

ALBANIA IN THE NOTES BY EVLIYA ÇELEBI IN THE 17TH CENTUR

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The Ottoman Empire underwent a series of radical changes throughout the 17th century, during which structural transformations occurred both in Anatolia and the Balkans. It was during this period that an empire built on conquest in its earlier existence had started paying attention to the organizational demands of the permanent settlements, such as tax collection. The same period also witnessed the birthpains of the same state's transformation into a settled monarchy.¹ Evliya Celebi is one of the prominent figures of this century who also was a live witness to this transformation, as well its socio-cultural and economic effects on the Ottoman geography. His work therefore goes far beyond being an example of a travelogue, and needs acknowledgement as a colorful presentation of the empire's sociological history in the 17th century geographic setting.² He depicts Balkan cities as lively settings that rival their counterparts in Anatolia, Syria and Egypt in economic wealth. Culturally, they are a good example of the impact of the center's tastes and preferences on the periphery. Meanwhile, Albania is an important center due to its commercial potential and geopolitical status in the Ottoman world. This is why at a time when the Ottoman Empire structurally transformed into a new order Evliya Celebi's writings on the Balkan cities and people carries significant importance. While his viewpoint is that of an elite, he did seek to understand the differences.

As an important traveller of the early modern age, Evliya Celebi sought to display the daily life in Albania, along with its demographic characteristics and culture. As such, the rich layers of his *Seyahatname* provide serious opportunities to historians to explore those settings. The name he picked for his book differs from the common travel type known as "rihla" in Islamic literature.³ Evliya Celebi's primary urge in his book is to provide a full description of the regions neighboring the Ottoman empire. Rather than following the rihla (e.g. el-Mukaddes and el-Makrizi) tradition of the Arab travellers (e.g. Ibn Cubayr and Ibn Battuta), he has taken up the example of the masalik wa mamalik and khitat traditions of Arab geographers. His

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¹ Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, Syracuse University Press, New York 2005.

² Robert Dankoff, "Evliya Çelebi ve Seyahatnamesi Işığında Osmanlı Toplum Hayatı", *Türkler*, çev. Nasuh Uslu, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, Ankara 2002, c. 10, s. 268-291.

³ *Rihla* is the term used to refer to pilgrimage in Islamic literary.

works are based on a far wider geographic diameter than his counterparts of the same period, and involves diverse elements like a version of geographical history, traditions, folklore, and other details. A closer look at the poetics of Evliya Celebi's descriptions reveal that a detailed description of cities remains the most significant literary currency of his writings. In these, it is also possible to detect a method based on earlier formulations and diagrams. According to this method, a city's history and administrative status, along with its topography are the initial details shared in his work. Next comes their physical fabric, houses, madrasas, mosques, bazars and public bathrooms, i.e., its public, religious and economic centers in description. In addition to these details, Evliya Celebi also discusses the city community's behavior and traditions, dress code, elite, and the peculiarities of the language(s) they speak in detail. For him, the city is not a dwelling place for its inhabitants, but also a construction set to reach posterity. Finally, along with the life stories of the dead people and its holy people, graveyards, tombs of saints and shrines wrap up the picture.¹ Regardless of geographic location, all cities ranging from Skopje, Belgrade, Aleppo, Cairo are introduced through this general framework. Albanian cities, which are important stops in the colorful fabric of the Ottoman world in the Balkans, are also a part of the same framework and descriptive formulation.²

The initial activities of the Ottomans in the Balkans date back to as early as 1383. During this period, the increasing pressure of the Ottoman raiders on the Valonian prince led him to leave his lands under the protection of the Venice.³ The campaigns of Bayezid I on Albania which lasted from 1394 to 1396 proved fruitful in the resulting Ottoman expansion.⁴ The earliest records of Albania under Ottoman administration date back to Bayezid I reign. These are mainly *tahrir* records, which were prepared during the campaigns to Albania in 1394 and 1397. Meanwhile, it is possible to detect various feudal families loyal to Ottomans in various settings in records dating from 1416. While families receiving *timar* were mostly Christians, Muslim population solely consisted of military and religious officials. Later, following Sultan Murad II.'s conquest of Janija, he required new records for lands

¹ Robert Dankoff, "Bir Edebiyat Anıtı: Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi", *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, Ed. Talat Sait Halman-Mehmet Kalpaklı, Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 2007, c. 2, s. 348-349.

² Halil İnalçık, "Bir Musahibin Anıları ve Seyahat Notları", *Evliya Çelebi*, Ed. Nuran Tezcan-Semih Tezcan, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 2011, s. 336-337.

³ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 1995, 6. bsm., c. 1, s. 203-209

⁴ Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, çev. Nilüfer Epçeli, Yeditepe Yayınları, İstanbul 2011, c. 1, s. 189-199, Nicolae Jorga, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, çev. Nilüfer Epçeli, Yeditepe Yayınları, İstanbul 2011, c. 1, s. 238.

and population. According to a record dating from 1432, Ottoman dominance began to be visible in the region. While Southern Albania went under the Ottoman control, Skender Beg (Georges Castriota from) the Castriota family in the North gave a hard time to the Ottomans. Although Skender Beg was raised in the Ottoman palace for fifteen years, he shifted his loyalties to Alphonso V, King of Naples in March 1451. Although Murad II and Mehmet II tried to eliminate this threat through their campaigns to Albania, it did not end until Skender Beg's death in 1468.¹

Following the death of Skender Beg, Albania witnessed the long lasting conflict between Venice, which claimed ownership to the region due to the treaty dating from 1463 and the Ottomans. During this period, Ottomans did manage to control those regions they lost earlier. Finally, they took control of the region through the conquests of Akcahisar, Drivasto, Les and Jabyak in 1478, Shkodre in 1479 and Durres in 1501. However, the construction of regional administration would wait the conquest of Bar (Antivari) and Ulgum in 1571.²

