraged, segments of the Christian population of Epirus, including Jannina, migrated to the Adriatic islands, primarily Corfu. Another portion converted to Islam to retain their existing rights. Although records indicate that in the early years of Suleiman the Magnificent's reign there were 32.097 Christian households in the Sanjak of Jannina compared to 613 Muslim households, Evliya Çelebi, who visited the city in the latter half of the seventeenth century, reported that the city centre contained 18 Muslim quarters, along with 14 Christian, 4 Jewish and one Gypsy quarter, indicating that Muslims were the largest group in the city centre (Gökaçtı, 1999, p. 36-37; Barkan, 1953, p. 214). By the end of the eighteenth century, the population of the Sanjak of Jannina was estimated at 30.000, of whom 24.000 were Greeks (Floros, 2009, p. 22-27). Traveller Holland notes that in 1812, Jannina had approximately 30.000 inhabitants, comprising Greeks, Turks, Albanians, and Jews, excluding Albanian soldiers, with Greeks being both the most numerous and the wealthiest group (Holland, 1815, p. 134-135). Following the implementation of the Regulation of the Danube Province of 1864 in Jannina, population data began to be published at the provincial level. Table 1 presents the population development of Jannina up to the Balkan Wars, along with the proportion of Muslims in the population.

Table 1

Population and the Rate of Muslims in Jannina

Source	Year	Population of the Province	The Rate of Muslims (%)
Akarlı(1972)	1864-77	710.000	36
İsmail Kemal Bey (Translation Office of the Sublime Porte)	1866	More than 400.000	-
Gilliéron(1877)	1877	210.000	20
Official Census	1880	280.000	40,5
Provincial Yearbook	1890/91	512.812	43,6
Official Census	1903	650.000	44,6
Official Census	1905/6	516.766	43
McCarthy(1995)	1911	560.835	43,6
Gökaçtı(1999)	1912/13	594.439	44,2

Source: Gökaçtı, 1999, p. 41; Akarlı, 1972, p. 66, BOA. HR. SYS. 124/6, 19 December 1866; Gilliéron, 1877, p. 103; BOA. Y. MTV. 4/23, 8 June 1880; Yanya Vilayet Salnamesi (Ioannina Province Yearbook), Hijri 1308 / 1890-91, p. 254; BOA. Y. PRK. MK. 12/92, 29 March 1903; Behar, 1996, p. 55-57; McCarthy, 1995, p. 6.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Jannina had become the second most populous province in Ottoman Europe after the Danube, Monastir, Edirne, and Bosnia (Akarlı, 1972, p. 66, 82). The Greeks predominantly lived east of a line stretching from Preveza through Ergiri to Konitsa, while the Albanians resided to the west (BOA. HR. SYS. 124/6, December 9, 1866). Following the Congress of Berlin, the Greek state opened schools in the Province of Jannina, particularly in the sanjaks of Ergiri, Berat, and Görice, to Hellenise Albanian Christians. However, the Ottoman authorities soon realised that recording Orthodox subjects as Greeks in the population registers was being exploited as a basis for the Hellenisation of Albanians and Greece's territorial claims. Consequently, they sought to record Orthodox populations according to ethnic affiliation, Vlachs, Greeks, Albanians, or Gipsies, to maintain demographic balance (BOA. Y. EE. 50/72, June 5, 1905; Erken, 2021, p. 302-303). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Romanian propaganda in the region attempted to transform Greeks into Vlachs. In particular, it sought to separate the Vlach community from the Greeks by establishing schools and churches in the villages of Duvse and Furka in the Zagori district of Jannina, as well as in Salonica and Monastir. These efforts largely failed because the Vlachs had been previously registered as Greeks, attended Greek churches, and adopted Greek customs (BOA. Y. PRK. UM. 76/1, June 5, 1905). Before the Balkan Wars, Muslims accounted for 15% of the population of 178.355 in Ergiri, 47% of 154.703 in Preveza, and 32,4% of 57.409 in Berat. Between 1876 and 1911, the proportion of Muslims in the Province of Jannina rose from 38% to 43%. Nevertheless, Jannina, along with Monastir, had the lowest proportion of Muslims. Bulgarians and Greeks in Monastir contributed to a more balanced demographic distribution across the province, whereas the Muslim population in Jannina remained the lowest in Ottoman Europe (McCarthy, 2010, p. 42, 121).

