

CORFU AND YANYA IN TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT  
AT THE TURN OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY  
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CORFU AND YANYA IN TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT  
AT THE TURN OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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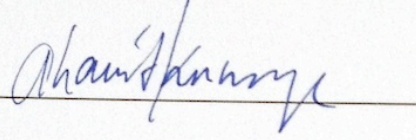
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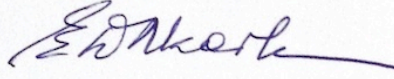
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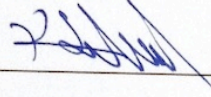
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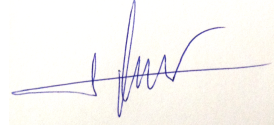
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## ABSTRACT

### CORFU AND YANYA IN TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT AT THE TURN OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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This thesis is about border crossings between the Corfu Island and Yanya province at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Greece's irredentist policy and its attempt to construct a modern Greek national identity in Corfu will be discussed in the context of the multicultural and multilingual social environment that prevailed in the island. Between the transnational way of life in Corfu and the imposed nationalist policy of Greece emerged a new and growing discrepancy. Therefore, this study will evaluate the historical assumption that the island functionally served the interests of Greece after its unification with Greece in 1864.

Yanya, which the Ottoman historiography has rarely touched upon so far, had a similarly multicolored and multi-faceted society at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Demographically, the local population consisted of the Greeks, Muslim and Christian Albanians, and Vlachs. This study elaborates on each group separately and also on interventions of foreign states that aimed at increasing their political and economic influence while impairing Ottoman authority in the region.

After discussing the political interests and expectations of various groups in Corfu and Yanya, the last chapter will focus on myriad aspects of interrelationships between the two shores. The transnational approach emphasizes the circulation of people, political organizations, philanthropic associations, and commodities that crisscross national demarcations and the impacts that stem from these movements.

These transitions either legal or illegal across the borders will be evaluated mainly based on the intelligence gathered by the Ottoman consulate in Corfu.

Keywords: Yanya [Janina], Corfu Island, Greece, irredentism, *Megale Idea*, transnational, smuggling.

## ÖZ

### 19. YÜZYILIN SONU VE 20. YÜZYILIN BAŞINDA ULUS-ÖTESİ BAĞLAMDA KORFU VE YANYA

ÖNER, ONUR.

MA, Tarih Bölümü

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Bu tez 19. yüzyılın sonu ve 20. yüzyılın başında Korfu Adası ve Yanya vilayeti arasındaki sınır geçişlerine odaklanmaktadır. Yunanistan'ın yayılmacı (irredentist) politikaları ve Korfu'da ulusal kimliği inşa etme girişimleri adanın sahip olduğu çok kültürlü ve çok dilli yapı bağlamında ele alınacaktır. Korfu'nun sahip olduğu çok kültürlü ve çok dilli hayat tarzı ile Yunanistan'ın adada empoze ettiği milliyetçi politikalar yeni ve giderek artan bir uyumsuzluğa neden olmaktadır. Bu çalışma adanın 1864'de Yunanistan'a ilhakı sonrasında işlevsel olarak Yunanistan'ın çıkarlarına hizmet ettiğine ilişkin tarihsel varsayımı tartışmaya açacaktır.

Osmanlı tarih yazımının bugüne dek nadiren değindiği Yanya vilayetinin yine aynı dönemde -19. yüzyılın sonu ve 20. yüzyılın başında- Korfu ile çok katmanlı iç yapısı açısından çeşitli açılardan benzerlikleri bulunmaktaydı. Demografik olarak yerel nüfus Rum Ortodokslar, Müslüman ve Ortodoks Hristiyan Arnavutlar ile Ulahlardan oluşmaktaydı. Bu çalışma her grubu ayrı ayrı ele almakta ve yabancı devletlerin bölgede siyasi ve ekonomik etkiye sahip olmak ve Osmanlı otoritesini zayıflatmak adına yaptıkları müdahaleleri değerlendirmektedir.

Bu farklı grupların Korfu ve Yanya'daki çıkar ve beklentilerine değinildikten sonra, son bölümde bu iki bölge arasındaki ortak hayatın pek çok yönüne odaklanılacaktır. Ulus-ötesi perspektif ulusal sınırları aşan insanların, siyasi örgütlerin, yardım derneklerinin ve ticari malların dolaşımını ve bu hareketlerin doğurduğu etkileri önemle vurgular. Bu çalışmanın odağında olan yasal ya da yasal

olmayan sınır geişleri Korfu'daki Osmanlı konsolosluęunun toplamış olduęu istihbarat temelinde ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yanya, Korfu Adası, Yunanistan, irredentizm, *Megale Idea*, ulus-ötesi, kaçakçılık.



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## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

**BOA, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, Türkiye**

*[Prime Minister's Archives Istanbul, Turkey]*

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| BEO          | Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası [ <i>Document Bureau of the Sublime Port</i> ]   |
| DH. MKT.     | Dahiliye Mektubi Kalemi [ <i>Ministry of Interior Affairs, Secretariat</i> ]   |
| DH. TMİK. S. | Dahiliye Tesri'-i Muamelat ve Islahat Komisyonu [ <i>Reform Commission, Interior Ministry</i> ]  |
| İ. HUS.      | İradeler Hususi [ <i>Special Decrees</i> ]   |
| MV.          | Meclis-i Vükela Mazbataları [ <i>Minutes of the Council of Ministers</i> ]   |
| HR. TO.      | Hariciye Tercüme Odası Evrakı [ <i>Foreign Office, Translation Bureau</i> ]  |
| ŞD.          | Şura-yı Devlet Tasnifi [ <i>Council of State</i> ]   |
| Y.A. HUS.    | Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Maruzat Evrakı [ <i>Prime Minister's Special Reports, Yıldız Palace</i> ]  |
| Y. EE.       | Yıldız Esas Evrakı [ <i>Basic Documents, Yıldız Palace</i> ]   |
| Y. MTV.      | Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzat Evrakı [ <i>Various Miscellaneous Reports, Yıldız Palace</i> ]  |
| Y. PRK. AZJ. | Yıldız Arzuhal ve Journaller [ <i>Petitions and Intelligence Reports, Yıldız Palace</i> ]  |
| Y. PRK. EŞA. | Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Elçilik, Şehbenderlik ve Ataşemiliterlik [ <i>Documents of Embassies, Consulates, and Army Attachés, Yıldız Palace</i> ] |

## INTRODUCTION

This study is about border crossings, either illegal (smuggling, contraband, and bandits' invasion), or legal (trade, diplomatic, and touristic) between the Corfu Island and the Yanya province at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

After the unification with Greece in 1864, the Ionian Islands gained strategic importance for Greece to accomplish its irredentist policies in the Ottoman lands. To put it differently, Greece considered these islands, and particularly Corfu, as a stepping-stone to move on to Ottoman lands in Epirus and Macedonia. Being a frontier for the Ottoman lands in Epirus, Corfu offered many advantages to Greece, allowing it to be involved in internal politics of the region. Practices such as propaganda of Hellenism through the Greek schools, Orthodox churches, and journals, encouraging arms trafficking in the region, and inciting the Orthodox population in Yanya against the Ottoman provincial authorities were frequently applied. Though the endeavors of the Greek state failed many times to achieve the desired results, it did not lose its motivation for expansionist policies.

Nevertheless, to take this historical assumption, which manifests itself in the nationalist currents, for granted, one has to forget that Corfu was a heterogeneous place at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and distinguished by its dynamic cultural mix. People of different religious, social, and cultural backgrounds lived together in Corfu as they did in previous centuries under the Venetian and French rule, as well as during the period of the British protectorate. Having considered this particular situation, one might anticipate that any attempt to construct a national identity in a place such as Corfu would produce contests; many forms of resistance, and thus negotiations at the local level.

This thesis also questions whether all the activities, either legal or illegal, from Corfu to Yanya were conducted for Greece's or any other state's interests, as the old generation historians put on states' interests in explaining past events. There had to be captains under either the Ottoman or Greek state's permission who loaded/unloaded their coffers in various hidden points along the shores of Yanya without any political engagement at all. As smuggling has been performed through the centuries, the profit might have been the real motivation for those captains or traders in this route. It is also plausible to think that one might have been profoundly involved in gun smuggling for the Greek political interests and national ambitions in the region as

well as for profit. Myriad variations might be thought for the illegal commercial activities in order to explain it in a coherent narrative. However, the arguments about the economic scale of these activities between the two shores or any assertion about the percentage of illegal trade in the total value of commerce in the region are purposefully left beyond the scope of this study. Besides, a historical narrative built on archival records would easily err in its estimates of smuggling. Primary sources, which will be used throughout this dissertation, are also inadequate to draw a clear picture about the scale of smuggling between Corfu and Yanya or the profits made out of it. Archival materials require a critical approach since one would not know how many of these illegal activities were regularly recorded or how many of them escaped attention or were purposefully overlooked. One can presume that an overwhelming amount of illegal trade was carried out without being caught or reported.

The “transnational” approach might be a reasonable tool to evaluate these contacts that transgressed national demarcations in a completely different perspective. The term “transnational” is relatively new. David Thelen and Thomas Bender, who are interested in the American history, first used the term in the 1990s. The movements of peoples, institutions, and ideas that transcended national boundaries are the main concerns of these historians. Though some historians believe that the global perspective is part of the transnational approach, the term globalization is criticized because of its connections with the modernization theory, its falling back on such traditional dichotomies as civilized/uncivilized and its emphasis on the homogenization of the world. Transnational history is considered to be distinct from the comparative history as well. Transnational history might compare regions but, unlike the comparative approach, it does not perceive the national borders as a condition without further evaluation.<sup>1</sup>

From the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of nation brought under the yoke of its dominion all the other spatial units such as the local, regional, continental, and international. Though these units still mattered, the national unit was considered as the primary reference point for human actions. In recent years, historians began to conceive the inadequacy of the nation-state as an institution and structure in dealing with contemporary problems. Part of the problem is the assumption that the national,

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Tyrell, *What Is Transnational History?*, an excerpt from a paper given at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, January 2007, pp. 1-4, <http://iantyrell.wordpress.com/what-is-transnational-history/>



regional, and international orders are clearly distinguishable entities and the national subjugated other spatial units because it appeared to be the most effective source of sovereignty.<sup>2</sup>

Transnational history does not rival national-based scholarship for it does not neglect the importance of the nation-state. It attempts to bridge the national, the sub-national (local, regional), and the global by underlining the role of the individuals, social groups, and movements that circulate through borders.<sup>3</sup> It aims at highlighting interactions across national borders for a more pragmatic understanding of the nation. In this sense, the transnational approach is based on the principle of demarcation(s). In other words, the existence of a (national) border is necessary to evaluate the binary relationship, transnational ideas, and social structures in the transnational approach.<sup>4</sup>

Two additional emphases of transnational history are in order. First, historians who adopt this approach heavily criticize any approach that assumes a priori that nation and nation-state are the fundamental agents of human history. Second, they stress the role of individuals and social groups, benefiting from poststructuralist criticism.<sup>5</sup>

Akira Iriye, a leading proponent of transnational history, states that comparing any structure or an idea in one part of the world with those in another eventually results in underlining the differences. This position strengthens the idea of the historical uniqueness of each nation historically, and hence the idea of nation as an overwhelming agent. The work of comparing, he believes, should put forward the themes, institutions, ideas, etc. that are common to nations rather than paying attention to the specific aspects only limited to some specific groups in some regions. Akira Iriye believes that common ground would help *denationalize* history.<sup>6</sup> The period, which the transnational historians focus overwhelmingly on the modern era,

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<sup>2</sup> Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, "Global History and The Spatial Turn: From The Impact of Area Studies To The Study Of Critical Junctures Of Globalization", *Journal of Global History*, 5, 2010, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Tilse, *Transnationalism in the Prussian East: From National Conflict to Synthesis, 1871–1914*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2011, pp. 5-8.

<sup>5</sup> Matthias Middell - Katja Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn, p. 161.

<sup>6</sup> Akira Iriye, *The Internationalization of History*, Paper read at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, held in Cincinnati, December 28, 1988, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 1., February 1989, p. 4.

however, historians have begun to use this approach to analyze and reconstruct the remoter past, such as the 18<sup>th</sup> and even earlier centuries.<sup>7</sup>

Empires seem to be the origin of places from where transnational social, political, economic, and cultural movements have sparked. The boundaries of empires were more fluid and therefore the circulation of multifaceted set of ideas, identities, and the mobility of ordinary people were frequent.<sup>8</sup>

The myriad complex combinations such as birthplace, language, ethnic identity, religion, and so forth, construct the nationality of an individual. Transnational theory claims that most of these official classifications are not fixed entities since the mobility of ordinary people explicitly threatens the static framework of national identities. Some people, for instance, become transnational via travel or simply through immigration. Others move out from their birth town but succeed to become an international citizen by trade connections with the world outside. All these and many other possibilities indicate that transnationalism is part of the human experience not only in the modern world but also historically. Furthermore, these cosmopolitan lives acquire re-constructed identities based on new experiences and these identities consequently come into collusion with official categorizations. Therefore, national-based historical analyses appear to be inadequate to understand, and thus explain human actions in the past, particularly in the border regions separated and demarcated by nation-states.<sup>9</sup>

Recent scholarship pays particular attention cross-border interactions and cultural exchanges that transcended national borders at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many people were on the move in these years. This movement, which included state officials, aristocrats, tourists as well as skilled and unskilled workers, made globalization palpable. Between the 1840s and 1930s, about 150 million people moved to places outside their homelands either by force or with the hope of a better

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<sup>7</sup> Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History, The Past, Present, and Future*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2013, p. 39.

<sup>8</sup> Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, and Frank Trentmann, "Introduction", in Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, and Frank Trentmann (ed.), *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c. 1880–1950*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2007, pp. 1-8.

<sup>9</sup> Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott, "Introduction" in Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott (ed.), *Transnational Lives: Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700–present*, The Palgrave Macmillan Transnational History Series, UK, 2010, pp. 1-11.

life.<sup>10</sup> Such mobility in global scale indicates that the transnational approach will provide new thoughts on nation-state and the idea of nationalism. It appears that the political, economic, demographic, and cultural impacts of human mobility alter the sense of nation for the place in origin. To put it differently, global resettlements affect the sense of nation. Attention to interactions beyond national demarcation alters classical notions of nationhood that prioritize the deep-rooted continuities and traditions as the “essence” of a nation.<sup>11</sup>

This study, which will examine the mutual border crossings that influenced the internal politics of the Corfu-Yanya basin, would still be a nation-centric history. However, its emphasis on the day-to-day practices of the ordinary local people, instead of diplomatic and military operations brings it closer to a transnationalist study. The real agents of local politics including family and kinship networks, ethnic and religious communities, para-state platforms such as guilds of artisans and merchants, and philanthropic, artistic and other cultural organizations will be at the center of this narrative in order to understand power relationships and balance.

Michael A. MacDonnell considers the strategic role of the powerful Anishinaabe communities of Odawa, Potawatovi and Ojibva Indians during the Seven Years’ War (1754-1763) and its aftermath as part of the imperial conflicts between the French and the British North America in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The indigenous people’s ability to resist and negotiate with the British for their trading interests throughout the Great Lakes region indicates the importance of local politics versus imperial impositions. This new imperial approach gives voice to hitherto ignored Native Americans. The author claims that historians have to take into consideration the native peoples with which the Spanish, French, and British were in contact to have a fuller understanding of the imperial competitions in the America. Furthermore, he asserts that the French were somehow dependent on the people of Odawa for their existence and the Europeans were the ones who had to respect the regional alliances and conflicts for the survival of “colonial” rule. All these local sensibilities and

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<sup>10</sup> Sebastian Conrad and Klaus Mühlhahn, “Global Mobility and Nationalism: Chinese Migration and the Reterritorialization of Belonging, 1880–1910”, in Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier (ed.), *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s–1930s*, Palgrave Macmillan, US, 2007, pp. 181-182.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 204-5.

shifting alliances are integral to imperial histories and hence the historical narratives cannot neglect them if the aim is to show as full a picture as possible.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, the transnational approach attempts to put the so-called peripheries at the center of the imperial stories. It claims that the transnational circulation of people and goods are not specific to the trade hubs of Europe or America. Globalization, in this sense, is a worldwide phenomenon that is not the peculiarity of some cities or regions. Moreover, transnational histories complicate traditional clear-cut understanding of center and periphery, if by attracting attention to hitherto unstudied routes in the world.<sup>13</sup> This study attempts to explain the mutual relationships between the Corfu Island and Yanya Province from an appropriately transnational historiographic perspective.

The transnational approach overlaps with another main argument of this thesis regarding the international political framework related to Yanya-Corfu relations. If one consults the sources about British foreign policy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one would realize that the Ionian Islands have gradually lost their strategic importance. The British considered the islands no longer of service to their interests and gave them to Greece in 1864. After annexation to Greece, the Ionian Islands were no longer a target of international contention, as they were in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though this suggestion is true to some degree, being discarded by the Great Powers did not mean that the Ionian Islands became trivial and historically irrelevant. As it is pointed out above, the transnational historical analyses reject Euro-centric approaches and therefore considers the regions that were aloof from the interest of the Great Powers as important as the ones that served their interests. Therefore, the main focus of this dissertation, which is the interaction and exchange between the two peripheral territories of Corfu and Yanya, is of central importance to understand the Ottoman provincial policies and practices as well as the power struggle between the Ottoman state and Greece.

Let me elaborate on the contents of each chapter:

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<sup>12</sup> Michael A. McDonnell, "Dancing with Shadows: Biography and the Making and Remaking of the Atlantic World", *Transnational Lives: Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700–present*, pp. 54-66.

<sup>13</sup> Matthias Middell - Katja Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn, p. 152.

The first chapter will begin with a brief political history of the Ionian Islands in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What these seven islands strategically meant for the British Empire and the debates shaping British public opinion on the future of the British protectorate in Corfu will also be analyzed. Regarding the internal domain of Corfu, the chapter will discuss a range of issues from economical structure of Corfu to its transnational merchants, from its heterogeneous populace to the problems pertaining to land and landowning. Finally, Corfiot music will be among the issues to be dealt with in this part, considering its importance in the emergence of the Greek national music. In fact, these subchapters will substantially emphasize the multicultural internal structure of Corfu and will help us better evaluate the limits of the nationalist policies that Greece imposed in Corfu in order to create a common national consciousness in the island. The chapter will particularly pay attention to the divergent groups' distinct understanding of nationalism and therefore the expectations as well as resistances and negotiations at the local level.

The first part of the second chapter will discuss the Megali Idea and thus the irredentist foreign policy of Greece. The sustainability of irredentist policies, their advantages and negative effects on Greece will also be examined in this part. The chapter will deal with the discourses about the Greek identity and its historical, geographical, and cultural connotations among Greek politicians and intellectuals. The chapter will also question Greece's association with brigands and other unlawful people in the context of internal and external factors. Eventually, the impact of irredentist policies on the Yanya province via the Greek schools, Orthodox Church, Greek consulates, and bandit bands will be discussed in this chapter.

The Yanya province at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the other principal study field of this thesis. Chapter two will discuss it from a transnational vantage point. In this regard, Yanya's relations with Corfu will stand on a firm ground if only the local dynamics of this Ottoman province will be understood properly. Divergent inhabitants (Greeks, Albanians, Turks, Jewish community, Vlachs) of the province are an evidence of a multicultural society, which indicates certain similarities and parallels with Corfu. However, the power struggle in the city at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century appears to be have focused on the Vlachs. The chapter will emphasize these struggles, in which not only Greece, but also Romania was involved along with the Ottoman state.

The last part of the second chapter will highlight the Albanian issue by connecting it to Corfu and Yanya. Firstly, the chapter will pay attention to the initial stages of the Albanian struggle that bore the influences of nationalist concerns and the way it evolved at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The emergence of the Albanian identity was sudden and a serious concern for both states, the Ottoman and the Greek states. In the Greek state's perspective, it seems that they were politically unprepared and could not decide how to react to the emergence of the Albanian issue. The Hellenistic projects of Greece had been increasingly at work through the Greek schools and the Orthodox Church in Epirus. The Albanian issue jeopardized these endeavors. The second chapter will include an analysis of the unstable relations between the Greek State and Albanians, as well as their mutual influences.

The third chapter will focus on the commodities and people that transcended the imperial/national demarcations. The Ottoman consul in Corfu reported to Istanbul the illegal crossings mainly from Corfu to the shores of Yanya systematically. These reports give many clues about Ottomans views of events and depict the daily shuttles of sea captains between the two shores. They make clear that we need to take the myriad facets of border crossings into considerations. Geographical features, the Ottoman response in general, the inadequacy of financial resources in controlling the shorelines for both states, misconduct of the Ottoman customs officers and gendarmes, and the involvement of local people in smuggling appear to be the major factors affecting the border crossings in the region. Thus, this thesis will examine in detail each of these features. This part of the thesis will also attempt to identify the role of Corfu in the Albanian struggle at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The historiography of the Albanian issue rarely considers Corfu. The archival material, however, indicates that Corfu was involved in the Albanian question and that Albanian committees used Corfu in their operations to a certain degree. This study hopes to contribute a new vista to the scholarly debates on the Albanian struggle by highlighting the importance of Corfu in it. Since not all border crossings were illegal, their evaluation will enhance the arguments put forward in this thesis, which aims to catch a glimpse of daily crossings between the two shores. The frequent visits of the European aristocrats to Yanya, which will be touched upon, appear to be another facet of transnationalism in the region.

Finally, the last part of this study will present its conclusions regarding the issues debated throughout the dissertation.

This study benefits extensively from Ottoman primary sources located in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (BOA) in Istanbul. In addition, a variety of secondary sources -books, articles, and theses- written in English, Greek, and Turkish will help to fill in the gaps of information in the primary sources. The main deficit of this study is its failure to use Greek official records. Constrictions of time and travel funds prevented the use of these sources for the time being.

All the dates given in the thesis are standardized through converting them to the Gregorian calendar. The Hijri dates are indicated after the catalog number of each Ottoman primary record mentioned in the footnotes. Geographical names are written according to their pronunciation in the Ottoman Turkish. However, English names of places are given in *italic* typeface if necessary,

## CHAPTER 1

### CORFU FROM A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE AT THE TURN OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

This chapter will briefly discuss the history of the Ionian Islands throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The chapter will indicate the various trade networks of Corfu in order to understand the importance of transnational business activities. These trade connections are crucial to realize the impossibility of understanding Corfu within the framework of a narrow historical analysis based on nation-state. The chapter will also discuss how the local groups considered the British rule and ensuing unification with Greece. The chapter will emphasize what Greece and its nationalist policies meant for islanders and different expectations of many distinct groups from the process. The multicultural and multilingual internal structure of Corfu and the frequency of temporary visits of foreigners, either in terms of trade or touristic purposes, appear to be an explicit evidence of transnational way of life. The chapter will discuss how such richness reacted to the exclusionary nationalist policy of Greece. Finally, as the cultural dimension is an important aspect of national identity formation, the chapter will focus on the role of the Corfiot music in this process.

#### 1.1. Political and Military History of the Ionian Islands in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Before dealing with the political and military history of the islands during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is necessary to discuss the story of the name of Corfu. Etymologically, the name of the Corfu in the Greek language is Kerkyra [*Κέρκυρα*]. According to the conventional view, Kerkyra meant oak tree in Illyrian language. However, another opinion is that the word used for the indigenous people of the island in the ancient times, was Kerkyres. Nevertheless, in many European languages the island known as Corfu (*Corfou* in French, *Korfu* in German). The word may also come from the reinforced Old Fortress of the island, which had two high points (korifi [*κορυφή*])



means high point in Greek). This fortress protected the island from the “barbarian” attacks during the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>14</sup>

There had been ardent interests in pursuit of the Ionian Islands (Kerkyra, Paxos, Lefkas, Ithaki, Cephalonia, Zakynthos, and Kythera) amongst France, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and Great Britain during the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. The geographical location of these islands allowed this possessor to dominate maritime movements in the northern Mediterranean.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, those seven islands of which the Island of Corfu (Kerkyra) was the most important of all regarding the military or commercial matters increased the appetite of the Great Powers for Corfu.<sup>16</sup>

Regarding the political and military history of the Ionian Islands,<sup>17</sup> the Venetians held the islands from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century until the Treaty of Campo Formio (Campofornido) signed on 18 October 1797, by which they yielded to France. Gentili, the French commander, pointed out one of his letter that he invaded Corfu only with rather a small force of 2,000 soldiers, two warships, and with the help of Venetian sailors. He emphasized the support he received from the local Corfiotes during the invasion.<sup>18</sup>

With the help of the Patriarchate in Istanbul, the Ottoman center gathered intelligences about the French activities in the islands. It seems that the French sympathy among the Ionians did not last long. Based on the information procured by

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<sup>14</sup> Γεώργιου Μπαμπινιώτης, *Λέξικο της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας* [The Dictionary of Modern Greek Language], Second Edition, Κέντρο Λεξικολογίας Ε.Π.Ε., Αθήνα, 2002, p. 884.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Gallant, “Peasant Ideology and Excommunication for Crime in a Colonial Context: The Ionian Islands (Greece), 1817-1864”, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 23, No. 3, Spring 1990, p. 488.

