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The city and the district of Valona

- 1 Valona was one of the three Corfiot-Corinthian colonies on the Illyrian coast of Adriatic Sea along with Apollonia and Epidamnus—the modern Durrachion (Durrës). It was founded in the 6th century B.C., and its original Greek name was *Avlon* [: a hollow between hills].¹
- 2 The port-city of Valona, located in the south-western part of today’s Albanian state, is built on a bay protected by the headland of Glossa, the northern end of the Acroceraunian (Karaburun) mountains, and by the Sazan (Saseno) island. Approximately three kilometres south of the city lies, on a steep hill, the castle-town of

Kanina (Kalaja e Kaninës) which was built for the first time during the Hellenistic period.²

- 3 In 395 C.E., all the Albanian territories—which by then were included in the Roman province of New Epirus (*Epirus Nova* or *Illyria Graeca*)—, joined the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, and formed along with the territories of the today's Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM, the western Part of Bulgaria and most of Greece, the praetorian prefecture of Illyria (*Praefectura Praetorio per Illyricum*). Specifically, Valona, Kanina and the surrounding area were ruled by a high rank Byzantine official (*Sevastokrator*) who was resided in Plocë-Sevaster castle, near Kudhës, “three hours east” of the city of Valona.³
- 4 In 1205, the entire region passed into the newly founded Despotate of Epirus which extended from Naupactus (Lepanto) on the northern shores of Corinthian Gulf up to Durrachion, north of the city of Valona. Thereafter, up to 1372, Valona had been occupied seriatim, by the Sicilians Normans (1204-1273), the Angevins of Naples (1273-1297), again by the Byzantines (1297-1345), and by the Serbian princely house of Balsa which ruled the area along with the powerful Albanian Muzaki clan. In September 1835, following the death of Balsa II,⁴ the province came under the rule of Comita Muzaki-Comnenos (1372-1395), widow of his brother and daughter of the despot of Berat and Vlora Arianit-Comnenos; finally, in 1396, the whole area was inherited to Comita's daughter Ruggina (or Regina), who ruled with her husband, a Serbian noble from Zeta⁵ named Mrkša Žarkovic, a relative of the Byzantine imperial house of Comnenos.
- 5 In July 1417, during the reign of Sultan Mehmed I, Çelebi [: the Noble], (1413-1421) an Ottoman army invaded the area and captured the city and the adjacent castle-town of Kanina. In the region of Valona was established an Ottoman administration headed by a *Sancağ Beyi* [: district governor]. The city of Valona, which was the first seaport occupied by the Ottomans in the Adriatic Sea and the nearest to Italy, was used as a bridgehead for raids against the Ionian Islands and the province of Puglia in the Italian peninsula. Since then, the whole province will remain under Ottoman rule for 495 years until 1913.⁶
- 6 In the district of Valona was applied, almost from the beginning of the Ottoman conquest, the timariot system (*dirlilik*) and a meticulous record of lands, population and annuities took effect. However, it has not been a dramatic overthrow of the earlier social and economic status, since timars were also assigned to Christians, members of old feudal families.⁷ Specifically, the Cadastral Registers of 1430-1432 reveal that the 70% of the timars in the southern Albanian provinces belonged to indigenous Christian Albanians timariots (*şipahis*).⁸
- 7 Islamization, in this particular case, was not considered, despite the generally applicable rule, as a prerequisite for timar holding. Thus, the Albanians could manage timars, remaining themselves Christians, by merely declaring their loyalty and allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan. Eqrem Bey Vlora provides the information that circa 1450 the (Christian) Muzaki family managed 80 villages in the fertile plain of Muzakia (pre-ottoman feud of the family), while equally large lands in the same area were administered by the families of Araniti and Mataranga, both of them prominent members of the pre-Ottoman feudal elite.⁹ In addition, was granted to local Christian notables the purview of managing the tax collection—something not uncommon in the newly conquered Christian Balkan regions. The Ottomans, certainly, were driven to this

option taking into account the almost total absence of Muslims (aside from the armed forces which were based there) in the Christian Valona region and therefore the objective impossibility of an immediate formation of an administrative provincial mechanism, manned by Muslims.¹⁰

- 8 In the following time the voluntary islamizations, initially among members of the ruling class (by the end of the 15th century had left very few Christians timariots), and subsequently of the broader strata of the population, as well as the involuntary islamizations, through the *devşirme* system, made possible the region's governance mainly by Islamized Albanians, since no significant flow of Anatolian *Türkmens* or other Muslim ethnic groups has never been recorded, neither in the Valona/Berat district nor in the other Albanian Ottoman provinces.¹¹
- 9 By 1466, all the southern Ottoman-Albanian regions (Toskaria) formed the large *Arnavud-ili Sanjak* [: the sanjak of the land of the Albanians], which was divided into nine *vilayets*:¹² Argyrokastro (Gjirokastër), Klisura (Këlcyrë), Kanina, Berat, Timoron (Timorindje), Skrapar, Pavlo-Kurtik, Chartalos (Čartalos) and Kroja (Krujë).¹³ The northern Albanian provinces (Ghegkaria), which were organized largely into tribes and clans led by tribal chiefs, maintained their autonomous status, under Ottoman sovereignty. Then, after the conquest of Elbasan in 1466¹⁴ by Mehmed II, Fatih [: the Conqueror] (1444-1446 & 1451-1481), were created four new separate administrative divisions: the sanjak of Elbasan in the central Albania, where Mehmed II, after the capture of the castle-founded a new city which became the foothold of Islam in the wider region; the sanjak of Valona in the south; the sanjak of Ohrid (Ohër) in the east;¹⁵ and in 1479, the sanjak of Skodra (Shkodër) in the north.¹⁶ Approximately, at the same time (late 15th century) all the Albanian and Epirot lands that were kept outside the above sanjaks were included in the newly founded sanjak of Yannina.
- 10 From 1482 to 1538 the whole extensive territory with northern boundary the Shkumbin river (anc. Genysos) which flows north of Valona and forms a natural border between the lands of Ghegs and Tosks,¹⁷ and southern border the Kalamas River (anc. Thyamis) which flows into the Ionian Sea north of Ighoumenitsa, was constituted as a separate *serhad sanjak* [: border sanjak] centred on the city of Valona under the governance of a *serhad-bey*, a counterpart of the medieval *markgraf*. According to the Ottoman Surveys of 1506 and 1520, the sanjak included, seven cities (Valona, Berat, Argyrokastro, Tepelenë, Premeti/Premetë, Bogovë, Skrapar) seven castles and an unknown number of villages. In the capital, the city of Valona, resided, permanently, an Ottoman garrison and in its harbour anchored a small naval squadron.
- 11 At that time, between 1500 and 1535, in Valona sanjak were registered 33,570 Christian households (*hane*), 1,344 Muslim, and 553 Jewish of which 528 were concentrated in the city of Valona and the remaining twenty five in the city of Berat. Those figures indicate that eighty or more years after the conquest of the province by the Ottomans, the Christians continued to constitute the majority of the population. Similar figures appear and in the other Albanian sanjaks:¹⁸

Population in Albanian Sanjaks 1500/1535

Sanjak	Christian Households	%	Muslim Households	%
Skodra	23,859	95,5	1,116	4,5

Ohrid	32,748	98,1	641	1,9
Elbasan	8,916	94,4	526	5,5
Yannina	32,097	98,1	613	1,9
Valona	33,570	96	1,344	4

- 12 The provincial governor of Valona, an official in the rank of *sancak-beyi*, was assisted by seven *kadis* [: Muslim judges]—whose presence indicates, the existence of seven *kazas* [: district]—, 68 *zaims*, [: timariots with annual income between 20,000 and 100,000 *akçes*], and 479 *shipahis* [timariots with annual income up to 20,000 *akçes*].¹⁹ In addition to the local “feudal” forces of *zaims* and *shipahis*—who could recruit from their timars other 654 fully equipped horsemen (*cebelis*)—the Valona sanjak also had an Janissary infantry unit of 346 *Mustahfizs* and 107 *Azabs*, who were responsible for the custody of the castles.²⁰
- 13 According to the same Surveys, the sanjak of Valona was larger than the other three (the sanjaks of Ohrid, Skodra and Elbasan) and the richest, with annual returns to the imperial treasury of 32,000 Venetian ducats (circa 19,200,000 *akçes*).²¹ In the sanjak’s territory were located seven of the nineteen cities of the Albanian provinces, and its capital, the city of Valona, with a population numbering approximately 4,000-5,000 inhabitants, was the only urban center with a remarkable small craft industry, and a developed internal and external trade, which, to some extent, was due to the Jewish community. The Jews of the city of Valona were old Romaniots settlers, newcomers-refugees (Catalanos, Castilianos and Portuguese) from the Iberian Peninsula who arrived in the late 15th century persecuted by the Inquisition, and refugees from Apulia and Ancona during the middle 16th century.²² In 1685, during the Venetian-Ottoman War, the Jewish community had moved for security reasons in Berat, while those who had remained in the city of Valona were detained prisoners by the Venetians. From the port of Valona, were imported goods from Western Europe, and fabrics (velvet and brocade) from Istanbul and Bursa and were exported, mainly, mineral tar in large quantities.²³

The Albanian Sanjaks
(third quarter of the 15th century)²⁴

Sanjaks	Kazas	Towns	Castles	Villa- ges	Christian House holds	Muslims House holds	Jewish House holds	Sanjak beys	Kadis	Zaims	Timar shipahis	Jebelis	Mustah- fizs	Tax- revenue
Skodra Iskenderiye Shkodër	Iskenderiye Podgoridja Bihor Ipek Prizrin Karadadagh	5	6	895	23,355	371	--	1	4	8	137	?	297	4,392,9

Valona Awlonya Vlorë	Belgrade Iskarapar Premedi Bogonya Depedelen Argirikasri Awlonya	7	7	?	33,570	1,344*	553**	1	7	68	479	654	453	6,991,8
Elbasan	Elbasan Cermenija Ishbat Dirac	3	4	250	8,916	526	?	1	3	2	109	1,031	650	1,260,0
Ohrid Ohri Ohër	Ohri Dibra Akcahisar Mat	6	6	849	32,648	623	--	1	4	8	388	655	193	2,947,9

- 14 By 1538, the Valona/Berat sanjak came under the direct authority of the grand vizier; thus the *sancak-beyi* became representative of the central imperial government, exercising the sanjak's administration free from the control of the *beyler-beyi* [: general governor] of Rumelia. Since then, along with the sanjaks of Yannina, Delvino (Delvinë), Elbasan, Ohrid and Skodra will form the administrative units of the wider Albanian geographical area, until the late 18th century. That time they included in the two newly formed large and powerful *paşaliks* of Skodra and Yannina.²⁵
- 15 Evliya Çelebi (1611-1684), a famous Ottoman traveller of the 17th century, who toured the southern Albanian provinces in 1670, gives an image of the city and of the wider region. Evliya, who approached Valona from the north, says that he was tramping through a fertile countryside full of prosperous villages. But what had really impressed him was the mine of tar in Selinitza, which, as he says, yield to the imperial treasury seventy *yüks*, i.e., 35,500,000 aspers annually.²⁶ A second tar's mine, whose rights the Bey of Valona had acquired, returned to the treasury ten more *yüks* (5,000,000 *aspers*).²⁷ These two mines provided employment and income for the people of some twenty villages of the region which were excluded of any government tax. Evliya notes that in the mines other than the locals worked shackled cons confounded with death sentence or long-term convicts.
- 16 Continuing his journey to the south, he approached the castle of Kanina, which he describes as an “*impressive and incomparable*” fortress built on a mountain top in a triangular shape with three gates and a periphery of three thousand “*paces*”. Inside the castle they were 300 stone built houses covered with roof tiles, a mosque with a minaret, depositories for grains and ammunitions, and water cisterns. The fortress was guarded by 400 soldiers paid by the *Emin-Ağa* [: customs officer] of Valona.
- 17 Evliya notes that in the late 17th century, Valona was the capital of the homonymous *kaza* and Berat was the sanjak's capital, for geographic reasons, because it was located at the center of the district. In Valona there was an octagonal fortress built at a sandy

tongue in the entrance of the homonymous bay, “a real masterpiece of fortification.” The castle was surrounded by twenty cubits high and ten cubits thick walls, with eight bastions on which were installed batteries. The whole complex had—always according to Evliya—500 small and large cannons. Within the fortress, which had two gates, there were a seven floor *iç-kale* [: inner tower] built by Süleyman I’ Kanuni [: the Lawgiver] (1520-1566), a mosque, three hundred houses, and stores of grains and ammunitions. In the tower resided the *Dizdar-Ağa* [castellan], twelve officers and 400 soldiers. There were also, as resident, the head of the *Shipahi* forces, the commander of the Janissaries, the head *Kadi* (whose responsibility extended over on 150 prosperous villages), the inspector of the market, the collector of taxes, the inspector of customs duties, an officer responsible for the *haraç* [: property tax] collection, the chief architect, a naval officer and the mayor of the city.

