

PREVEZA DURING THE TANZIMAT ERA (1864-1895)

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The sandjak Prevesa has witnessed some of the most characteristic developments of the Tanzimat period. It had remained outside of the boundaries of the Hellenic kingdom as it was established in 1829, but still it was the closest contact point of the Ottoman empire with Greece both from commercial and geographical aspects.

Until 1912 the *Prevesa* sandjak was part of the *Ianina* vilayet (Yanya province). Between 1864 and 1912 it included 3 subdistricts (*kaza*); namely *Preveza*, *Loros* and *Marğılıç*- (today Margariti). Parga was at first a *kazâ* center and later remained as a *nahiye* (commune) within the *kazâ* of *Marğılıç*... 36 villages and two communes (*nahiye*) completed the administrative structure of the sandjak¹. The *nahiye* had been established on the lines of the French commune model; but owing to its autonomous administrative status, specially in the Balkans, it was not favoured by the Ottoman administration. Population figures quoted by Ottoman sources usually repeat the figures of the official yearbook (*salname*). As the census was not conducted in a very precise manner, these figures are only an approximation of the reality and they should not be used to work out population estimates for XIXth century Ottoman Europe. Population figures for 1895 based on an Ottoman source are as follows²:

	male	female
Greek-orthodox	5168	4840
Muslim	3512	3897

Another ottoman source gives the following figures for the same year, (1894) but based this time on households³.

¹ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Yanya* (annual of the province of Ianina) 1892, Nr: p. 211-214-216.

² Ali Cevad, *Memalik-i Osmaniye'nin Coğrafya Lugatı* (Geographical manual of the Ottoman lands) Constantinopol 1892 (1313 H) p. 238-240.

³ *Salname-i Vilâyet-i Yanya* Nr: 7, 1894 (1311 of H) p. 37.

	house holds	male	female	total population
Prevesa	2306	5556	4504	10.060
Loros	2780	6137	6507	13.654
(Margariti) Marğılıç	5224	12.576	11.379	23.955

It appears that Muslims were in minority both in the sandjak overall and in the main town. 25 years earlier (1871) the British consul *Barker* mentions 4318 Christians, 1724 Turks (meaning Muslims) 58 Cypies⁴... Either through lack of information or because perhaps a community had not yet been established; Consul *Barker* does not refer to a Jewish presence in Preveza. 8 years later, another British consul, *Blakeney* gives conflicting figures; 1200 Muslims to 11.200 (rest are; Christians), without providing a break-down on ethnical lines⁵.

But on the other hand consular reports provide valuable information on trade and agriculture. In 1864 a new provincial structure had been established in the Rumeli *vilajets* and this year (1863) the center of sandjak transferred from *Arta (Narda)* to Prevesa. This new administrative set up had brought along an increase in the number of provincial functionaries and in infrastructural expenditures. In 1864 Prevesa was connected to *Ianina* through telegraph. Similarly cables were laid between Prevesa on the one hand and *Parga* and on the other during the 1878⁶. Public security in the area which had, earlier been problematic also improved and by 1884 the British consul could write that it was becoming more satisfactory every year, although acts of brigandage are occasionally heard of. Even in 1864, British Consul Major to *Ianina*, *Stuart* reports that: "Brigandage, that used to be so rife here, has for some time been quite repressed, and individual crime is certainly below the average of other years⁷."

⁴ *Parliamentary papers and accounts report of vice-Consul Barker (Prevesa 1872-28 January)*, p. 1355.

⁵ *Ibid.*, (vice consul *Blakeney*) Prevesa, February 13, 1880 p. 1032, However he mentions that; "I am not aware that a census has ever been taken, but the population of the *caza of Prevesa* cannot exceed 10.000 souls".

⁶ *Vice-consul Blakeney*, Prevesa, February 22, 1878, p. 886.

⁷ *Vice-consul Blakeney*, Prevesa, March 1, 1884, p. 577 Formerly.

The increase in the number of provincial civil servants, introduced changes into everyday life in Prevesa, which was till then a small sleepy backwater. This numerous group of high-paid civil servants created a consuming class and new consuming patterns which in turn led to increased demands for imported goods. Since local products started to be exported, Preveza supplanted *Arta* as the main trading center of the area. British consuler reports for 1862-63 give the following data for commercial activities in *Arta*;

	imp.	exp in £
1862	38.000	14.000
1863	64.000	16.000

ships to port of *Arta*: Ottoman 255, Ionian 33, Austrian 2, Greek 100. In the following year (1863-64) period shipping to Preveza reached to following figures.

vessels		value of cargoes in £	
British	1		-
Ionian	173	8.559	
Greek	347	2.667	
Ottoman	84	2.000	
Austrian	8	1.445	
Italian	1		-
Ditto steamers	26	5.049	value of imports reached to 29.750 £

16 years later in 1880 the *exports* of Prevesa reached to 104.903 £ and imports to 234.025 £⁸, the shipping activities in the harbour of Prevesa in the same year was such as below⁹:

⁸ *Parl. Accounts and papers* (Great Britain) 1863-64: Vol. 70, p. 111.

