

THE LATER PASHALIK OF YANNINA (YANYA):

Topography, administration and population in Ottoman Epiros (1820-1913)

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The aim of the present study is twofold: First, to present a complete survey of Ottoman administrative divisions in Epiros during the nineteenth century, trace their gradual evolution through successive reform initiatives, and arrive at a precise definition of their spatial extent; second, to exploit this information in evaluating and interpreting certain statistical data on the distribution and development of Epirote populations. Although there exists a mass of published and manuscript data on these questions, its usage and interpretation has tended to proceed in a rather superficial way, due to a lack of conceptual clarity in handling geographical and administrative terminology, as well as the exclusive focussing of population studies on the so-called "ethnic" distribution of Ottoman populations, usually in order to prove political points.

The results of this study may be of interest to three groups of researchers: (a) Those interested in the local history of Greek Epiros and Southern Albania, and wishing to trace the Ottoman substratum underlying 20th-century administrative divisions and settlement patterns. (b) Those dealing with the history of Ottoman provincial institutions during the Tanzimat and Hamitic periods, notably the content and evolution of Ottoman administrative terms, the implementation of the vilayet system, and the history of census counts. (c) Those studying the population history of the modern Greek state, and wishing to supplement the available population data on the Greek kingdom during the 19th century with information on regions which remained outside the borders of Greece until the beginning of the 20th century.

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As indicated below, population trends in the two areas were highly divergent, especially during the latter half of the 19th century.

Part A: Geographical and historical background (pp. 21-98)

This part has been designed as an extended introduction to the area and period in question. Emphasis is placed on the political and economic background underlying Ottoman administrative practices, on the definition of geographical entities and nationality groupings, and on factors likely to influence population movements.

The old problem of the geographical delineation of Epiros is dealt with in chapter 1 (pp. 22-29). For the purposes of the present study, this term has simply been equated with the area of the Ottoman province governed by the pasha of Yannina. Chapter 2 (pp. 29-38) deals with landscape, production and economic development. Two main features stand out: The insufficiency of local agricultural and industrial production and the huge trade deficit, which was mainly balanced through the importation of capital by migrant workers. The distribution of the population by language and religion is discussed in chapter 3 (pp. 38-49). The province was divided between an Albanian-speaking and largely Muslim population in the north and a predominantly Greek-speaking Christian population in the south; transitional areas such as Tsamourya (Çameri), Aryirokastro (Gjirokaster) and Premeti (Permet) contained a very mixed population. However, Greek culture and influence were widespread among all Christian groups, and the religious dichotomy was more influential politically and psychologically than the superficial classification of the population by language.

Chapter 4 (pp. 49-65) deals with some aspects of 19th-century Ottoman institutions as expressed in the case of Epiros. Four main themes are taken up: the development of the Ottoman reform movement, the status and geographical distribution of forms of land ownership, especially private and state-owned chiftliks, the methods of taxation, and the formation of the Ottoman regular and irregular army. Although the reforms of the Tanzimat period greatly affected these sectors of social life, the results were not necessarily beneficial to Epiros as a whole, and may indeed have hastened its decline into economic and demographic stagnation. Continual tax increases and unrestrained competition from Western countries weakened local enterprises, while the gradual impoverishment of old Muslim landholders was not balanced by a corresponding improvement in the condition of the

peasantry. The purchase of chiftlik land by aspiring smallholders was only made possible through the acceptance of heavy mortgages and a lifetime of migrant labour, a process which denuded the country of its potential workforce.

Chapter 5 (pp. 66–77) briefly traces the history of the three mutually competitive nationalist movements: Greek, Albanian and Vlakh-Roumanian. The influence of the last was insignificant, but the first two were powerful enough to provoke several major uprisings during the period in question. The motives of these uprisings were sometimes confused, and, in the case of the Albanian Muslims, desire for national statehood was generally less important than the wish to resist the encroachment of centralist Tanzimat policies on the system of tribal autonomy prevalent during the previous century. The Ottoman government played the elements of resistance against each other quite skillfully, a fact which enabled it to minimize its territorial losses in Epiros up to the time of the Balkan wars.

Part B: Administrative organization (pp. 99–316)

Chapter 1 (pp. 100–112) attempts to clarify the use and meaning of certain forms of Ottoman administrative terminology, notably the relationship between the terms “pashalik”, “sandjak” and “mutasariflik”, or “vilayet”, “kaza” and “nahiye”. In fact, the last two terms were often interpreted in several senses, depending on whether the context referred to the traditional judicial hierarchy, or to contemporary administrative practice. Lists of kazas and nahiyes in the Ottoman yearbooks of the province of Yannina betray a bewildering confusion of criteria; the use of equivalent Greek terms in Greek writers of the period was equally inconsistent.