<sup>16</sup> Henry Jervis, White Jervis, Esq., Royal Artillery, *History of the Island of Corfú, and of the Republic of the Ionian Islands*, Colburn and Co., Publishers, London, 1852, p. vi.

<sup>17</sup> For the military and political events in the Ionian Islands and especially in Corfu within a chronological order, see Αδαμαντία Σκαρλάτου, *Η διαχρονική εξέλιξη του τοπίου της Κέρκυρας και η σχέση της με την ιστορία της νήσου* [Diachronic Evolution of Kerkyra and Its Relation with the History of the Island], Unpublished PhD Thesis, Faculty of Forestry and Natural Environment, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2011, pp. 7-9; Eftychia Kosmatou, “La population des Iles Ioniennes XVIIIème-XIXème siècle”, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Université De Paris I-Pantheon – Sorbonne, U.F.R. d’Histoire, Paris, 2000, pp. 29-32.

<sup>18</sup> Kahraman Şakul, *An Ottoman Global Moment: War of Second Coalition in the Levant*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Georgetown University, 2009, p. 69.

the Metropolite of Balyabadra [*Patra*] on 27 April 1798, the islanders hated the French as they looted the Orthodox churches and monasteries in the islands.<sup>19</sup>

After the French occupation of Alexandria on 1 July 1798, the Ottomans formed an alliance with Britain and Russia to wage war on France. Eventually, France was driven out of the Ionian Islands by the allied Russian-Ottoman naval forces in 1799. The Ottomans, Russians, and British made an agreement concerning those seven islands, by which they constituted an autonomous republic named the Septinsular Republic [*Cezayir-i Seba'î Müctemi'a Cumhuri, Republica Settinsulare*] in 1800.<sup>20</sup>



**Map 1.1.** The map of the Septinsular Republic

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septinsular\\_Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septinsular_Republic)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 74.

<sup>20</sup> Ruslan Kamalow, "Ege Sorunları", Unpublished MA Thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı, Ankara, 2007, p. 11; particularly on the contemporary Ottomans diplomacy, see Kahraman Şakul, *An Ottoman Global Moment*, pp. 49-93.

The rather weak resistance of French in the islands together with the popular support of islanders received by the Russian-Ottoman allied naval forces facilitated the invasion of the islands. All the islands but Corfu occupied not more than a month. In Zante [Zakynthos] Island, the reason behind the popular French hatred was the ban on currant trade with the British. The siege of Corfu lasted about four months, from November 1789 to March 1799. Corfiotes showed their sympathy to the eleven ships of the allied naval forces that entered to the Corfu harbor in November as the initial stage of the siege. Nevertheless, there was general fear and reluctance of the islanders on the presence of (Tsamides) Albanian troops of Ali Paşa of Yanya (1744-1822).<sup>21</sup>

The Ottomans considered themselves as the liberators of the islanders who stood against the oppressive French forces, and thus expected respect if not sympathy. With the help of the Patriarchate in Istanbul, the center distributed religious texts in each island in Greek. Patrona Şeremet Bey, who was the commander of the Ottoman troops in Corfu, opened a military hospital [*istipalye*] within the Corfu citadel in 1799 with a capacity of forty patients. This hospital was not specifically in service of the Ottoman soldiers, accepted civilian Corfiotes as well. Besides, a street fight between Ottoman soldiers and local people in *agora* ended up with at least 25 deaths in April 1801. The event indicated the tension between these two groups. The Ottomans forced to stay inside the city citadel as thousands of local people gathered to kill the Ottoman soldiers. Just after this bloody event, the new Ottoman squadron approached to Corfu but the senate did not allow their landing to the island presupposing that it would incite the armed Corfiotes, who have already been in state of rebellion.<sup>22</sup>

The Russians, rather than the Ottomans, were the real administrators of the islands. The new constitution promulgated on 23 November 1802, explicitly confirmed the political influence of Russia over the Seven Islands.<sup>23</sup> Both the constitution and the flag of the newly formed republic prepared in Istanbul with the Russian approval. The constitution was mainly regulating its foreign affairs by granting commercial privileges to merchants of the islands. The two things the Ottomans insisted to be written down in the constitution was the Republic would not

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<sup>21</sup> Kahraman Şakul, *An Ottoman Global Moment*, pp. 127-142.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 384-392.

<sup>23</sup> Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece*, Princeton University Press, United Kingdom, 1999, p. 103.

form alliances with the enemies of the Ottomans in war times and would immediately submit bandits and unlawfulls that fled to the islands from the Ottoman mainland in the Balkans. The considerable number of islanders felt uncomfortable being under Ottoman rule, there was continuous social unrest and protests during the year of 1802.<sup>24</sup> Since the crowd was waving British flag in the Zante Islands to protest the Ottoman rule in the same year, the Porte even thought about inviting British forces to island in order to suppress the uprisings. According to Tomara, the Russian ambassador in Istanbul, the local population of Ionian Islands, politically, consisted of four distinct groups: the supporters of Britain, French, Russian, and of the Ionian Islands.<sup>25</sup>

The complaints of local islanders were mainly about Ali Paşa of Yanya. The Republic generally informed Istanbul on the activities of Paşa through Russia. The military potential of Ali Paşa was frightening the local people in the islands. On one occasion, Paşa's soldiers did not hesitate to enter Santa Mavra district of Septinsular Republic in July 1804 for pursuing a group of deserter. In fact, the operation of Paşa was not only about deserters, which was an illegal act regarding the constitution of the Republic that guaranteed the territorial integrity, but more about manifesting his regional power.<sup>26</sup>

Ali Paşa, as an influential figure in the region, would not wait long to exploit/manipulate political and social uncertainty in the Ionian Islands. He considered that possessing Corfu and its mainland dependencies was vital to materialize his international aspirations. Myriad schisms on the status of the Septinsular Republic were to pave way to the plenty of alliances between France, Russia, Britain, and the Ottomans. Ali Paşa vaguely walked around these tentative international relations in order to accomplish his expansionist dreams. What he did was he negotiated with the French by benefiting from the hostile atmosphere between France and the Ottomans, which occurred after the French occupation of the Ionian Islands. He, however, decided at the last moment to stay with the Porte, as he realized

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<sup>24</sup> Kahraman Şakul, "Adriyatik'te Yakobinler: Mehmed Şakir Efendi'nin "takrir-güne" Tahriri, *Kebikeç*, No. 33, Ankara, 2012, p. 236.

<sup>25</sup> Kahraman Şakul, *An Ottoman Global Moment*, pp. 422-23.

<sup>26</sup> H. Baha Öztunç, "Yedi Ada Cumhuriyeti", Unpublished MA Thesis, Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Ana Bilim Dalı, Yakınçağ Tarihi Bilim Dalı, Tokat, 2007, pp. 39-41.

that the French would not resist against the Russian- Ottoman alliance. In these diplomatic intrigues, the British side was the next stop of Ali Paşa in 1803. This convergence in fact put the British at odds with Russia. Britain did not seek to have problem with Russia but to retain the influence of Ali Paşa in the region concomitantly. To complicate the situation more, Ali Paşa sustained his relations with the French without giving up negotiations with the British for the occupation of Corfu. He claimed that Napoleon promised him to possess the Corfu Island on the precondition that he would aid French troops' landing to his coasts.<sup>27</sup>

During the Third Coalition (1803-1806) against Napoleon, the Ionians explicitly supported the Russian navy forces in Corfu and enrolled to the Russian military camp together with Christian Albanians. The Russians paid two times more than the Ottomans who enlisted to their army.<sup>28</sup>

Interestingly, the first major survey of the Military Map School in St Petersburg, founded by Catherine the Great in 1797, owing to the need for detailed maps of the Black Sea, the Straits (Dardanelles and Bosphorus), and the Aegean Sea, was to send military cartographers to Corfu in order to map the area around the island in 1804-06.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte*, pp. 102-112.

<sup>28</sup> Kahraman Şakul, *An Ottoman Global Moment*, p. 428.

<sup>29</sup> Aleksey Postnikov, "From Charting to Mapping: Russian Military Mapping of Corfu in the Early Nineteenth Century", *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 53, 2001, p. 83.

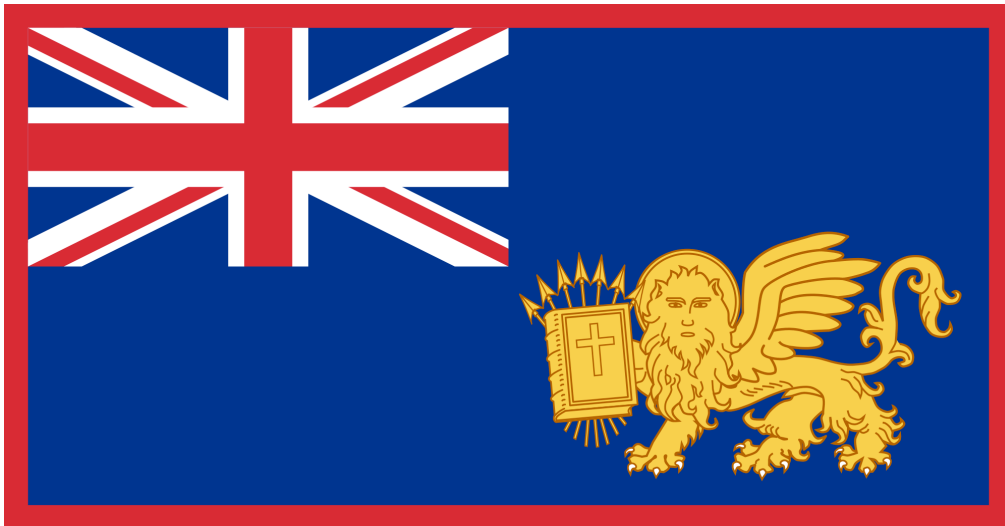


**Map 1.2.** Plan of the Corfu citadel on 5 July 1805.

Aleksey Postnikov, “From Charting to Mapping: Russian Military Mapping of Corfu in the Early Nineteenth Century”, p. 95.

Russia eventually lost its influence over the Ionian Islands when it allied with France with the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807. The Seven Islands became a French territory under the governor François- Xavier Donzelot. Napoleon knew possessing the Ionian Islands was significant, particularly after the occupation of Malta by the English. Moreover, Napoleon declared the Greek Orthodoxy as official religion of the Seven Islands and did not attempt to change the judicial affairs, so his sagacious decisions pleased the islanders.<sup>30</sup>

After the Treaty of Tilsit, the Ottomans entered into alliance with France against Russia and Britain. Political uncertainty arose due to the interference of many countries in the Seven Islands and this situation lasted until the Treaty of Paris signed on 30 May 1814 between Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. This agreement left the Ionian Islands to the protection of the United Kingdom, granted autonomy to Corfu in its internal affairs. This agreement became more solid through the Vienna Congress (from September 1814 to June 1815) and thus the decisions taken there fulfilled the further ambitions of the British side. The Seven Islands were renamed once more, this time as the “United States of the Ionian Islands”.<sup>31</sup>



**Figure 1.1.** The flag of the United States of the Ionian Islands

[http://www.freepik.com/free-photo/british-ionian-islands-grunge-flag\\_605731.htm](http://www.freepik.com/free-photo/british-ionian-islands-grunge-flag_605731.htm)

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<sup>30</sup> Henry Jervis, White Jervis, Esq., Royal Artillery, *History of the Island of Corfu*, pp. 191-193.

<sup>31</sup> H. Baha Öztunç, “Yedi Ada Cumhuriyeti”, pp. 79-82.

After almost fifty years as a British protectorate, the Seven Islands were annexed to the Greek Kingdom with the Treaty of London signed between Great Britain, France, Russia, and the Kingdom of Greece (29 March 1864). The British was to leave the island in two months on the condition that their trading activities would continue in the port of Corfu.<sup>32</sup>

## 1.2. The Economic Activities Challenging Nationalist Aspirations

To mention briefly, the production for export was the main characteristic of the Ionian Islands under the Venetian rule. Olive oil, currants and wine appeared as the most traditional products. From the very beginning of the Venetian period, monocultivation of olive was imposed on Corfu, and thus considerable amount of olive oil was produced. The olive oil was almost exclusively went to Venice and exported to many other places in Europe. Therefore, there were firm trade connections with Venice and Trieste and these cities became the base of many Corfiot merchants.<sup>33</sup>

The beginning of the French rule in 1897 did not mean radical changes in the economic trajectory of Corfu. Taxes continued to levied by the landowning nobility of the island together with some influential Jewish olive oil merchants. The tax collectors had contracts with the state that gave them the right to levy taxes of islanders between three to six year intervals. However, the mere change during the imperial French period was that the tax-system somehow sustained but in more centralist way.<sup>34</sup>

Regarding the economic relations between the Ottoman state and the Septensular Republic, the Ottomans informed the local authorities in Morea, Rhodes,

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<sup>32</sup> Coleman Phillipson, *Termination of War and Treaties of War*, The Lawbook Exchange, New York, 1916, p. 328; on the British policy on the Ionian Islands and the full account of British withdrawal from the Seven Islands, see “Greece and the Ionian Islands, 1832-1864”, Adolphus William Ward, *The Cambridge History of Foreign British Policy, 1815-1866*, Vol. II, in Adolphus William Ward and George Peabody Gooch (ed.), Volume II, Cambridge University Press, Great Britain, 1923, pp. 583-606.

<sup>33</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, “Credit, Bankruptcy and Power in the Ionian Islands Under British Rule, 1815-1864”, in K. Gratzner - D. Stiefel (ed.), *History of Insolvency and Bankruptcy from an International Perspective*, Södertörn Academic Studies 38, Huddinge, 2008, p. 83.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88.



İzmir and Bozcaada [*Tenedos*] for the granted trade rights to the merchant ships that carried the official flag of the Septensular Republic. The Ottomans fixed the customs duty to three percent for the merchants and traders of the Republic in the Ottoman territories in 1801. Furthermore, the Ottomans allowed the Republic to setting up consulates in its coastal trade hubs, such as Salonica, İzmir, Khios, and Cyprus.<sup>35</sup>

Largely, the island was connected to the outside world by two trading routes/networks in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The one was from the northern port cities of the Adriatic Sea, namely Venice and Trieste, to the mainland of Greek state and to the Ottoman lands facing the island. Second route was more inclusionary, which covered the northern European ports and headed towards the Mediterranean port cities. The Ionian sea-based economy gradually began to change with the British period. The British-made cheap cotton products extensively circulated in between Corfu and other ports in the region. However, it was not a radical alteration for islanders, the traditional output was concomitantly continued to be distributed to the neighboring lands (Dalmatia, Epirus, and southwest coasts of Greece) and Europe as before.<sup>36</sup>

Apart from the invasion of the British cotton, the very sign of the British involvement in the region manifested itself through hitherto unexplored trade routes. The engagement of Corfiot merchants in the Black Sea grain trade meant new prosperity and the expansion of business limits of islanders. Corfu was the principal island to build these business networks among the other islands, the ports of Cephalonia and Zante, however, continued to export its output mainly in traditional routes.<sup>37</sup>

The merchants of Ionian Islands were multicultural as the other various communities who lived in these islands. The traders from myriad places of Europe (Britain, Italian states), the members of many important merchant families from the Aegean Islands and the mainland Greece, merchants of Epirus and other parts of the

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<sup>35</sup> H. Baha Öztunç, “Yedi Ada Cumhuriyeti”, pp. 41-44.

<sup>36</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, “The Merchants of the Ionian Islands between East and West: Forming Local and International Networks”, in M. S. Beerbuhl - J. Vogele (ed.), *Spinning the Commercial Web. International Trade, Merchants, and Commercial Cities, c. 1640-1939*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 2004, pp. 47-49.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

Ottoman state, traders of Malta, and Jewish merchants all settled in the island to engage in the ongoing business. These merchant families chose the Corfu, Cephalonia, and Zante islands as their base of operation.<sup>38</sup>

In the first year of the unification of the Ionian Islands with Greece, the Greek state prepared an electoral list, which also helped defining those to decide to be a Greek citizen. The Jewish community (which will be dealt in detail later) was the largest group who refused the Greek citizenship. The internal occupational structure of Corfu in 1865 could be inferred from the electoral lists of Greece.

| <b>Occupational Group</b> | <b>District 1</b> | <b>District 2</b> | <b>District 3</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------|
| Craftsmen                 | 142               | 392               | 337               | 871          | 24         |
| Merchants                 | 87                | 432               | 148               | 667          | 19         |
| Servants, employed        | 120               | 145               | 245               | 510          | 15         |
| Proprietors               | 114               | 195               | 180               | 489          | 14         |
| Retail                    | 51                | 209               | 150               | 410          | 12         |
| Professions               | 81                | 106               | 108               | 295          | 9          |
| Laborers                  | 6                 | 110               | 79                | 195          | 6          |
| Other                     | 2                 | 11                | 15                | 28           | 1          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>603</b>        | <b>1,600</b>      | <b>1,262</b>      | <b>3,465</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Table 1.1.** 1864 Electoral List, Εγχώρια Διαχείριση [Domestic Administration], cited in Athanasios Sakis Gekas, “Credit, Bankruptcy and Power, p. 113.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp. 56-57.

### 1.3. Internal Dynamics in Corfu and the Unionist Propaganda in Greece

The political and economical changes that occurred particularly during the British protectorate brought about a general prosperity to Corfu. However, some Corfiotes became more radically against the British rule and strived for the Greek propaganda, whereas the others stood to resume the political situation in the island.<sup>39</sup>

To mention that there was no sign that the upper-class merchants of the island who were involved in large-scale exportation and importation had any inclination to the unification with Greece. Furthermore, it was the merchants of the islands who had invited the British troops to these islands in 1809 and helped them to occupy the southern islands. The very reason of this tendency was the commercial liberty provided by the British and therefore they were quite satisfied with the political situation.<sup>40</sup>

The reformists were ideologically akin to this group, and they were petty traders, professionals, journalists, and politicians. Being the bourgeoisie of the islands, they certainly had some ideas related with modernization, liberalism and progress however; each group had a different understanding of these ideas in line with their own expectations. It is to be mentioned that they were not against the protection. In fact, their primary concern was to add more reforms to the 1817 Constitution. Yet, the idea of unification was generally considered as “premature”.<sup>41</sup>

To better understand these two groups, one has to take into consideration the

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<sup>39</sup> Particularly related to the popular Greek resistance against the British protectorate in the Ionian Islands, and more about the day-to-day practices of islanders during the period of the British rule, see Thomas W. Gallant, “Turning the Horns: Cultural Metaphors, Material Conditions, and the Peasant Language of Resistance in Ionian Islands (Greece) during the Nineteenth Century”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 36, No. 04, October 1994, pp. 702-719; Thomas W. Gallant, "Honor, Masculinity, and Ritual Knife Fighting in Nineteenth-Century Greece." *American Historical Review*, Vol. 105, No. 2, 2000, pp. 359-82; Thomas W. Gallant, "Peasant Ideology and Excommunication for Crime in a Colonial Context: The Ionian Islands (Greece), 1817-1864," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 23, No. 3, Spring 1990, pp. 485-512.

<sup>40</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, “Class and National Identities in the Ioanian Islands under British Rule”, in Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (ed.), *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)*, Ashgate, UK, 2009, pp. 163-165.

<sup>41</sup> Gerassimos D. Pagratis, “The Ionian Islands under British “Protection” (1815-1864), in Carmel Vassalo, Michela D’Angelo (ed.), *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean: Commerce, Politics and Ideas (XVII-XX Centuries)*, Malta University Press, Malta, 2007, p. 144.

currant trade figures only two years prior the unification took place. Nearly 75-80% of the currant of these islands was routed to the port cities of England such as London, Liverpool, and Falmouth.<sup>42</sup>

After all, the young islanders, particularly the ones who were educated abroad –mainly in Italian universities, could not be member of the huge administration machine of the High Commissioner in the islands. Thus, they lost their hopes for a possible economic benefit from the British domination, gradually adopted a rough political stance against the British rule. It is understood that the general optimistic liberal atmosphere in Europe also impressed them. Priests in the countryside, where the majority of the population was Orthodox Greek, also strived to mobilize the villagers through the sermons loaded with nationalist agitation. These groups somehow became the ardent supporter of unification with Greece. The failure of the MP William Ewart Gladstone’s reforming mission in 1858 could also be taken into consideration in this process as an external factor.<sup>43</sup>

We should also mention briefly on the British perspective, on the eve of the unification with Greece. The British politicians argued about the future of the Corfu and Paxos Islands. They claimed that these two islands were different from the others in terms of demography and history. The landowners and cultural elites in these two islands were mostly descendants of the ancient Venetian rulers. The Greek nationalist propaganda was not dominant among these ethnically non-Greeks as in other five Ionian Islands (Lefkas, Ithaki, Cephalonia, Zakynthos, and Kythera). This opinion propagated for the transformation of Corfu and Paxo into a British colony.<sup>44</sup>

Another point of view was based on geopolitics. Accordingly, the Ionian Islands and particularly Corfu were not as important as Malta. Furthermore, the lack of enthusiasm in the islands for continuation of the British protectorate, on the other, forced the British to retreat.<sup>45</sup>

The remarks of one European traveller, Edmond Spencer who regularly

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<sup>42</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, “The Merchants of the Ionian Islands, p. 51.

<sup>43</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, “Class and National Identities in the Ioanian Islands, pp. 168-172.

<sup>44</sup> Bruce Knox, “British Policy and the Ionian Islands, 1847 – 1864: Nationalism and Imperial Administration”, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 392, July 1984, p. 509.

<sup>45</sup> A. W. Ward, *The Cambridge History of Foreign British Policy*, p. 603.

visited the island under the British protectorate are also worth mentioning. Spencer strongly believed that the unification of the Ionian Islands with Greece would not be beneficial for Corfu:

If these beautiful islands should fall under the rule of the factious chiefs and turbulent demagogues of “Young Greece” whose political honesty and public virtue are empty sounds, they would speedily become the retreat of bandits- the home of pirates.<sup>46</sup>

It is also important to cite the observations and remarks of an eminent Ottoman bureaucrat and intellectual on the Corfu Island. Ahmed Cevdet Pasha stayed in Corfu for four days in order to reach Iskodra [*Shkodra*] via Bari and Trieste in October 1861. He had a chance to witness the daily life in Corfu when the British were still the protectors of these islands. Though his descriptions are not lengthy, they still offer a significant contribution to the study of the economic and politic situation of Corfu during the period in question. He mentions that the British did not transfer the levied taxes and other sources of income to her own treasure but spent the money for the infrastructure and other necessities of the islands. The British treasury covered the military costs in Corfu. Hence, Corfu was a suitable place for trade and well-to-do merchants and other rich notables were plainly satisfied with the political situation of the islands. However, the ordinary people in Corfu were against the British protectorate and propagated for the union with Greece. Cevdet Pasha underlines the latter had the majority for which the British somehow began to consider the possibility of withdrawal from the islands. Anticipating the possible handover three years before, he wrote a brief letter to Âli Pasha about the current situation in Corfu and the anticipated events.<sup>47</sup>

Even though Cevdet Pasha’s political observations corresponded with the internal politics in Corfu in a certain degree, his information on the expenditures appears to be wrong according to the figures published by Henry Jervis.

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<sup>46</sup> Edmond Spencer, *Travels in European Turkey in 1850, through Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thrace, Albania, and Epirus; With A Visit to Greece and the Ionian Islands*, Vol. II, Colburn and Co. Publishers, London, 1851, p. 223.