Albania in the Ottoman period showed changes in economic and demographic aspects. Cities in the first period of Ottoman rule changed into small markets. For example, Vlorë has established strong relationships with commercial centers such as Istanbul and Bursa. All kinds of fabrics, velvets, cotton textiles, carpets, spices and leather trade flourished in Vlorë. At the end of the sixteenth century, two major changes in Albania consisted visible. "Two fundamental changes in the structure of the empire, namely the disruption of the *timar* system on the one hand, and the deterioration of the fiscal system on the other, had their impact on the situation in Albania as elsewhere. The first change, which coincided with the weakening of the central authority at the end of the 16th century made possible the formation of large estates in the provinces, while the second made it necessary for the state to assess new taxes and to reform the *djizya*, which due to its increased rate, affected particularly the Christian population. The discontent is manifested especially in the rebellious attitude of the Catholic highlanders in Albania in the 17th and 18th centuries and in their co-operation with hostile powers. On the other hand, as the central control weakened, the highlanders began to penetrate into Rumeli and even in Anatolia from the beginning of the 17th century. In the 18th century, pashas, begs

¹ Halil İnalçık, "Arnavutluk'ta Osmanlı Hakimiyetinin Yerleşmesi ve İskender Bey İsyanının Menşei", *Fatih ve İstanbul*, İstanbul 1953, c. I-II, s. 152-175; İnalçık, "İskender Bey", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, İstanbul 1950, c. V, s. 1079-1082.

² Mustafa L. Bilge, "Arnavutluk", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul 1991, c. 3, s. 385-386, Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, s. 360-372.

and a'yan everywhere took into their service these highlanders who were reputed to be the best mercenaries.”¹

Albania described by Evliya Çelebi is a country that has changed the social and economic structures. He toured Kosovo in 1660, northern Albania and Montenegro in 1662, and southern Albania in 1670. In his “Seyahatname” or “Books of Travel” is described these regions.² For 17th-century Albania, and in particular for the interior of the country, the "Seyahatname" constitutes a mine of information.³

Social Life in Albania

Population

Evliya Celebi's Albania displays a cosmopolitan Balkan life as its demographic component. Along with Muslim and Christian Albanians, Greeks and occasionally Gypsies formed the major groups. It is also possible to trace the elements of millet system in the region.⁴ For instance, according to the figures provided by Evliya Celebi, within a total of 37 neighborhoods, 18 of them consisted of Muslims, 14 of them populated the Christians and 7 of them belonged to the Jewish people, along with 1 Gypsy neighborhood.⁵

Albanian People

Evliya Celebi's depiction of Albanians are mostly positive. He frequently praises its men as fearless heroes who frequently raid non-Muslim lands for holy war. Similarly old Albanians are described as friendly and sage. While describing a market place in Elbasan, Evliya Celebi describes the Albanian woman as follows: “From the backwood villages arrive in such Albanian girls with fairy faces, and angel figures shining like stars.”⁶ However, he also adds that Albanians are quite

¹ Halil İnalçık, “Arnawutluk”, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1986, s. 656-657. İnalçık, “The Ottoman Decline and its Effects upon the Reaya”, *Aspects of the Balkans, Continuity and Change*, Ed. H. Birnbaum/ S. Vryonis, Lahey 1972, s. 338-354.

² M. Cavid Baysun, “Evliya Çelebi”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, İstanbul, s. 405-406, Müctebe İlgürel “Evliya Çelebi”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, TDV. Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, c. 11, s. 530-531.

³ Robert Dankoff/ Robert Elsie, *Evliya Celebi in Albania and Adjacent Regions: Kossovo, Montenegro, Ohrid (Evliya Celebi's Book of Travels)*, Brill Academic Pub., 1999, 299 s.

⁴ Joseph R. Hacker, “Jewish Autonomy in the Ottoman Empire: Its Scope and Limits”, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, Ed. Avigdor Levy, The Darwin Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1994, s. 153-202, ayrıca bkz. Macit M. Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi Mit ve Gerçek*, Klasik Yayınları, İstanbul 2004.

⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, Haz. Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul 2011, c. 8, s. 627.

⁶ *Seyahatname*, c. 8, s. 697.

stubborn.¹ Nevertheless, Evliya Celebi praises their cleanliness along with their good nature, regardless of their sex, and well-behavior.² While explaining the root cause of people's beauty with the climate of the city they dwell in, he also underlines their hospitality.³ In his descriptions of Kostendil, Elbasan and Janija, Evliya Celebi adds comments, such as "it is considered as very ill-mannered to keep doors closed and show hospitality to one's guest"⁴

Another aspect of Albanian identity in Seyahatname is depicted as the proclivity for recreational activities, and a general tendency to have a good time. In fact, in his depictions of various Albanian cities, as well as their crowded bazaars and marketplaces, Evliya Celebi underlines this feature repeatedly. While describing the famous recreation areas in Albania, he precisely makes the following comments: "In these places, one runs into lovers flirting with each other at every turn. There is much mirth and gaiety in these gatherings, which reminds one of Harzemsah Navrouz at daytime and of Huseyin Baykara assemblies in the evening. The sound of the large number of the variety of singers, instrument players and thespians displaying their art even quieten the nightingales, which otherwise love to sing."⁵

While Evliya's depiction of historical details does not run paralel to today's historical classifications, they do show consistency within themselves. While referring to various historical dates or details, he often uses certain known points of reference. Evliya Celebi also makes use of information available in certain holy books or legends (of people, rulers, Seddad bin ad, Amalika and Jamshid), too. Among historical figures that are used as Evliya's historical points of reference are Buhtunahr, Alexander the Great, Anoushirvan, are Byzantian Emperor Harkil. Meanwhile, he refers to the Circassians, Lazes and Abhasians as Arab descendents of the Kureishian tribe. He uses a similar description for Albanians, too.⁶ In various parts of Seyahatname, Evliya Celebi claims Albanian people to have originally descended from Cebel-i Elheme of the Kureishis, who constructed Albania during the time of Caliph Omar.⁷

According to Evliya Celebi, Albanians are a talented folk, which helps to explain the large number of educated people and poets found there. In a city named Ergiri,

¹ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 645.

² Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 656.

³ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 689.

⁴ Robert Dankoff, "Ayıp Değil!", *Çağının Sıra dışı Yazarı Evliya Çelebi*, Ed. Nuran Tezcan, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, s. 112.

⁵ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 701

⁶ Tansu Açık, "Evliya Çelebi'de Yunan-Roma Dünyası", *Çağının Sıra dışı Yazarı Evliya Çelebi*, Ed. Nuran Tezcan, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, s. 29.

⁷ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 701

he notes the existence of several reknowned poets, such as Bukayi, Figani, Nalisi, Sukuti and Fezai. Among these people, he further underlines the abilities of Nalisi as a specialist in kasides.¹

Albanian Names

A closer look at Evliya Celebi's methods of description reveals his efforts to take a snapshot of the local people in all aspects. Regardless of being in Egypt or in the Balkans, detailed information regarding people's lives and personalities are always provided in his work. Yet, those parts of his work examining names, which hold clues about cultural and social origins perhaps reveal the most interesting details. According to Evliya Celebi, while Cemalizade and Kasimzade are some of the common male names, Selime and Salime are among the most widespread female names in Albania. Meanwhile most Albanian handmaidens or concubines are noted to receive Canisi and Hanifi as their names.²

Albanian Attire

Dresscode in a land can be a material cultural indicator of the social history of a country, period and geography. As Fernand Braudel points out, clothes can provide serious clues regarding raw materials, factors of production, cultural constants, fashions and social hierarchy. While clothes fashion can vary according to the personal taste, it can still be a constant indicator that reflect social contrasts.³ Seyahatname in this regard offers some valuable observations concerning the social dynamics of clothing. Albania is noted as a place where covered bazaars (bedesten) provide all kinds of rich fabrics and goods, and its people are noted for their tasteful attires. All notables wear *mutalla* turbans, and are dressed in sable furs and silks. Meanwhile, young people prefer *sikma cuka* and wear velvet clothes with red colored sable fur caps on top. All men wrap a silk belt named teybend around their waists, and complete their clothings with knives known as palas.

The relative freedom in female attires characteristic to Rumeli regions is also observable in Albania. Women belonging to reaya wear many different styles of clothings with white colored turbans on top, and let their hair loose and their faces unobstructed. In Janija, Evliya Celebi further reports that among Greek and Christian Albanians, a pointed black colored skullcap is fashionable, even though he also adds that he finds the addition of an Albanian kalabak to its pointed end of

¹ Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatname, Seyit Ali Kahraman-Yücel Dağlı, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, c. 6, İstanbul 2010, s. 126.

² Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 699.

³ Fernand Braudel, *Maddi Uygurluk Ekonomi ve Kapitalizm XV-XVIII. Yüzyıllar: Gündelik Hayatın Yapıları*, çev. Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay, Gece Yayınları, c. 1, Ankara 1993, s. 271.

these caps as useless. Evliya, who finds this attire to have a rather weird and eccentric outlook comments that a shawl made of felt from sheep wool completes this attire. Meanwhile in Ohrid, elderly women don various types of gilded Mohammedan turbans and complete it with feraces of various colors.¹ Evliya Celebi points out to the widespread use of ferace among women, which enable them to shop modestly in covered bazaars and marketplaces.² Evliya Celebi remains an unsurpassed source for cultural history and material elements for his period, too. Although fez became an Ottoman symbol much later in Sultan Mahmud II period, he points out to its favored use by levents in charge of castles located on the borders of Albania during his time. Evliya Celebi makes numerous references to this attire and emphasizes its similarity to Algerians.³

Life in Albanian Society

Evliya Celebi commends the natural beauty and demography of Albania. While describing a town named Virahor, he vividly describes its recreation areas with its tasty springs and tall trees with a frequency unseen in Greek, Arab and Persian lands. Meanwhile, his anecdotes on social life gives clues about the habits of Albanians in everyday life. A coffee house by the stone bridge in the same town offers clues about daily life: “This is a place which resembles decorated by Chinese motifs, and proves to be a gathering point for travelers and intellectuals. In front of the coffeehouse are tall sycamore trees and underneath are sofas surrounded by banisters where all travelers passing by take a rest freely and enjoy themselves while having drinks and coffee. On each tree are the nests of many hundreds of thousands of beautiful sounding birds. When one of the melancholy sounding birds begin singing, those who listen to it feel that they are enjoying life to the fullest.”⁴

The joie de vivre of Albanians are often mentioned in Evliya’s work. In his descriptions of Lefkada Island, one can find the traces of a cosmopolitan city life: “they have so many taverns there that all levents of the castle end up drinking there all day and night to the accompaniment of shawm-and-drum. This creates a din reminiscent of those in the Vilayet-i Cezayir.”⁵

Myths and Superstitions

Although Evliya Celebi is into local folklore, he also admits when his knowledge of them is second-hand. For instance, during his visit to Ma’fuf el-Kerhi’s tomb

¹ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 633.

² Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 717.

³ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 605.

⁴ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 604-605.

⁵ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 611.

located in the vicinity of Baghdad, he refers to the myth of lions visiting it, and one of them keeping guard with the graveyard watchman as follows:¹ “While I have visited the tomb many times, I never saw any lions there.” When he encounters a similar situation in Albania, Evliya adopts a similar approach. Meanwhile, he makes the following comments regarding the Boyana Lake as follows:

“The Creator of our Universe has created seven islands of various dimensions made of grass and roots, some of them of about a harman or two, three or five harman length. In some years, when faced with strong winds, they end up moving to a different neighborhood, and in some seasons these little islands meet one another in the middle of the lake and unite. All of them contain a variety of little saplings and greens. People living in the region reach them on boats for a visit and some rest and make themselves merry there. If there’s a particularly strong wind, a few of them may end up moving on the lake, while carrying the people on them, reminiscent of Solomon’s throne. The locals also like the movement of these islands, and boast that “It happened thus back in our age,” in the secure knowledge that they would never get hurt while one them, since it is their natural composition. “God is capable of everything” (Qur’an, Bakara 20). They explain that “if the winds blow particularly strong, those islands will move; otherwise, there would never be a movement. While there have been particularly strong winds in Alexandria, I have never seen them move, even though I have seen them stay still at all times.”²

Evliya Celebi carefully observes those superstitions or bizarre forms of behavior spread in public. For instance, he is astonished by a tradition prevalent at the time in Albanian cities, which involves them hiring men who moan and bawl for their dead people every Sunday to commemorate them. For this very reason he also names the city of Ergiri as the “city of moans.” In his words, “what is strange is the ability of those people who are hired to moan for the dead can cry and shed tears for someone whom they are not even related to.”³

Religion and Spiritual Life

Evliya Celebi reflects the religious/spiritual life in Albania through his vignettes on tekkes and tasavvuf people. He names Dervis Huseyin Tekkesi located on the east of Aya Mavra castle as one of the stops where teachers gather to have chats on religion, and perform tevhid zikrullah.⁴ Seyahatname also mentions the name of

¹ Robert Dankoff, *Seyyah-ı Âlem Evliya Çelebi'nin Dünyaya Bakışı*, çev. Müfit Günay, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, s. 211.

² Seyahatname, c. 6, s. 124.

³ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 656.

⁴ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 607.

Baba Sultan in Vlorë as an indicator of the strong traces of Bektasi teaching in the Balkans. The Tekke of Hacı Bektas Veli located in Kanye, which was originally built as a pious foundation of Gazi Sinan Pasa, is not only mentioned as a place renowned in the region, but also famous in the lands of Rums, Arabs and Persians. This construction is described by Evliya to have a big waqf; boasting a kitchen distributing various types of food to passers by. Evliya Celebi explains the devotion of the locals of Ergiri to Bektasi teaching through interesting examples. For instance, Evliya claims that similar to the people in Aydonat, these people do not eat zerde and call it an invention of Muaviye, and avoid boza and wearing blue color.¹

Evliya's descriptions of Albanian towns and villages reveal that these encompassed all the elements of a refined Islamic culture. Seyahatname remains one of the primary sources in understanding the sufism in 17th century Balkans. Without a care in their size, Evliya Celebi recorded all dervish tekkes in Balkans; thus holding a mirror to the liveliness of sufi movements in the Balkans.² While discussing the outskirts of Ergiri, he particularly underlines the great respect that Tekke Mosque Hankah and Sheikh Abdullah Aga receives. He also refers to the Halveti tekke in Albanian Belgrade as a unique construction.³

Customs and Traditions

Seyahatname devotes quite a big portion to Albania. Evliya Celebi therefore describes the social life and cultural characteristics of the local people in detail. While remembering his father, who stayed in the village of Mikat on the road of Vlorë 70 years earlier, and who left an inscription on the wall still visible, Evliya Celebi argues that the Albanian people are brave, heroic and gallant people.⁴ While lavish in his praises, Evliya Celebi is not reticent in voicing his dislike on certain matters, too. For instance, while discussing a Muslim village named Lopis in the lands of Devline, he bluntly asserts that its inhabitants are “evil men.” Similarly, his descriptions of the folk traditions of the region, including its most social aspects, such as marriage, birth, and death are particularly noteworthy. While describing a marriage ceremony he witnessed at a village named Libohova located on the border of the town of Ergiri, he comments the following: “We handed in the bride after much festivities to his groom. That night, there was such an excess of drinking and festivities accompanied by drinks and assemblies reminiscent of the court of Huseyin Baykara that by the morning “70 barrels of wine and 2 thousand lamb

¹ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 654.

² Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 653.

³ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 669-670.

⁴ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 676.

kebabs were consumed.” In short, this poor fellow watched this gathering for a week, which was a form of Albanian wedding, where his praises of the event run short.”¹

Albanian Cuisine

What Evliya Celebi writes about the Albanian cuisine gives important clues about their eating and drinking habits of 17th century Albanian society. Albanian lands, particularly Aydonat, plays an important role in supplying the olives and olive oil of the Ottoman Court.² Albania is also described as a land rich in lemons, citrus fruits, figs, and various greens. In Delvinye, olive and olive oil trade plays an important role in their income.³ Among Albanian food, white Albanian breakfast rolls (simit), white flour pastries (pogaca), pastry with chickpeast, borek with chicken filling, baklava with cream filling and samosa with almonds are noticeable. Among drinks, a version of boiled grape molasses named reyhani comes up. Among this food, we also find out that Albanian society likes to drink wine. Evliya Celebi particularly mentions this detail in those sections where he discusses the castle levants and dizdars. In harbor regions, various types of fish, including carp, chub mackerel, grey mullet and seabass are also frequently mentioned. According to Evliya Celebi, another praiseworthy aspect of the Albanian cuisine is its sweet smelling, pure and clear honey, the likes of which he claims that cannot be found even in places like Athens and Crete.⁴ Evliya Celebi also adds that the hosaf and sweets in Ohrid are unsurpassed. He states that “I was about to die after trying 26 varieties of hosaf at a local’s feast in Ohrid. In the lands of Rumeli, Ohrid is known for its hosafs and feasts.”⁵

