

## THE GREEK AND OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATION DURING THE TANZİMAT PERIOD

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Even though the Greek revolt was not the first successful national revolt, it had a shock on the Ottomans. The Serbian revolt had paved the way for other Balkan peoples to revolt and had increased their hopes for national revival: but the Greek revolt directly accelerated the Balkan nationalist movements. After the foundation of the Kingdom of the Hellenes, the Greek nation all at once faced structural problems and elicited great hope and despair. After the Greek revolt, the Turkish Empire developed a consciousness of decline and immediately tried to change its administrative, educational, and military structures. Even though Austria and Russia had favoured Greek independence for a while, they soon gave up their Hellenophile policy out of fear of unrest from their own national minorities, namely, the Hungarians and Poles, who had a rich past.

One of the most striking consequences of the Greek revolt was that the Ottomans began to eliminate Greeks from important positions in the bureaucratic and social structure of the empire. As is well known, the Phanariot dragomans in the Sublime Porte were replaced either by converted Christians, such as Bulgarzade Yahya Effendi, or by Armenians, such as Sahak Abro Effendi. Some of the Phanariots, however remained faithful and favoured subjects of the empire (with the exceptions of Mavrokordato and Ypsilanti)<sup>1</sup>; for example: Musurus Pasha was sent as the first ambassador to Athens in 1840 and was hated intensely by Greek nationalists, who attempted to assassinate him. As a result of this attempt on his life, he suffered permanent injury to his left hand.<sup>2</sup> Photiadi Bey, his successor as ambassador to Athens, Kalimaki Bey, the ambassador to Vienna, and Sava Pasha (who compiled a still read manual of Islamic law) were other prominent figures in the Ottoman administration. But these men were the exceptions. In fact, Greek supremacy in the Ottoman Empire was in decay. The Ottomans took measures in order to prevent further revolts of Greek subjects in Rumelia (the European part of the Ottoman Empire) and the islands.

In the following decades, the Ottoman administrative apparatus showed two features: on the one hand, reforms and concessions to the Greek communities, while on the other, distrust and surveillance. One of the most remarkable cases of countermeasures taken to prevent a nationalist revolt was that taken on the island of Samos (Sisam). The Sublime Porte granted autonomy to this island by a special concessional decree (imtiyaz fermanı) issued in 1832 and named it "Sisam Emareti." The islanders almost gained a constitutional structure. The waves of revolt had forced the Ottoman administration to create such a concessionary status. A native was appointed as the governor of Sisam (Sisam Beyi), and representatives were elected from among the notables forming a meclis (council), which was responsible for making decisions on matters related to navigation, tax collection,<sup>3</sup> construction, school instruction, and even Church affairs. The Ottoman army evacuated the island and public maintenance and security functions were left to the islanders. Sisam had to pay a certain annual tax to the Sublime Porte.

In 1861, Miltiadi Bey was granted a new ferman (edict), which regulated the functions of the meclis, defining the legislative period and matters of tax collection and the budget of the emaret (chieftainship). The annual tax was set at 400,000 Ottoman qurush and had to be paid to the Sublime Porte in two portions. The Ottomans however, retained the right to keep a small gendarmerie, consisting of twenty men with their commander. As jurisdictional authority, a judge had to be appointed by the Sublime Porte, who then had to work with a court whose members were elected from among the local notables. The first provincial newspaper in the Ottoman Empire, Vilayet Ceridesi, was probably published in Sisam before that of the Danube Province. The publication must have been in two languages: Greek and Ottoman Turkish. However, even though I found an irade (decree) in the archives,<sup>4</sup> I have not yet been able to locate a copy of this paper. The constitutional status of Samos challenged the Ottoman constitution in a way, since it remained in force even after 1878, together with Mount Lebanon, Crete and Eastern Rumelia. Yet, fear of revolutionary activities abroad as well as in the Greek kingdom caused a recession of the Greek element in the empire's bureaucracy and social life, and Greeks were subjected to greater control than in the past.