<sup>47</sup> Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, 13-20, Cavid Baysun (ed.), Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1991, pp. 159-160.

| <b>New Works:<br/>Ordnance</b>       | <b>Works and<br/>Repairs</b> | <b>Building and<br/>Repair of<br/>Barracks</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--------------|
| £ 346,814                            | £ 62,086                     | £ 47,411                                       | £ 456,311    |
| <b>Totals</b>                        | £ 456,311                    |  |              |
| <b>Contribution<br/>of Islanders</b> | £ 307,627                    |  |              |
| <b>Defrayed by<br/>Great Britain</b> | £ 148,624                    |  |              |

**Table 1.2.** Return of Expenditure Incurred in the Ionian Islands for Ordnance Works Since the Peace, Distinguishing What Portion of It Has Been Defrayed by Great Britain, and What Portion by the Ionian Islands Between 1815 and 1847-8, Henry Jervis, White Jervis, Esq., Royal Artillery, *History of the Island of Corfu*, p. 322.

Cevdet Pasha's identification of the ordinary people's pro-Greek stance should not be taken for granted as well. A newspaper article, for instance, about the stance of the islanders during the 1897 Ottoman-Greek War indicates a completely different picture regarding the national identity. It should be remembered the national consciousness peaked throughout the mainland Greece and among the Greek population of the Crete Island.

During the late war [1897 Ottoman-Greek War], a number of the English and Italian volunteers for the Foreign Legion passed through the island on their way to the fighting between Janina and Arta, were received with much clamor. The gallant islanders, however, did not show much alacrity in crossing over to the mainland with their visitors, but left them to knock their heads against the Turkish forces without any support. During the war scare of 20 years ago, the Corfiotes showed themselves equally careful of their skins, for though a regiment or two was shipped on board a transport for possible service at the front, those of the gilded youth who could smuggled themselves on board the Austrian-Llyod steamers at a sacrifice of all dignity, and made their escape to Trieste till the alarm died away.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Corfu In Winter, *Liverpool Mercury etc* (Liverpool, England), Thursday, December 30, 1897; Issue 15601, British Library, Gale Document Number: Y3204430141.

Another correspondent of European newspaper underlines the lack of connection with Greece saying that, "...it is strange to be writing from any part of Greece and to have little to tell about the Cretan crisis. But Corfu only knows events 'on terra firma' by few telegrams from Athens. There are three Corfu papers (weeklies) for this city's 28,000 and this island's 114,500 inhabitants. There was a fourth paper two months ago, printed half in Greek half in Italian (for after 400 years of Venetian domination Corfu remains Italian to some extent), but it has since then ceased to appear".<sup>49</sup>

#### **1.4. The Land Problem and Its Impact on National Identity Formation**

The land issue was another economic problem that affected the public opinion about the political future of the islands. The cancellation of debts of villagers was important since the debtors faced the threat of imprisonment. Some historians consider this fact as the primary factor behind the armed uprisings of the villagers and farmers against the British rule.<sup>50</sup> In this regard, the 1848 and 1849 uprisings in the countryside against the British protectorate could be mentioned as the breaking points for the British protectorate. Furthermore, the islanders particularly in the countryside also had a desire to unify with the Greek kingdom. By the end of August 1849, another agrarian uprising broke out in Cephalonia, however, the British army eventually suppressed it.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, there was another group called the "Undergrounders" [*Καταχθόνιοι*] consisted of landowners and old feudal families, whose roots could be traced back to the Venetian period. Since the aggressive policy of Greece would impair the tranquility in the islands, they perceived the protection as necessary for the island's social and economic life. These landowners were totally against the idea of unification with Greece.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> How Corfu Takes The Crisis, *Daily News* (London, England), Tuesday, February 23, 1897; Issue 15884, British Library, Gale Document Number: BA3203358294.

<sup>50</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, "Class and National Identities in the Ionian Islands, p. 171.

<sup>51</sup> A. W. Ward, *The Cambridge History of Foreign British Policy, 1815-1866*, Vol. II, p. 599.

<sup>52</sup> Gerassimos D. Pagratis, "The Ionian Islands under British "Protection", p. 144.

Great expectations in terms of property rights and many other problems related with the land issue appear to have continued even after the unification with Greece. In fact, large-scale political changes profoundly changed the political practices of the islanders. Now, it was Athens, i.e. the parliament, where these problems were addressed. The islanders could now accentuate their problems via their representatives in the Greek Parliament in Athens.<sup>53</sup>

The negotiations in the parliament indicate that the British domination, which lasted was not able to solve the land problems pertaining to the Venetian feudalism in these islands. Furthermore, these problems, which eventually were transferred to Greece, could only be solved in the 1890s. Regarding the land code that was promulgated in 1867, the farmers were now able to buy some portion of the estate that belonged to the feudal lord in Corfu. However, since the farmers did not possess enough money to buy the land, the system was sustained and therefore the farmer continued to live under the burden of the system. Georgios Theotokis (1844-1916), a Corfiot politician and three times Prime Minister of Greece between 1903-1909, prepared a draft law with the goal to liberate the farmer from the burden of the landowners in the islands. The law was passed on 14 December 1893.<sup>54</sup> The execution of the law was not easy at all. The landowners and the inheritors of the Venetian landlords sued the government many times. Nevertheless, in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the land problem was still an unresolved issue for the islanders.<sup>55</sup>

After all, the islanders, as it appears, considered the process of unification with Greece as an opportunity to provide solutions for the problems pertaining to land. While the national consciousness of islanders should not be ignored, it seems that the economic benefits were more significant.

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<sup>53</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, "Credit, Bankruptcy and Power, p. 108.

<sup>54</sup> Όλγα Παχή, «Από το φεουδαλικό σύστημα γαιοκτησίας στο αγροτικό ζήτημα της Κέρκυρας (1864-1925)» [From the Feudal Land System to the Land Problem of Kerkyra], Unpublished PhD Thesis, History Department, Ionia University, Greece, 1996, pp. 181-182.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 193.



## 1.5. The Population of Corfu

Regarding the population figures in the Ionian Islands, many travellers, observers, and historians commonly express that there were many diverse groups living together in the islands, however the Greeks constituted the majority of the populace during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Athanasios Gekas points out that the towns of the three islands; Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia, were heterogeneous places, where the Venetians, Maltese, Jewish people, and many other foreigners lived together. However, the Greek-speaking peasants made up the majority of the population during the British protectorate.<sup>56</sup>

According to the population census of Corfu in 1857, Corfu had 67,330 people. Indeed, the census offers information on the distribution of population in towns and the countryside. According to it, 15,921 people lived in the Corfu town, whereas the figure for the suburbs was 7,659. The total population lived in the countryside of Corfu was 42,576 and in the islets was 1,174.<sup>57</sup>

Another important statistic provides data about the foreigner inhabitants in Corfu in 1853:

|                   | <b>Permanent Settler</b> | <b>Foreigner</b> |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Greek</b>      | 8,199                    | 1,494            |
| <b>Protestant</b> | 13                       | 151              |
| <b>Latin</b>      | 1,581                    | 2,592            |
| <b>Israelites</b> | 2,160                    | 224              |
| <b>Total</b>      | 11,953                   | 4,461            |

**Table 1.3.** Εκτελεστική Αστυνομία [Executive Police], 1719, 1/91, IAK, cited in Athanasios Sakis Gekas, "Credit, Bankruptcy and Power, p. 113.

<sup>56</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, "Credit, Bankruptcy and Power, p. 83.

<sup>57</sup> Ionian Islands Government Gazette, No. 292, CO 136/286, 1857, NA, PRO, cited in Athanasios Sakis Gekas, "Credit, Bankruptcy and Power, p. 112.

The population of the United States of the Ionian Islands in 1858 is also very close to the figures in population censuses of 1896 and 1907. The total population of the Ionian Islands was estimated 240,000 in 1858.<sup>58</sup>

Constance Fenimore Woolson travelled to Corfu in the late 1880s and observed that the town of Corfu had 26,000 inhabitants. The population was a mixture of Dalmatians, Maltese, Levantines, and others; but the Greeks had the majority. Moreover, there was a Jewish district to be mentioned.<sup>59</sup>

The numbers below are based on the Greek state census in 1896 and 1907, respectively.<sup>60</sup> According to the 1896 census, Ionian Islands' total population was 265,297. However, the number appears to be slightly higher in the 1907 census (267,596 in total). More specifically, the population figures for merely Corfu could be found in the Greek state's census in 1907: With 49,462 males and 49,929 females, the total population was 99,571.<sup>61</sup> The figures in censuses clearly show Corfu was the most populated island among the seven islands, which possessed almost one-third of the Seven Islands' population.

Though I have not come across any source, either primary or printed, that refers to the Muslim populace in Corfu, the assumption of the Muslim community lived in Corfu would not entirely be unsupported in the light of an Ottoman archival material that mentions the presence of a Muslim cemetery in Corfu.<sup>62</sup> These were most likely the Ottoman soldiers who joined the allied Russian-Ottoman naval forces' invasion of Corfu to expel the French presence in 1799.

## 1.6. The Jews of Corfu

The Jewish community in Corfu was another facet of the multicultural and multilingual life in the island. Professor D.T. Ansted made a visit to Corfu in 1863,

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<sup>58</sup> Bruce Knox, "British Policy and the Ionian Islands, p. 504.

<sup>59</sup> Constance Fenimore Woolson, *Mentone, Cairo, and Corfu*, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1896, p. 299.

<sup>60</sup> *Αναριθμήσις των Κατοικών των Νεών Επαρχιών της Ελλάδος* [Population Figures of Greece's Newly Joined Provinces], Υπουργειον Εθνικής Οικονομίας, Διευθύνσεις Στατιστικής, Εν Αθηνάις εκ του Εθνικού Τυπογραφίου, 1915, p. νά.

<sup>61</sup> *Αναριθμήσις των Κατοικών των Νεών Επαρχιών της Ελλάδος*, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> BOA, Υ. MTV. 35-12 (04/M /1306).

only one year before the British rule was over. His journey was a result of his curiosity to see and judge in place what England had done in its fifty yearlong protection in the island. He wrote about the Jewish quarter; according to him it was neither dirtier, nor more noisy, and nor more crowded than the other parts of the island. The general condition of the Jewish people explicitly indicated their poverty. However, they were not persecuted in Corfu as they were in elsewhere in Europe. They mainly engaged in jobs pertaining to the port business, as porters they unload/upload the ships.<sup>63</sup>

The majority of the Jewish populace lived in the second district of Corfu. The electoral list of the Greek state indicates the occupational distribution of Jewish people in 1864. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that these people were the ones who took Greek citizenship, and thus it should not be considered as the precise occupational classification of the entire Jewish community in Corfu.

| <b>Occupation</b>     | <b>Total</b> | <b>Jews of 2<sup>nd</sup> District</b> | <b>%</b>    |
|-----------------------|--------------|--|-------------|
| Craftsmen             | 871          | 194                                    | 22          |
| Merchants             | 667          | 268                                    | 40          |
| Servants,<br>employed | 510          | 13                                     | 2.5         |
| Proprietors           | 489          | 7                                      | 1.5         |
| Retail                | 410          | 113                                    | 27.5        |
| Professions           | 295          | 21                                     | 7           |
| Laborers              | 195          | 92                                     | 47          |
| Other                 | 28           | 1                                      | 3.5         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>3,465</b> | <b>709</b>                             | <b>20,5</b> |

**Table 1.4.** 1864 Electoral List, *Εγχώρια Διαχείριση* [Domestic Administration], 1544, IAK., cited in Athanasios Sakis Gekas, “Credit, Bankruptcy and Power, p. 114.

<sup>63</sup> D. T. Ansted, M.A., F.R.S., *The Ionian Islands in the Year 1863*, W.M. H. Allen & CO., London, 1863, pp. 16-17.

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, port workers in Thessaloniki were also overwhelmingly Jewish. In the traditional Ottoman guild system the necessary official permission was transferred from father to son, and thus the continuity of the family ties was guaranteed in the Thessaloniki port. The evidence of Jewish numerical superiority in the port business was clearly seen when the ships anchored in the harbor on Saturdays. The Jewish workers were not working on the day of Sabbath, therefore the ships had to wait all day in order to load or unload the commodities.<sup>64</sup>

A British newspaper article circulated on 10 April 1897 mentions that the Jews were relatively favored under the British rule but they acquired the full equal rights only after Greece occupied the island. It also points out that the population was roughly 3.000 and they were an amalgamated race composed of Eastern, Greek, Spanish, Jewish and Italian. Their dialect is a mixture of Greek and Italian.<sup>65</sup> According to an alternative view the dialect of the Jews lived in Corfu was rather Italian than the Greek language.<sup>66</sup>

Constance Fenimore Woolson also paid attention to the Jews in Corfu, and gave clues about the cruelty and oppression these people have encountered:

Jews abound, or did abound at the time of my visit. Since then fanaticism has risen its head again, and there have been wild scenes at Corfu. Face to face with the revival of persecution for religious opinions which is now visible in Russia, and not in Russia alone, are we forced to acknowledge that our century is not so enlightened as we have hoped that it was.<sup>67</sup>

The rise of the anti-Semitic violence in the eastern parts of the Mediterranean region had certain similarities with the anti-Semitic wave in Europe. However, the violence in the port cities such as Corfu was also pertaining to the emergence of

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<sup>64</sup> Shai Srougo, "Professional Characteristics of the Jewish Guild in the Muslim World: Thessaloniki Dockers at the End of the Ottoman Era", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 26:2, 2011, pp. 118-123.

<sup>65</sup> The Jews Of Corfu, *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London, England), Saturday, April 10, 1897; Issue 9997, from the British Library, Gale Document Number: Y3200473909.

<sup>66</sup> Steven Bowman, "The Jews in Greece", in L. Ehrlich, S. Bolozky, R. Rothstein, M. Schwartz, J. Berkovitz, J. Young (ed.), *Textures and Meaning: Thirty Years of Judaic Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst*, Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2004, p. 425.

<sup>67</sup> Constance Fenimore Woolson, *Mentone, Cairo, and Corfu*, p. 301.

nation-states, as well as their harsh policies against some minorities such as the Jews, gypsies, and others living in the national territories.<sup>68</sup>

The efforts of the Prussian state, for instance, in order to expand the German population in the provinces of the Eastern Marches, and thus the growing influence of German and Polish nationalism paved the way to the perishing of the Jewish populace between 1882 and 1907. The percentage of the self-employed Jews in Posen decreased from 43.4% to the 21.3% in this period. Moreover, the share of the Jewish workers in wage employment fell from 30.0% to 12.3%. Nevertheless, the Jewish population was in gradual downfall from the 1840s onwards. In the city of Posen they constituted the 21% of the population, whereas the figure went down to 4% in 1905. In between 1885 and 1905 the Jewish population dropped from 14,600 to 9,200 in Marienwerder *Regierungsbezirk*, and in Bromberg from 16,500 to 10,500. The Protestant population in these regions was in uptrend concomitantly. In parallel with the nationalist waves, the Polish banks reduced the amount of the credits given to the Jewish merchants; hence the economic situation eventually worsened day-by-day for the Jewish community in the Polish territories.<sup>69</sup>

Within the Greek nationalist context, the Orthodox Christianity was politically an important tool to strengthen the idea of national religion in Greece. The policy, however, did not only affect the Orthodox Greeks, but also other religious groups (Jews and Muslims). Particularly during the Greek War of Independence (1821-1828) the rhetoric of the religious rivalry (Christianity versus Islam) was frequently used and the Jews in the Peloponnese were perceived as the supporter of the existing Ottoman domain, and eventually became the target of the Greek revolutionary bands in the region.<sup>70</sup>

An important event took place in Corfu on 14 April 1891. An eight-year-old Jewish girl, called Rubbina Sarda, found dead in the Jewish district in Corfu. However, instead of criminal investigation, police arrested the father of Rubbina and

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<sup>68</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, "Class and Cosmopolitanism: The Historiographical Hortunes of Merchants in Eastern Mediterranean Ports", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 24: 2, 2009, p. 107.

<sup>69</sup> Mark Tilse, *Transnationalism in the Prussian East: From National Conflict to Synthesis, 1871-1914*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2011, pp. 30-31.

<sup>70</sup> Effi Gazi, "Revisiting Religion and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Greece", in Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (ed.), *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)*, Ashgate, UK, 2009, p. 103.

two other Jews. Interestingly, after the suspicious people were released, the Christians of island began to rumor the girl was a Christian inhabitants of island and she was killed by the Jewish people as sacrifice. This was the very similar blood libel story that was witnessed in many parts of Europe and Russia. Then the Christian populace gathered in the Jewish district and attempted to burn down the neighborhood. The Christians completely destroyed the Jewish quarter even though the Mayor announced that the girl was Jewish, and not Christian. These events were under close scrutiny of the European Powers. Eventually, the British, French and Greek warships came to the island in order to stop the expanding of the looting and violence against the Jews and to protect their fellow countryman in the island. The events continued more than a month. Being mostly the poorest ones, about 2-3,000 Jewish people were displaced and forced to emigrate from Corfu in the beginning of the 1890s. The emigration continued somehow months after the events, and many Jewish people settled mainly in Trieste, and in many Ottoman cities such as Yanya and Salonika.<sup>71</sup>

The Ottomans were also aware of the events and therefore were expecting a wave of immigration from Corfu. During the first half of May 1891, the estimated expenses of such an emigration were calculated and it was asked from the budget of Pire (Piraeus) consulate in Athens.<sup>72</sup> The first group from the Jewish community of Corfu arrived in the Ottoman lands on 18 May 1891.<sup>73</sup>

The exclusionary policy against these groups, which were perceived as a threat to the homogenously designed populaces in the nation-states, was generally carried out by the Greek state in Corfu. Hence, the island's multicultural society was neglected and the ideological assimilation was imposed on the island. In fact, the absence of Jewish populace in Corfu meant nothing more than the loss of cosmopolitanism of Corfu, and substantially fading off the global trade networks of the island.

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<sup>71</sup> Athanasios Sakis Gekas, "The Port Jews of Corfu and the 'Blood Libel' of 1891: A Tale of Many Centuries and of One Event", *Jewish Culture and History* 7, 1-2, in D. Cesarani, G. Rommain (ed.), *Jew and Port Cities, 1590-1990. Commerce, Community and Cosmopolitanism*, Special issue, 2004, pp. 185-187.

<sup>72</sup> BOA, Y. A. HUS. 247-16 (06/L/1308).

<sup>73</sup> BOA, Y. PRK. ZB. 8-30 (09/L/1308).

### **1.7. Music Is Not Only About Art: The Spread of Corfiot Music in Greece**

Corfu became respectively subject to the Venetians, French “liberators”, Russian “mediators”, and English “protectors”, however, neither Italians nor Ottomans possessed the island. As a matter of fact, the island inhabited by many subjects of these temporal rulers. Since the Italian cultural and architectural influence was dominant, one may consider that Italians never fully deserted the island.<sup>74</sup> This observation on the multicultural structure of the islands manifest itself not only politically or demographically but also in many artistic forms. Therefore musical analysis of the island will eventually bridge over to understand the cultural dynamics of Corfu in a different perspective.

In the cultural framework, the Ionian Islands, thanks to its continuing Italian opera culture, filled the gap in the modernization process of the Greek state. In this very social and also ideological necessity, the professional musicians of Corfu and Zakyntos Islands, became important actors to correlate with the European cultural movements in Greece. The state designed “national” music was in essence nothing more than the amalgamation of some French, German or Russian classical music flavored with Ionian music under Italian influence. It is to be mentioned that, in the process of creating the national Greek music, the local folk melodies were scarcely used, which were considered as the remainder of the Ottoman past.<sup>75</sup>

Haris Xanthoudakis makes a certain distinction when it comes to deal with the social stratification and social conscience in the Ionian Islands and mainland Greece. She claims that since the Ionian Islands socially and historically were more akin to the developments that took place in Western Europe, contemporary cultural currents like naturalism, realism and social art particularly in the form of opera initially appeared in those islands.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Katy Romanou and Maria Barbaki, “Music Education in Nineteenth-Century Greece: Its Institutions and their Contribution to Urban Musical Life”, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 8, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 58

<sup>75</sup> Haris Xanthoudakis, “Composers, Trends and the Question of Nationality in Nineteenth-Century Musical Greece”, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 8, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp 41–55.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49.

Niccolò Chalichopoulos Manzarò (1795-1872), born in Corfu during the Venetian rule, was of mixed Greek and Italian noble descent and he was a remarkable music theorist and composer. He was considered as the most influential cultural figure in Corfu and the person who was also responsible for the music education in the island up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His Philharmonic Society in Corfu, founded in 1840, had an explicit policy of reducing improvisation, which was highly practiced in the church music. Instead, instrumental music and polyphony were favored. His choices about the way the music was played somehow indicate the tendency towards the Western musical tradition.<sup>77</sup> He actually never travelled to the East. His main destination was Italy, particularly Naples. As it was commonly practiced in many southern Italian cities, the Italian opera was perceived to be the utmost artistic level in music also in Corfu.<sup>78</sup>

Spyridon Xyndas (1810-1896), another eminent musician born in Corfu, composed the first real Greek opera in 1867, called “The Candidate” [Ο Υποψήφιος]. The libretto was originally in Greek (in Demotic) and performed by the Greek singers. The plot was highly political based on some social problems in Greek society such as the land issue, radicalism, and political corruption. The inclusiveness in this play explicitly transcended the current political camps and national boundaries. Local Corfiote melodies incorporated with the melodies of Epirus, and local instruments such as *zourna* and *tanbour* were used in combination with oboe and bass-drum.<sup>79</sup>

Above examples suggest that Corfu was a sort of bridge for Greece to meet the current western artistic forms, and modernize its traditional music. The musical inclusiveness of the islands concomitantly transcended the national ambitions, which was mainly interested in maintaining nationalist expressions through musical forms.

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<sup>77</sup> Katy Romanou and Maria Barbaki, “Music Education in Nineteenth-Century Greece, p. 70.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, pp. 72-74.

<sup>79</sup> Haris Xanthoudakis, “Composers, Trends, p. 50.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE GREEK IRRENDENTISM AND THE YANYA PROVINCE

This chapter will first analyze the meaning of the *Megale Idea* for Greece and how it dominated its expansionist foreign policy. The chapter will deal with the irredentist desires of the Greek state and its traditional association with brigandage. Yanya and Corfu had certain similarities regarding the multicultural internal structure. As the chapter will elaborately explain, the Greeks, Albanians, and Vlachs were the main indigenous groups. However, neither their language, nor their religion could sharply be defined. They were in many cases bilingual and shared common aspects of Islam and Christianity. All these complicated factors appeared as natural obstacles for the nationalist desires of the Greek state. Finally, the chapter will emphasize foreign intrigues in the region, namely of the Romanians, Italians, and Austrians, which further impeded the expansionist policy of Greece and also challenged the Ottoman authority in the city.

#### 2.1. The *Megale Idea* and Greece

The *Megale Idea* (the unifying project of Hellenism and the reconstruction of the Byzantine Empire with Constantinople as its capital)<sup>80</sup> was indeed in circulation long before the Greek War of Independence and was the very motto throughout the formation of the Greek national identity that dominated the domestic as well as foreign policy of Greece during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>81</sup> From the

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<sup>80</sup> George W. Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913*, I. B. Tauris, London: New York, 2006, p. 124.