Conclusion

In Franz Babinger’s work, titled “Evliya Celebi’s Route in Albania,” he discusses his 1662 and 1670 visits to Albania, and concludes that most of the information disclosed there as accurate. While acknowledging the monotony of Evliya Celebi’s descriptions, Babinger also explains it as due to his use of the method known as geography of nations.⁶ Indeed, the information provided by Evliya is far superior to

¹ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 658-659.

² Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 638.

³ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 645.

⁴ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 681-682.

⁵ Seyahatname, c. 8, s. 716.

⁶ Franz Babinger, “Ewlija Tschelebi’s Reisewege in Albanien.” *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* 33, (1930), s. 138-78, II Abt., fq. 138-178; [Reprint: *Rumelische Streifen* (Berlin, 1938), 1-40], Nuran Tezcan, “1814’ten 2011’e Seyahatname

those limited information given by another known figure of his century, known as Katip Celebi. Given the rarity of any travel notes on the region from 17th century, Evliya Celebi's descriptions gain further importance. His study offers a detailed yet balanced view of the lives, human and material cultural elements in different geographies of the Ottoman world. His depictions of Albania are particularly colorful due to their lively sceneries. The Albania reflected through the lens of Seyahatname is a rich land in terms of its economics, with prosperous cities. The methods he uses to depict the Albanian people are no different from those he employs for other Ottoman lands and people. That said, Evliya Celebi does make a successful analysis of the main characteristics of the Albanian people, which makes them stand out on their own. Similar to other Balkan lands, Evliya's snapshot of Albania is that of a land that is caught in the calm before the approaching storm. With the second Vienna defeat, the Ottoman lands in the Balkans entered a new phase with different political dynamics and social conditions. The importance of Evliya Celebi's writings lie in witnessing the conditions preceding this turning point a quarter of a century earlier, and his ability to capture some of the clues of the this forthcoming change.

THE SHKODRA BANNER ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE DURING THE TANZIMAT PERIOD (1839-1876)

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The most precise topic of the regulatory work of the Ottoman state administration in 19th century was the reconstruction of the Ottoman provincial administration. Sultan II. Mahmud (1808-1839) continued effort to maintain the Nizam-i-Jadid reforms to strengthen the central authority after passing the throne. After abolition of the Janissary quarry, fundamental changes in the administrative and military areas began to be realized. First, the Anatolia States administratively divided into four sections¹. The arrangements in the administrative and civil areas made during the reign of Sultan Mahmud were aimed the strengthening of the central authority had acquired. The elimination of the maverick administrators and Ayans in various parts of the country was achieved in success and almost all regions were collected under the administration of the central authority.

The most important event in the first half of the 19th century pointing out the transformation of the Ottoman Empire was the announcement of Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu (3 November 1839). By the programmatic reforms of Tanzimat, it was effected to correct the administrative deficiencies in the Ottoman Empire, to equalize muslims in non-muslim populations, and to prevent the major powers does not intervene in the internal affairs of the state. However, the implementation of envisaged reforms had been passed; the people harmed their interests with the Tanzimat period was encountered to strong resist. During this period, there had been problems in the implementation of the Tanzimat in the Balkans.

The centrism tendency posed by the Tanzimat movement affected the Ottoman state administration in two main ways. First, a new organization was created in financial area. Second, there was a need a proper, quick and equitable functioning process by the local people and the clusters to affect the administration, it had given rise to the tradition of decentralization in the Ottoman Empire.

¹ Halil İnalçık, ‘Eyalet’, Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi (DIA), C. XI, İstanbul 1995, p. 548.

Just before the declaration of the Tanzimat Reform, a provincial organization of the Ottoman Empire was encountered to include the governors for management of the states (eyalet), while mütesellim for the management of the sandjak (sancak, liva), from time to time, in the presence of the administrators called mutasarrıf¹.

When entering the period of Tanzimat, the Shkodra city² was the center of a state covering all Northern Albania³. From the second half of the 18th century, Bushati family from the local feudal powers had been effective in Shkodra and had this city their headquarters. In Albania, there were two major pashalic: Shkodra Pashalic in the management of Bushati family at north and the other Ioannina Pashalic in the management of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha at south. However Mahmud II got Bushati dynasty reigning in Shkodra to Istanbul in 1831 so brought end to the existence of the family in this city and made a new administrative arrangement. After the elimination of local feudal forces, the old state system had been renewed and the states were replaced by Pashalics applied a policy of centralization. With this new administrative reform in 1836, the territory of Albania was divided into nine pashalics as Shkoder, Monastir, Janina, Prizren, Silk, Pristina, Skopje, including İvranya and Leskovik⁴. By the year 1846 after the proclamation of the Tanzimat, Shkodra and Pirizren Pashalics separated from the State of Rumelia and Shkodra state was established as a new form of government. As a result of arrangements, it is understood that the Tanzimat was started to be implemented in Sandjak of Shkodra in 1847⁵. But there were those who wanted to continue to the old procedure. For example, in 1855, the Latin people living in the two villages connected to Gjakova district of Sanjak Shkodra claimed the collection of taxes in accordance with the procedure before the Tanzimat⁶.