The affairs of the Patriarchate became a controversial issue. It was criticised by the Greeks in the kingdom as too conservative and suspected by the Sublime Porte of being a spiritual and nationalist centre. Russia, on the other hand, had an ambivalent attitude towards the Patriarchate, supporting it as it did formerly and yet hesitating because of the conflict with the nationalist demands of the Bulgarian church movement. In spite of this, Russia spent much effort keeping its representative functions and its protective role of the Greek Orthodox church in the empire. For instance, it became customary around this period for members of the Romanov family to visit the Ottoman Empire about every two years, with visits to Constantinople and Jerusalem, kissing the hand of the patriarch in public. Grand Duke Constantine's visit to Jerusalem in 1859 is a striking example of this. Russia continually sponsored Greek Orthodox schools, defended the rights of Greek subjects, and turned some cases of conversion into a diplomatic issue.<sup>5</sup>

After the draft of the general educational law, Greek schools, like others, were put under the control of the Ministry of Education. The books used in these were subject to scrutiny. Occasionally, even some Greek subjects informed the Porte of the harmful contents of these books. Such a case took place in 1860. Some school books brought from foreign countries to be used in these schools were found to contain harmful material, and a petition was signed by Ottomans belonging to different millets,<sup>6</sup> including Greeks. They demanded that these books be rewritten and corrected. The decision of the Sublime Porte was that the history books had to contain the lives of the Apostles. These petitioners, mostly muallims (school teachers), asked for twelve years to rewrite these books. They suggested Biblical history for primary schools, and ancient Greek history, general history, together with Ottoman history and hagiography, for secondary schools.

Others, such as a clerical professor named Filippaki from the Halki seminary (on Heybeli island, in the Marmara Sea) informed the Sublime Porte that the professors in the seminary were teaching the students harmful ideas. Filippaki was sent to Europe with a salary of 300 Franks.<sup>7</sup> Also, the newly founded Ottoman high schools (like the medical high school *Mekteb-i T\_bbiye*, the Imperial School of Administration *Mülkiyye Mektebi*, a veterinary school, etc.) granted a quota of 33 per cent of places to non-Muslim Ottoman students. That quota caused both rumours and a struggle among different non-Muslim communities. In 1857, the Imperial Medical School (*Mekteb-i T\_bbiye-i\_ahane*), following a petition from the Armenian community, reduced the number of Greek candidates to 50, from 55, to the benefit of Armenian candidates. That case indicates a general trend in the Tanzimat period, when the Greek element in the empire began to lose its former privileged status among the non-Muslim communities.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly the reaction of the élite Ottoman Greeks indicates a different character. Some of the Phanariots during this era tried to impose a confederate administrative structure for the safety of the empire and their own community. One of them, André Coroméles, proposed a Turco-Greek empire and suggested that the "Sultan should have the title of 'Sultan of the Turks and King of Greeks'." Another, Stefanos Xenos, emphasised "the common interests of the Turks and Greeks in the empire" during the days of the Bulgarian revolt and anti-Turkish demonstrations in London. Another, Pitzipios Bey suggested in a book the adoption of Byzantine institutions, equality of two religions, and the coronation of Sultan Abdulmejid as Emperor of Byzantines.<sup>9</sup> The church had to fight on the one side against the secularist tendencies of some modern Greeks, and on the other side to oppose the demands of the Bulgarian nationalists, who sought to have a national, independent Bulgarian church.