A brief survey of Ottoman administrative divisions in Epiros up to the fall of Ali Pasha of Tepelen (1820) is undertaken in chapter 2 (pp. 112–119). Ottoman and other sources indicate that the borders and main territorial divisions of the three Epirote sandjaks of Yannina (Yanya), Delvino (Delvine) and Avlona (Vlore) remained almost unchanged from the early 16th to the early 19th century. However, the 18th century was marked by a considerable loosening of official sandjak hierarchy, leading to confusion over sandjak boundaries and the de facto autonomy of various areas. During the rule of Ali Pasha (1788–1820), all three sandjaks were subsumed under his personal authority, although their official status differed in each case.

The evolution of the Ottoman administrative framework during the 19th century is discussed in chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 120–148). Between 1820 and 1846 the three Epirote sandjaks were subject to a kind of personal union under the mutasarrif of Yannina, who was thus known as the “mutasarrif of the three sandjaks” (*elviye-i selase*): this office was combined for a time with the valilik of Rumelia (1824–1833 and 1834–1836), then with the mutasarrifliks of Trikala and Salonica (1837–1840), leading to an extreme concentration of power in the hands of a single governor. The status of the three Epirote sandjaks remained largely unaffected by the Tanzimat reforms of 1839–1840; it was only in 1846 that radical reforms were instituted through the agency of the military governor of Rumelia, Mehmed Reshid Pasha. The pashalik of Yannina was now organized as a separate *eyalet*, with a central administrative council (*medjlis-i idare*) and two vice-governors or *kaimmakams* in Gjirokaster and Berat. A third *kaimmakamlik* (Arta) was created in 1849, a fourth (Preveza) in 1864. During the period 1864–1867 there was constant shifting of boundaries and administrative capitals in some of these sandjaks; the details can be filled in by data provided from Greek consular archives, since the official Istanbul yearbooks for these years are generally muddled.

In 1867 the vilayet system was extended to the pashalik of Yannina, which was joined with Trikala to form the vilayet of Yannina. (It is notable that contemporary accounts betray little enthusiasm for this reform; many local Greeks regretted the erosion of local autonomy through the imposition of government appointees, notably in the administration of the *nahiyes*). The previous administrative division of the province was retained, with minor changes; later, the sandjak of Trikala was made independent from Yannina (1878), and a new sandjak of Leskovik functioned briefly between 1882–1888. The last years of Ottoman rule (1910–1912) saw the creation of the separate sandjak of Reshadiye or Chamlik (Tsamourya).

Chapter 5 (pp. 149–195) presents a list of all Ottoman *kazas* to appear in Epiros during the period in question. In addition to 14 *kazas* that functioned continuously to the end of Ottoman rule (Arta, Yannina, Paramythia or Aydonat, Konitsa, Margariti, Filyates, Pogoni, Delvine, Gjirokaster, Tepelene, Permet, Berat, Skrapar and Vlore), new *kazas* were established at Preveza (1830), Parga (1830), Metsovo (1850?), Radhovizi (1859), Himare (1877). Leskovik (1882) Lushnje (1894) and Reshadiye (1910); in other cases, older *kazas* were abolished

or their boundaries changed, while border modifications in 1876-1882 led to considerable loss of territory on the part of the vilayet. All such changes have been catalogued in Appendix B / I (pp. 280-288), while appendices B / II-IV (pp. 288-309) contain a list of Ottoman governors of Yannina and the sandjaks subject to them.

Chaoter 6 (pp. 196-210) briefly describes the extent and development of Orthodox ecclesiastical dioceses in Epiros. Since the conflation of ecclesiastical and administrative divisions is a common source of blunders, especially in the Greek source materials, care has been taken to distinguish the two sets of data. Finally, chapter 7 (pp. 210-224) explores the concept of "town" and "village" as a basis of 19th century administrative practice. The chief point to be emphasized is that "villages" appearing in official lists and population statistics can in no sense be equated with discrete settlements, but may correspond to groups of settlements sharing the legal status of a single commune.

Part C: Population counts (pp. 317-450)

Chapter 1 (pp. 318-336) contains a survey of Ottoman census efforts known to have taken place in Epiros during the 19th and early 20th century. Direct evidence indicates the existence of 5 major surveys, occurring mainly in the years 1831, 1845-1846, 1871-1875, 1884-1886 and 1905; these coincided with similar activities in other Ottoman provinces. Unfortunately, the official records of these censuses have not been located archivally. Figures published by Greek authors in 1853 and 1856 seem to be based, partly at least, on the counts of 1831 and 1846; those of the 1870s are concisely reported in Ottoman yearbooks, while the substance of later censuses is preserved in summary registers located in Ottoman government and Greek consular archives. Many of these sources contain numerical distortions due to selective correcting, conscious manipulation, or plain arithmetical and copying errors. Often, population figures are not a direct product of the actual census, but represent "revised" estimates obtained by deducting deaths and adding births officially registered in years following the census date. The accuracy of such data seems more questionable than that of the censuses themselves.