After the proclamation of the Tanzimat, the first innovation in the administrative field were formation of muhassılıks and Muhassılık Assemblies which muhassıls have to create legally where they go. Muhassıls were assigned the task of actions to

¹ Musa Çadırcı, "Tanzimat'ın İlânı Sıralarında Türkiye'de Yönetim (1826-1839)", Belleten, C. LI/201, TTK pub., Ankara 1988, p. 1222, 1229.

² Shkodra name comes from Skodra in the language of Illyrian. Shkoder referred to names such as Shkoder, Skord, Shkoder, Scutari, Alexandria, Skadar, Scodre in history. Ali Bardhi, Müfettiş Davut Boriçi'nin Günlüğünde (1870-1877) İşkodra Vilayeti'nde Eğitim, Marmara Universty Graduate School of Social Sciences MA thesis, Istanbul 2009, p. 14.

³ Albania was mentioned as the place where the Albanian community rather than a political or administrative region name under the management of Ottoman Empire. Hale Şıvgın, "Arnavutlarda Milli Bilincin Gelişme Süreci", Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları, Kasım-Aralık 2003, 147,p.3.

⁴ Ali Bardhi, Müfettiş Davut Boriçi'nin Günlüğünde (1870-1877) İşkodra Vilayeti'nde Eğitim, Marmara Universty Graduate School of Social Sciences MA thesis, Istanbul 2009, p. 28.

⁵ BOA., Sadâret Evrakı Mektubî Kalemi (A.MKT), no. 97/73.

⁶ BOA, Hâriciye Nezâreti Mektubi Kalemi (HR. MKT), no. 112/75.

perform the count of population and goods where they go¹. So the expected success in management from Muhassıllık system required by the Tanzimat did not achieve in 1842, this institution was abolished. The state system is also affected by this situation in nature. According to the new regulation implemented where Tanzimat was applicable, state were separated to sandjak; sandjak to district. The villages had been continuing to exist as the smallest administrative units. According to this system, the administration of villages was given to demarch, the administration of district to director of distict, and while the administration of the sandjaks to prefect. The state also was ruled by governors. Sandjak of Shkodra was ruled by the administration of district during this period by taking a share of the new arrangement². Shkodra District Governor was also included in district directors under responsible to the prefect³. Accordance with the application made from March 1842, the dignitaries in each district on the places included in the Tanzimat gathered and elected one of them to get director. According to the legislation, the person who will serve as director were paid attention to being loved by the people of honest, reliable, attention to personalities. Solely, the ones was elected who wanted the people to be sometimes the director according to the status of districts, from time to time, the assignments was done under the initiatives of governors. The assignment of the directorate became absolute by approval of the center⁴. No payment was made for services of the directorate by the state, free services were conducted. Here were a free service and people assigned to the task who were not civil servants trained by trade, abuses were more likely here than in other units. Therefore, appointments were treated selectively. For example, after inquiry about Hadji Pasazade Mustafa who wanted to be the manager to Podgorica District connected to Shkodra was decided to be or not be the manager⁵.

When Tanzimat reforms were applied, Gosine District⁶, Bar District⁷, Zadrima District⁸, Podgorica District⁹, Ülgün District¹, Leş District² and Gjakova District³

¹Yücel Özkaya, "Tanzimat Öncesi Sosyal ve Kültürel Durum ve 1840-1850 Arasında TaşradaTanzimat Uygulaması", Tanzimatın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu (Bildiriler), Ankara 1991, p. 121-140, 261; Ayla Efe, "Muhassıllık Teşkilatı", Anadolu University Graduate School of Social Sciences PhD thesis, Eskişehir 2002, p. 8-10.

² BOA, A.MKT., no. 17/61.

³ It is understood that is targeted prevention of a possible damage to the collection of tithe revenues and waste by suggesting that the managers from dynasty gentry assigned to administration of districts were busy with work of the country and the poor. Musa Çadırcı, "Türkiye'de Kaza Yönetimi (1840-1876)", Belleten, LIII/206, Ankara 1989, p.238.

⁴ Musa Çadırcı, "Türkiye'de Kaza Yönetimi (1840-1876)", Belleten, LIII/206, Ankara 1989, p. 237-239.

⁵ BOA, A.MKT., no. 48/62.

⁶ BOA, A.MKT., no. 139/100.; Sadâret Divân-ı Hümâyûn Kalemî (A. DVN) no. 114/48.; 19/10.

⁷ BOA, A.MKT., no. 135/39.

⁸ BOA, A.MKT., no. 217/17; BOA, Sadâret Evrakı Mektubî Kalemî Mühimme (A. MKT. MHM), no.352/78; BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no.353/23.

⁹ BOA, A.MKT., no. 48/62.; A. DVN. No. 25/23.

connected to Shkodra Sandjak were ruled by directorate. During the same period, some unrest occurred in the Bihor and Tirgoviste Districts within the sandjak⁴. Because of the situation not improved, these districts were bound to the Yeni Pazar Sandjak by the annexation to the state of Bosnia in 1849⁵. In the meantime, the Babiâli published the interim guidelines determining areas of the power and authority of the Governors, mutasarrifs, prefects and district directors in 1850, and submitted to the relevant authorities⁶.