The Ionian islands, a joint protectorate of the Ottoman and Russian Empires and later Britain, on the one side, and Crete on the other, were strictly controlled by the Ottomans. Whenever the general of the Ionian islands, *Cezaîr-i Sab'a Generali*, visited cities like Preveza on the continent, the Sublime Porte was informed by agents.<sup>10</sup> And the missionary activities of the British Protestants in the islands were stopped by efforts on the part of the Sublime Porte, the Greek patriarchate, and Russia. An irade (decree) of 1839 is a clear illustration of that.<sup>11</sup>

A report by the Ottoman ambassador Musurus Pasha in London informed the Sublime Porte that the Greek kingdom enlisted the local people of Crete for the Greek army (28 March 1861). Musurus Pasha learned about this from his agents in London. He then met with Lord John Russell, and the Sublime Porte pressured Great Britain to prevent the Greek kingdom from doing this. Some Cretans registered in the islands belonging to the Greek kingdom had become Greek subjects. Musurus Pasha

demanded, however, that they should not be entitled to claim Greek citizenship if they had migrated to one of the Ottoman Dodecanese islands or Anatolia.<sup>12</sup> Actually, the small Hellenic kingdom was in need of population and migration from the Ottoman continent and islands. It was not rare, nevertheless, for many of these immigrants to try to go back to the Ottoman Empire in disappointment. The Ottoman government, favouring this movement, exempted them from the capitation tax (cîzye) for eight to 10 years, and sometimes subsidised them in agriculture. In May 1850 alone, 90 families came from Greece back to their home.<sup>13</sup> During these years, even the regulation of the tithes (ashar nizamnamesi) had been translated and issued in Greek.<sup>14</sup>

Armenians, Jews, and Maronites were favoured to the detriment of Greeks in officialdom. In fact, Greek intellectuals had been slowly suffering from a brain drain, though in special professional branches of the army, officers and sailors of Greek origin were employed. At Easter, the navy had to anchor in certain ports because of their Greek crew.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, in the naval academy (Mekteb-i Bahriye-yi Şahane) Greek was taught to all of the students. In 1858, a certain Kostaki Bey was appointed to the academy as an instructor of Greek.<sup>16</sup>

During these years, it would be hard to claim that the Ottoman political mind could evaluate the essence of Greek nationalism. Nationalist movements and the activity of bands are usually cited in Ottoman correspondence as eşkiya (bandit), like eterya eşkiyası and the countermeasures which had to be taken were not taken on the spot.<sup>17</sup> Both official documents and Ottoman historical records contain little information on the political background and character of this movement and their contacts or position towards other manifestations of Balkan nationalism.

The activities of Greek nationalist bands spurred the Ottoman authorities to take some drastic countermeasures. In Salonica alone, five leaders were arrested in 1852. Thereafter, merchants and priests coming from Greece to Ottoman ports were subjected to investigation. Suspected of subversive activities, some Greek neighbourhoods in Istanbul, such as Tatavla and Pangaltı, were subjected to military control in January 1854, and İzzet Pasha was appointed as military commander of Beyoğlu. In the same year, the Greek colony of Beyrouth, was put under strict control.<sup>18</sup> Nationalist ideas spread widely among the Greeks of the empire, leading the authorities to control every publication and newspaper from Greece.

Greeks in the Aegean region and Trabzon enjoyed an economic renaissance. Kydonia (Ayvalık) and Smyrna (İzmir) were transformed into cultural centres of Hellenism in Asia Minor, and a rich merchant class as well as rich Greek farmers emerged in small towns like Phocaea (Foça). Greeks were represented in provincial councils (Meclis-i İdare-Vilayet i and Meclis-i İdare-i Liva), but now they had to share this new privilege with other non-Muslim millets. At times, they were subjected to abuse by Muslim members of these councils, which raised protests from the Patriarchate.<sup>19</sup>

The bureaucracy of the Tanzimat period, especially in the provinces of Rumelia, had a cultural fringe. A good number of them had a knowledge of Greek and Bulgarian. As Ahmed Mithat Efendi, a noted writer of the Hamidian era (late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), mentions in one of his books, "European children have to learn foreign languages in school, but Ottoman children (Turks) Armenians and Greeks of Istanbul pick up their languages by playing with others ... ." <sup>20</sup> A book, *Tuhfet'ul Uşşak* (A Present for Children) by Fevzî teaches Greek vocabulary in a poetic form to the Turks.<sup>21</sup>

Nam-i Hudadır Teos, ademe de antropos

Dervi\_e der asketis, evliya adı ayos

(The name of The God is Theos, and man is antropos Dervish is askhetis, and evliya is agios)

1 See for the origin of Phanariot families, Sturdza, M.D. (1983), 'Grandes Familles de Grece, d'Albanie et de Constantinople', Dictionnaire historique et genealogique, Paris.