Before the Balkan Wars, the demographic trajectory of Jannina closely reflected the long-term population pattern of the Ottoman Balkans. Specifically, while the population of Ottoman Europe increased by 0,8 per cent between 1885 and 1910, that of the Balkans rose by 0.97% between 1790 and 1910. After 1820, this rate further accelerated to 1,3 per cent. Thus, during the latter period, the population growth of Ottoman Europe lagged behind that of the Ottomans' former Balkan territories (Palairet, 1997, p. 14, 19). Meanwhile, the low population issue that had persisted since the Ottoman era was exacerbated by the new historical pressures

resulting from high birth rates and falling mortality rates in the wake of the Balkan states' independence (Mazower, 2000, p. 13).

Migration and Settlement Policies in the Late Ottoman Jannina

From the last quarter of the 19th century onwards, the Province of Jannina experienced depopulation, with the Muslim population declining more rapidly than the non-Muslim population. At the turn of the century, insecurity, heavy taxation, feudal production relations, and backwardness prompted some Muslims in Jannina to migrate to Anatolia and the larger Ottoman urban centres. These factors were the main contributors to the population decline (The Times, 1902, p. 8). Reports by the British Consul, R. Stuart, indicate that the Muslim population decreased by 50%, mainly due to mass conscription preventing return. Conversely, Christians migrated to Greece, Izmir, Istanbul, and Suez to work in labour-intensive industries such as seafaring and domestic service, owing to regional poverty and hardship, resulting in an almost 40% decrease (Consul Stuart, 1872, p. 814; Consul Stuart, 1877, p. 104). Another factor was the United States' growing appeal as a destination for labour. According to Karpat (1985), between 1860 and 1914, around 1,2 million Ottomans emigrated to America from ports such as Marseille, Alexandria, and Trieste, and about 450.000 from Albania, Macedonia, Thrace, and Western Anatolia (Karpat, 1985, p. 185; Blumi, 2013, p. 91). While somewhat exaggerated, Kokolakis (2003) states that by 1906, approximately 30% of the population in the Province of Jannina had emigrated. Reports indicate that thousands left Jannina, Salonica, and Monastir daily, travelling via Corfu, Piraeus, Brindisi, and Naples. Despite Ottoman measures, migration could not be prevented. Even major companies such as Singer facilitated transfers, assigning officials to the docks (BOA. BEO. 3072/230334, June 4, 1907; BOA. BOE. 3116/233675, August 2, 1907). The governor's arbitrary rule, widespread misery, and continued violations of regulations by public officials accelerated these movements (BOA. Y. MTV. 301/50, August 16, 1907). Lack of security discouraged farmers from tending to their villages and farms, adversely affecting the economy (Mustafa Suphi, 1909, p. 1-2). Another major factor in Christian emigration to the United States was the desire to avoid military service (BOA. ŞD. 654/22, May 14, 1911).