After Islahat Edict of 1856, the Ottoman county administration had been revised. The defining characteristic of Islahat Edict of 1856 was providing affiliates of the people (especially non-Muslims) to the administration by re-organization of the administrative, financial and judicial organs. In fact, county management system envisaged in the edict put into practice with a regulation issued in June 9, 1861, in Lebanon, Jabal-i. Nevertheless the enforcement of new order to the all the empires was not achieved due to frictions in the Ottoman administration. The basic document which improved the Ottoman administrative system was "Regulations for the Administration of the Provinces" dated November 7, 1864. With this regulation, states were abolished and province units were established by consist of sandjak (liva), instead of state. Thoughts and works of Midhat Pasha, the Governor of Niche, were used in the preparation of new regulations⁷.

A number of arrangements had been made with Provincial Administration Act dated 1864 and the Balkan Peninsula had been established as Shkoder, Monastir and Janina Provinces. In 1865, the Shkodra Sandjak had been annexed in Tirana and Draç Districts⁸. By the year 1866, after dispersed and arrest of the ringleaders of the rebels against the principal in Zadrime town of Shkodra⁹, a new sandjak was performed by the annexation of some districts to Zadrime to ensure peace in of Shkodra. Salih Efendi, director of Leş and Zadrime Districts, was appointed to district governor of new sandjak¹⁰. Later, a livâ (sandjak) was decided to establish

¹ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no. 18/59.

² Leş District was established at the former Dukakin Sandjak. BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no. 90/66.

³ BOA, A. MKT. UM no. 162/51.; BOA., HR. MKT, no. 199/49.

⁴ BOA, Meclis-i Vâlâ Evrâkı (MVL), no. 134/3624.

⁵ BOA, MVL, no. 66/4.

⁶ BOA, A. MKT. UM no.337/69.

⁷ İlber Ortaylı; "I. Tanzimat Devrinde İdarî Yapı", Osmanlı Devleti Ve Medeniyeti Tarihi, Editor: E. İhsanoğlu, IRCICA, Istanbul 1994, Vol.1, p. 283.

⁸ During the rule of the Ottoman, it was the center of the district in the Sandjak Draç of Shkodra province. BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no. 322/43.

⁹ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no. 351/87.

¹⁰ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no.352/78.

as named Zadrime Sandjak¹. However the activities of the people against Salih Efendi were not able to be prevented².

Regulation of the Province in 1867 and the 1864 arrangement had been made to cover the whole empire. Province of Thessaloniki was founded in 1867 by Provincial Regulations and some parts of eastern Albania were taken into it. The combination of Kavaye and Peklin towns with Dıraç town by leaving from Shkodra and connecting to Ohrid by another change in the same year was decided by Vala Assembly and reported to Mutasarrıflık of Shkodra and Governor's Office of Rumeli³. By 1868, Provinces of Shkodra and Skopje were combined⁴ and found to comply with the creation of a new province⁵. In the meantime, Gosine district⁶ connected to Yenipazar Sandjak and Kırçova Subdistrict (nahiye)⁷ were connected to Shkodra. Province of Shkodra was founded in 1869 after the 1867 provincial regulations and province were included in some places of northern Albania such as Matt, Debre, Prizren, Gjakova⁸. Likewise, Mirdita Subdistrict due to Shkodra in 1869 was translated into the district and appointment of Captain Gün as District Governor and the formation of a council of appeal were deemed to be appropriate⁹.

In order to make more evident of Regulations of 1864 on January 22, 1871, the Regulation of General Administration Province was entered into force¹⁰. According to this new arrangement, provinces were separated into livas (sandjacks), livas into districts. The administration of the county was given to governor, administration of livas to mutasarrıf, the management of district to prefect¹¹. After this new arrangement made in 1870-1871, Sandjak of Prizren was separated from the Province of Skopje and connected to Shkodra¹². In 1874, the sandjaks of Shkodra,

¹ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no.352/98

² BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no. 353/23.

³ BOA, Yabancı Arşivler (YB. 04), no. 5/66.

⁴ BOA, İrâde-Mesâil-i Mühimme (İ.MMS.), no. 35/1474.

⁵ BOA, İrâde-Şurâ-yı Devlet (İ.ŞD.), no. 12/577.

⁶ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no. 412/31.; Gosine district was abolished in 1873, but then it was acquired in Prizren district again. BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no. 463/100.

⁷ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no.421/71.

⁸ Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye (SDAO), 1286, p. 132.

⁹ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no.440/43.

¹⁰ İlber Ortaylı, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İdari Modernleşme ve Mahalli İdare Alanındaki Gelişmeler", İdare Hukuku ve İlimleri Dergisi, İstanbul 1982, I-II, p. 143-148; İlber Ortaylı, "İlk Osmanlı Parlamentosunun Yapısında Eyalet İdare Meclislerinin Etkisi", Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İktisadi ve Sosyal Değişim: Makaleler-I, Ankara 2004, p. 233-239; Mehmet Seyitdanlioğlu "Yerel Yönetim Metinler (VI): 1871 Vilayet Nizamnamesi ve Getirdikleri", Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler, September 1996, Vol.5, p. 89-103.

¹¹ Abdulhamit Kırmızı, Abdülhamid'in Valileri Osmanlı Vilayet İdaresi 1895-1908, Klasik Yayınları, İstanbul 2008, p. 31.

¹² In 1868-1869, Prizren, Gjakova, İpek, Pristine, Vulçitrin, Gilan, Yeni Pazar and Luma depended to province of Skopje. Prizren became independent province a in 1871-1872gain. BOA, İrâde Dâhiliye (İ. DH), no. 592/41119.