<sup>81</sup> Vangelis Kechriotis argues that the post of Prince [*hospodar*], which was offered to the Greek-Orthodox Phanariot families [*Fenerliler*] from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century also rendered possible the initial cultural contacts between the educated young Greeks and the Western intellectuals, Vangelis Kechriotis, "Greece Will Reclaim Its Place Among the Nations of Europe": Images of Greeks and Turks in European Public Discourse at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.", Presented at the workshop *Revisiting South Eastern Europe: Comparative Social History of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Institut für soziale Bewegungen, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, January 2007; The tributary princes of Wallahia, Moldovia, and Transylvania were in close touch with the Phanariotte Greek translators in Istanbul and constantly informed the Ottomans about the political and social atmosphere in Western and Central Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Viorel Panaite, "The Voivodes of the Danubian Principalities –As

beginning of the War of Independence in 1821 to the signing of the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, the idea of Greek peoples' liberation from the Ottoman yoke and re-gaining the "Greek" lands substantially motivated the Greek foreign policy.<sup>82</sup> The Greek state ardently claimed Epirus and Macedonia regions in the north, the Aegean islands and much of Asia Minor in the east, and especially the Crete Island in the south. Besides, Greece was devoid of any Great Power patronage, like that of the Orthodox Slavs with Russia and Romania with Austria-Hungary, which would encourage its nationalist aspirations. The pursuit of such an aggressive policy was not sustainable, given the economic and military limits of Greek state.<sup>83</sup>

The endeavors of Greek politicians as well as intellectuals to establish the "Great Idea" and to incorporate it within the Greek society were not unavailing. Ioannis Kollettis (1774-1847), a Greek politician, during his speech in Greek National Assembly in 1844 clearly delineated the idea:

The Greek Kingdom is not the Greece but its smallest and most lacking part of it. A native Greek is not the only one who lives in this Kingdom, but the one who lives in Ionia, Thessaly, Serres, Adrianople, Constantinople, Trebizond, Crete, and Samos. All these lands are, somehow, in profound relation with the Greek history or Greek race.<sup>84</sup>

As the speech revealed, being Greek or the Greek identity was based on many concepts ranging from geography to politics and from history to culture. In other words, ancient, Byzantine and modern past were all intermingled under the name of "historic rights" on land. Greece's boundaries were still ardently debated among

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*Harâcgüzarlar of the Ottoman Sultans*", in Kemal H. Karpat with Robert W. Zens (ed.), *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities and Political Changes*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 2003, p. 77.

<sup>82</sup> L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York – Chicago, USA, 1958, pp. 292, 467-477.

<sup>83</sup> Richard C. Hall, *The Modern Balkans: A History*, Reaktion Books, London, UK, 2011, p. 67.

<sup>84</sup> Richard Clogg, *Modern Yunanistan Tarihi*, (trans. Dilek Şendil), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1997, p. 66; Dimitri Kitsikis states in his provocative study that the politicians who enforced the Greek state to perform policies according to the *Megale Idea* were in charge for the will of the Great Powers. Ioannis Kolettis was the person who expressed this political thought for the first time in Greece, Dimitri Kitsikis, *Türk-Yunan İmparatorluğu*, Volkan Aytar (trans.), İletişim, İstanbul, 1996, p. 154.

Greek intellectuals and politicians in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, the lengthy Ottoman rule perceived as a break with the very relevant past of the Greek civilization and thus the pervading discourse sanctified this “invented” Greekness through reviving the ancient and the Byzantine past. Put differently, the Hellenization of the past became *sine qua non* element in the process of the Greek identity formation.<sup>86</sup>

A Greek writer and the first president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894-96, Dimitrios Vikelas (1835-1908) wrote about the assumed boundaries of the Greek state in 1885. He claimed the Greek state’s northern borders would begin from above Corfu and would extend to Chalkidiki in the Aegean Sea. The Greek part of Macedonia and Crete would designate the southern borders of this state.<sup>87</sup>

As mentioned above, nearly all the foreign relations of Greece as well as the contemporary political issues were interpreted and reinterpreted through the viewpoint of the *Megale Idea*. So aggressive in its essence, the policy of irredentism led to growing violence and thus paramilitarization of northern borders of Greece.<sup>88</sup> The Greek state, in order to fulfill her irredentist ambitions, hired many Greek bandit chiefs, *kapudans*, put them in charge as border guards, and also encouraged them to organize raids for the purpose of seizing property, plundering, and mobilizing the Christian population to revolt against the Ottoman authorities across the border.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Serious attempts have been made to construct the national identity in Greece during the 19<sup>th</sup> century through which the modern Greeks would be linked to the ancient Greeks. Therefore, questions like “who were the Greeks and what was their real geographic boundaries?” were vehemently disputed between the Greek intellectuals and also some Western European intellectuals, who called themselves “Philhellenes”. Particularly on the process of Greek identity’s formation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Theodore G. Zervas, “Locating a National Identity in Modern Greece”, *The Making of a Modern Greek Identity: Education, Nationalism and the Teaching of a Greek Historical Past*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2012, pp. 27-68.

<sup>86</sup> Basil C. Gounaris, “Model Nation and Caricature State: Competing Greek Perspectives on the Balkans and Hellas”, in Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (ed.), *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)*, Ashgate, UK, 2009, p. 145.

<sup>87</sup> Robert Shannan Peckham, “Map Mania: nationalism and the politics of place in Greece, 1870-1922”, *Political Geography*, Vol. 19, 2000, p. 86.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece*, Arnold Publishers, London, 2001, pp. 55-56.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas W. Gallant, “Brigandage, Piracy, Capitalism, and State-formation: Transnational Crime from a Historical World Systems Perspective”, in J. Heyma and A. Smart (ed.), *States and Illegal Networks*, London, 1999, pp. 43-45.

The bizarre relationship of Greece with brigandage and how irredentism was associated needs to be explained elaborately. The emergence of Greece could not have been possible without the support of the brigands to some degree. Therefore, some core concepts like law, crime, and punishment were not in place for long. Thus achieving a consensus on these basic principles was not easy for the newly founded Greek state. Continuous lack of clarity or order in society during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was probably due to the brigands' association with pro-Independence *klephts*.<sup>90</sup> The very presence of semi-military forces in the nationalist movements was not peculiar to Greece in the Balkans. Irregular *haiduks* and *martolos* were the prominent components in the Serbian and Bulgarian upheavals against the Ottoman rule.<sup>91</sup> Since Greece was not allowed to have a professional army and because of Greece's protecting powers' refusal to extend Greece's frontiers by force at the expense of the Ottomans, the military operations of Greece were based on hired brigand bands. The primary military purpose was to create havoc in the Ottoman lands claimed by Greece.<sup>92</sup> Brigand bands were recruited many times in 1854, 1868, 1878, 1896-97 to incite revolts in Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, and Crete.<sup>93</sup> However, the bankruptcy in 1893, as well as costly and degrading defeat in the Ottoman-Greek War in 1897 resulted in the cooling down of the expansionist aspirations, albeit only for a short period.<sup>94</sup> The irregular forces, established through amnesties declared periodically by the Greek state, were perceived as the real

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<sup>90</sup> Gerassimos Karabelias, "State Modernization and Military Intervention in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece During the Early Twentieth Century: A Comparative Analysis of the 1908 and 1909 Coups D'Etats", *Oriente Moderno*, Nuova Serie, Anno. 23 (84), 2004, pp. 154-159.

<sup>91</sup> Fikret Adanır, "Balkan Historiography Related to the Ottoman Empire Since 1945", in Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, Leiden: Brill, 2000, p. 236.

<sup>92</sup> For the policies of Charilaos Trikoupis (1832-1896) and Theodoros Deligiannis (1820-1905), two significant political leaders in Greece during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, regarding the *Megale Idea*, and also for the political process that paved the way to the emergence of Eleftherios Venizelos (1864-1936), see Gerassimos Karabelias, "State Modernization and Military Interventions in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece During the Early Twentieth Century", pp. 157-164.

<sup>93</sup> John S. Koliopoulos, Thanos M. Veremis, *Greece, The Modern Sequel: From 1831 to the Present*, C. Hurst & Co., Malaysia, 2002, pp. 221-225.

<sup>94</sup> George Andreopoulos, "State and Irredentism: Some Reflections on the Case of Greece", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 4, December 1981, pp. 958-959.

national army while the regular army was nothing more than a decorative Western institution.<sup>95</sup>



**Map 2.1.** The expansion of Greek state from 1821 to 1947

Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece*, p. 55.

<sup>95</sup> John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece 1821, 1912*, Oxford, 1987, p. 81.

## 2.2. The Yanya Province in Irredentist Plans

Similar identity discourse among the Greek intellectuals also embraced Epirus land and its populace. Especially after the rearrangement of territories in the Berlin Congress, the identity formation struggle gradually became a primary issue. Dimitrios Hassiotis, a historian and a politician, wrote in 1879 that the whole Epirus was Greek in essence. His belief concomitantly targeted to obstacle the further Albanian claims in the region. The point was the Christian population in the region spoke different languages (Greek, Albanian, Turkish, and Aromanian Vlach) but it considered the language had no relation with national feelings. These people were Greek because they were Orthodox since they baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>96</sup> It appears that religion was another strong component of Greek nationalism. The Orthodoxy and the Church considered being the traditional protectors of Greeks and thus the national identity tightly connected to religion.<sup>97</sup>

Before dealing with the interventionist policy of Greece in Yanya, a brief touch on the population figures and the administrative character of this province seems necessary. According to the Yanya Yearbook [*Salnâme*] of 1311/1894, the population of the Yanya province was 500,904. The distribution of the populace to each district was: Yanya (166,901), Ergiri (138,236), Berat (149,318), Preveza (46,659).<sup>98</sup> The 1313/1897 Ottoman statistical book states the Muslim population

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<sup>96</sup> Elias G. Skoulidas, "Identities, Locality and Otherness in Epirus during the Late Ottoman period", paper presented at the 4th European Congress of Modern Greek Studies of the European Society of Modern Greek Studies (EENS, Berlin, Germany), the title of the symposium was 'Identities in the Greek world (from 1204 to the present day)' and held at the University of Granada (9-12 September 2010), p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> The author points out that the dominant Greek historiography created an imagined homogenous Orthodox Christianity and placed it at the very center of the Greek national narratives. She believes a reconsideration of the boundaries of Orthodoxy is necessary since the entity is in process of change in line with the social, political, and cultural transformations in Greece just like the national identity itself. Effi Gazi mentions the multifaceted internal structure of Orthodoxy, limits to its dominance in the cities and the countryside, and its relation with other religions inside Greece should be taken into consideration to better understand the role of religion, particularly in the process of national identity formation in Greece, Effi Gazi, "Revisiting Religion and Nationalism in Nineteen-Century Greece", pp. 101-104.

<sup>98</sup> 1311/1894 Yanya Vilâyet Salnâmesi, pp. 178-295. However, two historical accounts indicate different total population figures in the Yanya province; 527,100 in Binbaşı M. Nasrullah, Kolağası M. Rüşdü, Mülazım M. Eşref, *Osmanlı Atlası (XX. Yüzyıl Başları)*, Rahmi Tekin and Yaşar Baş (ed.), Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003, p. 33; 517,274 (year 1897) in Stanford J. Shaw, "The Ottoman Census System and Population,

figure in Yanya as 221,475, whereas the Christians were 287,812. This statistical account indicates the total population figure in the Yanya province as 516,681.<sup>99</sup>

The province of Yanya was administratively subdivided into five districts, *sancaks*: Yanya, Preveza, Reşadiye [*Paramitia or Aytonat*], Ergiri [*Gjirokastër*], and Berat. The Yanya province was composed of four cities of modern Greece (Arta, Ioannina, Preveza, and Thesprotia) and a larger part of Grevena. The last territorial rearrangements before the Balkan Wars (1913-14) detached Grevena (1862-65, 1881), and a considerable part of Arta (1881) from the Ottomans. Ergiri, Aya Saranta [*Sarandës*], Avlonya [*Vlorë*], Tepelen [*Tepelenë*], Permet [*Përmetit*], Skrapar [*Skraparit*], Berat, and Fier [*Fierit*] are Albanian cities today, which were then part of Yanya.<sup>100</sup>

In Epirus, especially after the 1897 Ottoman-Greek War, the Greek state systematically made Hellenist propaganda through the Orthodox Church and the intelligence activities of six Greek consulates in Yanya, Preveza, Berat, Ergiri, Avlonia, and Lorus.<sup>101</sup> Because of the limited capacity of the church's services, there had to be done more to sustain Greek influence in Yanya. The Epirots in Athens founded a secret organization on 25 March 1906, which was considered to be crucial for more effective Greek propaganda. The name of the organization was "Free Epirus" [*Ἡπειρος Ἐλευθέρα*] and it was under the leadership of Spiros Spiromilio, a military officer. According to the code of organization, the primary aim was "the emancipation of enslaved Epirus under any circumstances in accordance with the supervision and activities of the Greek state..." [*ἡ διά παντός μέσου ἀπελευθέρωσις*

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1831-1914", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, October 1978, p. 338.

<sup>99</sup> Tefik Güran, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin İlk İstatistik Yıllığı 1897*, Historical Statistics Series, Vol. 5, Ankara, 1997, p. 23.

<sup>100</sup> Μιχάλης Κοκολάκης, *Το Ὑστερο Γιαννιώτικο Πασαλίκι: Χώρος, διοίκηση και πληθυσμός στην Τουρκοκρατούμενη Ἡπειρο (1820-1913)* [The Late Period of the Janina Pashalic: Place, Administration, and Population in the Ottoman Epirus (1820-1913)], Κεντρο Νεοελληνικῶν Ἐρευνῶν, Ε.Ι.Ε., Αθήνα, 2003, pp. 33-4; Γεώργιος Σ. Πλουμίδης, «Ο Ἑλληνισμός της Ἡπείρου στίς παραμονές της ἀπελευθέρωσης του: (1905 περ. -1912)» [The Greek Culture of Epirus on the eve of the Emancipation (ca. 1905 - 1912)], *Δωδώνη*, τόμος ΣΤ' Ἰωάννινα, 1977, p. 356; Nevertheless, another account mentions that the Yanya Province was composed of four *sancaks*, namely Yanya, Preveza, Ergiri, and Berat, see, Binbaşı M. Nasrullah, Kolağası M. Rüşdü, Mülazım M. Eşref, *Osmanlı Atlası (XX. Yüzyıl Başları)*, p. 33.

<sup>101</sup> For the Greek consulates in the region, see 1311/1894 Yanya Vilâyet Salnâmesi, p. 114.

της υποδούλου Ηπειρου εκ παραλλήλου προς τας βλέψεις και τας ενεργείας του κράτους...].<sup>102</sup>

The political conditions in Yanya were not pleasant at all. Almost four thousand people gathered in the Municipal Theatre of Yanya in order to exchange opinions on the pervading economic and administrative problems. The gathering of people at the theatre in August 1907, which organized by the Epirus Committee, indicates how energetically the committee could operate in Yanya. These people were complaining about poverty and arbitrary rule of Governor Seyfullah Paşa. The conditions compelled the local people to search for alternative solutions. The emigration especially to America seems to be one of them.<sup>103</sup>

Similar to the practices of the Greek committees in Macedonia, the Epirus Committee propagated the idea that they were acting on behalf of the Greek population in Yanya. According to the local Ottoman authorities, the founder of the organization was the priest Tomadi from Yanya.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, similar to the Free Epirus Committee organizational structure, it had members from the Greek military class [*ümerâ-yi askeriye*].<sup>105</sup>

The influence of Romania, Austria, and Italy was gradually increasing (the foreign powers' aspirations on Yanya will be dealt in detail in the next sub-section). The Epirus Committee engaged in re-organizing the church's services, assisting the Greek consulates to regulate educational affairs, and procuring-delivering weapons to the Greek population in the region. All these activities conducted by the Committee were very related with the assumption that the local populace would give support to the Greek official army when they landed in the region.<sup>106</sup> The procurement of weapons to the Christian populace in Yanya was highly disturbing the Ottoman authorities. The Ottomans assumed that the activities of the committee in Yanya set the stage for the revolution; therefore, additional military support was demanded

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<sup>102</sup> Χριστίνα Πιτούλη-Κιτσου, *Οι ελληνοαλβανικές σχέσεις και το βορειοηπειρωτικό Ζήτημα κατά την περίοδο 1907-1914* [Greek and Albanian Relations and the Southern Epirus Problem During the 1907-1914], Ολκός έκδοση, Αθήνα, 1997, pp. 35-36.

<sup>103</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 301-50 (07/B/1325).

<sup>104</sup> BOA, BEO 3151-236305 (14/Ş/1325).

<sup>105</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS. 516-125 (11/L/1325).

<sup>106</sup> Χριστίνα Πιτούλη-Κιτσου, *Οι ελληνοαλβανικές σχέσεις*, p. 36.



from the center on 8 February 1909.<sup>107</sup> The authorities in Yanya were also in hot pursuit of some suspicious local people in order to avoid gun smuggling into the region.<sup>108</sup> The center warned the provincial authorities on the same issue that they should not allow the suspicious people to enter Yanya even if they have passports.<sup>109</sup>



**Map 2.2.** The Ottoman Map of the Yanya Province at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Binbaşı M. Nasrullah, Kolağası M. Rüşdü, Mülazım M. Eşref, *Osmanlı Atlası (XX. Yüzyıl Başları)*, p. 34.

<sup>107</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2734-6 (17/M/1327).

<sup>108</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2662-99 (24/L/1326); BOA, BEO 3438-257841 (27/L/1326); BOA, MV. 121-68 (30/L/1326); BOA, DH. MKT. 2679-79 (16/Za/1326); BOA, MV. 122-51 (21/Za/1326).

<sup>109</sup> BOA, BEO 268794-3584 (19/C/1327).

### 2.3. The Vlach Community of Yanya in the Midst of the European Intervention

The rearrangement of borders according to the Congress of Berlin in 1878 neither satisfied Greece nor the Ottoman side. Greece immediately requested a revision of the borders and with the help of Britain succeeded in possessing the most part of the Teselya [*Thessaly*] and Narda [*Arta*] region in Epirus in 1881.<sup>110</sup> The geographical re-arrangements, in fact, had a strong impact on the traditional life of the Vlach people. In the aftermath of these alterations, the summer pastures of the stockbreeding population of the region remained within the Ottoman territory, while winter pastures were ceded to Greece.<sup>111</sup>

Besides, dividing fully the Vlachs' traditional habitat, there was no any topographical feature to split the land. So artificial as it seems, the indigenous people tended to ignore the border or the border control to retain their customs, and thus the borders gradually became places of conflict and contention. In order to understand the traditional life in Yanya province, one has to know the geographical character of the region, which indeed offers information on the economical activities in Yanya.

The mountain chains of Pindus outline the physical character of Yanya province, thus leaving the only way to connect with outside world through Adriatic Sea and tributaries. Epirus region contains all the northern branches of the Pindus, which also forms northwest area of modern Greece. Epirus is surrounded by Ionian Islands, Albania, and Greek terra firma: Thessaly and Macedonia. All the Ionian Islands, but especially the island of Corfu had a very close proximity with the Preveza in the southwest and with the Avlonia shores in the northwest.<sup>112</sup>

Because of these though geographical features in Yanya, the proportion of

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<sup>110</sup> Richard C. Hall, *The Modern Balkans: A History*, p. 64.

<sup>111</sup> John S. Koliopoulos, "Brigandage and Irredentism in Nineteenth-Century Greece", *European History Quarterly*, 19 (1989), p. 87.

<sup>112</sup> Μιχάλης Η. Αράπογλου, *Οικιστική Γεωγραφία της Ηπείρου* [Architectural Geography of Epirus], Τεχνικό Επιμελητήριο Ελλάδος-Τμήμα Ηπείρου, Ιωάννινα, 2005, p. 43; for an elaborate account on the geographical features of the Yanya province, see, Şemseddin Sami, *Kâmûsü'l-'alâm*, Vol. V, Mihran Matbaası, İstanbul, 1898/1316, p. 4789.

arable land was significantly small compared to the grazing lands and forests.<sup>113</sup> Contemporary accounts clearly display this unbalanced situation in between 1880 and 1910: cultivated lowland accounted for around 6 percent of all land (101,132 hectares of 1,752.000 hectares). The 93.17 percent was grain in the cultivated land of the region, 4.12 percent vineyard, 1.67 percent garden and 1.04 percent was industrial plant (cotton, flax, cannabis, tobacco).<sup>114</sup> In many parts of the Pindus Mountain, forest industry had also social and economic importance among non-agricultural activities such as animal husbandry.<sup>115</sup>

Because of the geographical features of the region, which entailed non-farm economy or non-agricultural activities, the local people mainly engaged in livestock breeding and subsistence farming.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, the lack of arable lands in the Yanya region entailed the extensive pastoralism. As a deep-rooted tradition from ancient times, pastoralism and stock raising were predominant occupations in the Epirus region.<sup>117</sup> Particularly in the area between Janina and Arta, which is called the

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<sup>113</sup> Μιχάλης Η. Αράπογλου, 'Ο χώρος και ο άνθρωπος' [Place and Human], Βασίλης Γ. Νιτσιάκος, Μ. Αράπογλου, Κ. Καρανάτσης, *Νομός Ιωαννίνων: σύγχρονη πολιτισμική γεωγραφία*, Νομαρχιακή Αυτοδιοίκηση Ιωαννίνων, Γιάννινα, 1998, pp. 23-4.

<sup>114</sup> Γεώργιος Σ. Πλουμίδης, «Ο Ελληνισμός της Ηπείρου», p. 361.

<sup>115</sup> Αλεξάνδρα Ν. Παπασπύρου, *Πολεοδομική Ιστορία των Ιωαννίνων* [Historical Urban Planning of Ioannina], Unpublished MA Thesis, Σχολή Αρχιτεκτονών Μηχανικών ΕΜΠ, Αθήνα, 2009, p. 11; It has also to be mentioned, the tobacco production was not an important sector of the Epirus economy. When the *Régie* attempted to increase the cultivation of tobacco in Preveze around 1890, for instance, local people did not show much interest. They found out the offer was not so lucrative. Therefore, the sericulture and viticulture, which were a true backbone of the economy in Macedonia and Thrace towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were not critical sectors in the Epirus region, Angelos A. Chotzidis, "The Impact of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration on the Economies of Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace (1881-1912): A Preliminary Approach", PhD Symposium on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus, 2-3 June 2001, The Hellenic Observatory, European Institute London School of Economics, UK, pp. 4-9; for more on the agricultural activities in Yanya, see Şemseddin Sami, *Kâmûsü'l-'alâm*, Vol. V, pp. 4789-90.

<sup>116</sup> Michael Palaret, *The Balkan Economies c.1800-1914: Evolution without Development* (Cambridge Studies in Modern Economic History), Cambridge University Press, UK, 2003, pp. 16-17, According to the author, this situation in the many parts of the Balkan region worked other way around in between 1874-1914. In other words, the extensive pastoralism vanished and agriculture intensified in Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria, pp. 363-369.

<sup>117</sup> N.G.L. Hammond, "Illyris, Epirus and Macedonia in the Early Iron Age", *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1982, p. 624; T.G. Papachristou and P. D. Platis, "The Role of Rangeland resources and pastoralism in the Development of Mountainous Regions of Epirus", in Andreas Georgoudis (ed.), *Animal Production and Natural Resources Utilisation in the Mediterranean Mountain Areas*, Wageningen Academic Publishers, The Netherlands, 2005, p. 67.

Tzoumerka area, gathered 200 families with 70,000 sheep during the 1880s and 1890s. These nomadic and semi-nomadic families were mainly of the Sarakatsan and Vlach people.<sup>118</sup>

The Vlachs, who lived in the Balkans and accounted for roughly 140,000 people at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, sought to overcome the problem, which was created by the Berlin Treaty, through various methods. First, the overwhelming majority of the poor mountainous villagers changed their surnames in order to blend in the society. In other words, they adopted names of respectful families in order to minimize the prejudices.<sup>119</sup> Secondly, they kept warn the center via petitions like the one below in 1881, on the year of the Thessaly's annexation to the Greek State:

Since the Vlachs and the Albanians made up of 20,000 families, they cannot go as shepherds together with their flocks of sheep to Thessaly. As shepherds they have no possibility of following another profession, which will induce them to give up shepherding, they may oppose the handling over of Thessaly to Greece. In fact, they will unify and come together and if they are not successful, they will turn to banditry. Whatever happens, neither the Muslim nor the Christian Albanians can in any way rejoice at the destruction of the Vlachs, because they will realize that the harm, which befell the Vlachs, will in the future also happen to them. Because of that, they will arm together with the Vlach people to resist against the Thessaly's annexation to Greece.<sup>120</sup>

The attempts of the indigenous people did not suffice to challenge the political situation. Desperate to rescue themselves from these volatile conditions, their protest evolved and took the form of emigration. During the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 30 percent of all the population in Yanya emigrated to the countries of

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<sup>118</sup> Katerina Goltsiou, *Theme IV. Transhumance Routes. Report of Greece*, Canepal Project, Prisma, October 2011, Greece, p. 8.

<sup>119</sup> Basilis G. Nitsiakos, *A Vlach Pastoral Community in Greece: the effects of its incorporation into the national economy and society*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1985, p. 86.