In a 1907 letter from the Governor of Jannina to the Grand Vizier, later discussed in the Special Assembly, it was reported that only 4.000 of the town's nearly 20.000 inhabitants were Muslim. In contrast, almost all of the approximately 92.000 people in the surrounding villages were Christian. Given the province's strategic location on the Greek border, the letter argued that a population predominantly composed of non-Muslims was undesirable. The fact that the more numerous Christians did not vote for Muslims in parliamentary elections intensified tensions and complicated the provincial administration. Accordingly, measures were requested to increase the Muslim population (BOA. Y. A. RES. 145/97, April 2, 1907; BOA. I. DH. 1465/16, April 9, 1908). A previous proposal by the Director of Education in Jannina highlighted the decline in the Muslim population and stated settling 150.000 Crimean migrants in villages of 50, 200, or 500 households. The state would establish these villages by purchasing large estates bought by foreigners (BOA, TFR. I.M, 2/166, January 3, 1904). Indeed, the Ottoman central administration deemed it appropriate to address this issue by relocating to Jannina both Muslim Turks arriving from lost Balkan territories and those previously resettled elsewhere who failed to adapt and wished to return, facilitating their settlement. As a precaution, the Governor requested that the few regional soldiers be stationed at the Janina and Preveza castles, ensuring security, and that imperial agricultural lands be allocated to the migrants, thus establishing an Islamic village. The state would also gain revenue from agnam (cattle tax) and ushr (tithe on agricultural produce) by opening these areas to development (BOA. Y. A. RES. 145/97, April 2, 1907; BOA. I. DH. 1465/16,

April 9, 1908; BOA. DH. MKT. 1238/40, April 30, 1908; BOA. BEO. 3298/247288, April 15, 1908; BOA. DH. MKT. 2636/9, October 21, 1908).

In the Ottoman Empire, the Commission for the Settlement of Migrants (İskân-ı Muhâcirîn Komisyonu) oversaw migration and settlement activities, operating under the Instructions for the Settlement of Migrants (İskân-ı Muhâcirîn Talimatı). The last directive preceding the decision for Jannina dates to 1906. According to its articles, commissions chaired by the governor, sub-governor, and district administrator were to manage migrants' sustenance and settlement. Upon arrival, migrants were placed under the commissions' protection and temporarily settled in vacant state-owned premises or, if unavailable, in rented houses. The commissions determined the final settlement locations, while a municipal engineer and foreman, appointed from among the commission members, surveyed the houses, mosques, and schools to be constructed. Once construction was complete and agricultural land was allocated, migrants were transferred to their permanent houses. A register recording house numbers, family names, population, and allocated land was submitted to the local administration. Every 20 houses formed a village, and every 20 villages constituted a district, to which the local administration appointed a headman, tax collector, and teachers. From settlement until harvest, migrants received only half a bread ration; however, rice soup was provided at far and sahur during Ramadan to supplement their rations. Migrants under the age of 12 years will receive half an okra of bread daily, while older migrants will receive one okka. Land allocated to migrants will consist of state farms, abandoned villages, and unclaimed ruins, with plots ranging from 50 to 100 acres depending on soil fertility. The state will provide each household with tools, farm animals, and seeds to support agricultural activities. Migrants may acquire ownership if they cultivate the land continuously for ten years; until then, land transactions require certificates from local migrant administrations and governors, which can be exchanged for royal deeds (sened-i hakâni) after ten years. These lands cannot be transferred or renounced without royal deeds. New neighbourhoods and villages shall be located along railway and postal routes, near water and forests and not in hazardous areas such as mountains. Migrant villages lacking nearby scrubland (pernarlık) for woodcutting will be allocated additional land for woodland cultivation. An inspection committee was established to examine the relevant items and oversee all duties specified in the instructions, including purchases made during construction and at auction (BOA. A. DVN. MKL. 46/1, February 27, 1906). Over time, several amendments were introduced. Articles 10 and 11, concerning the provision of rations to migrants until the 1907 harvest, failed to prevent abuses despite precautions, causing unnecessary losses to the Treasury. It was also noted that migrants arrived with little or no cash from their homelands and relied on labour and trade to earn a living in their new locations (BOA. I. HUS. 152/63, April 1, 1907). In 1909, the period required for migrants to obtain a royal deed, enabling them to pledge their allocated land as collateral for credit from the Agricultural Bank, was reduced from ten to six years (BOA. BEO. 3673/275444, December 4, 1909).