- 18 Furthermore, Evliya gives information about the, outside the walls, open city of Valona. The city, built on a flat grassy plain full of orchards, vineyards, and lemon, orange, olive, pomegranate and fig trees, had 1,000 one or two storeys, stone built houses with tile roofs, and was separated into five *mahalas* [: quarters, neighbourhoods], that each one had its own mosque. Valona had four other (central) mosques, three *medreses* [: higher Islamic schools], five primary schools, two Bektashi *tekes* and one Halveti *teke* (: dervish lodge), a *hamam* [: public bath], eight *çesmes* [: water fountains] a *pazar* [: market] with 417 shops, and four *hans* [inns]. North, between the city and the open sea stood the village of Zvërnec, with 150 families of Christians who worked in the salt marshes or were fishermen.²⁸ Although Evliya does not give details about the religious identity of the countryside, we see that, at least, in the city of Valona by early 16th century, the Christians numbered 150 households, restricted in the nearby village of Zvërnec, while the Muslim households (both in the city and in Kanina) increased to 1,300. It is clear that by the late 17th century, Islam had already won the majority of the province’s population.
- 19 In December 1804, nearly 130 years after Evliya’s tour in the region, William Leake, one of the most reliable European travellers of the Albanian and Greek provinces of the Ottoman Empire visited the city of Valona. According to Leake, Valona had marked signs of neglect: “On the sea side there is a tolerable wharf, with an apology for a fort, in the shape of a square inclosure of ruinous walls, with towers and a few cannon.”²⁹ The same picture of abandonment also had “the impressive and incomparable”—according to Evliya narrative—fortress of Kanina. This different image is due partially to the many exaggerations in the narrative of Evliya, and largely to the fact that in 1691, a few years after Evliya’s tour, these two castles had been almost completely destroyed by the Venetians. Leake, however, agreed with Evliya on the region’s fertility; “the town occupies a hollow thickly grown with olive trees, among which are some gardens of herbs mixed with cypresses, poplars, and fruit trees.”³⁰ The olive trees extended up to the hills, while, north, there was a wooded valley. Finally, he also mentioned the existence of a lagoon opposite the island of Sazan, and wrote that the inhabitants of the nearby village (probably the Christian settlement Zvërnec mentioned by Evliya) are involved in salt marshes and with fishing.
- 20 Henry Holland, another trustworthy English traveller provides information on the city at the beginning of the second decade of 1800. Holland gives a picture similar to that given by Leake, particularly on soil fertility and the plantations around the city. According to Holland, Valona was a Muslim city with 1,000 Muslim and only thirty

Christian houses, with six mosques and an (orthodox) church. He also notes that the city had a port from which were imported goods from European countries and exported wheat, corn, wood, wool, oil and mineral tar.³¹

The house of the Beys of Valona

- 21 The Vlora family, namely the family of the Beys of Valona, was one of the most prominent Ottoman-Albanian “noble” and influential houses in southern Albania. Eqrem Bey Vlora, in his *Memoirs*, notes as first recorded ancestor of the family a certain Gjergj [: George] Golemi—obviously a Christian—who resided in the citadel of Kanina around 1398, during the reign of Sultan Bayezid I’ Yildirim [: the Thunderbolt] (1389-1402). He, also, argues that the Golemi family was connected by marriage to Bayezid—an allegation which is also adopted by Franz Babinger.³²
- 22 A very well known Gjergj Golemi is Gjergj Aranit Komnenos, a “hero” of the (later constructed) Albanian national history, relative by marriage with the imperial house of Komnenos and father in law of the *par excellence* Albanian hero, George Kastrioti-Skanderbeg. Golemi was married to Maria Muzaki and he had acquired vast lands in the wider region including Valona. This particular Gjergj Golemi, however, (for which we do not know the exact date of birth or death) could not reside in Kanina in 1398, since thirty four years later, in 1432, being thirty six year old, he led an insurgency in central Albania. Therefore, if it is not a totally imaginary construction of an illustrious ancestor by Eqrem Bey, then it would be another unidentified Gjergj Golemi, probably member of the same wider family.
- 23 Equally groundless seems to be the claim of kinship by marriage with Bayezid I’. We know that Bayezid had seven consorts of whom four were Turkmen princesses (Devlet Shah Hatun, daughter of Germiyan Suleyman Shah; Devlet Hatun, daughter of Germiyan Yakub Shah; Hafsa Hatun, daughter of Aydin Isa Bey; Sultan Hatun, daughter of Dulkadir Suleyman Shah; and an other, of unknown name, Germiyan princess). The other consorts were the Byzantine princess Angela, the Serbian princess Mileva or Despoina, daughter of prince Lazarus and the Hungarian princess Maria, daughter of Count Janos. Furthermore, at that time the House of Osman followed a specific intermarriage policy; namely, Osmanlis entered into marital alliances with daughters of indigenous significant military and religious officials in order to consolidate their internal power, and with daughters of Christian Balkan rulers and Turkmen Anatolian Beys aiming at the safeguard and the expansion of their own domains or at the weakening of rival dynastic houses. Certainly, the Vlora family, did not belong to any of the above categories.³³
- 24 Ismail Kemal Vlora Bey (1844-1920), deals also with the origins of his family. He mentions as founder of the Vlora House, in the post-Byzantine period, a “pure Albanian”³⁴ Ottoman officer named Gazi Sinan Pasha, “who after having occupied the post of Grand Vizier, went to Valona in the time of Suleyman the Magnificent, in the capacity of Captain Pasha, or Grand Admiral of the Fleet. He fixed his residence there definitely and ended his days there.”³⁵
- 25 However, as with the Byzantine ancestor, there is also a problem regarding the accuracy of Ismail Kemal information concerning “Gazi Sinan Pasha”, the considered Ottoman founder of the Vlora house. By the name “Sinan” identify many high-ranking Ottoman officials. Specifically, during the period to which refers Ismail Kemal, that is to

- say during the reign of Suleyman I' (1520-1566), the sole Sinan Pasha who served as *Kapudan Paşa* [: fleet admiral] from 1550 to 1553, was Yusuf Sinan (or Sinanüddin) Pasha who died on December 21 1553. However, Sinanüddin Pasha, was a brother of the grand vizier Damad Rüstem Pasha, Opukovic (1544-1553 & 1555-1561), for which we know with certainty that he was not of an Albanian but of a Croat-Bosnian origin.³⁶
- 26 Another namesake high rank Ottoman officer was Koja Sinan Pasha (?-1596), five time Grand Vizier, who had served as *Kapudan Paşa*, and also led as *serasker* [: commander in chief] many important military campaigns in Tunis, in Wallachia, and against the Safavids of Iran and the Habsburg Empire. But Koja Sinan Pasha, who was indeed of Albanian origin (from the village Topoyan in the region Lurë in north-eastern Albania) served as *Kapudan Paşa* and Grand Vizier during the reigns of Murad III' (1574-1595) and Mehmed III' (1595-1603), and not under Suleyman I' (1520-1566). Moreover, he dies in Istanbul and "was buried in his own *türbe*, built by *Mimar Davud*, in the *Çarşıkapı*, quarter in Istanbul", nor is there any evidence that ever settled or visited Valona.³⁷ The rest Albanian grand viziers during the reign of Suleyman were Ayas Mehmed Paşa (1536-1539), Damad Çelebi Lutfi Pasha (1539-1541) and Damad Kara Ahmed Pasha (1553-1555); none of them was named Sinan Paşa, and all of them resided in Istanbul. Moreover, none of them was originated from Valona, except Lutfi Paşa.³⁸
- 27 Information relating to the ancestor-founder of the Vlora family, also provided by K. Mertzios, Chr. Soulis, P. Aravantinos and W. Miller. According to these sources, the ancestor of Vlora house was probably Kara Sinan Pasha (or Celebi Sinan Pasha), an Albanian origin military commander, conqueror of Epirus, who, in 1431, had been appointed governor of the province. However, he had never been *Kapudan Paşa*, he never received the office of the grand vizier, and, moreover, he served during the reign of Murad II' (1421-1451) and not under Suleyman I'.³⁹
- 28 Furthermore, other sources mention that in the early 16th century (1518), a certain Sinan Pasha, head of a naval force (but not as chief admiral, but as a squadron leader) managed to conquer achieved the region of Himara (Himarë)–but this Sinan Pasha had never received the Grand Vizier's office. Miller, who got these information from Aravantinos, notes that Sinan Pasha settled after the end of military operations in Valona and appointed governor of the province. He showed great care for the city, gaining great popularity and the nickname *Arnavud* [: Albanian] although his origin was from Anatolian city of Konya. Also, Aravantinos and Miller indicate that the descendants of that Sinan Pasha retained, practically hereditary, the office of governor – Bey of Valona.⁴⁰
- 29 However, if the founder of the Vlora family is indeed *Arnavud* Sinan Pasha, then the claim of Ismail Kemal on the "pure" Albanian origin of the family is rebutted: "The Albanian after the conquest, and particularly after the conversion of the great mass of the people to Islam, tried to find titles for their families in connections of Anatolian origin, just as the ancient Greeks pretended that they were descended from noble Egyptian families. But the truth is, our ancestor Sinan Pasha, was a pure Albanian; and we are proud to feel that during the Ottoman domination, in spite of much unjust treatment from the Turkish rulers, we served the Empire faithfully, while at the same time preserving and undefiled our Albanian patriotism."⁴¹
- 30 Of course, when Ismail Kemal wrote these lines (early 20th century) he had already abandoned the Ottoman legitimacy along with many others members of Vlora house – and had joined the movement of Albanian nationalism (*Rilindja Kombëtare*). Now, a "pure" Albanian origin constitutes for the former high-rank Ottoman officer an

accessional asset of legitimation for his participation in the Albanian national movement. Contrariwise, the promotion of an Anatolian–i.e. Turkish–origin at the end of 19th and at the beginning of 20th century, namely at the heyday of the Albanian national awakening, was not suitable and convenient for the family members who chose to play a leading role in the Albanian national movement.