<sup>120</sup> Çünkü yirmi bin familyadan ibâret olan mezkûr Ulah ve Arnavudun celebkeş misâllu koyun sürüleri ile berâber Teselyaya gidemeyeceklerinden çobanlığı eyletişleri için başka bir san'atın icrâsına muktedir olmadıklarından Teselya'nın Yunanistan'a terkine karşı durabilirler. Hattâ ittifâk ve tecemmu' edeceklerdir ve muvaffak olmadıkları halde eşkıyâlîğe mübâşeret eyleyeceklerdir. Herhalde gerek İslâm ve gerek Hıristıyan olan Arnavudun ve Ulahların mahvından aslâ ve katiyen mesrûr olamazlar. Çünkü Ulahların başına gelen fenâlığın ileride onların da başına gelebileceğini düşüneceklerdir. Ve bu sebebden bunların dahi Ulahlar ile silaha sarılarak Teselya'nın Yunanistan'a terkine karşı duracakları karîne-i hâtırdır, BOA, Y. PRK. AZJ. 4-108 (29//1298). cited in Ebru Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans: Empire Lost Relations Altered*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2007, pp. 62-63.

Europe, Australia, Canada, Argentina, and particularly to the United States.<sup>121</sup> The following petition of some Vlach people on the date of 21 March 1885, clearly manifests the reasons for emigration, which were the disruptive attacks of bandit bands, in contrast to the Ottoman perception:

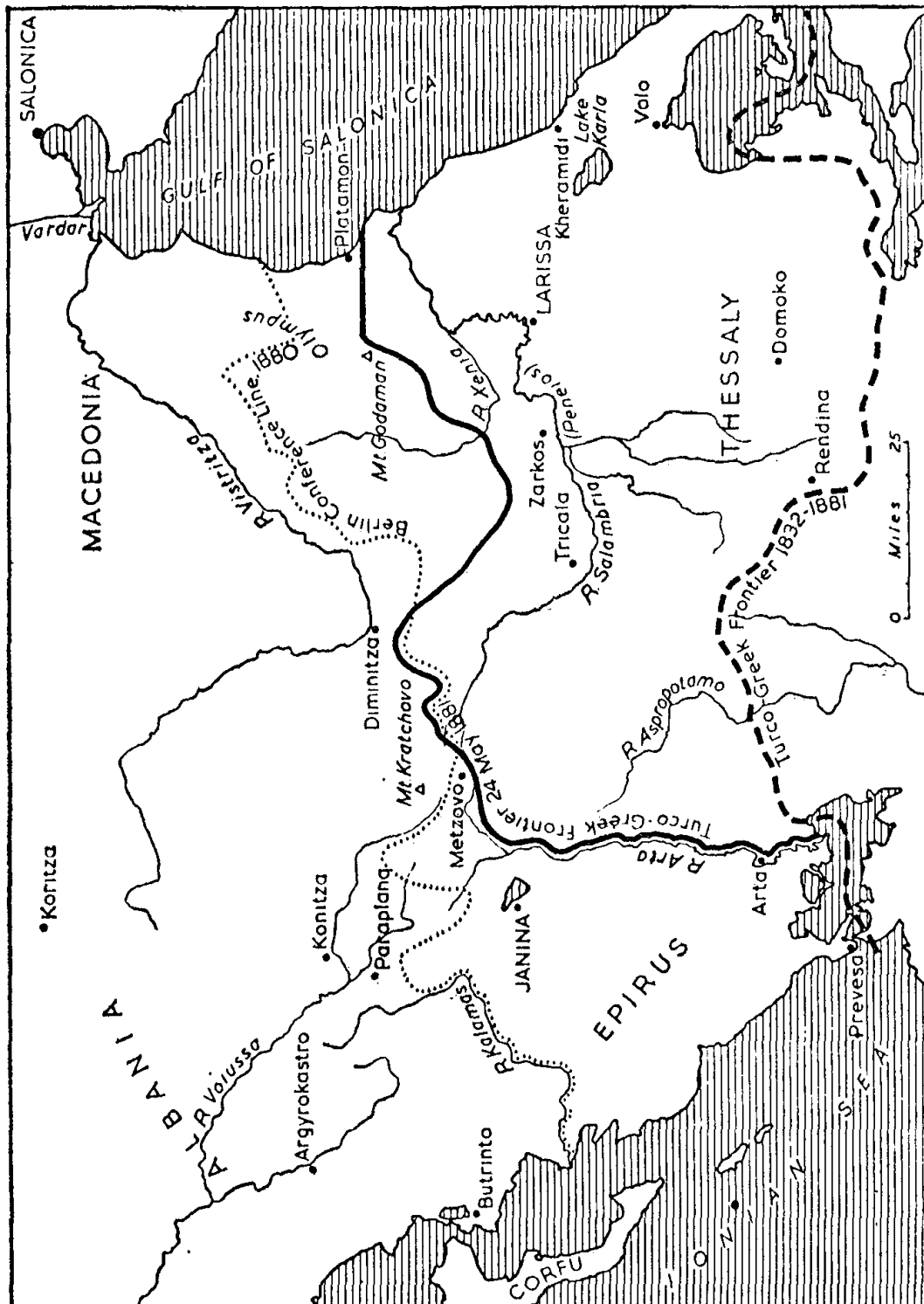
Some Vlachs, who built up successful business connections with Romania leave their homeland for good due to the lack of security of life, property, and honor. Under these circumstances, people who still live in their villages are more likely to emigrate. These are the problems demanding immediate solution to cease the attacks of brigands  
Vlach people of the Papnikou village.<sup>122</sup>

The Vlachs were also at the center of the political battles between the Greek State and Romania in order to gain power in the region. As it seems, other Balkan states had their own irredentist desires as well. These encounters were visible predominantly in the educational and religious fields.

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<sup>121</sup> Γεώργιος Σ. Πλουμίδης, «Ο Ελληνισμός της Ηπείρου», p. 358; Cassavetes states that there were more than 30,000 people from Epirus region living in the U.S. and they established an Epirus association to support immigrants from the region, Nicholas J. Cassavetes, *The Question of Northern Epirus at the Peace Conference*, Carroll N. Brown (ed.), Oxford University Press American Branch, New York, 1919, p. 77.

<sup>122</sup> ...memlekete emniyyet cân ve mal mefkûd idüğünden berâyı ticâret Romanya ile hıristiyana azamet idenler bir daha buraya avdet itmiyorlar ve kalanlar hicrete mecbûr oluyorlar..., BOA, HR. TO. 528-78 (30.12.1885).



**Map 2.3.** The Turco-Greek Frontier, 1880-1881

Basil Kondis, *Greece and Albania 1908-1914*, Institute for Balkan Studies - 167, Thessaloniki, 1976, p. 27.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many Romanian schools (primary and secondary) began to operate in the areas particularly densely populated by the Vlach people such as the villages of Zagori (Flambourari, Bobusa), Brusoxori (Laista, Palaioxori, Lesnitsa), Tristeno (Dresdeniko), Kastanonas (Grebeniti, Dragai), Flambouraki, Sirrako, and Meçovo.<sup>123</sup> It seems the Romanian propaganda yielded results at least in some villages. Furthermore, the Romanian Consulate of Yanya began to operate in 1904 and systematically procured teachers for these schools. The Ottoman government counted 106 students in the Romanian Vlach schools, whereas the number counted by the Metropolis of Yanya was 70 in 1905. Interestingly, the last Romanian Vlach school was active in Yanya until 1940.<sup>124</sup>

These figures were considerably low as compared to the number of Greek schools in the Epirus region. The total number of Greek schools in Epirus in 1875 was 694, with 780 Greek teachers and 24,899 pupils. The number of Greek schools in 1908 was 722, with 879 Greek teachers and 25,274 pupils.<sup>125</sup> These figures also demonstrate the scale of the impact the Greek government had in the Ottoman lands in Epirus. The Greek state had six consulates in the towns of Yanya, Preveza, Ergiri, Berat, Lorus, and Vlore. Gathering intelligence through these consulates, Greece implied it had major interests in the region.<sup>126</sup>

The Metropolis of Yanya, in parallel with the official Greek perception, complained about the Romanian Education Minister's intervention in the assignment of teachers to Vlach Schools in *Rumeli* and therefore awaits the response of authorities.<sup>127</sup> Even the Patriarch in Istanbul was annoyed by the Romanian influence on the Vlach people. The Patriarch mentioned that Romania builds Vlach schools

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<sup>123</sup> Ιωαννής Ν. Φλόρος, «Η παιδεία στα Ιωάννινα κατά την Τουρκοκρατία (18<sup>ος</sup> αιώνας – αρχές 20<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα)» [Education in Ioannina during the so-called *Tourkokratia* (18<sup>th</sup> century – The Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)], Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Johannesburg, 2005, p. 123.

<sup>124</sup> Yanya 65-45, Bobusa 25-27 (15 boys, 12 girls), Furka 16 (8 boys, 8 girls) -8, Γεώργιος Σ. Πλουμίδης, «Ο Ελληνισμός της Ηπείρου», pp. 369-70.

<sup>125</sup> Αθήνα Αντ. Κολτσιδά, «Η εκπαίδευση στη Βόρεια Ήπειρο κατά την ύστερη περίοδο της Οθωμανικής αυτοκρατορίας, η ίδρυση, η οργάνωση και η λειτουργία των ελληνικών σχολείων» [The Education in the Northern Epirus During the Late Ottoman Period: The Foundation, Organization and the Functioning of Greek Schools], Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Aristotle University, The School of Theology, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2008, pp. 103-104.

<sup>126</sup> George W. Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle*, p. 124.

<sup>127</sup> BOA, DH. TMIK. S. 31-48 (24/Ca/1318).

purposefully in various places of Yanya where the Vlachs do not even live. The very purpose of them, according to the Patriarch, was to create tension between the Greeks and Vlach community in Yanya.<sup>128</sup>

The most annoying of all for the Greek Orthodoxy must have been the requests of the Vlachs for the ecclesiastical and thus liturgical separation from the Greek Orthodox Church in 1904. They asked for the permission of the Patriarch to have their own clergy and church.<sup>129</sup> As it appears, this was totally an unwelcome demand for the Greek Church as the Greeks fiercely acted against it and thus gradually agitated the Greek population in Yanya.<sup>130</sup>

With in the Greek irredentist perspective, the Greek state would hardly accept the idea that the Vlachs were a distinct community with their own history. In this historical narrative, which is a sort of “Greek national teleology”, they believed the Vlach people had a deep Greek consciousness and were bilingual, speaking Vlach and Greek, just as they perceived the Arvanitovlachs, *Αρβανιτοβλάχοι*, who were trilingual, speaking the Albanian, Vlach, and Greek languages. In other words, the Greeks claimed that they were all Greek Epirotes.<sup>131</sup> Interestingly, an Albanian intellectual Şemseddin Sami claims that many Vlach people gradually became Greek due to the efficient Greek propaganda made by the Greek schools in the region. Moreover, especially the Vlachs who lived around the Pindus mountain range were still speaking their own language. The Vlachs of the Berat region, which was overwhelmingly Albanian, were thoroughly assimilated and spoke only Albanian language.<sup>132</sup>

The Ottomans were also confused and could not decide how to handle the issue. On the one hand, the Vlachs appealed consistently to the center to open new schools in many of their villages; nevertheless, the Ottomans procrastinated to gain

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<sup>128</sup> BOA, MF. MKT. 531-41 (27/C/1318).

<sup>129</sup> BOA, BEO 2389-179108 (25/Ca/1322).

<sup>130</sup> BOA, BEO 2708-203078 (25/N/1323); BOA, BEO 2705-202860 (18/N/1323); BOA, BEO 2989-224158 (21/Z/1324); BOA, BEO 2989-224151 (19/Z/1324).

<sup>131</sup> The formation of the Greek nationalist aspirations for the Epirus region and through the Greek intellectuals in the Greek State as well as in diaspora throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and up until to the Balkan Wars and also the term “otherness” are elucidated by Elias G. Skoulidas, “Identities, Locality and Otherness in Epirus during the Late Ottoman period” pp. 1-10.

<sup>132</sup> Şemseddin Sami, *Kâmûsü'l-'alâm*, Vol. I, Mihran Matbaası, İstanbul, 1889/1306, p. 153.



time. They did demographic researches in those areas to understand if it was necessary to open a school. Thus, they simply did not want to lose authority in the region by making it hard to get a license.<sup>133</sup>

Another political manoeuvre of the Ottomans was to award the Vlach people through picking up some of their children and sending them to a very prominent school of the Ottoman State, the "Lycée Impérial Ottoman de Galata-Sérai" (Mekteb-i Sultanî) in Istanbul. The policy was not specific to the Vlachs of Yanya, it was also carried out in Manastir and Salonika between 1902 and 1904.<sup>134</sup>

After all, the attitude of the center regarding the Vlachs reveals itself through an event occurred in Yanya on January 1906. A Vlach school was completely destroyed by fire. The Governor Osman Paşa (between 1897-1906) explicitly blamed the Vlachs, and thus took measures accordingly. In fact, the anticipation of Osman Paşa did not base on any evidence, which seems to manifest the prejudices of the provincial authorities on the Vlach community. Osman Paşa believed that the Vlachs had tendency to commit any kind of crime, from destroying their own school to smuggling. Before any reliable investigation took place, Osman Paşa immediately banished some people from the Vlach community who were totally unrelated with the event. Consequently, the increasing amount of petitions that demanded justice entailed the center to send a special committee from Istanbul in order to find out the reasons of the unrest in Yanya. The report of the committee as an outcome of their investigation, dated 6 January 1906, unearthed the situation in Yanya. The bulk of committee's information did not rely on a detailed investigation. In fact, the investigators mainly stayed around the center and spoke with local people. The report revealed that the school was set a blaze by brigands who came from the village of Grevene. Local people did not believe Osman Paşa could not know the real suspects, but he did insist to blame the Vlach people. Second, he banned the production of tobacco, for the reason it would induce smuggling. Finally, the indigenous people of the city considered the past nine years of Osman Pasha's governance rather arbitrary and corrupt.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> BOA, MF. MKT. 763-1 (26/Za/1321); BOA, MF. MKT. 822-88 (25/L1322); BOA, MF. MKT. 797-49 (06/C/1322).

<sup>134</sup> BOA, İ. HUS. 103-1320/Z-096 (20/Z/1320); BOA, BEO 162894-2172 (28/C1321).

<sup>135</sup> BOA, Y. EE. 50-95 (12/Za/1323).

Meanwhile, Italy and Austria were the foreign states aspired the Ottoman disintegration in the region. The Italian endeavor to consolidate its influence especially in the southern parts of Epirus (Yanya and Ergiri districts in the Yanya province) was in fact more related with its irredentist and expansionist policy and clearly revealed the ambition to dominate maritime traffic in the Adriatic Sea. The Italian interest in the Vlach community seemed to be a tool to interfere with the internal affairs in the region. The Italian propaganda somehow gained strength after the foundation of Italian schools and the Italian Commercial Agency (1900) in Yanya.<sup>136</sup> Italy and Austria made an agreement eventually in November 1897 revealing they both have no plan for a military operation on the condition that any third party will not occupy the land.<sup>137</sup> Both states' interest in the region revealed by the number of consulates operated in Yanya province. Italy and Austro-Hungarian Empire had three consulates, in Yanya, Preveza, and Avlonya. Great Britain had two (Yanya, Preveza), whereas Russia and France had one consulate, both in Yanya.<sup>138</sup>

To underline that, Italy gave explicit support to the Romanian policy in the region. The Ottoman state permitted Romania to open embassies in 1905 thanks to the intervention of Italy. Because of the Romanian assimilation policy on the Vlachs, the Greek-Romanian relations virtually stopped on 13 June 1906 and remained frozen up until June 1911.<sup>139</sup>

#### **2.4. The Albanians of Yanya and the Albanian Struggle**

The Albanians were in a different nexus than other *millets* in the Balkans. Particularly the Muslim Albanians had many opportunities such as gaining high posts in the government, bureaucracy, and army. They were in vital position throughout the Ottoman period in the Balkans to counterbalance with the Christian populace of the region. In addition, they had a rather high degree of local autonomy. It was

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<sup>136</sup> Ιωαννής Ν. Φλόρος, *Η παιδεία στα Ιωάννινα κατά την Τουρκοκρατία*, p. 27.

<sup>137</sup> Basil Kondis, *Greece-Albania 1908-1914*, p.26, 41; Richard C. Hall, *The Modern Balkans: A History*, p. 31.

<sup>138</sup> 1311/1894 Yanya Vilâyet Salnâmesi, pp. 114-115.

<sup>139</sup> Χριστίνα Πιτούλη-Κιτσου, *Οι ελληνοαλβανικές σχέσεις και το βορειοηπειρωτικό Ζήτημα κατά την περίοδο 1907-1914*, p. 40.

perhaps the lack of all these advantages that ignited uprisings and paved the way for the Greek, Serbian, and Bulgarian national movements.<sup>140</sup>

With the Congress of Berlin (13 June-13 July 1878), which rearranged the Treaty of San Stefano, Bulgaria did not incorporate any Albanian land but Serbia kept the areas, where the Albanian population lived. Furthermore, Montenegro gained independence with a small portion of land again densely populated by the Albanians.<sup>141</sup>

The territorial advantages granted to Montenegro, paved the way for the gathering of thousands of armed Albanians volunteers on the northern frontier. The Albanians defeated Prince Nicholas, the Montenegrin ruler, and thus the Albanian question became a concern for the Great Powers. It turned into a problem they could not neglect any more. Therefore, the Great Powers reconsidered the decisions taken at the Berlin Congress and decided that the Ottomans had to withdraw its military units from the disputed zones.

The Ottomans, as a counter response, proposed the surrender of the Catholic Albanian regions of Hoti and Uljinc to Montenegro and keeping the Muslim populated areas within the Ottoman State. The Muslim and Catholic Albanians' protests reacted to an alarming level. They declared that they would stop considering themselves Ottoman any more and take the initiative to defend their lands against any foreign intervention if the Ottoman state implements its plans. Although the forces of the Prizren League fought fiercely, eventually in November 1880 Hoti, Gruda, and Uljinc regions were handed over to Montenegro in accordance with the Great Powers' will.<sup>142</sup>

In the intellectual field, two leading figures, both belonging to prominent Albanian families, namely Abdullah Frasheri and Mehmed Ali Vrioni (1842-1895) were elected to represent the Albanian League in order to explain their problems to the Great Powers. Abdullah Frasheri, affiliated with the *Bektashi* order, was well aware of the Albanian *Bektashi Babas'* support for the Albanian League. He was

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<sup>140</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Fate, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 369; Stark Draper, "The Conceptualization of an Albanian Nation" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1, January 1997, p. 2.

<sup>141</sup> Basil Kondis, *Greece and Albania 1908-1914*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>142</sup> Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History*, I. B. Tauris, London-New York, 2001, pp. 34-37.

decisive in increasing sympathy among Albanian Muslims. Furthermore, the *Babas* had strong influence on the Albanian notables. Therefore, he continuously visited the *Bektashi* lodges in the region to explain the necessity of the Albanian League and thus to gain their support. In response to these requests, the *Baba* Alush of Frasher gently responded and opened the gates of his *tekke* for a general meeting of both Muslim and Orthodox Albanians on 10 November 1878.<sup>143</sup> Abdul Frasher and Mehmed Ali Vrioni also visited many European capitals in 1879 to underline the Albanian character of the region. They also had a chance to meet with the British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury on 12 May 1879.<sup>144</sup>

In accordance with the favorable intellectual and political atmosphere in the Ottoman domain,<sup>145</sup> the Albanians abroad were also actively involved in publishing books, journals, and newspapers. *Drita* was published in Sofia in 1901, *Bashkimi* in Romania. Albanian émigrés in America published a weekly journal called *Kombi* in 1906. Schools founded specifically for instruction in the Albanian language.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p. 32; George W. Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle*, p. 52.

<sup>144</sup> Basil Kondis, *Greece and Albania 1908-1914*, p. 39.

<sup>145</sup> Isa Blumi, in a revisionist fashion, attempts to understand the relative Ottoman tolerance for the Albanian issue and challenges the nationalist paradigms in the Balkan scholarship. He argues the reactions, violent or not, to the decisions taken in the post-Berlin Treaty period, were regionalist in character but not nationalist. According to the author, post-Ottoman historians since the 1920s, considered the resistance within the Albanian national framework but there were considerably different sets of interests among the participants. Thereby, assessing these events in terms of regionalism is important. This approach will avoid seeing these movements through the prism of nationalism and thus will help better understand the local dynamics at play. He adds the multiple local actors and many distinct groups such as *Sunni* Muslim and Catholic Gegs, Orthodox Christian, and *Bektashi* Tosks' conflicting interests do not fit into the nationalist teleology. Finally, and interestingly, most of the Albanian intellectuals as well as the local ordinary Albanians' understanding of the world was shaped in the Ottoman context. A stronger and more developed Ottoman state that would invest more to the region and thus will pay more attention to the reforms were the real demands of all these committees, to see these arguments in more detail, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800 -1912*; for a similar "localism" and "proto-nationalism" problematic in the historiography regarding the Arab provinces in the Ottoman state, see Suraiya Faroqhi, "Coping with the Central State, Coping with the Local Power: Ottoman Regions and Notables from the Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century", in Fikret Adanir – Suraiya Faroqhi (ed.), *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, Brill, Leiden, 2002, pp. 351-381; Kemal H. Karpat states that the establishment of the Prizren League was to gather and act in order if only the Ottoman state disintegrates, Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, pp. 369-370.

<sup>146</sup> George W. Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle*, p. 59; Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History*, p. 47.

The Patriarchate strongly opposed the foundation of Albanian schools in the region. The very concern was based on the belief these developments would pave the way for the Albanian national consciousness and the emergence of Albanian Autocephalous Albanian Orthodox Church in the region. The possibility of the liturgy in Albanian through Albanian priests under the Autonomous Albanian Orthodox Church would clearly hamper the Hellenization campaign, which was actively carried out by the Greek Orthodox Church in Epirus for ages.<sup>147</sup>

In 1882, the Yanya center witnessed the opening of the *Mekteb-i Sultanî* branch as an Ottoman educational attempt. The main purpose was to compete with the famous Greek gymnasium, namely Zossimaia in the Yanya center. Even though its educational system systematically stressed the superiority of the Greek culture and its language, many well-to-do Muslim families in the region willingly sent their children to Zossimaia because of its well-known educational quality.<sup>148</sup> Ismail Kemal Beg (1844-1919), and Semseddin Sami Frasheri were among the Albanian intellectuals who were taught in this eminent school in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ismail Kemal Beg wrote in his memoirs about his high school days at Zossimaia in a rather admiring fashion.<sup>149</sup> Mehmed Süreyya Bey (1860-1940) points out how the distinguished Muslim families' children in Epirus were educated in the Greek schools of Yanya.<sup>150</sup>

During the year of 1902, the increasing violence and external pressure in the Balkans resulted in the unification of three provinces, namely Selanik, Monastir, and Kosova under the name of *Vilâyet-i Selase* by Abdulhamid. The official restrictions on publishing or possessing books in Albanian were to follow. Furthermore, any correspondence in Albanian language was considered a criminal act.<sup>151</sup>

When the Young Turk movement emerged as a reaction to the absolutist policies of Abdul Hamid, the Albanians supported the movement and actively

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<sup>147</sup> Fikret Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, İhsan Catay (trans.), Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, 1996, p. 92.

<sup>148</sup> George W. Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle*, pp. 89, 93.

<sup>149</sup> *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, Sommerville Story (ed.), Constable and Company LTD, London, 1920, p. 17.

<sup>150</sup> Abdulhamit Kırmızı, "Introduction", in Abdulhamit Kırmızı (ed.), *Avlonyalı Süreyya Bey (1912-1920): Osmanlı Sonrası Arnavutluk*, Klasik, İstanbul, p. 32.

<sup>151</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, Vol. II, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1983, p. 46.

worked for it from the very beginning. The affiliation of the Albanians to the Committee of Union and Progress (CPU) was closely related with the party's emphasis on the Ottomanism rather than Turkism during the ongoing civil war in Macedonia in 1906.<sup>152</sup> When the uprisings of the Albanians became successful in July 1908, there were many collective celebrations throughout the Balkans. The Albanians explicitly expected favorable outcomes, such as the removal of restrictions on printing of Albanian books, circulation of newspapers, and even founding an autonomous Albania.<sup>153</sup> The disappointment of the Albanians was not delayed long as the Young Turk regime continued to impose policies analogous to those of Abdul Hamid in the Balkans.<sup>154</sup> At this point, I will not elaborate further on the Albanian issue, as the political developments, which paved the way for the Albanian independence in between 1908-1912 is beyond the scope of this study.