On 21 July 1907, the Commission for Vacant Lands (Arâzî-i Hâliye Komisyonu) was established to determine migrants' settlement locations (BOA. ML. EEM 854/12, March 14, 1910). Following correspondence between the Commission for Vacant Land, the Commission for the Settlement of Migrants, and the Governorate of Jannina, Laziko Yaylağı (highland pasture used for seasonal grazing), Kolukat Chiftlik, and Dermerun Meadow were selected for 300 migrant households arriving from Rumelia. The Governorate of Jannina was asked about the following regarding the sites deemed suitable for settlement: the total size of the allocated land, how much of it was suitable for agriculture, whether sufficient resources were available for woodcutting and water, the cost of constructing a two-room mosque and a one-room house, the cost of providing a pair of animals and

a plough through a reverse auction, and whether, according to local custom, migrants would pay imro[6] to the Treasury or, as in the Province of Edirne and some other chiftliks, receive the land with a title deed from the imperial estate, in which case they would be liable for the tithe. In the reply dated 7 May 1908, the total settlement area was reported as 13.534 acres. According to the Instructions for the Settlement of Migrants, each household was to receive at least 80 acres, requiring 24.000 acres for 300 households. Of the remaining 10.466 acres, 1.301 acres consisted of plots belonging to the imperial lands (emlak-ı miriyye), including the Turna, Kasım Ağa, Deve, Teryakis chiftliks, and Kule Bey pastures. Meanwhile, 2.384 acres from the Beylik, Nesimce, and Topçu pastures and hamlets were to be transferred to the administration of the imperial estate (emlak-ı humâyûn), and the remaining 6.781 acres were deemed appropriate to be separated from the imperial estate land to which Laziko Yaylağı was attached. While the land was agriculturally productive with sufficient water, Kolukat Chiftlik was inadequate for forestry, so wood was to be sourced from nearby Lozec Chiftlik. Due to limited transport and long distances for materials, mosques and houses were estimated to cost 40 lira each, and a pair of oxen and a European-style plough cost 15 and 1,5 lira, respectively. As Laziko Yaylağı and Kolukat Chiftlik were part of the Sultan's estate, 30% of the settlers were required to pay . Since agreement could not be ensured, the matter was postponed to the Ministry of the Private Treasury (Hazine-i Hassa Nezareti). It was recommended that a decree stipulate that the allocated land could only be sold to Muslims, preventing later sales to Christians (BOA. ML. EEM. 688/49, May 7, 1908).

In a letter dated 23 May 1908, the Jannina Imperial Property Commission (Yanya Emlak-ı Humâyûn Komisyonu) informed the Governorate of Jannina that Kolukat Chiftlik, Laziko Yaylağı, and Dermerun Meadow would suffice for the anticipated migrants, whose exact number was unknown. The letter stated that settling one household could cost the up to 60 lira, including seeds, and that the budget for migrant settlement was insufficient. It noted that construction costs for houses previously built in the province did not exceed 2.000 kuruş, and requested 700 kuruş for a pair of agricultural animals. The feasibility of constructing a house for 2.000 kuruş and acquiring oxen or one pack animal for 700 kuruş was examined. Regarding the prevention of land sales, the letter affirmed that, under the Instructions for the Settlement of Migrants, migrants who did not cultivate their land for ten years could not transfer or dispose of it. After ten years, the settlers were expected to become accustomed to their new location and were unlikely to sell their land. The letter also requested that expenses from the settlement be organised and transferred. Finally, it mentioned that the Muslim population in Hacıköy, Bulgaria, was prepared to migrate to Jannina via the bridge of Mustafapaşa (BOA. ML. EEM. 688/49, May 23, 1908).