- 31 As for the office of the grand vizier with which Ismail Kemal endows his (real or manufactured) ancestor, this may be due to incomplete or incorrect information or, more likely, to his willingness to exalt further his family's prestige. Nevertheless, regardless of the historical truth, the Vlora family seems to have convinced many historiographers and historians, and all its fellow countrymen—and had persuaded itself—that its origin was a certain Sinan Pasha, offspring an Christian Albanian Byzantine noble family of the pre-Ottoman period, who, having converted to Islam, probably by way of *devşirme* system–, became a *Kapikulu* [: slave/servant of the Porte] and obtained highest military and administrative offices. Thereafter, he returned to his hometown, he administered wisely the wider region, he won the respect and the loyalty of the people, and, finally, he provided an “hereditary” office for his descendants.
- 32 The Vlora house (the noble Albanian families received generally the name of their native city or of the region on which they ruled) established itself as the dominant family of the region and acquired the title of Bey by the end of 15th century. The family retained its title, not de jure but de facto, throughout the Ottoman period and after the establishment of the Albanian state in 1913. The continuous hegemony of the family consolidated its reputation, prestige and power not only in the Valona district but also in the wider area of the Albanian provinces, and in Istanbul itself.
- 33 Even in cases in which leading members of the family fell into disfavour or even were punished with death for errors, omissions and activities contrary to the interests of the central Sultanic power, (for instance, Deli Yusuf Pasha Vlora and Ismail Pasha Vlora Velebisti were hanged in 1634 and 1763, respectively) their successors were chosen always among members the same family. So, Hasan Bey and Yusuf Bey nephew and grandson of Deli Yusuf Pasha, became Beys-governors of the city and the region in 1640 and 1666, respectively. Furthermore, in 1765, Mahmud Bey, grandson of Ismail Pasha Velebisti, assumed the administration of the sanjak. Until the early 19th century, the house of Vlora seemed to be the only choice for the central Ottoman administration since no other family seemed to have the power to impose its authority and to maintain a relative orderliness in the region. In the mid-18th century the people of Valona “*cut in pieces*” a certain Ismail Pasha because he tried to take the city's governance “*from the descendants of Sinan*.”⁴² Thus, this successive exercise of power by 25 members of the Vlora family for 350 years had created an hereditary “nobility” unusual and contrary to the Ottoman institutions.⁴³
- 34 This indisputable sovereignty of Vlora family in Valona/Berat sanjak has been further strengthened by the end of 17th century because of the decline of timariot system (*dirlik*); a fact which in turn led to the loss of the direct control of provinces by the Sublime Porte, and to the gradual prevalence of *çiftlik* (land tenure) system. Furthermore, the old class of shipahis, which made up the equestrian armed forces of the provinces, was replaced by the new class of landowners *Beys* and *Agas*, free from the military obligations which entailed the *dirlik* system.⁴⁴
- 35 The weakening of the central power is indicated by the course of the Cadastral Surveys and the Population Registers. In the Albanian-Ottoman provinces this system was put

in operation since 1431 and from that time onwards repeated in 1485, 1534, 1536, 1571, 1582, 1591, 1596, 1606, 1672, 1691, 1694, 1698 and 1715. Thereafter, this system will collapse because of the inability of the Sublime Porte to impose it, and of the reluctance of local potentates to implement it.⁴⁵

- 36 These was the period during which the Albanian Beys began renegotiating, in their favour, their obligations towards the Sublime Porte, and increased significantly their landholdings usurping the peasants' lands who became tenants.⁴⁶ Thus, it took place an extension of landownership and a resulting concentration of wealth in the hands of few powerful families. These families managed complex clientele systems with many branches and had at their disposal powerful armed bands which supported their political and social enhancement and enabled them to dispute the central Sultanic power.⁴⁷ So, in the Albanian provinces was imposed a status of extensive lawlessness, since the landowner-Beys had conflicts between them, in order to ensure political supremacy and economic benefits, while the enfeebled Porte unable to manage the situation confined itself to a policy of "*Divide et impera*" hoping to avoid the complete loss of control in the wider area.
- 37 The Vlorë *der'e madhe* [: Great House] established itself in this closed social group of the "Great Beys" who thrived in the Albanian south after the first decades of the 18th century, holding a conspicuous place.⁴⁸ The family governed the sanjak from its *Konak*, a monumental building complex, in a plot of 40,000 square meters, known as the "Palace of Beys" (*sarajet e bejlerve*). The building was located near the southeast gate of Valona, on the axis leading from the port to the center, and was surrounded by a high stone wall, eight meters height, with two large gates. The "palace" had a *selamlık* (men's quarters) and a *harem* (women's quarters) for the family members; it had also other buildings in which lived and worked numerous, male and female, servants: housekeepers, European and Turkish educators and teachers of foreign language and "good manners" for the sons and daughters of the family, bodyguards, attendants, gatekeepers, stableman, grooms, coachmen, gardeners, woodcutters, "adopted" daughters and sons, and a large number of armed men. The family, fed every Thursday (day of the *pazar*) more than two hundred people which thronged into the city from the surrounding villages. The leading (male) members of the house accepted, daily, a large number of locals who hoped to settle personal pending issues – a procedure that confirmed the possibility of Vlorë family to exercise power. In the "Palace of Beys" stayed also during the night passing governmental officer, political and/or military "clients" of the family, travellers and relatives by marriage, from the wider region.⁴⁹
- 38 The Vlorë beys had enormous *çiftlik*s in the fertile valley of Muzakia, and gathered wealth from various economic activities (management of tax collection, rights of rental revenues, etc.),⁵⁰ which gave them the possibility, as mentioned above, to maintain a complex clientele system, strong private armed bands by which they safeguarded the maintenance and expansion of their economic, political and social power, and enhanced their negotiating capacity with the Sublime Porte.⁵¹ In addition, their power was entrenched and extended through a complicated system of intermarriages with other influential families.
- 39 More specifically, the Vlorë Beys had concluded intermarriages—actually marital alliances—with the family of Kurt Pasha of Berat, the Arslan Limpohova family of Argyrokastro, the Vryoni family of Berat, the Bitsaksu family of Elbasan, the Delvina family of Delvino, and with the family of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha.⁵²

The confrontation between the Vlora Beys and Tepedelenli Ali Pasha

- 40 The problem of disorder and of the continuous conflicts between the unruly landlords and chieftains in the Albanian provinces was not resolved by the military or political intervention of the central Ottoman power, but by local forces.⁵³ In the second half of the 19th century, especially during the last quarter, emerged from this chaos, two strong personalities who managed to impose their authority setting up two powerful *Paşaliks*, which replaced the weakened central authority of Istanbul and filled the power vacuum that had left the earlier period of disorder. Thus, in the Albanian north, in the land of Ghegs, prevailed Mustafa Pasha Bushatli, founder of a real dynasty based in Skodra, which ruled the wider area from 1757 to 1831.⁵⁴ In the Albanian south, again, in the land of Tosks, dominated Tepedelenli Ali Pasha (1741-1822), *Vali* of Yannina *eyalet*.
- 41 Ali, an offspring of a Bey's family from Tepelenë (his father, Veli Pasha served there as *mütesellim*),⁵⁵ began his legendary career in 1763, at age 22, as head of a bandit group and, gradually, managed to hold the important offices of *Rumeli Derbentler Başbuğu* [: general guardian of the mountain passes of Rumeli *eyalet*] (1784); of the *Terhala Valesi* [: governor of Trikala vilayet] (1785); and finally governor in the very important Yannina vilayet (1788).⁵⁶ Since then, Ali Tepedelenli will rule for approximately 40 years directly—or indirectly, through his sons and grandsons—on an extensive geographic area which covered the present southern Albania, and the most of the today's Greece (Epirus, Thessaly, Western Macedonia, western and central Mainland Greece, the northern part of Evia island, and Peloponnesus). The multi-religious and multi-ethnic "state" of Tepedelenli included Orthodox Christians, Muslims (mostly Sunnis, as well as *Bektaşis* and members of other *sufi Muslim* orders), Jews, and other smaller ethnic or religious groups; its population was close to 1,500,000 inhabitants (the first Greek Kingdom according to the census of 1834 had 651,233 inhabitants), and its population consisted of Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Jews, Serbs, Turks, Vlachs, and Roma. It covered an area of 75,000 sq km, i.e. it was larger than the first Greek state (50,212 sq km), as well as from the present states of Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Switzerland.⁵⁷
- 42 The Albanian toparch won the admiration, respect and fear of both his friends and enemies, and further attracted the interest of travellers, historians, novelists, poets and artists who have recorded, depicted and evaluated his life and activities resulting to the most contradictory conclusions. But whether as a "Satan of Hell" or "Muslim Bonaparte", Ali Tepedelenli Pasha, was, indisputably, a charismatic historic personality and a genuine product of his time.
- 43 Ali, assuming, in 1788, the administration of the important and rich pashalik of Yannina, strained to fill, for his own favour, the power vacuum in the wider area of Toskaria, which had been created by the weakness of the Sublime Porte, beating the strong local Beys and every other groups that could challenge his authority.
- 44 Consequently, the influential and feared Vlora family found itself from the outset, along with the Delvina Family, the Beys of Chameria (Çamëria), and the Christian mountainous warlike confederations of Himara and Suli, on the target of the new

strong man of Albanian South. The rivalry between the Vlora house and Ali dated from 1765, when the powerful Kurt Pasha of Berat preferred to marry his daughter Mariem to Ibrahim Pasha Vlora, who “*was descended from an illustrious family*”⁵⁸ and a “*scion of the noble clan of Sinan*”, rejecting the proposal of the “*inconsiderable*” Ali Tepedelenli. This marriage resulted in a substantial increase of the power of the Vlora Beys who, after the death of Kurt Pasha, in 1784, extended their authority in Berat district. Accordingly, in 1790, Ibrahim Bey Vlora, assumed the office of the *mutaşarrif*⁵⁹ of Berat. Moreover, Ibrahim’s brother Jafer Bey, “*a man with talent and reputation*”⁶⁰ took command of Valona district.⁶¹ Things developed, however, differently for the other Beys of the northern regions of the Albanian south; a year earlier (1789), Ali Tepedelenli had achieved an overwhelming victory against them.