**Figure 2.1.** The Proclamation of Young Turk Revolution in Monastir, 23 July 1908, M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 148.

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<sup>152</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, Princeton University Press, New York: Oxford, 2008, p. 147.

<sup>153</sup> George W. Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle*, p. 205.

<sup>154</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, p. 87.

#### 2.4.1. Albanian-Greek Relations in the Post-Berlin Treaty Era

The historiography mainly points out the post-Berlin Treaty period for a possible Greek-Albanian involvement in some way or other. These encounters were overwhelmingly in the nationalist context and entailed tension between these entities. However, there were certain encounters between them before the Berlin resettlement since the Greek Orthodox and Albanian people, be Muslim, Orthodox or Catholic Christian, lived in the Yanya province.

Interestingly, the issues such as the relations between the Albanians and Ottomans, how the Albanians considered themselves, or the way the Greeks of Yanya province perceived the Albanians, are revealed in the local council proceedings of Yanya held in 1879-1880.<sup>155</sup> Fervent debates occurred frequently in the meetings, particularly over the appointment of the local administrators for the *sancaks* and *kazas*, namely the district governors, *kaymakams*, and *mutasarrifs* and the Greek members frequently objected to the favoring of Albanian-origin administrators.<sup>156</sup> The representatives of the Greek population also insisted on that any district administrator had to know the local language and the center should consider that when it would appoint candidates to these posts. The very reason for this objection was to prevent the appointment of Albanian or Muslim authorities to the areas densely populated by Greek Orthodox Christians.<sup>157</sup>

As a general conclusion from the proceedings, the attitude of Albanian members was affirmative to the suggestions of the Ottoman governor or other Muslim officials. The articles such as the extended use of the Greek language in official matters, the priority of origin for the appointments to local official posts, the protests of the Greeks against the protection of Albanian Muslims in the courts, etc. was in the form of block vote. About twenty different matters discussed in the meetings. The board carefully listened the Greek members in the council meetings, debated almost all their proposals in detail, but did not pass any of them.

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<sup>155</sup> Ελευθερίας Ι. Νικολαΐδου, «Προτάσεις της επιτροπής του Βιλαετίου Ιωαννίνων πάνω στο σχέδιο μεταρρυθμίσεων της Πύλης (1879-1880)» [The Suggestions of Local Commission of Yanya on the Centre's Reform Plans (1879-1880)], *Δωδώνης*, Ι' τόμο, Ιωάννινα, 1981, pp. 339-368.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, p. 355-56.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 358-59. This proposal negotiated elaborately in the council, then voted 11-9 against and rejected, p. 360.

In between the declaration of the Ottoman-Russian War in April 1877 and the Berlin Congress, the Greek Prime Minister Constantine Kanaris (1795-1877) in order to build military as well as diplomatic relations got into contact with the Albanian leaders between June and December of the same year. These semi-official meetings held in Yanya in July 1877 between the deputies of the Greek government and Albanian leaders, which was continued in Istanbul in December 1877. The aim of the Greek government was to organize collective uprisings in Epirus together with the Albanians. The Albanian activists who participated to these meeting were mostly Muslim and their leader was Abdullah Hüsni Frasheri. The Albanians before making any commitment to Greece wanted to consolidate the Albanian struggle in the Ottoman state. During these meetings, the Greek side proposed a regime that will bring into existence a bicephalous government. Eventually, the Albanians refused the Greek proposal on the grounds Greece would gradually absorb the Albanians. Another reason for disapproval was based on the negotiated borders of this bicephalous Greek-Albanian government. The endeavor of the Greek state did not bear fruit and the relations eventually broke off when the Ottomans signed an armistice in Adrianople with Russia in January 1878.<sup>158</sup>

After having many crises over border disputes with the Albanians, the Greeks have realized they must not be in antagonistic relations with the Albanians to achieve further demands in Epirus. There were certain historical bonds between the Ottomans and the leading Albanian families that had strong influence on Albanian populace, and it was difficult for Greece to interrupt these bonds. The Greek claims on Epirus reached to the highest degree in the Rumelia crisis in 1885 and during the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, with which the Greek army mobilized along its northern frontiers. The mentioned historical bonds were at work once more when the Albanian leaders and the irregular bands decided to join the Ottoman army against the Greek forces in the 1897 war.<sup>159</sup>

Greece had to re-consider its policy regarding the Albanians, particularly after the defeat in 1897 war. The setting up an organization called “Arvanitic Association of Athens” or “Albanian Union of Athens” in 1899 with the Albanians

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<sup>158</sup> Χριστίνα Πιτούλη-Κιτσου, *Οι ελληνοαλβανικές σχέσεις και το βορειοηπειρωτικό Ζήτημα κατά την περίοδο 1907-1914*, p. 30.

<sup>159</sup> Basil Kondis, *Greece-Albania 1908-1914*, pp. 28-29.



who lived in Greece reveals the reevaluation of relations. The union declared that even though there are religious differences, the Albanians and the Greeks would never be a strong entity without the other. They both had one religion and one king in the same fatherland during the Byzantine Empire. The emphasis was again on the well-known Hellenic world of the past. From the Greek perspective, an independent Albania would offer an opportunity to confront the Bulgarian alliance, which critically threatened Greece's interests in Epirus as well as in Macedonia. The Greek government neither officially announced nor accepted this policy. It seemed Greece wanted to carry out these operations in secret.<sup>160</sup>

The Mürtzeg reform plan, which was reluctantly accepted by Abdul Hamid in 1903, paved the way for the reconsideration of Greek-Albanian relations.<sup>161</sup> The implementation of reform plans in the *vilayets* of Kosovo and Monastir, which were overwhelmingly populated by Albanians, resulted in Albanian guerillas' struggle in Macedonia. The Greeks only then realized and thus accepted the political situation has not yet matured for the Greek-Albanian solidarity.<sup>162</sup>

#### **2.4.2. Intellectuals Seek for A Possible Rapprochement: Ismail Kemal and Anastasios Koulouriotis**

Ismail Kemal (1844-1919), the national leader of the Albanians, who would also be the first Prime Minister of independent Albania in between 1912 and 1914, belonged to a prominent Albanian family from Avlonya district. As an active liberal-minded governor of many towns in the Balkans during the grand vizier Midhat Pasha (1822-1884), he could not escape sharing the same fate with him. Both being dismissed by Abdul Hamid, Ismail Kemal was assigned as the Governor of Trablusgarb [*Tripoli*]. He strongly believed the appointment was to keep him away from Istanbul and instead of admitting the post, he decided to escape to Europe. After submitting his resignation to Abdul Hamid, he embarked on an English ship in Istanbul and

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<sup>160</sup> Basil Kondis, *Greece-Albania 1908-1914*, p. 31.

<sup>161</sup> Fikret Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 216.

<sup>162</sup> Basil Kondis, *Greece-Albania 1908-1914*, p. 33.

demanded political asylum on 1 May 1901. The ship headed to Athens through Midlli [*Lesbos*] and Izmir [*Symrna*].<sup>163</sup>

The tone of his writing in his memoir reveals sympathy and admiration for Greece. He was so delighted to be in Athens, which he enthusiastically loved since his childhood. Indeed, he was quite satisfied with the political position Greece recently took against the Albanians. The sincere atmosphere in Athens somehow caused him to take responsibility for the possible Greek Albanian rapprochement. In the process of exchanging views with the Albanian politicians in Athens, he wanted to convince them that an alliance of both camps in the Balkans would be mutually beneficial. During his six-week stay in Athens, his impression was that the current political situation and the lack of order in the Balkans confused the Albanians people.<sup>164</sup>

Ismail Kemal, as an exile in Europe, was involved in publishing a newspaper. Before giving details about his life as a journalist, it is noteworthy to mention that Ismail Kemal distanced himself from the Young Turks and devoted himself purely to the Albanian issue.<sup>165</sup> He got contact with Faik Konitza (1876-1942), who was publishing a newspaper called “Albania” for a long time in Brussels. Though he wrote some articles in this newspaper, the partnership with Faik did not last long for unknown reasons. He subsequently published a new newspaper called “Le Salut de l’Albanie”, in the Turkish, Albanian, and Greek languages. His memoirs do not cover the period between 1902 and 1908, in which he founded an organization, namely the “Albanian Greek Committee” (1907). The aim of this organization was largely parallel with his political views on Greece and Albania. The activities of this organization induced disturbance in Istanbul, and even among the some Albanian intellectuals on the eve of the proclamation of *Meşrutiyet* in 1908. Midhat Frasheri (1880-1949), the son of the Abdullah Frasheri, in his article in a newspaper called *Liriyâ* stated Ismail Kemal became a “toy” of Greece and heavily criticized him for

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<sup>163</sup> *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, pp. 291-96.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, p. 296.

<sup>165</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation For A Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 27.

his expectations from the Greek state.<sup>166</sup> According to him, Kemal published the newspaper to propagate the idea that the Greek and Albanian people had common interests and that they should build a common future.<sup>167</sup>



**Figure 2.2.** Ismail Kemal is giving a speech during the celebrations for the emergence of the free Albanian state, Isa Blumi, *Reinstaining the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800 -1912*, p. 177.

About a year after the Young Turk Revolution, Ismail Kemal became a deputy in the second Ottoman Parliament. The unrelenting policy of the CUP on the Albanian issue seems to have alienated him from the Young Turk movement.<sup>168</sup> The Ottoman countercoup of 1909, due to which he was forced to leave Istanbul for

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<sup>166</sup> Bilgin Çelik, "Introduction", in Gürol Konca – Ahmet Akşit (ed.), *İsmail Kemal Bey'in Hatıratı*, Adnan İslamoğulları and Rubin Hoxha (trans.), Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, 2007, especially pp. xxx-xxxii.

<sup>167</sup> Isa Blumi, *Reinstaining the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912*, p. 121, the author claims that Ismail Kemal advocated Tosk Albanians and Greek alliance. Moreover, his "Great Eastern State" did not cover all the Albanian regions.

<sup>168</sup> *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, p. 350.

good, appears to be the turning point for Ismail Kemal. Hereafter, he would no longer be involved in the CUP politics, this time decisively, and would channel all his efforts into the Albanian struggle. He stayed in Corfu in July and August 1909 and the authorities in Yanya informed the center about his attempts to send “fifty thousand weapons” to the Albanians.<sup>169</sup> Moreover, he came in close contact with the “National Society” [*Εθνική Εταιρεία*], a secret Greek nationalist organization founded in 1894, in Corfu and sought ways to distribute guns to his fellows.<sup>170</sup> The Ottomans blamed him for giving economic support to the Greek committees and warned the officials in charge to take the necessary measures about him on August 1909.<sup>171</sup>

The Greek press, on the other hand, also attempted to compose a common consciousness between the Greeks and Albanians during the 1880s and 1890s. On this new common ground, the deep-rooted image of the “Turkish Albanian” [*Τουρκαλβανός*] in the Greek mind was to fade away. The novel image of the Albanians was cultivated in the articles of newspapers through the use of compound nouns such as the “Greco Albanians” or “Greek Albanianism” [*ελληνοαλβανικός*], [*ελληνοαλβανισμός*], [*ελληνοαλβανιστί*], [*Ελληνοαλβανοί*].<sup>172</sup>

Anastasios Koulouriotis (1822-1887) was an Arvanite (Albanian in origin but Greek speaking) journalist and writer living in Athens. Interestingly, his political views were in parallel on many aspects regarding the Albanian issue with Ismail Kemal. His journal “The Voice of Albania” [*Η Φωνή της Αλβανίας*] defended Albanian Greek federalism as the appropriate political structure in the face of pan-Slavism. He pointed out that the increasing gap amongst the Muslim and Christian Albanians and demanded to enhance the solidarity. He considered the Albanian

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<sup>169</sup> BOA, BEO 3621-271515 (12/R/1327).

<sup>170</sup> BOA, BEO 3543-265693 (16/R/1327).

<sup>171</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 3550-266247 (27/R/1327).

<sup>172</sup> Ηλίας Γ. Σκουλίδας, «Οι σχέσεις Ελλήνων και Αλβανών κατά το 19ο αιώνα: πολιτικές επιδιώξεις και θεωρήσεις (1875-1897)» [The Relations Between the Greeks and the Albanians during the 19th century: Political Aspirations and Visions (1875-1897)], Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Ioannina University, The School of History and Archeology, Ioannina, Greece, 2001, pp. 264-265.

language as a vital factor for the emergence of an Albanian identity. However, his preference for the Albanian language was the Greek alphabet.<sup>173</sup>

It reveals many factors were at work regarding the Greek and Albanian relations in the period under the question. The intrigues of the Europeans were to add new problems to the existing ones and thus the chaotic atmosphere in Epirus was getting worse at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Greeks were rather more consistent in their claims since they were well equipped with a central state ideology, whereas the Albanians were in a state of diversity. Many different Albanian groups, each with their distinct interests, were incapable of generating a common policy about their future. Therefore, the relations between Greece and Albania were mostly tentative, in parallel with the general atmosphere.

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid, pp. 266-268.



**Map 2.4.** Albania in 1913.

Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History*, I. B. Tauris, London - New York, 2001, p. xii.

## CHAPTER 3

### BORDER CROSSINGS BETWEEN TWO SHORES AND THE OTTOMAN RESPONSE

After analyzing Corfu and Yanya regarding their social, political, and cultural characteristics, the final chapter will deal with the legal or illegal crossings between the two borders. Transnational scholarship strongly emphasizes the movement of individuals, political organizations, philanthropic associations, and commodities across borders and the impact of these circulations. Keeping in line with this approach, the present chapter will focus on border crossings between Corfu and Yanya is the main focus area of this chapter. The information gathered by the Ottoman consulate in Corfu indicates that the island had strategic importance not only for Greece but also for Albanian committees. Both parties wished to weaken the Ottoman authority in Yanya in order to reach the political outcomes they desired. In this regard, arms smuggling and systematic movements of bandit bands were among the most common practices. However, archival material also reveals the tension between the Ottoman consul and the coastline officers in Yanya, perhaps due to a state of mutual mistrust to some degree. Interestingly, it seems the Ottoman center did not consider the reports of the consul as dependable. This belief appears to have stemmed from helplessness due to financial resources, which made it difficult to properly control the immense shoreline of the Yanya Province. However, not all the transitions were illegal. The chapter will also focus on the frequent visits of the European aristocrats to the Yanya shores to see the natural beauties, and archeological ruins as well as to organize hunting parties as another aspect of transnational life between Corfu and Yanya.

#### **3.1. The Ottoman Consul in Corfu as an Eyewitness to the Events**

Before dealing with the Ottoman consulate's warnings about crossings between Corfu and Yanya, the distance between the two shores should be roughly understood. Thus, one can comfortably evaluate the value of information procured by the consulate and assess the events accordingly. Travel accounts answer questions in this regard, thanks to their elaborate delineations and descriptions. Though most of the

travel accounts require a critical reading, they are still particularly useful regarding the geographical information they provide about the region in question.

First, the consulate in Corfu could safely observe any activity between two coasts with the naked eye. Karl Baedeker emphasizes that the “Turkish” coast of Epirus with its lofty mountains could be viewed easily from the west side of Corfu.<sup>174</sup> Edward Spencer, another traveller, who carried out excursions on this route during the British protectorate, mentions that the voyage from Prevesa to Corfu took a few hours in an open boat.<sup>175</sup> The last account gives the time of travel for the route, which was mostly used by the vessels and boats shuttling between Corfu and Yanya. The shortest and most usual way, he says, is from Corfu across to Sayada [*Saranduz*]. This route took about two or three hours in clear weather.<sup>176</sup>

The Ottoman consulate [*baş şehbenderlik*] in Corfu provided many advantages to the Ottoman side. The traffic, whether legal or illegal, between the two coasts was busy and the consulate on Corfu systematically informed the Ottoman authorities on the shuttling of vessels that carried goods as well as illegal materials and brigands. These detailed reports have real historical value for a historian to comprehend the day-to-day practices of crossings between the two shores and to more carefully analyze the events that occurred in the region.

The Ottoman consul of Corfu, in one of his letters, clearly reports the situation in between Yanya shores and Corfu Island on 31 May 1900. He claims that weapons, ammunition, and all sorts of forbidden materials are being transported from Corfu to the shores of Yanya via Greek boats, *varkes*, almost everyday. Greek brigands constantly cross over to the other side, plunder the shores of Yanya and return to Corfu without trouble.<sup>177</sup>

The transportation of any kind of guns, pistols, ammunition, and various forbidden documents such as notifications, announcements, journals, and newspapers from Corfu to Epirus were seriously threatening the future of the Ottoman presence

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<sup>174</sup> Karl Baedeker, *Southern Italy and Sicily With Excursions to Malta, Sardinia, Tunisia, and Corfu*, Dulau and Co., Publisher, London, 1908, p. 462.

<sup>175</sup> Edmond Spencer, *Travels in European Turkey in 1850*, p. 213.

<sup>176</sup> John Murray, *Handbook for Travellers in Greece: Describing The Ionian Islands, The Kingdom of Greece, The Islands of the Aegean Sea, With Albania, Thessaly, and Macedonia*, London, 1854, p. 381.

<sup>177</sup> BOA, BEO 1507-112962 (25/S/1318).

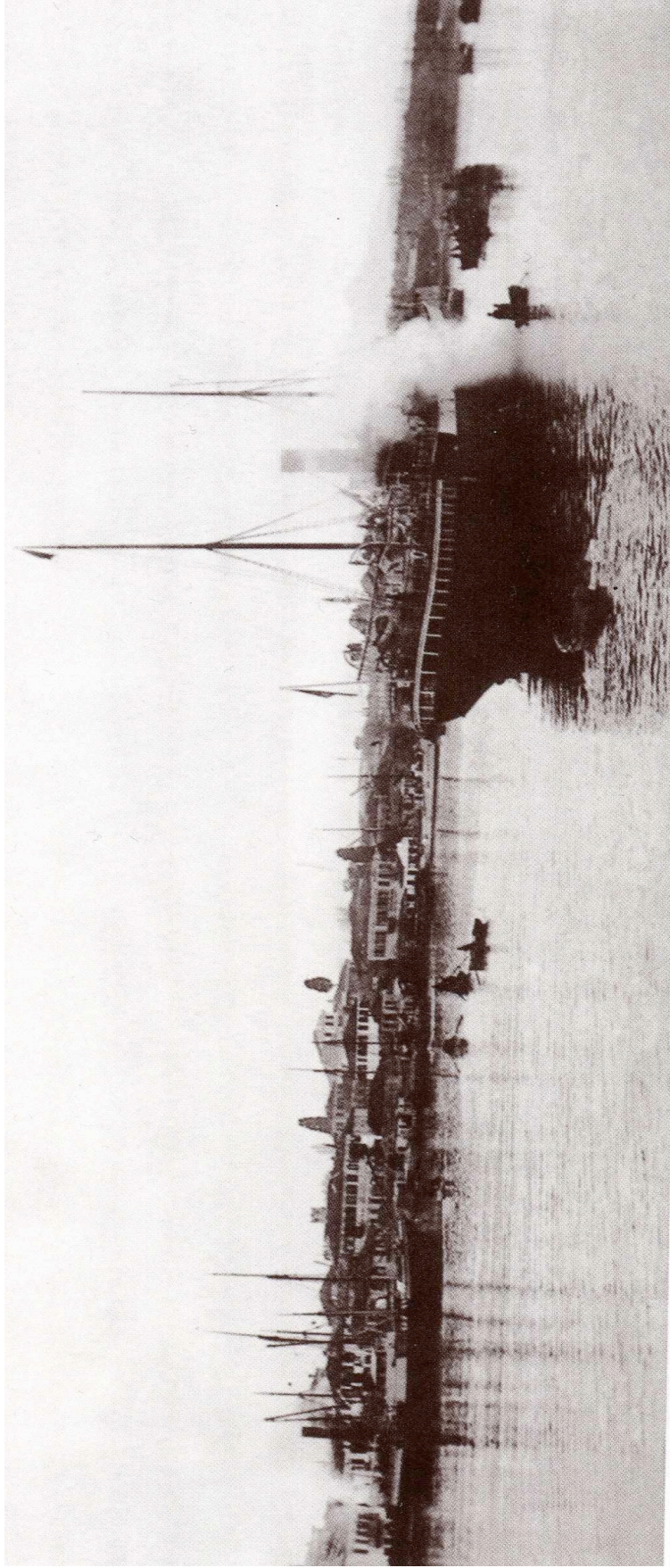


in the region. Besides, it is reasonable to assume that Ottoman authorities knew about all these activities. Warning letters circulated between the Ottoman correspondents in Corfu, Athens, and Yanya on a regular basis. Particularly the Ottoman consul in Corfu posted many letters, which define explicitly the infiltration of bandits as well as the transportation of unlawful goods [*eşya-yı memnû*] from the island.

It reveals that it has been six months since the Ottoman consul arrived in Corfu. According to his observations, almost all the boats and vessels whether Ottoman or Greek that shuttle between Corfu and Himara (Khimara), Sayada (Saranduz), Kalanyokou, Veyvar, and Aya Todorî shores, which are all in close distance to each other, and make money from smuggling. The Ottomans are not able to guard the coastline properly, only a couple of gendarmes and customhouse guards, *kolcu*, carry out the task of protecting of these shores. He mentioned that at least about eight and ten vessels pass by Corfu per day and eighty percent of them do not even apply to the Ottoman consulate in order to obtain a visa on their *patente*. Moreover, the local people on both sides take advantage of these activities. Many voyagers from Corfu have no passports at all. The Ottoman consul also claimed that the owners of the vessels manipulate the transportation of banned material under the name of fishing in the Himara, Veyvar, and Gomince fishponds. He informed the authorities in Yanya and the Governor of Preveza about this traffic. He mentioned that though the local authorities took some precautions, they all lasted for a couple of days. Thereafter, the business continued as usual and voyagers without a passport keep on shuttling between Corfu and the shores across.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> BOA, Y. PRK. EŞA 32-12 (20/L/1316).



**Figure 3.1.** The panoramic view of the Preveza Harbour, 1900-1910, *Α Βαλκανικός Πόλεμος, Η απελευθέρωση της Ηπείρου, (1912-1913)* [The First Balkan War, The Emancipation of Epirus (1912-1913)], Ίδρυμα Ακτία Νικόπολις, Πρέβεζα, 2002, p. 30.

The report of the consul above possesses important details such as how frequently the vessels/boats shuttled between two shores. Accordingly, around ten vessels sailed per day and more than half of them did not even apply to the authorities to get their licenses, *patente*, stamped. Thereby, one can conclude that at least half of the daily transported material or passengers were carried without having official permission.

The consul also gives information on the routes for that the trafficking of weapons into Yanya in the second part of his letter. He underlines Athens was the starting point of all these weapons. It seems the weapons followed a route that began in Athens continued to Corfu, and reached the Ottoman shores in Epirus through local vessels and boats. The selling prices are also worth mentioning according to the statements of the Ottoman consulate. Normally, he says, these weapons were worth 100-150 *guruşes* but traffickers sold them for 700-800 *guruşes* in Corfu. According to the consulate, this is one of the reasons why smugglers took risks to procure weapons into the region.

Though the bulk of smuggling between Corfu and Yanya seems to be insignificant, still it was a constant business. These activities affected many different areas as well according to the archival record sent from the Ottoman Foreign Office, *Dâire-i Hâriciye*, on 10 March 1903. It reveals sixteen rifles and about four hundred pieces of dynamite were captured as they were carried from Elbasan to the two Bulgarian villages in Debre, Macedonia. The investigation showed that the arms came Corfu to the Himara shores of Yanya and then to the Dukan village in Avlonya. Another bunch of weapons that reached various places in Macedonia, such as Ohri and Kreçeve, followed the very same route.<sup>179</sup>

Another note of the Ottoman consul was about the continuing gun trafficking via Corfu on 2 November 1908. He mentions that old weapons [*isti'mâlden sâkit olmuş olan bu tüfenkler*] are sold publicly in the streets of Athens for three *drahmas* each. The consul demands from the authorities in Istanbul to ask the Greek state to control and halt this illegal trade. He claims these weapons were sold especially to Greek population in the Yanya Province. The consulate underlines the importance of regular business as well, how people from the Yanya Province regularly come to the island at least a couple of times each month for legal trade purposes. He states the

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<sup>179</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 653-28 (16/Za/1320).

need to provide conveniences to these people doing beneficial work. He states there is a difference between those engaged in regular trading and people who entered the island without any official permit or passport, and thus officers should treat them accordingly.<sup>180</sup>

### **3.2. Voyagers Without Passport Between the Ionian Islands and Yanya Shores**

Ottoman official documents indicate the voyagers without official papers [*tezkeresiz yolcu*] were another frequent problem between Corfu and the shores of Yanya. Therefore, many vessel captains were involved in illegal businesses by transporting these voyagers into the region.