Following the annexation of Bosnia by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in October 1908, the resettlement of Bosnian migrants in the Province of Jannina was initiated. The Bosnian Treaty of 26 April 1909 marked the formal renunciation of Ottoman sovereignty over Bosnia and Herzegovina. It allowed Bosnians who complied with legal procedures to migrate freely to Ottoman territories and guaranteed that such migrants would be recognised as Ottoman subjects. The exemption granted by the Ottoman government in 1911 from compulsory military service further accelerated migration (Dündar, 2021, p. 290). Some were relocated to Mitrovica, while others were sent first to Skopje and then to Konya. Previously relocated Bosnian migrants in Ankara did not remain settled and dispersed, rendering prior resettlement efforts futile. To prevent a similar outcome, the government inquired about the suitability of the province of Jannina, Monastir, and

[6]A form of rent determined by local custom, based on the share of produce or revenue paid by farmers to landowners for the use of the land. In his article in *Tanin* on July 29, 1909, Mustafa Suphi notes that in the Jannina Province, land was predominantly organised as farms owned by beys, while peasants paid imro, amounting to 50–60% of their yield after the state tithe, to these landowners. The imro system was widespread across many Balkan provinces (See Mustafa Suphi, 1909; Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, 1991, p. 142-143; Kaya, 2021, p. 38.)

Salonica, as Mitrovica and Skopje lacked adequate space and resources (BOA. DH. MKT. 2700/47, January 3, 1909). Resettlement might be feasible near Jannina, in the Laziko Yaylağı, Kolukat Chiftlik, and Dermerun Meadow. Accordingly, a letter was sent to the Province of Kosovo to determine the number of migrants and the houses required, ensuring that accommodations would be ready upon their arrival in Jannina (BOA. DH. MKT. 2742/27, 16 February 1909).

Although the Migrant Commission of Jannina (Yanya Muhacirin Komisyonu) stated that sending migrants from Kosovo to Jannina was unnecessary due to their small number (BOA. DH. MKT. 2864/25, July 3, 1909), it was decided to allocate the Balta Çayırı and Lakos plots, part of the remaining holdings of Tepedelenli Ali Paşa's estate, located half an hour from the town of Preveze in the Province of Jannina, for the settlement of migrants arriving from Bosnia. The estate covers approximately 1.500 acres and generates an annual income of 7.000-8.000 kuruş from grass sales. Each household was to receive 50 acres. With 30 migrant households expected by May 1909, Table 2 presents the costs for surveying and constructing houses and providing seeds, agricultural tools, and farm animals. Sixty kilogrammes of corn per person were to be provided to support the resettled migrants. Given the fertility of the 1,500-acre land, cultivation would yield 300-400 Lire in revenue for the Treasury from produce taxes alone (BOA. DH. MKT. 2848/31, June 15, 1909).

Table 2

Budget allocations and requests for migrant resettlement

	Expense Item	Unit Cost (kuruş)	Total (kuruş)
Budget Allocated by the Ministry of Interior	Survey of Maps and Plans and Construction Expenses	5.000	150.000
	Seeds and Agricultural Trade	300	9.000
	Draft Animals	1.000	30.000
Total			189.000
Actual Expenditures	Construction of Four Houses in Preveza and Temporary Housing Costs		50.000
	Provisioning of Migrants in Jannina		13.900
Remaining Balance			125.900
Additional Allocation Requested	Construction of 50 Migrant Houses in Preveza, Incorporating 9 Households in Transit	5.700	285.000
	Costs of Seeds and Draft Animals and Provisions and Rent until Settlement	1.068	53.400
	Construction of 15 Houses at Kolukat Chiftlik	6.000	90.000
	Costs of Seeds, Draft Animals, and Provisions for Settling Migrants at Kolukat Chiftlik	8.333	125.000
Total Requested			553.400
After Deducting the Previous Balance			427.500

Source: BOA. DH. MKT. 2848/31, 15 June 1909.; BOA. DH. MUI. 59/46, 3 February 1910.

Note: At the end of the 18th century, a monetary reform was introduced in the Ottoman Empire whereby the para replaced the akçe as the basic accounting unit of currency. In this system, 1 Ottoman kuruş (piastre), a silver-based denomination, was equivalent to 40 para or 120 akçe. The higher denomination, the Ottoman lira, was valued at 100 kuruş. In terms of foreign exchange, 1 British pound sterling corresponded approximately to 1.10 Ottoman lira, or 110 kuruş.