- 45 The Vlora house, however, despite Ibrahim’s official appointment in the administration of the Berat sanjak, will be during the following twenty years (1790-1810) squashed between the expansionist goals of the two major local rulers, Tepedelenli and Bushatli. The Vlora Beys will strive by force, manoeuvres and compromises, through temporary and heterogeneous alliances, and using their connections with the Sublime Porte, to maintain control over of the sanjak. In August 1794, Ibrahim Pasha Vlora, in a desperate effort to acquire good relations with Tepedelenli, consented to marry two of his daughters with the sons of Ali, Muhtar Pasha and Veli Pasha.⁶² Thus, in the spring of 1805, when Skodra Bushatli Pasha attempted to gain control on Elbasan, a city that belonged to the sphere of influence of Vlora Bey, Tepedelenli supported his relative by marriage, sending a military force of 2,500 men to confront the Bushatli’s troops. In addition, in June of same year the Tepedelenli-Vlora alliance will be confirmed with the arrival of Ali’s son, Muhtar Pasha, in Berat.⁶³
- 46 Intermarriage between powerful families was a usual procedure that aimed to increase the influence and wealth, and also to prevent or terminate undesirable conflicts. These marital alliances, however, had not always the expected results. The powerful Beys of Delvino had married their daughter to Tepedelenli;⁶⁴ yet, this marriage was not enough to prevent the subsequent conflict with their powerful and demanding son-in-law. A similar outcome had the marital alliance between the “*noble*” Beys of Valona and the “*parvenu*” Tepedelenli, since the marriages, failed to ensure permanent peaceful relations between the two families.
- 47 The conflicts between related by marriage families, however, did not lead always to an everlasting animosity between them. The relations by blood and by marriage constituted a strong bond in Albanian territories, which perpetuated in the subsequent generations, so that the related families could rely each other. Thus, in February 1850, nearly 30 years after the end of the bloody hostilities between the families of Tepedelenli and Vlora, when the women and children of the Vlora family were displaced -due to the disfavour of the Sublime Porte- in Thessaloniki and in Konya, the person that helped in every possible way their return and rehabilitation was their cousin, the governor of the “Lower Albania”, Ismail Rahmi Tepedelenlizade Pasha. Ismail Rahmi was none other than Ali’s beloved grandson (son of Veli Pasha and Zempide, daughter of Ibrahim Pasha Vlora). Once again, later, in 1864, when Ismail Rahmi was governor of the vilayet of Thessalia, he will offer an important administrative post to his young nephew, Ismail Kemal Bey Vlora: “*I now went to Larissa at the invitation of my uncle, Ismail Rahmy, Governor-General off Thessaly who appointed me chief of his cabinet, and treated me as a member of his own family.*”⁶⁵

- 48 In 1809, Ali Pasha was at the peak of his power: in 1796 he had annexed the district (*voyvodilik*) of Arta; next year (1797) he campaigned against Himara and managed to conquer the whole region except its inaccessible mountainous northern part⁶⁶ In late December 1803, after three unsuccessful campaigns, Ali forced to capitulation the warlike Suliots (clans of Christian Çamë-Albanians),—whom secretly helped Ibrahim Pasha Vlora—,⁶⁷ forcing them into expatriation; in 1805 he annexed Preveza and Vonitsa, cities with significant economic and strategic importance. Finally, in 1809, he suppressed the revolt of the *martolos* Thymios Vlahavas, in Agrapha region, ensuring the order and the tranquillity in these mountainous area.
- 49 Thus, Ali Pasha, at the end of the first decade of the 19th century, had established the order both in the southern regions (Chameria) and in the northern regions (Toskaria and Laberia) of his realm, having conquered Tepelen, Moscopole/Voskopoja, Klisura, Korca/Korçë, Argyrokastro, Delvino and the coastal area of Himara. The only person that had not bowed to Ali, was Ibrahim Pasha Vlora and his rich province. Ismail Kemal mentions in his Memoirs: *“Hesitant before no act of usurpation or crime, to eliminate gradually all the noble families of Albania in order to strengthen his own authority. There still remained our family, which resisted him at Berat and Valona.”*⁶⁸ Indeed, the Vlora Beys, despite the expansionist actions of the toparch of Yannina continued to control an area, whose the lands stretched north up to the river Shkumbi. This area included Muzakia, the most fertile plain of Albania, the lucrative mines in Selinitsa and the city of Valona, the biggest import/export port of southern Albania.⁶⁹
- 50 The whole venture, however, was not easy, because Ibrahim Pasha—besides the protection of the Sublime Porte, which rightly considered him as the only bulwark to the expansionist aspirations of Tepedelenli—,⁷⁰ could gathered 10,000 armed men. The favour of Porte toward Vlora family was demonstrated as early as 1789, when the *Beylerbeyi* of Rumeli handed the rights of collecting the taxes of Korca,—a prosperous city with considerable commercial activity—to Ibrahim Pasha and his brother Jafer. Also, as mentioned above, the Sublime Porte had appointed Ibrahim Pasha, in 1790, *Mutaşarraf* of the Berat/Valona sanjak, and his brother, Jafer Bey, governor of Valona.⁷¹
- 51 Ali Pasha, before beginning the military operations, had prepared himself politically, diplomatically and militarily. First, he tried to persuade the Sublime Porte that its “protégé” had secret consultations with French agents of Bonaparte—a true fact, although refuted by Ismail Kemal in his Memoirs.⁷²
- 52 In parallel, he triggered another of his talents, that is to say the corruption, luring with money and offices many of the supporters of the Vlora family, achieving the defection of many of them before the beginning of military operation.⁷³ On May 13, 1809, 12,000 men of the Ali’s army invaded the sanjak of Berat under the leadership of his son, Muhtar Pasha. The hostilities lasted three months, and Ibrahim pasha, stripped of most of his chieftains had to sign a treaty (August 13, 1809) by which he lost much of its territories in sanjak. The peace did not last long; by early October the forces of Muhtar Pasha occupied Berat and Ibrahim with 500 loyal men found refuge in the city’s castle. The siege of the castle was a good opportunity to demonstrate all its skills the trained by European officers army of Tepedelenli. The castle of Berat, one of the strongest in southern Albania fell relatively easily on January 8, 1810.⁷⁴
- 53 Ibrahim pasha, in accordance to the terms of capitulation, handed 2,000,000 Ottoman piastres (*kuruş*) from his personal fortune to Muhtar, and was released to withdraw in the city of Valona, whose administrator was of from 1809, the son of his deceased

brother Jafer,⁷⁵ Suleyman Bey, son-in-law of Mustafa Pasha of Delvino.⁷⁶ The French, alarmed by the successes of Ali (who now had turned his favour to England), reinforced Ibrahim Pasha with money and ammunitions, giving him the means to fight back and retake Berat.⁷⁷ The arrival of new troops of Ali, however, restored his absolute authority on the region; this time the Vlora family lost also the control of Valona which came under the administration of Muhtar Pasha.⁷⁸ The latter, appointed as his representative, Markos Damiralis, a Christian Albanian from the island of Naxos.⁷⁹ The defeat of the powerful and influential Ibrahim Pasha Vlora, opened the way for the conquest of the last two cities which were not yet controlled by Tepedelenli, Delvino and Argyrokastro, which subdued during the next year.⁸⁰ Thus, in 1811, was completed the incorporation of all the Albanian southern provinces, into the “state” of the Pasha of Yannina, which also consolidated his dominance in Epirus (except the city of Parga) and in Thessaly.⁸¹

- 54 Ibrahim Pasha Vlora was arrested captive and transferred to Yannina where he remained imprisoned until his death, despite the Porte’s efforts to free him.⁸² As Ismail Kemal notes: “*The result of this little campaign being favourable to Ali Pasha, Ibrahim Pasha was taken prisoner and incarcerated at Janina, where, after suffering the harshest treatment for twelve years, he died just as Ali Pasha was himself being besieged by the Imperial troops.*”⁸³
- 55 The command of this “little campaign” took over Omer Pasha Vryoni, one of the most efficient chieftains of Tepedelenli and an implacable enemy of Vlora family.⁸⁴ Ismail Kemal Vlora, writing ninety years later, does not hide his hatred and contempt for the Vryoni family which describes as “*parvenu*.”⁸⁵ The Vryonis, certainly, did not have the illustrious origin of the Vlora Beys. We know that, in the 18th century, they lived in the village Vryoni near Berat—hence the surname of the family. Most likely they originated from the Albanian north, the Ghegkaria, since they were Islamized Roman Catholics (a branch of the family remained Catholic).⁸⁶ In 18th century, the family held considerable estates in the plain of Muzakia, and, later, in 1864, an offspring of the family, Kehreman Pasha Vryoni founded the commercial city of Fier north of Valona and west of Berat.⁸⁷
- 56 By the 18th century there was a competition between the two houses because Vryoni family attempted to assert their presence in the region of Valona/Berat, in which, traditionally, the house of Vlora exercised its power. Eventually, none of the two families could impose its supremacy, fully or permanently. Despite the derogatory references of Ismail Kemal, it appears that the “noble” and “ancient” Vlora house forced to confront the Vryoni family as equal, and to come to intermarriage with it (the cousin of Ismail Bey, Suleyman Pasha, married the daughter of Omer Pasha Vryoni, Marusse).⁸⁸ This fact, however, did not prevent the continuing confrontation with each other; in the late 18th century, the Bey of Valona “*had banished Omer Bey Vryoni, a turbulent man, after confiscating his estates.*”⁸⁹ The latter went to Egypt and entered the court of toparch of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, —a legendary figure of Albanian origin who had gathered many (mostly Albanians) military adventurers with the expectation of a military career and acquisition of wealth.⁹⁰ In Egypt, Omer Vryoni, “*had distinguished himself against the English and returned into Epirus with an immense fortune and a great reputation for valour.*”⁹¹ In Yannina, he offered his remarkable military skills in the service of Ali Tepedelenli Pasha, who had formed a similar court, gathering a large number of (both Muslims and Christians) ambitious and competent military chieftains and administrative officers.⁹²

- 57 After the defeat and the following capture and imprisonment of Ibrahim Bey (January 1810), the Vlora family was pushed aside, while the rival Vryoni family became the leading power of the sanjak.⁹³ The Vlora Beys, apart from the political marginalization of the family, sustained also an economic catastrophe since they lost—only from the *kaza* of Valona—the revenues of 16 large estates⁹⁴ (*çiftliks*) and 5,913,715 piastres from loans.⁹⁵

The stance of the Beys of Valona towards the Sublime Porte

- 58 This situation lasted until 1820; that year the Porte having at its disposal evidences for the separatist intentions of Tepedelenli, and having obtained all the necessary military forces issued a Sultanic edict, according to which Ali as “a *fermanli* i.e. *guilty of a crime and an apodictic enemy of the State*”, had to present himself to Istanbul, in order to apologize for his “*treacherous behaviour*”.⁹⁶ Ali, refused to go in Istanbul and began to gather his forces preparing for defence. The Sublime Porte sent powerful armies under the leadership of the competent governor of Peloponnesus (*Mora Valesi*) Hursid Pasha, in which were added the troops of the local enemies of Tepedelenli, but also military forces of chieftains, who defected from Ali’s camp and declared allegiance to the Sultan.
- 59 The Vlora family, head of which was taken after the death of Ibrahim his brother, by Ismail Bey (1778-1829), along with other Beys “*who remained of the Albanian nobility, hastened to take part in these campaign against the common aggressor.*”⁹⁷ In 1820, Ismail Bey Vlora participated in the military operations that resulted in the recapture of Berat and the arrest of Ali’s sons, Muhtar Pasha and Salih Pasha. Thereafter he assumed the administration of the Valona/Berat sanjak, traditional feud of Vlora family by the 16th century.⁹⁸
- 60 Nevertheless, Tepedelenli’s expulsion had not weakened the power of the rival Vryoni family. Omer Pasha Vryoni, although he came into prominence under the aegis of Tepedelenli, did not hesitate to abandon his patron and join the forces of the Sublime Porte.⁹⁹ Thereby, he avoided his dismissal and, what’s more, he was appointed -after Ali’s death- governor of Yannina pashalik, (*Vali* of the sanjaks of Yannina, Delvino and Valona).¹⁰⁰
- 61 Omer Vryoni entrenched further his position in the official provincial Ottoman administration, fighting against the Greek rebels and revealing once again his military skills in a series of battles in Mainland Greece; in 1825, however, he disagreed with his superior *Rumeli valesi*, Mehmed Resid Kütahi Pasha and returned to Yannina. In 1828, he took part in the Russo-Turkish War as commander of a corps of 20,000 men, and excelled in the (unsuccessful) military operations for the recapture of the city of Varna. After 1830, he was appointed in high administrative posts in various provinces of Macedonia.¹⁰¹
- 62 The Ismail Bey Vlora, and his cousin Suleyman Pasha, had also participated in the battles against the Greek rebel forces as head of armed men, recruited from Valona district. Yet, like their opponent, Omer Pasha Vryoni—faithful to the tradition of disobedience of the Albanian chieftains—quickly disagreed and came into conflict with the commander in chief of the Ottoman forces in Missolonghi, Kütahi Pasha, who as an representative of the central ottoman authority, was always (justifiably) sceptical and sometimes hostile to the unpredictable and insubordinate Albanian chieftains.