Prizren, Skopje and Debre had been annexed to province of Monastery¹. In this period, Sandjak of Shkodra was consisted of a total of ten sandjaks as the central liva, Leş, Buka, Merdita, Kavaya, Bar, Ülgün, Akçahisar, Burgurca and Tirana. In 1874, for the continuation of loyalty of albanians to the state, Shkodra was again thought to be governed by governor's office². As a result of subsequent amendments, Shkodra Sandjak has been the central province of Shkodra in 1877. In 1878, the Province of Shkodra was consisted of Shkodra and Dıraç sandjaks³. The centrum of the province was Shkodra sandjak, and consisted of Shkodra⁴, Tuz⁵, Leş⁶, Puka⁷, Mirdita⁸, Akçahisar (Krupa)⁹, Ülgün¹⁰, Bar¹¹, Podgorica districts; Dıraç sandjak consisted of Dıraç¹², Kavaye¹³, Şiyak¹⁴, Tiran¹⁵ districts.

MULHAKAT of PROVINCE SHKODRA in 1878

SHKODRA SANDJAK

DIRAÇ SANDJAK

¹ 1877 yılında Manastır Vilayeti lağv edilerek Selanik Vilayeti'ne katılması uygun görülmüştür. In 1877, the province of Monastery was abolished eligible to participate of Thessaloniki province. BOA, Dâhiliye Nezâreti Mektubî Kalemi (DH. MKT), no. 1326/19.

² BOA, Yıldız Arzuhal Jurnalleri (Y.PRK. AZJ), no. 1/25.

³ VSİ, 1312, p. 62.

⁴ 10500 muslims, 4200 catholics, 720 greeks and a total of 15420 people were available in Shkodra. BOA, Yıldız Tasnifi/ Perakende Evrakı Umum Vilayetler Tahriratu (Y.PRK.UM), no. 1/79.; In 1894, the city of Shkodra consisted of 14 neighborhoods and 12 of them were islamic, and the city's total population were reached to 41000. VSİ, 1312, p. 65.

⁵ BOA, Y.EE., no. 12/15.

⁶ 360 catholics and 12 muslims were available in the district of Leş in 1878. BOA, Y.PRK.UM, no. 1/79.

⁷ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no.387-A/15.; 3600 muslims and 4800 catholics for a total of 8400 people were living in the districts of Puka, Ikbale and Karacadağ. BOA, Y.PRK.UM, no. 1/79.

⁸ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, no.440/43.

⁹ The population of Akçahisar consisted of 6402 muslims and 578 catholics. BOA, Y.PRK.UM, no. 1/79.

¹⁰ On this date, the muslim population of Ülgün district was 3000 and the total population was 3090. BOA, Y.PRK.UM, no. 1/79.

¹¹ Bar district was divided from Shkodra and annexed to Karadağ as a result of the Treaty of Berlin.

BOA, Y.EE., no. 79/8.

¹² There was a total of 4800 people which 3112 of them were muslims. VSİ, 1312, p. 65.

¹³ the total population of the district which 13809 muslims, 88 catholics and 1588 greeks lived were 15485. BOA, Y.PRK.UM, no. 1/79.; Previously it was a village, then made a district in 1866. VSİ, 1312, p. 129.

¹⁴ BOA, İrade Dâhiliye (İ.DH), no. 66146.; In 1879, it was made a district. VSİ, 1312, p. 133.

¹⁵ The total population of Tiran where 15596 muslims, 199 catholics and 575 greeks lived in was 16370. BOA, Y.PRK.UM, no. 1/79

Tuz District	Dıraç District
Leş District	Kavaye District
Puka District	Şiyak District
Mirdita District	Tiran District
Akçahisar (Krupa) District	
Ülgün District	

The Ottoman Empire tried to prevent the interventions of foreign states with the Edict of Islahat which was declared in 1856; however these interventions had continued to increase. After the events in Yemen and Herzegovina for holding the state together, Constitution had been declared on December 23, 1876. Fundamental Law was gained entry into force of the proclamation of the Constitution. Constitution was welcomed by officials and inhabitants of Shkodra in particular by Shkodra Governor, Mustafa Resit Pasha, and this satisfaction was submitted to Bab-ı Ali. After the proclamation of Constitution, the changes were made in the administrative structure. In particular, some changes had been made within the province as a result of the Treaty of Berlin was signed at the end of the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War. The Ottoman Empire, some places newly established as well as Ülgün and Bar disytricts located within the province of Shkodra had to leave to Karadağ. However, İspiç subdistrict connected to Bar town was given to Austria with this treaty. Due to the majority of the people of İspiç subdistrict constituted by Latins and their reluctance to be the annexation of Karadağ, this place was given to Austria¹. There were six provinces after the Congress of Berlin in the Balkans. These were Edirne, Salonica, Monastir, Janina, Shkodra and Kosovo provinces. The province of Shkodra structure had remained much the same way until the day Turkish rule ended in 1913.

As a result, in the 1878 Berlin Congress, it was decided to grant some regions of Albania to Karadağ. The Albanians against decisions formed a national unity in Prizren with the support of the Ottomans. League of Prizren created as a result of the congress began on June 10, 1878, Albanian province was gathered under a single diplomatic struggle was adopted, and identified status of the fields of study on the preparation of the independence. Albanian independence movement was carried out by other organizations and gained power after the Constitutional II. In 1909, the National Congress gathered in Monastir, taking the first step towards full independence of the Ottoman Empire in the Shkodra, Kosovo, Monastir and Ioannina were requested to include an autonomous Albania. Management of the Union and Progress against this request, sought reconciliation of developments that

¹ BOA., Y.EE., no. 79/8.

occurred in the Balkans. Gained autonomy in 1912, prior to the conclusion of the Balkan War, Albania had become a principality of December 1912, connected to the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was forced to give up all claim to Albania after London Conference held on May 30, 1913.