⁹ *Vice-consul Blakeney*, Prevesa, February 19, 1881, p. 579.

	steam	sail
Austrian	60	5
British	2	-
Greek	-	3.252
Italian	-	17
Ottoman		1.108
total	62	4.382

Though Prevesa still remained as a relatively small port in comparison to other Ionian and Thracian ports. Especially the annexion of Arta by Greece in 1881 caused a deterioration of the life of Prevesa, since it remained as boundary town of the empire. Certainly, there was no local industry worth mentioning in Prevesa. In 1871 viceconsul *Barker* noted that: "Prevesa is a very small place and its commerce is limited and comaratively insignificant. The value of imports exceed threefold that of exports, rendering these countries always indebted to Europe and while it proves that the system of Gouvernment in Turkey as yet does not encourage native industry". But on the other hand *Barker* mentions; "that Prevesa had lowest mortality rate and was most healthy place in the region, free from epidemics and contagious disease..."¹⁰ Industry was limited to a few small workshops, processing local agricultural products (see the list in Appendix 1) in the 1880s there were 24 oliveoil presses, 5 flourmills and 3 soap factories. Tax returns indicate the presence of 104.000 olivetrees and 5000 fruittreas. Basic exports products in 1884 was consisting of wheat, barley, fish, tobacco and soap. But as Consul *Stuart* mentions: "in this country neither machinery, nor the wheeled carriage is employed in aid of labor. The ox issued for ploughing and the pack-horse for transport. Both are fallowing off as will in quality as in numbers. Worst than that for the demands occasioned by Crimean war, some good amount of horses were exported. The deficiency

¹⁰ *Vice-consul Barker*, Prevesa, January 28, 1872, p. 1355 gives a mortality rate 43 per 2000.

this created has never been supplied; and from that time dates the deterioration of the breed, which every year becomes more observable..."¹¹.

The value and approximate quantity of main crops given by Consul *Blakeney* for the year of 1883 is listed below¹²:

	quantity	value in £
wheat (kilo)	20.000	4.181
barley (kilo)	15.000	4.163
oats (kilo)	19.800	1.080
wool (kilo)	20.000	1.090
fish (okkas)	120.000	5.454
cheese (in skins)	31.000	1.536
tobacco	15.000	2.045
butter	3.000	272
soap	100.000	3.181
sheep and goat -skins (in bles)	40.000	2.909
olive-oil (barrels)	8.600 (in 1880)	626

In this very same year, *Blakeney* still reports the existence of some bands of brigands. But these events have been concentrated mostly in the internal districts of Epirus and international trade of Prevesa have not been much affected by it. However in 1882 he had reported at recession of the economic activities depending the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 and the transfer of *Arta* (Narda) to Greece: "the cession of *Arta* to Greece has produced a great convulsion in the trade of this port and that of *Salabora*; but this is not the case, for the fertile plain of *Arta* still remains to Turkey, so that only the imports to *Arta* from foreign countries no longer pass through Prevesa. The prices of the various commodities of life have since the late

¹¹ *Parliamentary Accounts and Papers* (Reports by Consul Stuart on the present state of Epirus) Janina April 24, 1872, p. 816.

¹² *Ibid.*, *Blakeney* Prevesa, March 1, 1884, p. 577.

Russo-Turkish war risen about 50 percent". (Prevesa, February 16, 1882, p. 1161).

In town there were 11 Greek-orthodox churches, one Roman-Catholic church, 2 mosques, (*Ali Pasha and Ahmed Agha Dino*) and two türbe (muslim mouseleums). These figures give a fair image of the religious life of the town (see appendix 1. the list of the buildings in town for the year 1871). As the town and sandjak of Prevesa had a cosmopolitan composition, the Administrative Counsel of the sandjak (Liva idare meclisi) was composed by the clerical heads of the different communities and besides two elected Christians and two Muslim members.

Ottoman administrators (mutasarrıf's of Prevesa) of the Tanzimat era were usually enthusiastic builders and were instrumental in developing the provinces. However the governors (vali) and subgovernors (mutasarrıf) of the Danubian region (Bulgaria) were more successful in comparison to the rulers of Morea. After the independence of the Kingdom of Hellens, Morea could not enjoy a development similar to Western Anatolia, Western Thrace and *Danubian province* (Bulgaria). Taking the example of Prevesa, the *mutasarrıf's* required long tenures to develop their sandjak and instruct some reforms, but which was not the case. They often had to change their posts. The relatively high torn-over of local administrators prevented continuity in policies and slowed down construction activities. The official Ottoman yearbook (salname) of *Ianina vilaiet* for the year 1311 H. (1894) gives the list of the sub-governors (mutasarrıf) of Prevesa since 1864¹³; The first *mutasarrıf* appointed after the promulgation of famous "decree of Provincial administration" in 1864 (İdare-i umumiye-yi vilayet nizamnamesi) was *Hasan Şevki Pasha* (1 March 1864), followed by *Selim Pasha* and later by *Timur Edhem Pasha*. *Timur Edhem Pasha*, had been appointed to Prevesa after *Reshid Pasha*, *İzzeddin Sir Pasha*, had been appointed to Prevesa after *Reshid Pasha*, *İzzeddin Sir Pasha* and *Fikri Efendi* for a second time. I was not able to find any biography of this long-duré *mutasarrıf* of Prevesa. He then followed by *Selahaddin Bey*, *Kazım Bey*, *Abdürefi Efendi* and *Hadi Ahmed Ferid Pasha* (totally eleven *mutasarrıf's* within a period of 30 years).