- 63 Specifically, in September 1825, the continuing failures of the besiegers to occupy Missolonghi in conjunction with the delay of wages, created frictions between the Albanian chieftains and the Ottoman commander which led to the withdrawal of a significant part of the Albanian mercenary troops. Kasomoulis, a chronicler of the siege, notes the internal disagreements that had arose in the Ottoman camp, which resulted in tensions and in the final departure of a large number of Ghegs (Northern Albanians) under Hacı Bey Mahmud Yakovali. He notes too the departure of troops of the southern Albania (Toskaria) mentioning the withdrawal of an Albanian commander named Suleyman Pasha, who probably is Suleyman Pasha Vlora, cousin of the Ismail Bey. He also mentions the departure of another Tosk commander, Ismail Pasha Pliasa, a relative of the Vlora family.¹⁰²
- 64 At the end of Russo-Turkish War and of the hostilities with the Greek revolutionaries (1829), the Sultan showed himself eager to terminate immediately the “Albanian Question”, –that is to say, the problem of administrative and political disorder in the Albanian provinces – with the suppression of the anarchy that returned after the power vacuum which was created by the dissolution of the Ali’s “state”. The Albanian Beys, having first lined up with the Sublime Porte in a temporary and occasional alliance against the common enemy, Ali Pasha, they attempted, subsequently, to regain their earlier privileges and possessions which had been usurped by the Albanian toparch. The Porte, however, showed from the outset that it was not in the least disposed to accept the return of the Albanian regions in the *Ancien Regime* of the pre-Tepedelenli era.
- 65 The Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) had ascended to the throne in 1808, succeeding his half-brother Mustafa IV, who reigned only one year, in 1807. Mustafa had succeeded his cousin Selim III (1789-1807), a cultivated Sultan with literary knowledge and artistic skills, who had attempted to launch a political and social reformatory program. The modernist views of Selim caused the intense dissatisfaction of the traditional, reactionist Ottoman elites (the janissaries and the *ulemas*), who realized that the implementation of these reforms would undermine their interests. So, they expelled Selim and promoted to the throne the insufficient Mustafa, a docile instrument and a supporter of their interests.
- 66 The removal of Selim provoked a strong reaction of the pro-reformative forces, and Alemdar Mustafa Pasha, the powerful *ayan* of Rusçuk, led his forces in the Ottoman capital in order to restore Selim. Mustafa ordered the execution of the two legitimate contenders for the Sultanate, his cousin Selim and his half-brother Mahmud, in order to remain the only male descendant of the Osman house and thus, to avoid his deposition. Selim was executed, but Mahmud managed to escape. So, when Alemdar Pasha arrived in Istanbul raised to the throne Mahmud and imprisoned Mustafa, who was executed shortly afterwards by order of his brother.¹⁰³
- 67 Sultan Mahmud II, an admirer of his elder cousin, Selim III, wanted to continue the latter’s modernization project, seeking the establishment of a strong central power, able to impose its political, economic and social choices in the whole imperial territory. He moved cautiously trying not to cause the reaction of the still influential traditional elites, and managed to laid the foundations of a major reformatory -administrative and military- program. The crowning moment of his reign (for which he was called by some historians “Peter the Great” of the Ottoman Empire) was the destruction of the Janissaries. The latter—a former elite corps of the Ottoman army—had become a kind of

praetorian guard, who enthroned and dethroned Sultans, whenever they thought affected their acquired privileges, and opposed to any attempt for the modernization of the political, administrative and military structures of the empire.

- 68 In June 1826, the Janissaries mutinied once again; in the ensuing conflicts which took place in the streets of Istanbul, the loyal Sultanic supported by artillery, burned and razed the barracks of the Janissaries, and then engaged in a methodical slaughter of approximately 10 000 Janissaries. The very few survivors were exiled to remote provinces of the empire and their properties confiscated by the Sultan. The elimination of the Janissaries, which the Ottoman historians recorded as “the *auspicious event*” (vaka-i hayriye), continued in Thessaloniki, where the last members of the former powerful body decapitated in the (White) Tower which was later named “Tower of the Blood.”¹⁰⁴
- 69 The task of the restoration of sultanic rule in the Albanian provinces took on the “iron arm” of the Sublime Porte, *serasker* Mehmed Resid Kütahi Pasha, a staunch supporter of the reforms and an uncompromising persecutor of the undisciplined Albanian Beys who sought to exercise, again, their power as semi-independent toparchs. Kütahi, grand vizier since January 1829, arrived in Yannina, and invited the influential Tosk chieftains Ismail Silihdar Pota, Esim Bey, Abdullah Bey and Ismail Bey Vlora for consultations.¹⁰⁵ All of them refused to present except Ismail Vlora who accepted the invitation, despite the warnings which he had received. Of course, Ismail Bey was not, a naive or an inexperienced person; it seems, however, that the lure of the office of the general governor of the Yannina pashalik which was offered to him by Kütahi—an office that in 1822 had been given to his implacable enemy Omer Pasha Vryoni—was irresistible, since such a perspective would consolidate his family at the top of the power in the whole Toskaria. Further, Ismail Bey probably attributed the warnings which he had received “by a number of Albanian chiefs who were at Janina, to jealousy.”¹⁰⁶
- 70 In Yannina, Ismail Bey arrived with a strong escort of five hundred armed men. Immediately he was invited by the grand vizier to assume, formally, the governance of the pashalik. Ismail Kemal, in his *Memoirs*, describes what happened as follows: “He [: Ismail Bey] repaired immediately on horseback with a small suite to the government palace in the famous citadel. The gates closed behind him and the suite, and in the very act of dismounting my grandfather and his attendants were shot down, and he himself was decapitated.”¹⁰⁷
- 71 Once again, followed a hard period for the Vlora family; the Porte, in an attempt to marginalize the old “aristocratic” Albanian families promoted to the higher administrative offices members of “lesser” families considering their loyalty as less precarious. The more versatile Vryoni family, traditional enemy of the Vlora family seemed to be a good choice. At that moment, the Vlora family was powerless, since after the assassination of Ismail Bey and the death of his cousin Suleyman Pasha left without adult male members. The Vryonis, assuming the governance of the Berat/Valona province, removed the women and the four underage sons of Ismail Bey from the city of Valona was the basis of power of the family—to Berat and imprisoned theme in the castle of the city.¹⁰⁸
- 72 In August 1830, had been completed the operational plan of the Sublime Porte, which aimed to the elimination of the influential Albanian Beys, still inconsistent with their military and tax obligations towards the central Ottoman government. In August 26, 1830, Kütahi managed to attract in the Macedonian city of Bitola (Monastir), a large number of Albanians Beys and Agas—of whom many had taken part in the Russo-

Turkish War of 1828-1829—enticing them with honours and with the payment of delayed salaries. But, instead of rewards and redemption, the Albanian Beys and other influential chieftains, approximately five hundred, were trapped and killed by Ottoman troops during a military parade.¹⁰⁹

- 73 Kütahi, having subdued or eliminated the feared Beys of the southern regions, campaigned against Skodra, the last bastion of autonomy in the Albanian provinces. In the previous years, during the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829, Kara Mustafa Pasha Bushatli had allied with the Russia investing on a possible Ottoman defeat, which would facilitate his separationist goals. In the battles that followed, the forces of Mustafa Pasha suffered heavy losses and were forced to surrender. Thus, in 1831, after seventy four years, the semi-independent principality of Bushatlis came to an end. The surviving members of the family were deported to Anatolia. After that, all Albanian provinces were subdued and placed under the command of non-Albanian officials; this was a major success for the reformative efforts of Mahmud II.

The Gjoleka's Rebellion in Toskaria

- 74 In 1830, as we mentioned above, the Vlora family was in an extremely difficult position. Its main foe, the Vryoni family, having shown a remarkable flexibility in the choice and the rotation of patrons, allies and enemies, managed—after the assassination of Ismail Bey, the death of his cousin Suleyman Pasha and the incarceration of Ismail's minor sons in the castle of Berat—to ensure the administration of Berat sanjak. Yet, the Vlora Beys will show an outstanding resilience and durability; having established for four centuries a high social standing and prestige, a broad and strong clientele system, and also powerful marital alliances, the Vlora family managed to protect its *ocak* (house), from the decay or the annihilation, and get back to the forefront. A chance appeared on June 1847, with the revolt of the southern Albanian provinces. This rebellion was the consequence of a rising tide of discontent which dispersed throughout the Toskaria, because of the reformative (administrative, military and economic) measures imposed by the Sublime Porte. These measures, which already had implemented in Yannina pashalik, were in stark contrast to the interests of the landowners who possessed huge estates up to 100,000 acres and did not want the slightest disruption of the existent favourable feudal relations; of the merchants and craftsmen of the urban centres to which was imposed a heavy taxation; and of the mountainous tribesmen who refused to negotiate their traditional autonomy and to accept the conscription which imposed on them by the *nizam*-law of 1843.¹¹⁰
- 75 In this heterogeneous and coincidental coalition—in which some historians had seen ethnic characteristics and sensibilities against the occupier “Turk,”¹¹¹ should be added the peasants, who in their vast majority had become tenants, and whose misery made them unpredictable and, therefore, dangerous. The actions of the new *Rumeli Valesi*, Mehmed Resid Pasha, for the enforcement of the reform measures (census, forced conscription, tax reform) accelerated the outbreak of the rebellion.¹¹² Thus, was formed a coalition of social groups with different political objectives, priorities, interests and goals which led to a generalized uprising.
- 76 The revolt, known as the “Revolution of Gjoleka,” from the name of its main leader Zenel Bey Gjoleka (1806-1852), broke out in early June 1847.¹¹³ Gjoleka, was member of a family of “small Beys,” originated from the village Kutsi in the province of Kurveleshi, a

rough and rebellious region between Valona and Delvino, in which prevailed the law of Laberia (*Kanuni i Labërisë*).¹¹⁴ He was a typical rebellious Albanian mountain warrior, a habitual rebel, who spent his life moving with ease and dexterity from illegality to legality and vice versa. He negotiated his loyalty, weighting each time the circumstances, both with the Ottoman Empire and the newly created Greek Kingdom trying to survive and thrive in the new reality that had began to consolidate in southern Albania and Epirus after the Tepedelenli's extermination of Ali Pasha Tepedelenli. This chieftain was a person with whom the Vlora family had special bonds. Gjoleka, as a prominent member of the Vlora clientele system, he was the person—as notes Ismail Kemal—“*who had avenged my grandfather, Ismail Bey, by killing the Master of the Robes of Reshid Pasha, will he was boasting of having beheaded Ismail Bey, and who was therefore attached to our family by special ties.*”¹¹⁵ This act became widely known, and Gjoleka gained the reputation of an man with courage and *besa* (honour), two qualities extremely appreciated in the Albanian society.