Some migrants scheduled for resettlement from Bosnia to Jannina were transported to Salonica[7] via Pljevlja. The travel expenses incurred for the journey of 151 migrants from Bosnia to Salonica via Pljevlja, amounting to 14.093,5 kuruş, were financed from the assets of the Province of Kosovo, whereas the subsequent shipping costs from Salonica to Preveza, along with provisions for food and other necessities, were covered by the Migrant Commission of Salonica (BOA. DH. MKT. 2861/100, June 30, 1909; BOA. TFR. I. KV. 223/22263, July 5, 1909). By August 1909, however, only seven households had migrated from Bosnia to Preveza. Although 60.842 kuruş had been transferred for the expenses of migrants who had already arrived, the Ministry of Finance could disburse only 300 kuruş, as the migration status of the thirty households remained uncertain (BOA. DH. MKT. 2903/24, August 11, 1909; BOA. DH. MKT. 2901/73, August 15, 1909). In a letter dated August 18, 1909, the Ministry of the Interior informed the Ministry of Finance that, according to a memorandum dated July 17, 1909, the total settlement expenses for migrants temporarily hosted in various provinces amounted to 352.500 kuruş, of which 189.000 kuruş had been allocated to the Province of Jannina. The letter requested that the remaining balance be transferred to Jannina (BOA. DH. MKT. 2904/66, August 19, 1909). By August 24, 1909, the number of migrant households to be settled in Preveza had risen to twenty-six, which caused difficulties in obtaining authorisation to spend the allocated 189.000 kuruş for resettlement in the Province of Jannina. Despite these challenges, the Ministry of Finance eventually issued the necessary transfer documents, albeit after a significant delay (BOA. DH. MUI. 2/67, August 26, 1909).

The Ottoman Empire regarded migration and settlement as a matter of honour. Despite the Treasury's difficult situation, it sought to provide migrants with adequate funds. Following a February 2, 1910 report in the Wiener Abendblatt, citing a telegram from Salonica claiming that Muslim migrants in Jannina were living in poverty in mosque corners, the government informed the Province of Jannina that the entire 1909/10 budget had been spent and the 1910/11 budget period had not yet commenced, requesting a solution for the necessary funds. The Jannina Governorate, based on information from the Migrant Commission, indicated that the migrants were staying as guests in houses rather than in mosque corners. It reported 91 migrants in Jannina and 223 in Preveza, noting that 15 houses in Jannina and 45 in Preveza were needed for their accommodation. A detailed breakdown of migrant expenses is presented in Table 2 under 'Actual Expenditurs' and 'Additional allocations requested" (BOA. DH. MUI. 59/46, February 3, 1910).

Despite the efforts of the Commission for the Settlement of Migrants and the Jannina Governorate, the number of migrants resettled remained limited, and the process was not completed on time. By March 1910, nine households occupied the 7.500-acres Kolukat Chiftlik, each allocated 50 acres, while the remaining land was auctioned for use as winter and summer pastures (BOA. ML. EEM. 826/38, March 12, 1910). By November 1910, only 12 migrants in Preveza had been resettled. The Jannina Governorate informed the Ministry of the Interior that the Balta Çayırı and the plot called Lakos needed to be distributed among the migrants to prevent destitution and allow them to sustain themselves (BOA. ML. EEM. 826/38, November 14, 1910). A letter from the Grand Vizier's Office to the Ministry of Finance, dated 20 April 1911, noted that the funds allocated for the migrants were insufficient to purchase estates with private ownership. It was therefore proposed that Treasury-owned estates, excluding those in Jannina, Monastir, and Shkodra or within a six-hour walking distance of the border, be considered for resettlement. On 31 March 1912, Sultan Mehmed V Reşad decreed that after sharecroppers and seasonal workers on Treasury estates in the specified locations received the land they required, any surplus should be allocated to migrants (BOA. MV. 227/54, March 30, 1912; BOA. DH.