The final section of this chapter describes the methods employed in two censuses carried out by Greek authorities immediately after the cession of parts of Epiros to Greece in 1881 and 1913. These sur-

veys are fairly reliable and can be used to test the validity of Ottoman data.

Chapter 2 (pp. 337-347) describes some supplementary sources which can be used in conjunction with Ottoman census records. The most important of these are church registers, which are independent of official Ottoman sources but usually inferior in quality. A statistical collation published in 1874 by an Epirote organization in Istanbul gives the most useful summary of such data. Other sources, such as consular archives or published geographical and "ethnographical" works, when not wildly inaccurate, can usually be shown to depend on known Ottoman documents or Greek ecclesiastical sources. Nevertheless, the records of Greek consular authorities in Epiros do on occasion present us with some original data, and are particularly interesting for their detailed statistical coverage of the Berat-Vlore area during the final decades of Ottoman rule.

Chapter 3 (pp. 348-366) discusses a number of technical issues concerning the aims, methods and validity of official population surveys. Ottoman censuses were different from modern census practice in that they attempted to list Ottoman citizens according to their permanent abode, rather than record their presence at a certain place during a specific census date. In practice, emigrants often continued to be registered as inhabitants of their native towns and villages for many years after their emigration. On the other hand, Ottoman censuses probably suffered from a high level of undercounting, especially among women and children. Such factors may explain a number of discrepancies between official Ottoman data and the censuses carried out by Greek authorities soon afterwards.

Some Ottoman figures are expressed in terms of "hanes", or households; the exact scope of this term can be gleaned from studying the rare copies of official population registers preserved in local archives. Ottoman yearbooks of the vilayet of Yannina give unusually full information on the average size of Epirote households (apparently about 5.4 persons, but probably nearer 6 if undercounting of women and children is taken into account). There is some local variation, with southern coastal areas and Muslim communities showing somewhat smaller averages.

Though Ottoman data are sometimes criticized as being partial either to Muslims or to Christians, neither is probably an important hazard. Minority groups such as Gypsies, nomad shepherds and fore-

ign residents were almost certainly undercounted, but they only constituted an insignificant part of the population. The total percentage of uncounted inhabitants was probably dwindling throughout the 19th century; for this reason, the apparent increase in official population figures may be over-optimistic.

Taking into account the above observations, an attempt is made in chapter 4 (pp. 367-389) to plot the size and density of the population in the various districts of Epiros during the period in question. Only sources thought to be based on actual census counts were used at this stage. Mistaken entries were corrected as far as possible, and records consisting only of household counts, as in the transcription of the 1846 census by Aravandinos (1856), were multiplied by figures representing the average household size of each region in later Ottoman statistics. Figures showing only male population were doubled and corrected for an undercounting of 12 % if the relevant data was collected c. 1870, but only 6 % for figures based on the census of 1884-6; in later data, undercounting is accepted as negligible. (In tables containing corrected figures, source dates have been rounded).

The figures thus obtained were further adjusted in order to offset the effect of various boundary changes. Thus the total population of Epiros: defined in terms of administrative boundaries existing in 1895, is seen to have increased from 385,700 inhabitants in 1830 to 604,000 in 1910, a rise of 57 %. In fact, this rise is rather unimpressive in comparison to other Balkan regions: moreover, most of it is concentrated in the first half of the period, gradually levelling off as the effect of mass emigration became more pronounced. In the southern, Greek part of the province, which was much more sparsely inhabited at the beginning of the period than the northern areas, rates of increase are consistently higher, gradually leading to a more balanced distribution of the population at the beginning of the 20th century. In all areas the Christian population rose faster than the Muslims, and the Jewish community faster than either. Thus the Muslims, who accounted for 53 % of the total population in 1830, had fallen to 38 % by 1910. Probably the Muslim population suffered from a lower birth-rate, a fact to be explained by sociological rather than traditional historical models.

The effects of emigration in reshaping the patterns of population distribution are documented in chapter 5 (pp. 390-405) by focussing on population and settlement data for the kaza of Yannina. The source figures are summarized in Appendix C / II (pp. 430-445). Villages

were divided into 7 main types, according to the shape of their population curve between 1850 and 1910. In areas with a known propensity to emigration, such as the Zagorohorya and Katsanohorya clusters of villages, the population invariably tended to stagnate. However, this stagnation was not directly associated with material poverty, but rather the reverse. Areas with a lower standard of living, such as the pastoral districts of Lakka and Tsarkovista, show a much higher rate of population increase. Due to their imperfect integration into the workings of Ottoman urban society, their inhabitants were apparently deterred from embarking on large-scale emigration.