- 77 Then he fled to Greece; from there, with the tolerance of the Greek authorities he passed the borders along with Greek guerrilla bands and attempted unsuccessfully to seize the town of Domokos, in Thessaly. He returned to the Greek territory, having looted, as was customary, both Muslim and Christian households and landholdings in Arta and the surrounding area. In 1834, he came back to the Albanian-Ottoman provinces, pursuing the familiar profession of the brigand. Having failed in an ambitious venture to plunder Yannina, he exchanged his return to the Ottoman legitimacy with his inclusion in the army, participating in military operations in Yemen and Syria. He returned, again, in the Albanian southern provinces, with a stopover in Athens, where he met his old acquaintance, the Greek prime minister Ioannis Kolettis. The meeting date is not known, however, it should be between March 30 and August 6, 1844, namely the period during which Kolettis was in office. An informal agreement between them is likely, since the Epirot Kolettis, par excellence proponent of the *Meghali Idea* (Great Idea) had every reason to favour a revolt in Epirus and in southern Albania. The terms of these agreement are not known; however, the Greek government should have agreed, in secret, to support the rebels with money and ammunitions.
- 78 The secret, indirect, contacts with Kolettis seem to have continued since Gjoleka achieved a large participation of Christians, both Albanian and Greek, chieftains in it. Furthermore, there is a document dated August 15, 1847 (whose authenticity is strongly disputed today) that records an agreement according to which the leaders of the revolt negotiate the support of the Greek government, offering five southern Albanian (Ottoman) districts in the Greek kingdom in exchange of a autonomous status.
- 79 Finally, in late 1847, the Porte, having extracted by the lure of amnesty, money and offices several chieftains, suppressed brutally the uprising, sending against the rebels strong military forces, and Albanian irregulars from the lands of Ghegs. Many of the revolt's leaders were arrested, imprisoned or deported. Gjoleka himself escaped; he surrendered voluntarily in May 1848 and was transferred to Istanbul. There, he was sentenced to exile in Anatolia; but soon he exchanged once again his amnesty with his participation, as head of the armed band, in the military operations in the area of Montenegro, during which he was killed in 1852, aged 46.
- 80 The Vlora family played a leading role in this revolt and the eldest son of the late Ismail Bey, Mahmud Bey and his brother, Selim Pasha, took command of the rebellious troops of the Berat sanjak. They had, indeed, an additional reason to join the rebellion beyond

the harmful to their interests reformist measures; the Porte had placed once again as *Kaimakam* [: district governor] in Valona/Berat sanjak—a member of the opposing Vryoni family, Hüseyin Pasha, son of Omer Pasha.¹¹⁶

- 81 After the suppression of the rebellion Mahmud, Selim and other men of the Vlora family, were arrested in Valona by regular Ottoman forces arrived there by sea by “*sailless vessels*.”¹¹⁷ As Ismail Kemal mentions: “*all the chiefs of the aristocracy and the notables who had taken part in the movement were arrested and deported to Konia in Asia Minor. Others were imprisoned at Constantinople. The families of the higher chiefs were deported in Salonica, and to various towns in Macedonia.*”
- 82 The Ottoman Empire after the first decades of the 19th century, administered the differences and controversies that arose between the various ruling elites with an unusually “civilized” manner. Normally, the punishment for the losers was nothing more but a deportation to undeveloped Ottoman provinces, remote from their areas of influence or, if they were officials of the central administration, in areas away from Istanbul—usually in the Kurdish provinces, in Yemen or in various regions in North Africa. There, the displaced persons, who generally were treated with courtesy and respect by the local authorities, were awaiting a change of the political situation, which would allow them to retake their previous offices in the central or provincial administration; then, in turn, were exiled to distant provinces the new losers of the political game.
- 83 An other example, again from the Albanian provinces is that of the Kara Mustafa Bushatli Pasha, who had rebelled against the Porte and made an alliance with the Russians during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29. Mustafa Pasha defeated by the Sultanic forces, was arrested and transferred to Istanbul, where he lived in captivity until 1846. Then he joined the Ottoman administrative apparatus and was placed *Vali* in various Anatolian provinces, until 1853, when he returned to Rumelia (Ottoman Balkans) as general-governor of Herzegovina *eyalet*.¹¹⁸
- 84 In 1850, began to emerge a new conciliatory policy of the Porte towards the Albanians. Abdülmecid (1839-1861), son and successor of Mahmud II, a cultured and liberal Sultan, and his grand vizier Koja Mustafa Resid Pasha (1800-1858), one of the most prominent Ottoman politicians of the 19th century, a modernized, liberal, and passionate champion of the Tanzimat reforms, demonstrated the sincerity of their intentions, replacing all the non-Albanians *Valis* of the Albanian provinces with persons of Albanian origin. Specifically, in February 1850 was appointed in Yannina, as governor of “Lower Albania” Tepedelenli’s grandson Ismail Rahmi Pasha, and in Prizren, as governor of the “Upper Albania” Ismail Pasha Pliasa.
- 85 Now, things began to emerge favourable for the Vlora house. The two newly-appointed Albanian *Valis* were maternal and paternal relatives of the family; thus, they informed their displaced relatives on the “New Albanian policy” of the Sublime Porte, which favoured the return of the exiles. In fact, in late 1851 or in early 1852, arrived from Konya in Valona, Mahmud Bey, which was chosen by the members of the family as the new head of Vlora house and assumed officially the administration of the district. However, his brother Selim Pasha and the famous chieftain Tselio Pitsari, “*being considered by the Government as elements of danger, were obliged to stay for some time in Thessaly.*”¹¹⁹
- 86 In October 1853 broke out the Crimean War; the Porte sent commands to the various provinces in order to recruit men. Mahmud Bey Vlora “*received orders [from the Vali of*

Yannina] to enrol men capable of bearing arms against the Russians”¹²⁰ and gathered 1,5000 armed men from the Berat sanjak. But this corps had never been transferred to the Crimean front and was sent to the southern borders of the pashalik in order to face a possible invasion of Greek troops in Epirus and Thessaly.

- 87 The Greek *Meghali Idea* (Great Idea) had invested much in the Crimean War. Throughout the country dominated intransigent voices, which demanded Greece’s entry into the war on the side of Russia—a policy with which seemed to agree the Palace, the army officers, the people and the majority of the politicians. The Greek government, however, fearing the reaction of England and France did not declared officially war against the Ottoman Empire, despite the intense pressures of Russia. But, secretly, allowed—actually organized—the invasion of irregular voluntary corps led by army officers. These forces invaded in Thessaly and Epirus, and in cooperation with local chieftains proclaimed the revolution.
- 88 The Berat/Valona forces joined the Ottoman army under the command of Keçecizade Mehmed Fuad Pasha (1815-1869), an important personality of the Tanzimat period, who at that time was commander in chief of the Ottoman forces in the Greek-Turkish front. On March 27, 1854 the corps of Mahmud fought successfully in the battle of Metsovo against the forces of Theodorakis Grivas, a leading figure of the Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) and then general of the royal Greek army.¹²¹
- 89 The participation of Mahmud Bey in the operations against Greek rebels in the area of Epirus, endowed him with prestige and honours, as well as with the rank of commander of the Albanian Militia, a military corps which had been formed in order to keep the serenity in the sensitive border areas.¹²² But the price was heavy both for him and his family; Mahmud Bey, in his effort to be—consistent that is to say, pleasing—to the Sublime Porte had to sell most of its landownership in order to cover the cost of 1,500 armed men. Since then, he will never regain his property and he shall content himself with the privileges deriving from his family social status and the salaries from the Ottoman treasury.¹²³
- 90 The political and economic weakening of Mahmud Bey Vlora and many other of his counterparts, probably strengthened their “Ottomanism” since the loyalty to the Sublime Porte became the only option to prevent their marginalization. Thus, many of those former unpredictable and insubordinate beys of the wild western Ottoman borderlines were gradually transformed into educated and loyal, central or regional, Ottoman officials.¹²⁴ This was a development quite similar to what had happen in 15th-16th centuries in western Europe, when the strengthening of the central royal power turned gradually the rebellious barons into loyal courtiers—“from eagles to peacocks.”
- 91 In this new context, Mahmud Bey, an educated person himself, “who had received a European education, which for his time was an extraordinary thing, could read and write Turkish, Italian and Greek; he understood French, and was well versed in the literatures of the Western nations,”¹²⁵ will offer to his son, Ismail Kemal, an excellent education (he is the first Muslim-Albanian who had studied in the famous Zosimaia Greek school of Yannina, and spoke perfectly Greek, Turkish, Arabic, French, Italian and English). His education, along with his social status and the connections of his family with the powerful Albanian lobby of the Ottoman capital, will allow him to occupy high positions and offices in the central apparatus and in the provincial administration. A similar course will follow and other members of the family; many of them will gain a

considerable education and will occupy high positions in Ottoman administration, such as Sanjak-beyis, Valis and other signor administrative and military offices. One of them, Mehmed Ferid Pasha Vlora (Yannina, 1852-San Remo, 1914), vali of Konya, –a person with considerable education who studied also in Zosimaia school and spoke Albanian, Greek, Arabic, Turkish, French, and Italian–, will occupy the highest ottoman office, that of Grand Vizier, during the reign of Abdulhamid II.

- 92 Further, member of the Vlora family, will represent, continuously, their province in the Ottoman parliament, participating actively in the shaping of the political developments during the last Ottoman period. And when the Young Turks' intransigence will exclude any possibility for the formation of a single and autonomous Albanian vilayet in the framework of Ottoman Empire,¹²⁶ they will leave the crumbling Ottoman legitimacy and they will join the Albanian national movement (*Rilindja Kombëtare*).
- 93 Subsequently, after the founding of the Albanian state, they will star in the public domain holding high political offices (members of Parliament, senators, diplomats, ministers). Ismail Kemal Bey Vlora himself, –a former high rank Ottoman officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Concil, *Sanjak-beyi* and *Vali*, and leading member of the “liberal-anglophile” group in the Ottoman Parliament–will be emerged in Valona, on 28 November 1912, –after a competition with his cousin Mahmud Suraiya Bey, one of the richest men in southern Albania–¹²⁷ first president of the provisional government of the independent Albania. Ismail Kemal himself will raise from the balcony of the family mansion in Valona, the alleged banner of Skanderbeg–the red flag with the Byzantine black double-headed eagle–¹²⁸ and he will acquire the titles of the “father of the Albanian national independence” and of the “founder of the Albanian state.”¹²⁹