2 Kunalalp, Sinan (1970/3), 'Kostaki Muzurus Paşa', T T K Belleten, Ankara, pp. 421-35

3 Hakkı, İsmail, Hukuk-u Idare-i, first publication, 1328 H/1910, Konstantiniye, pp. 369-74..

4 Irade-Meclis-i-Valâ, No. 9105 (II L 1268 February 1852).

5 B A (Archives of Primeministry), Irade-Hariciye, No. 4028, 21 S 1268/December 1851, after the death of a former Christian (named Ali), two of his daughters (who probably kept their faith) took asylum in the Greek consulate in Adrianople.

6 B A, Irade-Meclis-i-Valâ, No. 914. The petition is dated 6 Receb 1288/October 1869 while the corresponding irade is dated 2 Receb 1288/September 1872. The procedure covered a period of two years.

7 B A, Irade-Hariciye, No. 10276, 12 Safer 1277/August 1860.

8 B A, Irade-Hariciye, No. 7140, 12 N 1273/May 1857.

9 Coroméles, André (1853), *Reforme practicable en Turquie*, Athènes, p. 30 and Xenos, Stefanos (1876), *Union or Dismemberment of Turkey*, London, p. 11; and Pitzipios Bey, J.G. (1858), *L'Orient-Les Reformes de l'Empire Byzantine*, Paris.

10 B A, Irade-Hariciye, No. 4118, 1268 of H/1852, Irade-Hariciye, No. 4697, 6 C 1269/March 1853.

11 B A, Irade-Hariciye, No. 120, 29 Ca 1255/August 1839.

12 B A, Irade-Hariciye, No. 10214, 'Musurus to Ali Pacha' 28 March 1861.

13 B A, Irade-Hariciye, No. 4000, selh-i Muh. 1268/October 1851, Irade-Hariciye, No. 3209, selh-i Receb 1266/May 1850.

14 B A, Irade-Hariciye, No. 10308, 25 Zilhicce 1277/July 1861.

15 B A, Irade-Hariciye, No. 8997 14 R 1264/March 1848.

16 B A, Irade-Dahiliye, No. 27954, 22 Co. 1275/January 1859.

17 B A, Irade-Hariciye, No. 3188, 12 Receb 1266/May 1850. Irade-Dahiliye, No. 18295 selh-i Ca 1270/January 1854. See also in the same archive Yunan Defteri, No. 236.

18 B A, Yunan Defteri, No. 238 of the year 1270 H/1854 and Irade Dahiliye, No. 18295 selh-i Ca 1270/January 1854 for the case of Beyrouth, Irade Dahiliye, No. 18691, 1270 H/1854.

19 B A, Irade Meclisi-Valâ, No. 226, 9 Za 1256/January 1841.

20 Midhat, Ahmed, Ana baban\_n evlad üzerindeki hukuk ve vezaifi, Dersaadet 1317/1899, p. 72-4. Midhat, Ahmed, Çocuk melekat-i uzviyye ve ruhiyyesi, Dersaadet 1317/1899.

21 Fevzi, Tuhfet'ul Uşşak, from Levend, A.S. (1943), Divan Edebiyatı, Istanbul, p. 637.

exactly what happened during the Tanzimat. Ottoman policies during that period responded to emerging global modernity in both its Janus-like faces, the threatening aspect (separatist nationalism in the Balkans, imperialism in India, Asia and Africa) and the attractive aspect (the hope of overcoming Ottoman).