[7] According to Akyalçın-Kaya (2011), following the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War, Salonica served as a transit hub for Bosnian immigrants, a role it continued to play in the early 20th century for Bosnian migrants en route to Jannina, who were transported by boat from Salonica to various parts of the Ottoman Empire. (See Akyalçın-Kaya, 2011, p. 178.)

HMŞ. 19/27, March 31, 1912; BOA. BEO. 4025/301801, April 12, 1912; BOA. ML. EEM 854/12, April 20, 1911; BOA. BEO. 3884/291272, March 21, 1911).

The Real Estate Inspectorate of Jannina, based on information from the Commission of Vacant Lands, determined that in the Sanjak of Jannina, excluding the farms located on the border, within a six-hour walking distance from the border, and in the direction of the Pogon[8] region and Berat, there were barren lands, pastures, woodlands, and threshing floors, leaving 74.800 acres available for the settlement of 956 migrant households, according to reports submitted to the Ministry of Finance (BOA. ML. EEM 854/12, March 14, 1910). Details regarding the identified chiftliks are provided in Table 3.

Table 3

State-Owned Winter Pastures and Chifliks Allocated to Migrants

Districts	Households Capacity	Acres	Number
Jannina	500	26.825	10
Donat	116	23.200	1
Preveza	110	7.100	2
Loros	230	17.700	7
	956	74.825	20

Source: BOA. ML. EEM 854/12, 14 March 1910.

On March 31, 1912, detailed instructions were issued regarding the allocation of land on designated farms. According to this instruction, each province was required to form a commission to determine how much land was suitable for cultivation and to identify available pastures, forests, groves, and highlands. These commissions would inspect each farm to verify its boundaries and record the names of sharecroppers or seasonal users, the size of the land used, and the ownership status of the resident households. Every household was to receive forty acres of land, determined by the productivity and location of the plot. The purchase price per acre would be based on comparable land in the area, while a fair price would also be set for landless households. The allocated lands were to be sold in ten annual instalments, and each buyer would receive an imperial deed of ownership (sened-i hakani). These lands would also be subject to regular taxes and tithes. The migrants were permitted to use local pastures, threshing floors, and woodlands. Any surplus pasture suitable for cultivation would be distributed to migrant settlers. The commissions were instructed to consider the fertility of the land, the availability of pastures and woodlands, and to ensure that migrants would not face hardship or conflict with existing residents (BOA. ML. EEM 854/12, March 31, 1912; BOA. I. MMS. 150/16, March 28, 1312; BOA. DH. HMS. 19/27, March 31, 1912).

Before the Balkan Wars, the Governor of Jannina, Mehmed Ali Bey, submitted a detailed report on the province's condition, needs, and required measures. Referring to a proposal by the Jannina Corps Commander, Mirliva[9] Esad Pasha, he stressed the need to protect the Protestants and Vlachs who were beginning to spread among the Greeks. He noted that new Vlach villages could be more easily established on state-owned lands between Preveza and Meçova than Muslim ones, as the Vlachs spoke Greek. He further advised enrolling an appropriate number of Vlachs in the newly formed gendarmerie to ensure regional

[8]For security reasons, the state decided that lands near the Greek border should remain under the control of the Central Treasury. Although the people of Pogon were initially excluded from land allocations due to their focus on trade, the region was later included to prevent their loyalty to the state from weakening. (BOA. ŞD. 452/17, September 5, 1911).