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NOTES

1. Vlorë-Vlora in Tosk and Vlonë in Gheg dialect. In Greek, the city is called Αυλών, in Turkish Awlonya, in Jewish Avilona, and in the Venetian dialect, Avalona. William Miller, "Valona," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 37 (1917), p. 164.
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3. Leake, *op.cit.*
4. Donald M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epirus, 1267-1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages*, [Cambridge University Press], 1984 p. 160.
5. Zeta: a medieval principality of which territory covered the today's Montenegro and Northern Albania. On the Albanian Byzantine period, see, among others: Ioannis Romanos *Peri tou Despotatu tis Epirou* [On Despotate of Epirus], 1895; Antonios Miliarakis, *Historia tou Vasileiou tis Nikaias kai tou Despotatu tis Epirou* [History of the Kingdom of Nikaia and the Despotate of Epirus], Athens, 1898; Konstantinos M. Mekios, *Istoria tis Epirou* [History of Epirus], Cairo, 1909; S. Pollo – A. Puto, *Istoria tis Alvanias* [History of Albania], –in Greek – Thessaloniki, s.a., pp. 48-76; Constantine A. Chekrezi, *Albania. Past and Present*, [The Macmillan Company] New York, 1919, pp. 19-25. On the medieval period of Valona, see, Konstantin Jireček, "Valona im Mittelalter," in Ludvig von Thallcözy [ed.], *Illyrische-albanische Forschungen*, I, Munich & Leipzig, 1916, pp. 168-187.
6. Apart from a six-month period of Venetian occupation, from October 1610 to 1913 March 1611. Miller, *op.cit.*, p. 191; Franz Babinger, *Moametto II il Conquistatore et il suo tempo*, Turin, 1956, 570ff.
7. Polo-Puto, *op.cit.*, p. 79. General de Vaudoncourt, notes, erroneously, that the city and the surrounding area was captured in 1472. Guillaume de Vaudoncourt, *Memoirs on the Ionian Islands ... Including the Life and the Character of Ali Pasha the Present Ruler of Greece*, London, 1816, p. 114.
8. Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912*, Princeton University Press, Princeton N.J, 1967, pp. 4, 5; Aydin Babuna, "The Bosnian Muslims and Albanians: Islam and Nationalism," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 32, No 2, June 2004, p. 289.
9. From the Eqrem Bey book *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Türkenherrschaft in Albanien: eine historische Skizze*, ([translation: Robert Elsie on: http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_3/AH1956_1.html Eqrem Bey Vlora (1885-1964), studied at Theresianum (Vienna) and University of Istanbul. He worked as a civil functionary and diplomat in the service of the Sublime Porte, and then participated in the movement of the Albanian independence; in 1912 he was elected vice-president of the Albanian Senate. During the First World War, at first he was detained by the Italians, but then became a champion of a close relations policy between Albania and Italy. During the reign of Ahmed Zogou, he served in various diplomatic missions abroad. In April 1939, he welcomed the Italian invasion, was closely associated with Italian fascism and, in 1944, became foreign minister and minister of justice. After the dominance of the communist regime he took refuge in Italy. He died in Vienna at the age of seventy-nine. Author, among other things, of the two-volume work *Lebenserinnerungen*, Volume I, R. Oldenburg, München, 1968 & Volume II,

R. Oldenburg, München 1973, which gives with perceptive and delightful way information on the life and environment of an Albanian nobleman of the early 20th century.

10. Halil Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", *Studia Islamica*, [Maisonnette & Larose], No 2 (1954), pp. 103-129, *passim*.

11. The Ottoman authorities had displaced only a small number of people from Anatolian provinces (mostly from Konya), and they had been transferred too semi-nomadic Anatolian *Yürüks*. The latter had been settled in the mountainous eastern region of Dibra (alb. Dibër), in today's north-eastern Albania, and they had been charged with the custody of the road axis Albania-Rumeli. On *Yürüks* and their settlements in Balkan territories, see. Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, "Yörük" in H.A.R. Gibb, J.H. Kramers, E.Levi-Provençal, J. Schacht [eds.], *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition, [Leiden-E.J. Brill], 1960, [henceforth: *EL2*] Vol. I, pp. 338-341; Halil Inalcik, "Arnawutluk," *EL2*, Vol. IX, p. 651.

12. Here, the term/vilayet, means a administrative unit which is a subdivision of sanjak/sancak. That is, it has not the geographical and administrative scope that takes the term *vilayet* during the 19th century – when it becomes the largest administrative unit of the empire, replacing the *beylerbegilik*. After the administrative reform of 1864, the imperial territories will be divided into vilayets under the command of a *vali*. See, Halil Inalcik, "Eyalet," *EL2*, Vol. I, pp. 721-724.

13. Inalcik, "Arnawutluk," *EL2*, Vol. I, p. 655.

14. Elbasani (Albanian) and Elbasan (Ottoman) [El-basan: the fortress which subdues the land]. See more, L. Ménage, "Elbasan," *EL2*, Vol. II, p. 693.

15. M. Kiel, "Okhri," *EL2*, Vol. VIII, pp. 164-168.

16. Natalie Clayer, "Ishkodra," *EL2*, Vol. XII, pp. 461-462.

17. The Albanian historic space is divided geographically into two major regions: the land of Ghegs (Ghegaria/Gegari) that constitutes the Albanian north and the country of Tosks (Toskaria/Toskeri), that constitutes the Albanian south. These two areas have as natural boundary the River Shkumbin in central Albania. See more, George Gawrych: *The Crescent and the Eagle. Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913*, [I.B. Tauris] 2006, *passim*; H. Charles Woods, "Albania and the Albanians," *Geographical Review*, American Geographical Society, Vol. 5, No 4 (April 1918), pp. 263-264.

18. Denis Bašić. *The roots of the religious, ethnic, and national identity of the Bosnian-Herzegovinan Muslims*. University of Washington, 2009, pp. 277, 279; Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans. Kisve Bahase Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730*. Brill, Leyden, 2004, pp. 41-42.

19. Akçe (asper): a silver coin, the basic monetary unit of the Ottoman Empire until its replacement by *Kuruş*, which values 120 aspers.

20. Inalcik, "Arnawutluk," *EL2*, Vol I, p. 656.

21. Ducat was a gold coin minted by Venice in 1284 (ducato/zecchino).

22. On the Jews of the city of Valona, see: <http://www.sefarad.org/publication/lm/050/html/page16.html>. According to Turkish documents, and the *Historia e Shqiperisë* (Tirana, 1959), in 1520 the city of Valona was "preponderantly a Jewish town", *op.cit.* See, also, Robert Elsie, *A Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology, and Folk Culture*, [Hurst & Co.] London, 2001, pp. 141-142.

23. Henry Holland, *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia &c, during the years 1812 and 1813*, London 1915, p. 517.

24. Inalcik, "Arnawutluk," *EL2*, Vol. I, p. 655.

25. Michalis Kokolakis, *To ystero yaniotiko pasaliki. Choros, dioikisi kai plithysmos stin tourkokroumeni Epiro, (1820-1913)* [The late Pashalik of Yannina. Space, administration and population in the under Turkish rule Epirus (1820-1913)] K.N.E./E.I.E., Athens 2003, p. 107. He notes that in 1691, shortly after the end of the six-month occupation of the city of Vlora by the Venetians, the capital of sanjak will transfer in Berat and Vlora will become seat of a homonymous kaza. However, the traveller Evliya (see below) when he visited the city in 1670, i.e. 21 years earlier, notes says the city of Valona was the capital of a kaza, and the city of Berat the sanjak capital.

26. One yük: 500,000 aspers.
27. According to an information that provides Ismail Kemal in his *Memoirs*, the Vlora family had the royalties of mines during the last quarter of the 19th century, that is, two hundred years after the visite of Evliya Celebi. A. M. Sommerville Story [ed.], *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey Vlora*, [Constable and Company LTD], London, 1920, p. 108. On the mining rights by the family Vlora, see Leake, *Travels...*, *op.cit.*, p. 378, Leake notes that the annual revenues of Ibrahim Vlora amounted to 120,000 piastres.
28. Robert Dankoff & Robert Elsie (eds.), *Evliya Çelebi in Albania and Adjacent Regions (Kosovo, Montenegro, Ohrid)*, Leiden 2000, pp. 127-153.
29. Leake, *Travels...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-2.
30. *Op.cit.*, p. 2.
31. Henry Holland, *Travels ...*, *op.cit.*
32. Franz Babinger, "Awlonya," *EL2*, *op.cit.*, Vol I, pp. 767-768. The information drawn from, Ekrem Bey Vlora, *Aus Berat und von Tomor Serayevo*, 1991 *Zur Junde der Balkan-halbinsel*, No 13.
33. On the marital alliance policy of the Osmanli dynasty, see more, Leslie P. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem. Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York-Oxford, 1992.
34. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.* p. 4.
35. *Op.cit.*, p. 3; Ekrem Bey Vlorë, *op.cit.* The same information provides F. Babinger, *Rumelische Streifen*, Berlin, 1938, p. 24.
36. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem. Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 23, 66, 68, 76, 72, 199-200, 201.
37. F. Babinger - G. David, "Kodja Sinan Pasha", *EL2*, Vol. IX, p. 632.
38. Pearce, *op.cit.* pp. 111-112, 192, 246-247.
39. K. D. Mertzijs, "Chronogikoi pinakes ton pasadon tis Epirou" [Chronological Lists of the Pashas of Epirus], in *Epirotiki Estia*, IVI (1967); Panaghiotis Aravantinos, *Chronografia tis Epirou ton te omoron ellinikon kai illirikon periohon...* [Chronography of Epirus and of the adjacent Greek and Illyrian areas], Vol. II, 1856, pp. 292 et sq; Ch. Soulis, "Oi pasades ton Ioanninon" [The pashas of Yannina], *Epiros*, f. 27/5/1934; William Miller, *op.cit.*, pp. 191, 192, 193.
40. William Miller, *op.cit.* Kokolakis, *op.cit.*, p. 122, also questions the views of Aravantinos and Babinger, ("Awlonya", *Encyclopedie de l'Islam*), which identifies the founder of the Vlora family with various prominent Ottoman officials. Ekrem Bey, *op.cit.*, notes that Ali Bey, a brother of (Arnavud) Sinan Pasha, killed in the naval battle of Lepanto (1571), namely during the same period that Sinan Pasha acted in the region of Valona.
41. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-4.
42. Ekrem Bey Vlora, *op.cit.*; Renzo Falaschi (ed.) *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Vlora and his work for the independence of Albania* [Toena], Tirana, p. 417, note A. On the influence and the power of the Vlora family in the city and the wider area of Valona-Berat (albeit with some inaccuracies), see, Gabriel. Louis-Jaray, *Au Jeune Royaume d'Albanie*, Hachette, Paris 1914, Chapitre Premier "Vallona," *passim*.
43. Polo-Puto, *op.cit.*, pp. 127-128.
44. Polo-Puto, *op.cit.*, pp. 127-128.
45. It is indicative that the next Survey took place in 1830, after the Ottoman central government resumed the direct governance of the "Great Pashaliks" of Skodra and Yannina, and imposed its control over the local beys. https://www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Ottoman_Detailed_Cadastral_Surveys_in_Albania [Ottoman Detailed Cadastral Surveys in Albania].
46. Grigori L. Ars, *I Alvania kai i Epiros sta teli tou 18th kai stis arches tou 19th Centuries. Ta dytikovalkanika pasalikia tis Othomanikis Aftokratorias*, [Albania and Epirus in late 18th and in early 19th Centuries. The western Balkan Pashaliks of the Ottoman Empire], Athens 1994, p. 137.