The consulate reported on 13 December 1898, that a captain named İspiro Koç carried about twenty passengers without official permits and the brigand Koçuli Beltil was one of them. The Greek vessel named *Albania* sailed from Palermo and was insistently urged not to approach any harbor on the route. Nevertheless, captain İspiro stopped in the port of Dermas on the Himara shores and loaded some commodities together with twenty passengers.<sup>181</sup>

The Ministry of Interior [*Dâhiliye Mektûbî Kalemi*] emphasizes that any vessel whether holding an Ottoman or Greek *patente* (a license authorizing the bearer to drive a vehicle) shuttled between Corfu and different harbors in Yanya, carried passengers without passport everyday.<sup>182</sup>

Ottoman documents mention the cases of illegal crossings mainly from Corfu to Yanya, but there must have been activities in the opposite direction as well, from Yanya to Corfu. A local Greek newspaper circulated in Corfu called Φωνή [*Voice*], writes about meat smuggling from Epirus to Corfu on 6 December 1890 on its front page. Because of the considerably high custom prices on the livestock, profiteers of Corfu smuggled carcass from Epirus. The article points out the lower quality of these

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<sup>180</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2644-63 (7/L/1326).

<sup>181</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2148-21 (29/B/1316).

<sup>182</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2449-95 (15/L/1318).

meats and also warns the local authorities to reduce the custom prices on the livestock in order to impede illegal meat trade.<sup>183</sup>

A very tiny detail at the end of a lengthy Ottoman record mentions an interesting practice of some local people in Yanya. According to it, some shepherd families kept driving flock of sheep and lambs from the Ottoman lands to Corfu by vessels. The very reason of this systematic practice was to avoid paying sheep tax [*adet-i ağnam*] to the Ottoman state.<sup>184</sup>

Some critical issues such as controlling passports and issuing official permission for transportation were the main duties of the coastal-stationed officers along the Yanya shores. If the captains were involved in illegal business, and carried contraband with ease, there must be some deficiencies in the control mechanism. Archival records indicate that the Ottoman coastal control system was indeed inadequate in general. Along with financial shortages and the shortage of funds needed to address problems, bribery was a common problem that seriously threatened coastline security.

### 3.3. Improper Conduct of Coastline Officials

A European journalist, who experienced a journey from Corfu to the Ottoman lands in Yanya in 1895, stresses the illicit behaviors of Ottoman officials:

Early in the morning, with three boatmen, and something to eat in a basket, the departure for the Albanian coast was made. By eleven o'clock we reached the port, rather natural harbor, where I landed. I looked about for the "authorities" to whom the Turkish Consul had alluded. I saw but one lonely house, or, to be correct, hut, in front of which stood a ragged-looking Turkish gendarme. Another Turkish official was squatted, cross-legged, on a sort of round table sheltered from the sun by a roof of rushes. Indolently he examined me and the boatman who accompanied me as interpreter. Then he examined the boat's clean bill of health, and my papers. I had been warned that to overcome any little difficulties a five-franc piece was invaluable, so I gave one to each of the Turkish functionaries, and in a moment all was arranged. The ragged gendarme came along with me carrying his swords in his hands to beat away the dogs.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> ΦΩΝΗ Ἐν ΚΕΡΚΥΡΑ [The Voice of Kerkyra], 6 December 1890.

<sup>184</sup> BOA, Y. A. HUS. 516-83 (26/L/1325).

<sup>185</sup> On The Albanian Coast, *Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, Scotland), Thursday, October 17, 1895; Issue 249, British Library, Gale Document Number: BC3203839583.

The misconduct of the coast guards in Yanya was an annoying situation, and it seems the bribes taken by officers could not be prevented. The central government warned the authorities in Yanya about the passport control officers' failure to perform their job properly [*pasaport me'mûrlarının adem-i takayyüdləri*] on 28 February 1899. The center ordered the authorities in Yanya to punish the corrupted officers.<sup>186</sup>

The Ottoman consulate on Corfu sent a report to Istanbul on 24 June 1900 about the general situation on the island, underlining particularly the prevailing problem of smuggling between Yanya and the Ionian Islands. The consulate believed the very reason of the prevailing illegal trade was the immoral behavior of the coastline officers and security members.

He insisted that he informed the authorities in Yanya about the movements of brigands on the island and the transportation of guns and ammunition from Corfu to the shores of Yanya. The consul stressed that though he submitted all the necessary information since his arrival to the island did not make any effect to stop the crossings of brigand bands. Moreover, the coastline officials evidently ignored his warnings on security matters and some of them were even displeased about them [*iğbirâr-ı mûcib olmuştur*]. He strongly believed they were the very responsible persons for the prevalent gun trafficking. On the shores of Yanya, which were desolated to a great extent, only two or three officers are employed to provide security. As far as I observe, he says, these officers accept any gifts and are not in a position to display any resistance to smugglers. The coastal guards allow the sending of ammunition and weapons to various places in Yanya in return for a small amount of money [*birkaç mecîdiye mukâbilinde*].<sup>187</sup>

On 5 February 1901, the center stressed again that the transportation of passengers with no passport between Corfu and the Yanya shores should not be allowed and blamed the passport control officers for turning a blind eye [*me'mûrîn-i vilâyet tarafından iğmâz edilmekte olduğu cihetle*].<sup>188</sup>

Many archival records underline the corrupt behaviors of officers but not many enforcement or investigations appear to have been conducted. Particularly on

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<sup>186</sup> BOA, BEO 1275-95613 (23/L/1316).

<sup>187</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2280-43 (1/Ş/1317).

<sup>188</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2449-95 (15/L/1318).

two occasions both related to the same custom officers. The officers seem to have been dismissed or replaced after due investigations. The charge was that the officers in Sayada Customs Office had beaten by many boatmen came from the Himara region. The conflict between the officers and the boatmen was probably related to illegal commerce between the two shores. The authorities dismissed the custom officers.<sup>189</sup> At another case, the Ottoman Consul of Corfu specifically gave the name of the officer in charge on 23 April 1905. A police officer, Sadık Efendi, from the Sayada Custom Office permitted the passengers with no passport or with expired official papers to enter. The Ottoman consulate in Corfu warned the authorities to correct the situation and dismiss the police officer Sadık Efendi immediately.<sup>190</sup>

Despite the specificity of the information in the consul's letters, the center perceived this information with suspicion. A letter of the Foreign Office [*Hâriciye Nezâreti*] dated on 20 March 1907 reveals the authorities' suspicion of the information sent by the Ottoman Consulate in Corfu. Since the rumors and the hearings [*rivâyat ve mesmû'ât*] about bandit bands' approach to the Yanya shores via Corfu are not accurate [*makrûn-ı sıhhat olmamakla*], there is no need to allocate an annual sum for information gathering. Interestingly, the authorities referred to the intelligence gathered by the consulate as a bunch of rumors. Furthermore, the Foreign Office underlined the necessity of allocating an annual sum for information gathering to the Larissa, Trikala and Volos consulates [*Yenişehir, Tırhala ve Goloşehbenderlerine*].<sup>191</sup> There is no further explanation about the reasons behind the distrust of the consul's reports why the ministry deemed them unreliable or unjustifiable.

At any rate, the center continued to give an ear to the Ottoman consulate in Corfu and to require information from his based on his observations. Once more the consulate was asked about whether smuggling and gun transportation to Yanya still continued on 16 December 1908. In accordance with response of the consulate, the center ordered to the commodore of Preveza to assign one or two steamboats with the

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<sup>189</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 536-76 (02/R/1320).

<sup>190</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 952/89 (28/S/1323).

<sup>191</sup> BOA, BEO 3016-226128 (5/S/1325).

task of controlling the Yanya shores, and to make these observations more regularly.<sup>192</sup>

### 3.4. Albanian Revolutionary Committees in Corfu

The archival material points to the intensification of the border crossings of the Albanian committee members from Corfu to the shores of Yanya by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the assumption that the Ottoman state records relied on, Albanian committees had good relations with Greece and many of them were based in Athens. Corfu officially belonged to the Greek state, therefore the presence of Albanian committees in the island and their circulation between the two shores without much resistance manifested the cooperation between these two entities. One can assume that they were offering material and military support to each other.

According to a dispatch sent by the Ottoman consulate in Corfu on 20 May 1900, the Albanian activists wrote a pamphlet [*risâle*] in Athens on the Albanian struggle.<sup>193</sup> The name of the committee was “Union Albaniz”. The pamphlet was written for dissemination in Yanya in order to provoke the Albanian population in the region. The consulate states that three Greek soldiers brought it to the island. However, the pamphlet was hidden somewhere in the Corfu Castle, where it was discovered by the consulate. Furthermore, the pamphlet also contained a flag designed by the committee, which would be displayed when the long desired Albanian revolution succeeded in Yanya.

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<sup>192</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2684-83 (22/Za/1326).

<sup>193</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS. 406-85 (20/M/1318).





**Figure 3.2.** The Albanian Revolutionary Committee's flag, BOA, Y. A. HUS. 406-85 (20/M/1318), No. 4.

The consulate considered the pamphlet so significant, immediately translated it into French and sent it to the center. Eventually, the pamphlet was translated into Ottoman Turkish in Istanbul. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the language of the original. The alphabet on the flag gives some clues that the pamphlet was probably written in Greek. The Ottoman-Turkish translation of the pamphlet is quite long, eight pages. It pays attention to many related issues ranging from historical references to Albanian-Greek solidarity, the current political situation of the Ottoman state to the aim of the committee, and the privileges that a Greek Albanian federation

will offer to the Albanian people. A critical evaluation of this translation will help to better understand the meaning of the Albanian movement.

The committee faults the attitudes of the neighboring states of Austria, Italy, and Greece for instilling animosity among the Albanians, leading to divisions, hatred and violence against each other. This situation also resulted in the scattering of the Albanians in the neighboring states. The committee mentions how the Albanians abroad behaved well and were offered high posts particularly in the military class, thereby becoming integrated to these states and assimilated.<sup>194</sup>

The pamphlet considered the revolt against authorities is essential and the initial step for independence. The Greeks, Serbs, Montenegrins, Romanians, and Bulgarians appear to be the source of inspiration, since these people were all under the Ottoman sovereignty but gained their independence through uprisings [*her biri başlı başına bayrağa krala hükûmete hazîneye mahkeme ve asâkire mâlik serbest ve müstakil birer hükûmet olmuşlardır*]. Only Armenians and Jews were in a similar position with the Albanians. The Albanian case was worse because everyone considered the Albanian people as Turks. The committee ardently upholds the Albanian identity, and emphasizes the distinctions between Albanians and Turks. Then, the pamphlet sets to underscore the essential importance of the Albanian people for the historical continuity and survival of the Ottoman state not only in the Balkans but also in the Arab provinces.

According to the pamphlet, the Ottoman state was no different from any other foreign state. It warned its fellow Albanians about the future of the Ottoman state and that they would disintegrate sooner or later. If the Albanians continued to stay loyal, they would sink together with the Ottomans [*bizde kendisiyle berâber mahv ve gümnâm olacağız*]. Supposing that they would be free, they expected Albania to confront Austria's incursions. Italy would not even have dared to make plans on the Albanian lands. The committee points out to some differences between the economic and military capacities of their potential enemies. Italy and Austria appeared to be posing the most dangerous threats to the Albanians [*meselâ İtalya ve Avusturya bizi diri diri yüzebilir ve hatta ... arasında zerre kadar nişâne bırakmayacak derecede suhûletle bizi hazm edebilir*]. In order to avoid these giants, the Albanians had to think of the possibility of an alliance [*akd-i râbıta-yı vifâk*] with less hazardous

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<sup>194</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS. 406-85 (20/M/1318), No. 5.

[*ehven-i şer*] neighbors such as Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. The pamphlet, however, claims Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro were tools of Russia and could lose their independence to Russia in a short while.<sup>195</sup>

The committee points to the Greek state as the most convenient potential ally regarding the shared historical roots of the two peoples. It argues that the Greeks descended from our ancestors, *Palaşlar* [*Palaesti*, one of the three major ancient Greek tribes of Epirus], and had lived together in peace under the same king during the Byzantine Empire. They shared the same religion and sect as well in those times. Indeed, the committee relied on a rich pool of historical references to develop freshly its argument for an alliance with Greece. Another historical reference that the committee relied on was The Greek War of Independence in 1821.<sup>196</sup>

The pamphlet explicitly mentions that the Greeks achieved their sovereignty in 1821 with the very assistance of Albanian warriors during the uprisings. The Albanians came from many different regions to join this war, such as Souli, Himara, Athens, Corinth, as well as various places in the Morea Peninsula. Moreover, thirty thousand “Muslim” Albanians joined their Christian brothers to assist the Greek irregulars against the Ottomans.<sup>197</sup>

Another historical reference was related with the Romaioi. The pamphlet claims that the Romaioi, before becoming Greek, were all Albanians, therefore, being Romaioi means being civilized Albanian [*Rumlar Yunanî olmazdan evvel sırf Arnavud yâ'ni Palaş idiler, Yunanî demek mütemeddin Arnavud demektir*]. Without explaining how the Greek language then evolved out of the Albanian language, the pamphlet stated the Albanian language was the oldest spoken language in Greece, even Homer listened to it [*ol-vakt bunu Omerin dinliyor idi*].<sup>198</sup>

The committee, however, considered the religious diversity of Albanians as quite damaging for their common interests, and said it would have been much better if we all had the same religion. However, they believed the Albanians have to live

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid, No. 7.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, No. 8.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, No. 9.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, No. 10.

with the existing religions and sectarian affiliations.<sup>199</sup> If the Albanians would decide to walk alone and build an Albanian state, religious diversity would be the issue with which the neighboring Christian states and European Powers would work to interfere in Albania and to fracture Albanians.<sup>200</sup>

The committee presumed the problem of assimilation into a foreign culture would also be out of the realm of possibility if the Albanians would unify with Greece since they were not more populous than the Albanians. Thereby, the Albanians would remain as they were, without being Greek. The pamphlet emphasized these two groups of people lived together in this geography for centuries without transforming each other.<sup>201</sup>

Eventually, the revolutionary committee sought the future of the Albanian people on the same track with the Greeks. They also knew the probable alliance with Greece would break-off one day and the Albanians would continue on their own.<sup>202</sup> The temporary alliance with Greece, however, appeared to be the rational answer in view of the circumstances prevailing in the region. The authors of this invitation text appear to be heavily influenced by the idea of nationalism in their political view that would create a golden past for the Albanian people. This fictitious past of the Albanians, however, made space particularly for the Greeks and stressed what Greeks shared with Albanians in various historical stages. As the Albanians were composed of different religions and sects, the pamphlet overemphasized not to think in religious terms for the future of Albania. In accordance with the revolutionary ideas of the Enlightenment, there would be no further ground for religious beliefs. However, ethnicity, patriotism, and self-determination in paralleling the core ideas of the French Revolution lied at the center of the pamphlet.<sup>203</sup>

The Albanian revolutionary committee continued to transport weapons and helped the infiltration of many activists via Corfu during the late May of 1900. The

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<sup>199</sup> ...gerçi biz bütün Arnavudlar hep müslümân veyâ hristiyân olsaydık şübhesiz dahâ iyi olurdu mâdem ki meyânımızda ortodoks katolik müslüman bektâşî rîfâî gibi mezâhib ve müslümân-ı muhtelif ashâbı mevcûddur o hâlde şu mezâhibi ve ... olduğu gibi bırakmak muktezîdir, Ibid, No. 8.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, No. 10.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, No. 11.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, No. 12.

<sup>203</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*, Vintage Books, New York, 1996, pp. 20-23.

authorities estimated about five hundred rifles and fifteen powder bags were transferred to Himara and Mortu shores only in a week and then carried into the hinterland by unknown people.<sup>204</sup>

It seems the Ottomans were in active communication with Greek authorities on the problem of arms trafficking. The Albanian revolutionary committee based in Athens was smuggling guns via Corfu and the Ottomans protested this situation through their embassy in Athens on 16 January 1901. The Greek Foreign Office appears to have dismissed Ottoman claims by judging in response they pleading lack of knowledge about illegal gun trade but promising to inform the local authorities in Corfu to be more careful about these activities.<sup>205</sup>

### 3.5. The Ottoman Response to Border Violations

The Ottoman archival records on border violations mention concomitantly the geographical and demographical features of shores and nearby towns. Evidently, the Ottoman local authorities had difficulty in coping with smuggling and illegal entry cases along the shores of Yanya and listed the geographical features of the region as a major obstacle to security measures.

Since the shores of Yanya were so extensive and immense, it was not easy to police them extensively. Corfu [*cezire-i Korfu*] became a meeting point for brigands and outlaws with the instigation of the Greek government.<sup>206</sup>

Şemseddin Sami's *magnum opus* work, *Kâmûsü'l-'alâm*, offers a precise account of the geographical character of the Ottoman shoreline on the Adriatic Sea and the general condition of its coves, bays, quays and harbors in. According to Sami, Prevesa has one or two perfect harbors, however, due to the shallow areas and rocky shorelines, large ships cannot approach them. The city of Vutrinto, which is located right across Corfu, once was a beautiful port city with a running harbor, now looks like the city of ghosts. The port entrance of Vutrinto was shut down and it began to be used as a fishpond. Drac also had an excellent and quite wide harbor, which indeed ceased to operate long ago to avoid the Venetian march. The area now is nothing

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<sup>204</sup> BOA, BEO 1494-112025 (1/S/1318).

<sup>205</sup> BOA, BEO 1608-120549 (25/N/1318).

<sup>206</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2280-43 (1/Ş/1317).

more than a marshland. The best and still busy harbors in the area were Mortu Harbor, which is right across the southern part of Corfu and Paşalimanı Harbor in the south of the Avlonia quay. Even though ships arrived to the harbors of Serandos, Avlonia, Drac and Sengin, these places did not have adequate seaports.<sup>207</sup>

Geographical features was one of the main advantages of gun smugglers in Corfu and one of the main disadvantages of the authorities that were supposed to check smuggling. After receiving one of the many reports on gun smuggling from Corfu to the Himara shores the government dispatched a group of soldiers are sent immediately to the area. They captured sixty-three guns. According to the Mutasarrif of Ergiri [*Gijirokastra*], local people in Himara live scattered along the long shore and the long coastline made security unmanageable. Thus the Greek smugglers made it a base for their business.<sup>208</sup>

In contrast to the observations or claims of the Ottoman consulate mentioned above, the authorities in Yanya had many defensive tactics along the coastline in order to avoid brigand bands' incursions. Official coast guards, mobile observation towers [*tarassudat kuleleri*] and gendarmerie units on the land, torpedo boats, gunboats, and steamboats [*istimbots*] on the sea were used with the aim of providing security. However, the Ottoman archival materials still underline the general inadequacy of these precautions.

After the Greek occupation of Crete on 13 February 1897 and just before the Ottoman declaration of war on Greece on 17 April 1897, the shoreline across the Corfu seems to be alarmed about the political developments in Crete. The shores of Delvine according to the Ottoman authorities had strategic importance for a possible attack from Corfu, however, the current amount of soldiers at this point did not satisfy them. They urgently demanded an additional battalion in order to consolidate the defense line. Moreover, five hundred rifles were asked in order to distribute to the Muslim population in the region as an extra security precaution.<sup>209</sup>

At the very beginning of the twentieth century, the Ministry of the Navy prepared a report describing the economic situation of the Ottoman navy. It cites that two torpedo boats were sent from Istanbul to Preveza in order to facilitate

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<sup>207</sup> Şemseddin Sami, *Kâmûsü'l-'alâm*, Vol. I, Mihran Matbaası, İstanbul, 1889/1306, p. 151.

<sup>208</sup> BOA, Y. A. HUS. 516-83 (26/L/1325).

<sup>209</sup> BOA, BEO 926-69391 (24/L/1314).

observations [*tarassudât ve takayyüdât*] in the coastline but could not be adequately utilized. Due to insufficient coal and supplies [*kömürsüzlük ve noksân-ı levâzımdan nâşî*] these torpedo boats could not depart when there was a need. Therefore, the defense of the shores against bandits and smugglers could not be adequately ensured without the presence of torpedo boats.<sup>210</sup>

The information in more detail, which is directly related with the issue, comes from the Ministry of the Interior [*Dahiliye Nezâreti*] on 8 January 1900. The need for money in order to procure coal was urgent. It assumes though 40,000 *liras* were allocated specifically in order to have coal; even half of this amount was enough as an initial step. Nevertheless, not even a single *akçe* has reached the post so far; therefore unfortunately under these conditions the boats could not be moved.<sup>211</sup>

Besides, the Ottoman Consulate in Corfu did not agree at all with the commodore in Preveza. He argued two or three torpedo boats in Preveza were not operating periodically on the pretext of inadequate coal. Therefore, bandits and smugglers frequented in the courts of Yanya.<sup>212</sup> It seems there was a tension between the Ottoman consul and the coastline officials on the other side of the shore. It is worth mentioning that the language of the consul explicitly reveals his mistrust about the coastline officials. The consul strongly believed the “police and gendarmerie members in the coastline as well as the other people in charge in custom office, quarantine section and in the harbor are all local and they clearly fail to perform adequately. This situation cannot and should not be tolerated. They all are taking bribes in return for letting voyagers without passport, and also turning a blind eye on boats loaded with weapons.”<sup>213</sup>

Another plan to halt the transportation of weapons and other forbidden materials was to make an agreement with the “legal gun traders”. On 16 January 1901, the authorities announced gun trade would only be possible with an official permission, *şehâdetnâme*, on which it indicate the precise amount of carried weapons

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<sup>210</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2280-43 (1/Ş/1317).

<sup>211</sup> BOA, DH. MKT. 2294/15 (6/N/1317).

<sup>212</sup> BOA, BEO 1507-112962 (25/S/1318).

<sup>213</sup> ...pasaportsuz gidip gelen eşhâs-ı meçhûle ile evrâk-ı bahriyesi nizâmi dâ'iresinde olmayan merâkibiyeden beş on gurûş alarak iğmâz eyledikleri gibi iki üç mecîdiye alınca kayık dolusu tûfeng ve cebhâneyi görmemezlikten gelmek gibi [] irtikâbına cesâret eylemektedirler, BOA, Y. A. HUS. 406-85 (20/M/1318).

and the explicit address of destination(s). Otherwise, traders would pay twenty drachmas to the custom office for each gun in the vessel as an assurance until they complete the supporting documents.<sup>214</sup> It seems such an attempt to pacify the smugglers was too naïve to be successful.

It appears weapons and ammunition transported via vessels sold mostly to the Greek population in Yanya, and were expected to be used for the purpose of Yanya's unification with Greece. The 1897 Greco – Turkish War could be seen as a manifestation of this intention. The idea was to provoke a general revolt in the Greek population with the support of irregular Greek bands. That is why the Greek guerillas sent initially to Epirus via *Ethnike Hetariewa* (National Society) before marching with the regular Greek army. The dissemination of these uprisings in the Macedonia region was also expected. However, anticipated events did not occur. The Greek population in Epirus stayed passive, perhaps frightened by the possibility that the Albanian *başıbozüks* might be sent, causing havoc in Epirus.<sup>215</sup> Crete in early 1897 appears to be another example of an uprising of the Christian population. After an abortive revolt in Crete, the expected reaction did not take place, but this time the reason was the Great Powers' will. They simply wanted the island to remain autonomous within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>216</sup>

As invasions of bandits and illegal commerce continued from Corfu to Yanya province, the local authorities urgently demanded the building of new headquarters on the Yanya shores and recruiting extra gendarmerie soldiers as permanent staff. The budget for all these expenditures was to be compensated this time from the levied taxes.<sup>217</sup>

Though the presence of the Ottoman consulate on Corfu was an asset, which systematically informed the officials in Yanya, the Ottoman border security still could not cope with the illegal commerce and bandits' incursions via Corfu. The economic inadequacies seemed to be decisive for the prevailing circumstances. As one searches the archival material, one comprehends that many measures failed due to the financial shortcomings. The inefficient operations of coastline guards were related with their

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<sup>214</sup> BOA, BEO 1608-120549 (25/N/1318).