[9]Mirliva: An Ottoman military rank corresponding approximately to the modern-day brigadier general. The title mirliva was typically used for commanders in charge of a liva (brigade or sub-province), situated hierarchically between the ranks of miralay (colonel) and ferik (major general) within the late Ottoman army structure.

security. The report also included an earlier document from 1892 concerning the settlement of the Vlachs. It stated that the nomadic lifestyle of Albanian and Sarıkaçan Vlachs, who moved between summer and winter pastures, harmed public revenues, social order, and security. Moreover, the mountain range in the Zagor district, used by some Vlachs as summer pasture near the Greek border, served as a refuge for Greek bandits who occasionally employed them. The document proposed settling the Albanian Vlachs in Ergiri and the Sarıkaçan Vlachs in the Kolukat area of Jannina, along the Kaksul and Çeropol pastures, to prevent such problems (BOA. HSD. HADB. 5/53, April 14, 1913; BOA. DH. MKT. 2035/14, December 26, 1892; BOA. DH. MKT. 2055/56, February 24, 1893).

The Balkan Wars began only six months after the Sultan's decree ordering the distribution of Treasury-owned lands—allocating part to farmers and the remainder to migrants—and after the Governor of Jannina had submitted his report to the Ministry of the Interior. These developments undoubtedly interrupted the Empire's migration and settlement policies. According to Gökaçtı (1999), the Jannina Province had a total population of 594.439 in 1912-13, 44,2% of whom were Muslim. The 1905–06 Ottoman census recorded 516.766 inhabitants, including 225.415 Muslims (43,6%). These figures indicate an average annual growth of 2,02% over seven years, yet the proportion of Muslims rose slightly, falling short of the strategic demographic objectives of the Ottoman government.

Conclusion

Before the First World War, the world witnessed notable population growth, primarily driven by industrialisation and extensive migration, which reshaped demographic patterns. In contrast, the Ottoman Empire experienced demographic stagnation and, in some areas, population decline, mainly due to the impacts of ongoing wars. These conflicts triggered significant migration from territories lost by the Empire into the remaining Ottoman lands. Consequently, the proportion of Muslims increased markedly in the central provinces, whereas non-Muslims remained the majority in the European provinces, particularly in Jannina. In response, the Ottoman central administration implemented a policy to resettle migrants from Rumelia in Jannina.

The Ottoman Empire's efforts to enhance centralisation and bureaucratisation in the second half of the nineteenth century also shaped migration and settlement practices within the framework of demographic policies. These policies reflected a broader form of demographic engineering through which the state sought to reinforce its authority by managing population composition and ensuring security in its border regions. Refugee commissions established under this framework acted in accordance with directives sent from the centre but adapted their implementation to local conditions. This demonstrates that relations between the centre and the provinces in the late Ottoman period were characterised by reciprocal interaction and pragmatic adjustment rather than a rigid hierarchy. The commissions determined the farms where migrants would be settled and assisted them in adapting to rural production. The government aimed to increase the Muslim population in the Jannina Province, employ migrants for border security, and achieve economic gains through the creation of productive settlements. Despite financial constraints, the state sought to maintain a regular and institutionalised form of migration management, thereby demonstrating both its administrative capacity and the continuity of its population management practices beyond the late imperial period. Through coordination with local authorities, land, housing, and production tools were allocated to migrants under reasonable conditions and in accordance with established regulations. Nevertheless, the number of migrants ultimately settled in Jannina before the Balkan Wars fell short of the intended target.

Considering both the population size and the changes in ethnic composition, it is evident that the Ottoman Empire's demographic policies in the Province of Jannina achieved only limited success. According to Kokolakis (2003), the population growth in Janina strongly correlated with living standards. Although most non-Muslim population left the region in search of better conditions abroad, the proportion of Muslims in the total population changed little. Some Muslims from Rumelia migrated to Anatolia, moving away from the border areas most affected by the war (BOA, TFR. I.M, 2/166, January 3, 1904). Migration and settlement efforts were further hindered by financial constraints, administrative neglect, and a lack of coordination, which prevented the authorities from meeting migrants' expectations. As Marshal Fevzi Çakmak also noted (Ertuna, 1983, p. 10), attempts to resettle war-affected populations in border regions were unappealing to migrants and ineffective for regional defence. The Balkan Wars compounded these challenges, disrupting the implementation of migration and settlement policies. Ultimately, the Ottoman loss of Jannina eliminated any possibility of executing these plans in the province.

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