It would appear that part of the local population was opposed to cession of the region to Greece. Local notables informed the Palace, that if Prevesa,

¹³ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Yanya* (annual of the Vilayet Ianina) 1894 (1311 of H) p. 78.

Narda (Arta) and Ianina should be ceded to Greece, they would oppose such a move by rising arms. I February 1881 (1298 H) the King of the Hellenes toured Preveva and Narda, which caused some protests of the local Muslims¹⁴. A similar event in the past also indicates the sensitivity of the local Muslims, namely a short visit of the General of the Ionian Republic (Cezayir-i Seba generali) in to Preveva and Parga was a subject for careful observation by the Ottoman authorities¹⁵. Formerly in March 1879 telegrams to the *Yıldız Palace* claimed that the cession of Preveva, Arta and Ianina to Greece would spell disaster for the Albanians¹⁶. In fact it seems that Albanian nationalism was rampant among local Albanians. A new mutasarrıf was appointed to Preveva from Argiri (Ergiri) to curb the agitation caused by one *Abdul Bey* and his confederate, in Ianina¹⁷. Albanian element in those years seems to be deeply anxious.

However, even a study of the issues of the provincial newspaper *Yanya* (Ionian) in these years, indicate that some economic-social changes are intervening; estates are put on sale, bankruptcy and distraints were fairly frequent. Some sets of documents in Turkish archives also are a proof of this evolution¹⁸. However the highest percentage of the agricultural tithes, such as *ashar* and *aghnam* (ship and husbandrytax) in provincial budget, indicates that the economic structure of the sandjak Preveva based for along time on agricultural activities (see appendix 2).

¹⁴ BA-Yıldız-Hususi-165/145-(15-2-1297 of H (1881).

¹⁵ BA-İrade-Hariciye Nr: 4118, 29 CA 1268 of H (1851).

¹⁶ BA-Yıldız 16 q/2 (15-11-1297 of H (1886).

¹⁷ BA-Yıldız-160/72-25 Receb 1298 of H (1881).

¹⁸ BA-Yıldız-It ns: 25-5-1296 Nr: 161/26 see the collection of the news paper *Yanya* of the year 1873.

APPENDIX 1

Report by *Vice-Consul Barker* on the Trade of Prevesa for the year 1871, (Prevesa January 22 1872) *Parliamentary accounts and papers*, p. 1355-56.

Habitations, houses and huts	1.163
Shops	283 (total)
Drapers	14
Cooking-shops	7
Butchers	6
Fishmongers	5
Cofee-shops	9
Greengrocers	7
Ship-chandlers and grocers	235
Stores	88
Caravanserailles	6
Flour-mills	5
Military hospitals	2
Soap manufactories	3
(about 127.000 lbs. of this article is fabricated during the year)	
Oil-presses, wood-screw pressure	21
(the approximate value or cost of one press is 220 £)	
Schools	
(two for males, two for females, 3 being public schools supported by private contributions)	
Court of Justice (building)	
Government Civil offices	
(building where the Police-station is held, 42 men engaged for police service in town.)	
Metropolitan house	1

Churches (Greek orthodox)	10
Cathedral (ditto)	1
Chapel (Roman catholic)	1
Mosques (Mohametan)	2
Mahometan Monasteries (probably tekke)	2
Vapour bath	1
Quarantine office	1
(Building 7 persons employed)	
Forts (Usual garrison, Artillery 260, Infantry 680 men)	
Drinking Fountains (turkish çeşme)	5
2 Harbours (one inner harbour, where the Venetians had their Arsenal)	

APPENDIX 2

Population of the Sandjak of Prevesa in the year of 1893 *Salname-i Vilâyet-i Yanya* (Annual of the Ianina 1311), p. 37.

	Male	Female	Total
Prevesa district			
household: 2306	5556	4504	10060
Loros district			
household: 2780	6137	6507	12644
Margulic district (Margariti)			
household: 5224	12576	11379	23955

Financial portrait of the sandjak of Prevesa in the year of 1894 (same source p. 310-11)

<u>Incomes</u>	(in Ottoman qurush)
Emlak temettü (property and profit tax)	732.344
bedel-i askerî (military tax)	666.118
Aşar (agricultural tithes)	1.948.376
Agnam ve canavar (ship and husbandary tax)	1.172.459
varidat-ı saîre (other prevenues)	782.355

<u>Public Expenditures</u>	(in Ottoman qurush)
Şer'iyeye (religious courts and bureaucracy)	56.544
Dahiliyye (homeoffice)	280.960
Adliyye (Justice dept.)	163.324
Maliye (finance office)	210.704
Maaşat-ı zatiyye (salaries)	22.602
Zabtiyye (police)	26.122