<sup>215</sup> Basil Kondis, *Greece and Albania 1908-1914*, p. 28.

<sup>216</sup> Richard Clogg, *Modern Yunanistan Tarihi*, p. 92.

<sup>217</sup> BOA, BEO 2968-222587 (10/Za/1324).



numbers. There were, indeed, many attempts to provide extra soldiers, *neferât*, but the center left most of these suggestions unanswered.

### 3.6. European Aristocrats' Visits to Corfu and Yanya

The border crossing was not only about smuggling and illegal entry of lawful people. The circulation of people, whether they are noble or ordinary people, in the terms of trade, diplomatic mission, or tourism across the boundaries of states, was one of the characteristic of the globalization as well as the strong evidence for the transnational lives at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Corfu and other Ionian Islands were ideal venue for vacations by the members of the European royal families and distinguished foreigners. This perception of being an earthly paradise seems to be settled during the half-century British rule and it steadily became a tradition among these people. Moreover, the shooting parties in the Ottoman lands in Epirus were the part of these excursions.<sup>218</sup>

Corfu was a prestigious place for holidays not only for the Europeans but also for the King of Greece. The palace built for the English Governor, became a property of King George. Another residence of the King was a country-house, *Mon Repos*, was about a mile away from town. King George and his wife Queen Olga enjoyed spending their summers in Corfu. When Constante Fenimore was in Corfu, the Prussian Prince Henry and his wife was also there for recreation. Another important figure was the Empress of Austria, who after her frequent trips to the island, decided to build a country house to spend more time in Corfu.<sup>219</sup>

The travel accounts of voyagers were not the only source of information about the visits of the aristocrats and the shooting parties in the neighborhood Ottoman mainland. There were also newspaper articles covering these events. Journalists kept transmitting news from Corfu. A newspaper article emphasized the insecurity in the Albanian mountain villages: "...In the neighboring mainland of Albania I hear big shooting is easily procured, though on account of the lawlessness of the inhabitants it is somewhat risky..."<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Gerassimos D. Pagratis, "The Ionian Islands under British "Protection", pp. 150, 316-317.

<sup>219</sup> Constance Fenimore Woolson, *Mentone, Cairo, and Corfu*, p. 292.

<sup>220</sup> From Innsbruck To Corfu, *Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, Scotland), Tuesday, October 8, 1895; Issue 241, British Library, Gale Document Number: BC3203839199.

As mentioned, Ottoman lands in Epirus possessed perfect environment for hunting. The hunters from Corfu, however, had to be in touch with the local authorities in to get permission for hunting [*sayd ü şikâr*]. The Italian consul of Corfu requests shooting in Yanya in 8 October 1898,<sup>221</sup> Austria consulate and their guests [*rüfekâsı*] apply for hunting license in Seranduz in 8 November 1898,<sup>222</sup> German diplomats from Berlin visit Vlore [*Avlonya*] in 8 December 1898.<sup>223</sup> Since these armed people often arrived in Yanya with a crowded entourage that consisted of hunters, translators, and servants, the Ottoman authorities had to be careful to avoid possible confrontation with the local people. Second point was, the overwhelming majority of these people were either royal family members or eminent officers, which means that they could not be left alone to shoot in the remote mountain villages. Providing security and arranging suitable conditions for hunting was the duty of Ottoman gendarmerie.

German Emperor and the King of Prussia Friedrich Wilhelm II (1859-1941) was perhaps the most distinguished among the other royal visitors of Corfu. He bought the villa of the Habsburg Empress Elisabeth (1837-1898) in 1907, nine years after the Empress was assassinated by an Italian anarchist in Geneva, in 1898. *Achilleion* was the name of the house. Only the renovation and furnishing of this house costed about 600,000 marks, and yearly cost of the house was up to 50,000 marks. Furthermore, the household of the King who travelled with him to Corfu was enormous. It consisted of one hundred servants, officials, countless guests, and five cars.<sup>224</sup> His deep interest in archeology and Hellenistic world seems to be the very reason why he chose to reside in Corfu. During his frequent visits in Corfu, which was at least several weeks each summer, he made excavations in the Temple of Artemis in Corfu.<sup>225</sup> His archeological findings in the Artemis Temple, albeit rare, sent to the provincial museum of Utrecht, in the Netherlands.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> BOA, Y. A. RES. 96-25 (22/C/1316).

<sup>222</sup> BOA, BEO, 1208-90531 (23/Ca/1316).

<sup>223</sup> BOA, Y. MTV. 197-26 (04/Ş/1317).

<sup>224</sup> Isabel V. Hull, *The Entourage of Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1888-1918*, Cambridge University Press, UK: USA, 1982, p. 34.

<sup>225</sup> Lamar Cecil, *Wilhelm II: Emperor and Exile, 1900-1941*, Vol. II, The University of North Carolina Press, 1996, America, 1996, pp. 51-52.

<sup>226</sup> Lamar Cecil, *Wilhelm II: Emperor and Exile, 1900-1941*, p. 317.

It is interesting to see how the Ottoman state mechanism operated before the visit of a King to the Yanya shores. According to the archival records, the provincial authorities of Yanya were on the alert from the middle of August 1907 to the beginning of May in 1908. It was perhaps a special year for King Wilhelm II since he bought his Achilleion in Corfu, and his stay might have been longer than in order to renovate the house. A possible trip to the Ottoman lands was also spoken. The archival records are not clear whether the King decided to visit or the Ottoman side simply presumed it. Regardless of whether this visit occurred or not, what concerns us here is the Ottoman response to a king's arrival in its provincial city.

This dissertation focused on the Corfu-Yanya basin at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and emphasized the connections that transcended the politically bounded territories by using transnational historical approach. Transnational historical approach denaturalizes the nation and seeks to question the assumptions of nation-centric approaches, which have long dominated historiography, while investigating hitherto neglected transnational connections or the overlooked aspects such as the complex linkages, networks, and actors at local level.

Once the King arrived in Corfu, the Ottomans anticipated the King could also pay visit to Yanya. The first order in August 12 was about the maintaining of the roads that connect the shoreline to the city town of Yanya.<sup>227</sup> According to the archival records, the King did not pay visit that summer. It seems the correspondence became intense again towards the end of February in next year. When Wilhelm II returned to Corfu, the first order was about the gendarmerie units to monitor the places in the countryside that the King would hunt.<sup>228</sup> Another similar warning was for the soldiers on 24 February, and on 6 March. The order was to keep the places that King Wilhelm II would tour with his court under surveillance.<sup>229</sup> Towards the end of that month, a formal ceremony requested to be ready when the German Emperor approached to Yanya shores.<sup>230</sup> Many warnings sent in April about the repair of the Rusumat pier to where Wilhelm II's boats would anchor.<sup>231</sup> Eventually, a certain

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<sup>227</sup> BOA, BEO, 3123-234175 (03/B/1325).

<sup>228</sup> BOA, İ. HUS. 163-1326/M-53 (20/M/1326).

<sup>229</sup> BOA, BEO, 3264-244761 (21/M/1326); BOA, DH. TMIK. S. 72-42 (02/S/1326).

<sup>230</sup> BOA, BEO, 3277/245717 (21/S/1326).

<sup>231</sup> BOA, BEO, 3284-246247 (29/S/1326); BOA, Y. EE. 3296-247139 (18/Ra/1326).

Pasha sent to Corfu in order to present the kind regards of Abdul Hamid to Wilhelm II.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> BOA, Y. EE. 13-25 (29/Ra/1326).

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation focused on the Corfu-Yanya basin at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and emphasized the connections that transcended the politically bounded territories by using a transnational historical approach. A transnational historical approach denaturalizes the nation and seeks to question the assumptions of nation-centric approaches, which have long dominated historiography, while investigating hitherto neglected transnational connections or the overlooked aspects, such as the complex linkages, networks, and actors at local level.

Transnational history is a new field of historical study with many proponents and opponents. Transnational historical approach and its use in the reconstruction of the past events or the novelty of transnational perspectives are still debated among the historians and there are significant criticisms addressed at this approach.<sup>233</sup> The criticisms are in order. Even if a transnational historical approach sets out to underscore the permeability of national borders, through its references to the nation as the principal unit, it ends up reinforcing and reconstructing the nation and national boundaries. Furthermore, since it focuses on transitions and border crossings in-between two points, a point of departure and arrival, it puts forward a rather linear understanding of past events and to a certain extent disregards the expansion of circulation of people, symbols, commodities, practices, and even entities into new destinations. While a transnational approach criticizes the nation-centric historical approaches and promises to transcend their basic assumptions, the transnational gaze by focusing on two points misses the flows and linkages among multiple sites and layers.

Despite its pitfalls, I have decided to use a transnational historical approach in this study to attract scholarly attention to a hitherto unstudied route between Corfu and Yanya, owing to the promises that the transnational lens offers to the researcher. First of all, this approach allowed me to question and problematize the nation-centric historiography on Corfu and Yanya. Moreover, it allowed me to track and elaborate on illegal border crossings between these lands, while providing the means to better account for the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity and therefore diverse political

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<sup>233</sup> C. A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, And Patricia Seed, "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History", *AHR*, Vol. 111, No. 5, December 2006, pp. 1440-1464.

views in both ends. This approach also helped me to reveal the discrepancies between the local identities and the negotiations and resistances during the construction of national identities over the local ones.

The history of Corfu's place in international politics elaborated in detail in the thesis provides a general framework of Corfu's connections to the larger world. However, one needs to move beyond nation-centric political and diplomatic histories to capture the forces that shape the historical processes affecting a place and its people. In this thesis I drew attention to the internal dynamics of Corfu and questioned the Greek scholarship, which asserts that a good part of the Greek population of Corfu supported the cause of unification with Greece to an extent that the British administration could no longer disregard or ignore. This political situation provided a basis for the transfer of British authority to Greece in 1864. Greece, as the new sovereign of Corfu, appears to have succeeded in using the island in accordance with its national sentiments.

The picture was way more complex than presented above. Avoiding the narrow analysis of nation-centered historical approaches, this study did not consider the Corfiote society as monolithic. The Corfiote society was composed of transnational olive oil merchants, landowners whose roots went back to Venetians, non-resident European and Ottoman traders, dockworkers the majority of whom were Jewish, and petty traders, craftsmen, and peasants in the countryside, who were mainly Greek. The cosmopolitan and multilayered social structure contributed to the formation of hybrid identities in the island.

Such diversity meant different economic and therefore political expectations. Some of the islanders favored the continuation of the British rule and strongly opposed the idea of unification with Greece. Merchants of the island believed annexation would threaten Corfu's harmonious atmosphere and jeopardize the transnational trade activities that brought prosperity to the island. Many landowners opposed the Greek rule in the island, since they believed Greek rule would introduce a new land system that would challenge their existing property rights. Peasants in the countryside, however, explicitly supported the annexation of the island to Greece. Their economic expectations heavily influenced their political stance. As this thesis has indicated, efforts to settle the land issues of the island ran into a deadlock. The Greek Parliament was unable to produce a solution until the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The transnational gaze revealed the local diversity at the other end, in Yanya. The Yanya Province, upon which the Ottoman historiography has rarely touched so far, was multicultural and multilingual province as the Corfiote society.

This thesis underlined the struggle for cultural dominion over the society of Yanya at the turn of the 20th century in order to understand the reactions, negotiations, and resistances of local peoples. Greece was evidently better organized in educational affairs. Not only Greek pupils were educated in 665 Greek schools in the region, but many Muslims families sent their children to these schools as well. Many Albanian intellectuals had their primary educations in Greek schools like *Zoseimaia* in Yanya. In fact, Athens designed the syllabi of the Greek schools in Epirus and assigned handpicked teachers to these schools. Nevertheless, the argument the well-established Greek schools in Epirus were built to raise the nationalist sentiment of the local Greek people, needs to be reconsidered. It is possible the Muslim families simply wanted their children to have better education.

The Vlach community in Yanya was another target group for cultural influence. The Greeks were not the only ones aiming to gain cultural ascendancy among the Vlachs, the Romanians had similar ambitions to absorb them culturally. Even though the capacity of Romanian influence was not analogous with the Greeks', the Orthodox Church, another influential actor in Yanya, struggled against the Romanization movement targeting the Vlachs. The Ottomans as well adopted methods more or less similar to those of the Greek and Romanian states. They offered the children of some Vlach notable families in the Yanya Province a chance to study in the elite school *Mekteb-i Sultanî* in Istanbul. It seems there is the need for more local studies that would stay outside the nation-centered paradigms to reevaluate the cultural wars that took place within Ottoman society.

Focusing on the role of local identities and communities in Corfu and Yanya with the transnational approach allowed me to reconsider the activities of the Albanian committees in the region. It is true the Ottoman historiography has a rich literature on Albanians in the Balkans. However, it overlooked certain aspects of these activities. One of the contributions of this study is introducing Corfu to scholarly debates on the activities of Albanian committees. Another one is to pay attention to Albanian-Greek relations on the eve of the Ottoman disintegration in the Balkans.

It appeared the Albanians were politically in a state of diversity during their tentative relations with Greece. Many different Albanian groups had distinct interests and were not consistent enough to generate a common policy regarding their future. Their political uncertainty manifested itself in their relations with Greece, whereas the latter was better equipped with a state ideology. Many unionist committees founded in Athens towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, emphasized the Albanian future in a political ground, on which the Greeks would set up the rules.

The pamphlet of Albanian committee found in Corfu also manifested the Greeks were the dominant part in this alliance. The committee propagated the idea that the Albanians were still not ready to organize an independent state. They believed the possible Ottoman disintegration meant either Austria or Italy would dominate the region. According to the view of the committee, the European Powers had capacity to assimilate the Albanian people. Since the Greeks and Albanians have long been living together without imposing their cultural hegemony over each other, the Greeks appeared as the most convenient ally of all.

There were similar policies on the Greek side. The Greek press attempted to erase the deep-rooted image of the “Turkish Albanian” in the Greek mind. The novel image of the Albanians was cultivated in the articles of newspapers circulated in Greece. Ismail Kemal Bey, as an influential Albanian character, played a proper role to disseminate this new political ground among the Albanians through his articles.

While this study set out to explore the unstudied connections within the Corfu-Yanya basin, certain aspects remain unexplored. Therefore, there are certain limitations to this study. Transnational approach emphasizes all sorts of border crossings such as trade activities, migration, or cultural exchanges. However, this thesis, which used the Ottoman archival materials as the primary source, could only focus on illegal border crossings. The material at my disposal did not allow me to track the other type of flows and linkages articulated between Corfu and Yanya. Besides the illegal border crossings, the thesis touched upon the frequent visits of the aristocrats, members of the royal families, representatives of the European consulates in Corfu and their guests who frequently visited the Yanya Province for shooting parties or to see the natural beauty as well as the archeological ruins in the countryside. Even if the back and forth movement of ordinary people or legal trade activities in the Corfu-Yanya basin constituted an important element of the transnational flows, the thesis could not expound on them owing to the lack of



relevant archival material. While transnational approach seeks to focus on transnational activism of non-elites and go beyond the elite-subaltern divide in history writing, I could not account for the transnational activities of the non-elites in the Corfu-Yanya basin. Moreover, I could only elaborate on the flow of contraband goods in one direction, from Corfu to Yanya and not in the reverse direction. The thesis, therefore, fell short of fully using the potential to explore all types of border crossings that the transnational approach promises. Nevertheless, this is the first study on the border crossings between Corfu and Yanya and further studies remain to be conducted to complement the missing dimensions in this study.

It is hoped this study will be of interest not only Ottoman historians but also historians of modern Greece. It is also hoped this study, which aimed to put forward new questions on a hitherto unstudied region, Yanya-Corfu basin, with a transnational and explorative approach will induce new and comparative research in the years to come.

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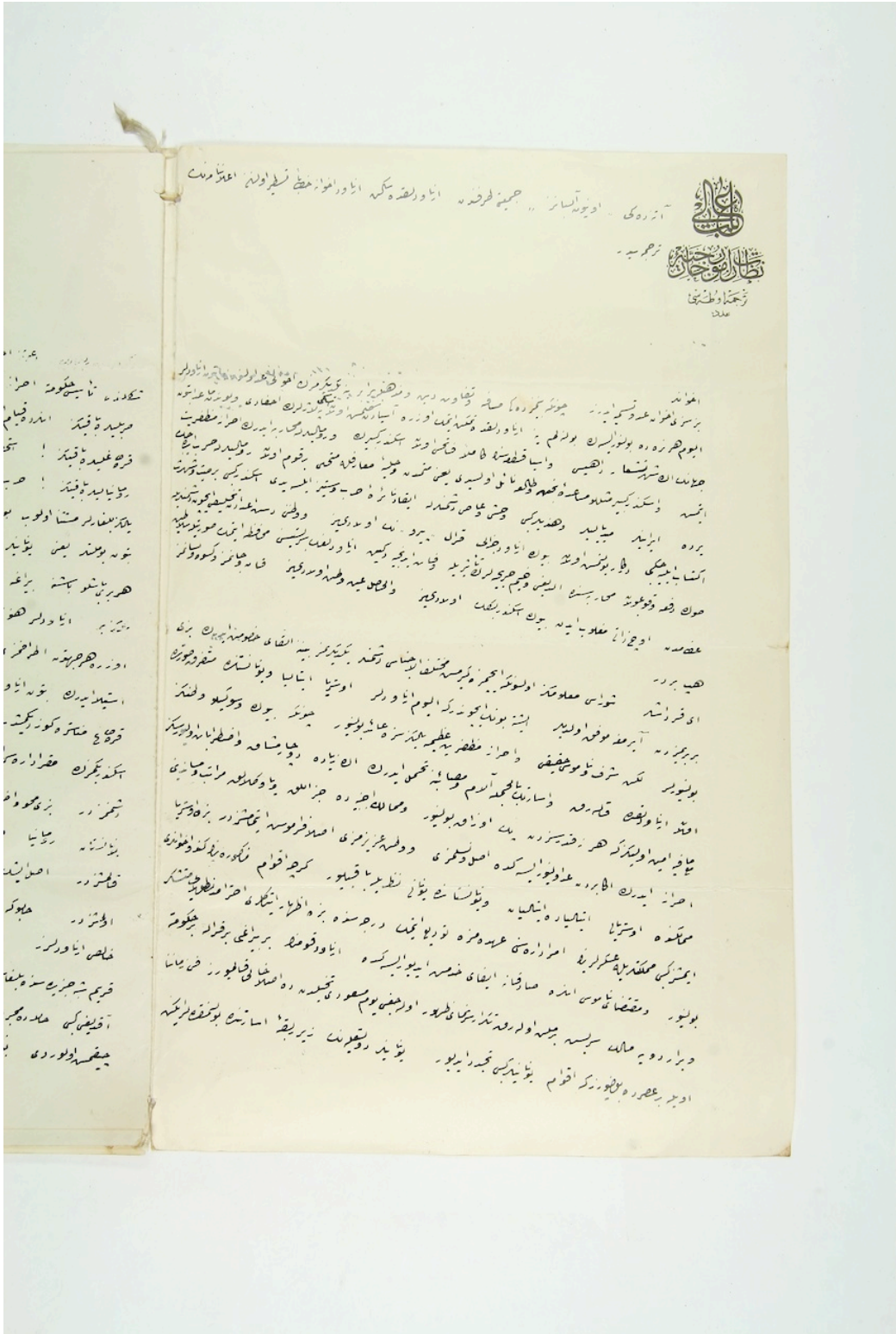
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APPENDICES

The Revolutionary Albanian Committee's Pamphlet,

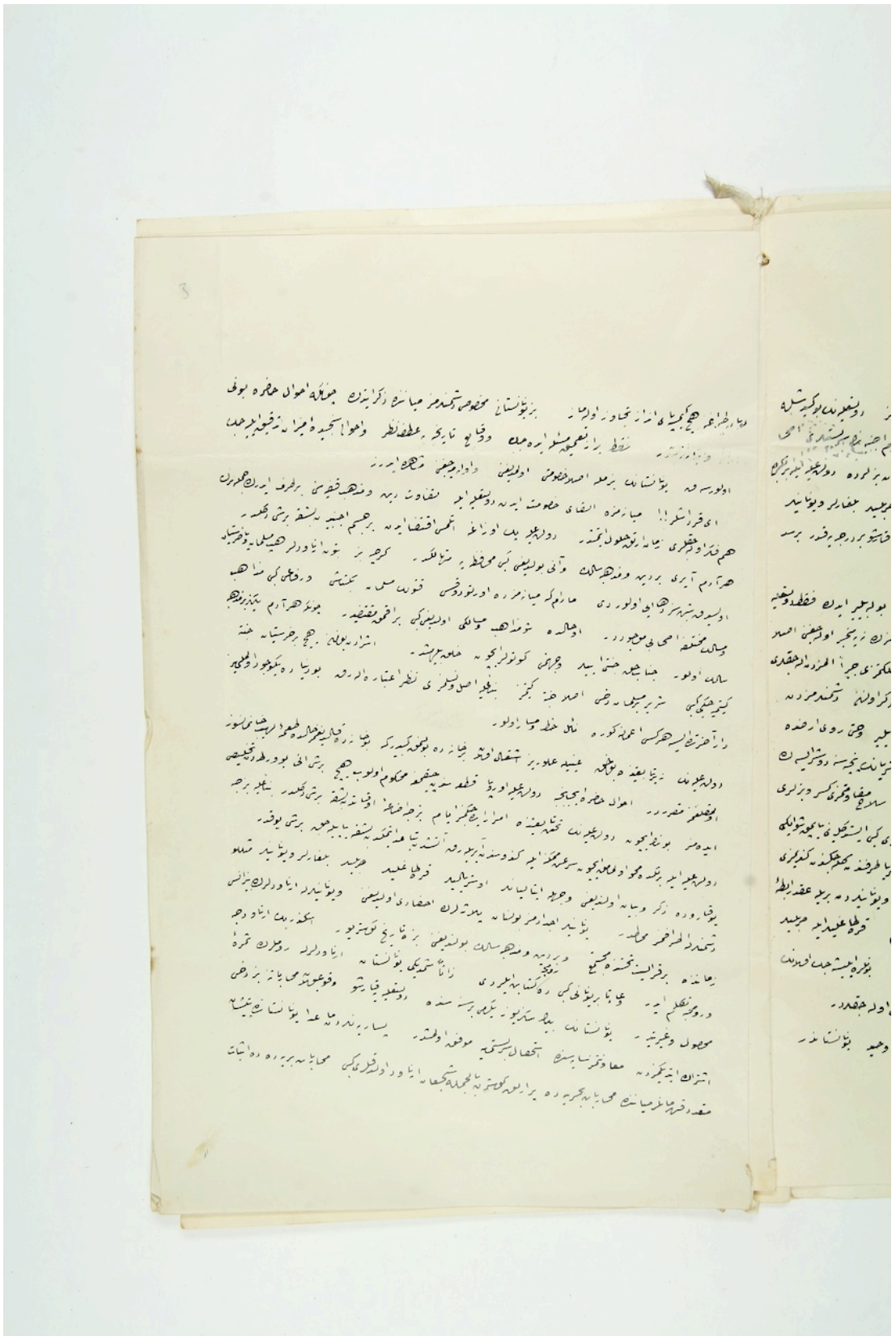
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دولت و بیعت و کسب و کسب  
 هم چنین است که در این  
 بدو آمده و در این  
 بویید جفا و بیعت  
 خاسته بر وجه بر سر  
 بود جبر این فقط و غیر  
 ترک از این امر  
 مگر ای جبر از این امر  
 کرد و این که در  
 بویید جبر روی اراده  
 نماند و بیعت و کسب  
 سواد و کسب و کسب  
 ای که این امر  
 با این امر که کسب  
 و بیعت و کسب  
 قریه علی و جبر  
 بویید جبر و بیعت  
 اورده و بیعت

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