47. Ramadan Marmullaku, *Albania and the Albanians*, [Archon Books] 1975, pp. 17-19; Polo-Puto, *op.cit.* p. 130; Kokolakis, *op.cit.*, p. 122.
48. The beys were not a homogenous social group. The “great beys were few in number and those who had large landholdings, wealth and power and held hereditary power. There were also “lesser” beys with smaller landholdings, wealth, and military and political power. Nathalie Clayer, *Oi aparches tou Alvanikou Ethnikismou* [The Origins of the Albanian Nationalism], Yannina, 2009, p. 45. [French original edition: Nathalie Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais. La naissance d'une nation majoritairement en Europe*, Karthala, 2007].
49. Ekrem Bey Vlorë, *Lebenserinnerungen...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-27.
50. Ahmet Uzun, “Tepedelenli Ali Paşa ve Mal Varlığı,” *Belletín*, LXV/244, 2001 [Ali Pasha Tepedelenli and his Fortune, in greek, translation Giorgos Syrmis- <http://www.eie.gr/nhrf/institutes/inr/instr-studiorumbalk/tepelenis.pdf>, p. 7.
51. Marmullaku, *op.cit.*, pp. 17-19; Kokolakis, *op.cit.*, p. 122.
52. Nathalie Clayer, *op.cit.*, p. 46; G. Makris, St. Papageorgiou, *To hersaio dictyo epikoinonias sto kratos tou Ali passa Tepelenli. Enischisi tis kentrikis exousias kai apoieira dimiourgias eniaias agoras*. [The overland network of Communication in the state of Ali Pasha Tepedelenli. Strengthen of the central authority and an attempt to create a indiscrete market Athens, 1990, p. 46; Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 5; Vasilis Panaghiotopoulos [ed.], Panaghiotopoulos, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, Athens (1747-1808), documents nos 19, 181, 220, 248, 338, 347, 367, Vol. III (1818-1821), nos 1053, 1513, 1415; Nathalie Clayer, *op.cit.*, p. 46; K. E. Fleming, *Ali Passa. O Mousoulmanos Vonapartis*, Athens, 2000, p. 155 [English original edition: *The Muslim Bonaparte. Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece*, Princeton University Press, Princeton N.J., 1999]; Ahmet Mufit, *Ali Passas o Tepelenlis (1744-1822)* [Ali Pasha Tepedelenli (1744-1822)] Yannina 1980, pp. 99, 112. Nathalie Clayer, *op.cit.*, p. 45, notes that the intermarriage system – sometimes – operated even within the context of the wider family (Ismail Bey Vlora and Bekir Bey Vlora married their cousins). Clayer takes this information from Ekrem Bey Vlorë, *Lebenserinnerungen...*, p. 133.
53. Polo-Puto, *op.cit.*, p. 128.
54. On the pashalik of Skodra and the influential family of Bushatlis, see, Ars, *op.cit.*, Chapters 2 & 6; S. N. Naçi, “Le pachalik de Scutari considéré dans son développement socio-politique au XVIII^e siècle”, *Studia Albanica*, iii/1, 1966, pp. 123-144; C. J. Heywood, “Kara Mahmud İshkondrali Paşa”, *EL2*, Vol. IV, pp. 588-589.
55. Mutesellim: sancak administrator, representative of the eyalet's governor, responsible for collecting taxes.
56. William Plomer, *Ali Pasha: The Diamond of Yannina, 1741-1822*, <in Greek>, Athens-Yannina 1987, p. 40; Sp. P. Aravantinos, *Istoria tou Ali Passa Tepelenli* [History of Ali Pasha Tepedelenli] Athens 1895, p. 40; Ioannis Lambrides, *Epirotika Meletimata* [Studies on Epirus], Issue A', Athens 1887, pp. 21-22; Makris-Papageorgiou, *op.cit.*, p. 48; Hamiyet Sezer, *New Information and Findings about the Çiftliks and the incomes of Ali Pasja kai his Sons* [translation, Eirini Kalogeropoulou] -in Greek: <http://www.eie.gr/nhrf/institutes/inr/inst-studiorumbalk/tsiflikia.htm> Ali, in 1802 became governor of Roumeli (Rumeli valesi), the highest office in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire (Leake, *Travels...*, *op.cit.*, p. 238; Ars, *op.cit.*, p. 216).
57. Makris-Papageorgiou, *op.cit.*, pp. 62-64; Alexandros Mansolas, *Politeiographikai Pliroforiai peri Ellados* [Demographic Information on Greece], Athens, 1867, p. 12. On the size of Ali's territories and its population, see, J. Bessieres, *Mémoire sur la vie et la puissance d'Ali-Pasha, Vezir de Yanina*, Paris 1820, p. 24.
58. Alfonse de Beauchamp, *The Life of Ali Pacha of Jannina, Late Vizier of Epirus, surnamed Aslan, or the Lion*, second edition, London 1823, p. 61. Beauchamp, notes, (*op.cit.*) that Ibrahim married an other of his daughters with a nephew of Ali Pasha.
59. Mutasarrif: governor of a sancak in the rank of Pasha of Berat.
60. Thomas Smart Hughes, *Travels in Greece and Albania*, London, 1830, p. 220.

61. Ars, *op.cit.*, p. 157; Makris-Papageorgiou, *op.cit.*, p. 46. Sp. Aravantinos, *op.cit.*, p. 18; Ahmet Mufit, *op.cit.*, pp. 36-37; Spyros Melas, *To Liontari tis Epirou* [The Lion of Epirus], Athens 1955, pp. 19-20; Renzo Falaschi (ed.) *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Vlora and his work for the independence of Albania* [Toena], Tirana, p. 417.
62. Panaghiotopoulos, *op.cit.* Vol. I' (1747-1808), document No 19. See, also, Leake, *Travels...*, Vol. I, p. 41; John Cam Hobhouse Broughton, *Travels in Albania and other provinces of Turkey in 1809 & 1810*, Vol. 1, London 1858, pp. 61, 103.
63. Ars *op.cit.*, pp. 230-231.
64. H. Bowen, "Ali Pasha Tepedelenli", *EL2*, Vol. I, p. 399.
65. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, pp. 14, 25. On Ismail Rahmi, see, Panaghiotopoulos, *op.cit.*, Vol I (1747-1808), documents Nos 320, 367, Vol. II (1809-1817) documents Nos 980, 9993, 1021, Vol. III (1818-821) documents Nos 1176, 1213, 1314; Sp. Aravantinos, *op.cit.*, pp. 225, 457-459; Mufit, *op.cit.*, pp. 105 146, 148.
66. Ars, *op.cit.*, p. 206. The whole region of Himarë will be subdued in 1810.
67. *Op.cit.*, p. 215.
68. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 5.
69. Ars, *op.cit.*, p. 255; Ahmet Uzun, "Tepedelenli Ali Paşa ve Mal Varlığı," *Belleten*, LXV/244, 2001 [Ali Pasha Tepedelenli and his Fortune] in Greek -translation Giorgos Syrmas- <http://www.eie.gr/nhrf/institutes/inr/instr-studiorumbalk/tepelenis.pdf>; Stavro Skendi, et al. (eds.). *Albania*, Preager, New York: 1956, p 7.
70. Palmer, *op.cit.*, p. 83.
71. Ars, *op.cit.*, p. 255.
72. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 6.
73. Ahmet Uzun, *op.cit.*; Ars, *op.cit.*, p. 255; W. M. Leake, *Travels...*, Vol. III, p. 550, 3, notes the defection of Bekir Aga, a chieftain who passed in the camp of Tepedelenli along with his two hundred armed men.
74. Gabriel Remerand, *Ali de Tebélen pasha de Yanina*, Paris 1828, p. 137.
75. Hughes, mentions that Jafer Bey Vlora, a strong protector of the Himariots and one of the most dangerous enemies of Tepedelenli, was poisoned by Ali's orders, *op.cit.*, p. 220.
76. Ars, *op.cit.*, p. 258. About the marriage of Suleyman Bey Vlora to the daughter of Pasha of Delvino, see, Panaghiotopoulos, *op.cit.*, Vol. II (1809-1817), document No 439.
77. Ars, *op.cit.* p. 259.
78. Ars, *op.cit.*, pp. 257-258; Ahmet Uzun, *op.cit.*; Sp. Aravantinos, *op.cit.* pp. 194, 222; Bowen, "Ali Pasha Tepedelenli", *op.cit.*, p. 399. Kokolakis, *op.cit.*, p. 125. Leake, (*Travels...*, Vol. IV, p. 549), notes that to Muhtar Pasha –who had excelled in the battles at the front of the Danube against the Russian army –, was given by the serasker and grand vizier Kör Yusuf pasha, the office of the *Rumeli valesi*, which held his father; but Muhtar preferred, since this office was already in the hands of his father, to take the pashalik of Valona, which until then was not controlled by the Tepedelenli family.
79. Damiralis is an interesting figure, who afterwards was initiated in the Greek secret organization of *Philiki Etaireia* [Society of the Friends], and in December 1821 took part in the First Greek National Assembly at Epidaurus as representative of the "Albanian allies," –who were, mostly, former chieftains of Ali Tepedelenli. Miller (*op.cit.*, p. 193) notes that in the city of Valona had taken place in the previous period bloody conflict between members of the Vlora family, which led the people of the city to seek the intervention of Ali Pasha.
80. Hobhouse, *op.cit.*, p. 85. Beauchamp, *op.cit.*, p. 214.
81. Polo-Puto, *op.cit.*, p. 139.
82. Hobhouse, *op.cit.*, p. 106. Ibrahim Pasha Vlora is a main character in the historical fiction of Alexander Dumas, father, *Ali Pacha* [electronic edition – Project Gutenberg]. It should be note that

the narrative not differ from historical reality, as it appears from within the historical sources and studies.

83. Sommerville-Story, *op.cit.*, p. 6. The narration of Ismail Kemal creates some problems. According to information given by the editor of the Italian publication of his *Memoirs*, Ibrahim Pasha Vlora died in 1819, before the summer of 1820 that is, before the troops of the Sultan besiege the castle of Yannina (Summer of 1820). Falaschi, *op.cit.*, p. 417.

84. Hobhouse, *op.cit.*; Ars, *op.cit.*, p. 256; Ars, *op.cit.* p. 256. On Omer Pasha Vryoni, see Christos Stasinopoulos, *Lexiko tis Ellinikis Epanastaseos tou 1821*, [Lexicon of the Greek Revolution of 1821], Vol. I', Athens, s.a., pp. 306-308; *Meghali Elliniki Enkyklopedia- Pagosmio Biographiko Lexiko*, [Great Greek Encyclopaedia - Universal Biographical Lexicon] Vol. II "Omer Vryonis", Athens, s.a., pp. 372-372.

85. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.* p. 8.

86. The Albanians religiously followed the Christian and Islamic doctrine. Further, the Christian Albanians, who constituted then 30% of the total population were divided into Orthodox (about 20%) and Catholics (about 10%). The Muslims (70% of the total population) were divided into Sunni (60%) and followers of the Bektashi dervishes Order (10%). Geographically, the vast majority of the Orthodox Christians were concentrated in southern areas (Toskaria) while the Catholics were found almost exclusively in northern Albania and in particular in the mountainous regions of the vilayet of Skodra. Finally, the Sunnis were located in all Albanian vilayets, with a more density in central areas, while the Bektashis mainly in Toskaria. Gawrych, *op.cit.*, pp. 69-71.

87. Carl Patsch, *Das Sandschak Berat in Albanien*, Vienna, 1904, p. 134; Gawrych, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

88. Falaschi, *op.cit.*, p. 417, note D (6, 17).

89. Beauchamp, *op.cit.*, pp. 201-202.

90. On Muhammad Ali, see, Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *Egypt and the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, [Cambridge University Press], 1984; Khaled Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali*, [Oneworld Publications], 2009; Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, his Army and the Making of Modern Egypt*, [Cambridge University Press], 1997.

91. Beauchamp, *op.cit.*, p. 202.

92. See Makris-Papageorgiou, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-55.

93. The Vlora-Vryoni rivalry over the supremacy and the acquisition of political and administrative offices continued during the period of the Albanian "national revival." In 1909 Aziz Pasha Vryoni, and Ismail Kemal Vlora, were elected representatives of the Berat sanjak Valona in the Ottoman Parliament. (Gawrych, *op.cit.*, p. 332); further, Iliaz Bey Vryoni, Sami Bey Vryoni, Eqrem Bey Vlora, and Kemal Bey Vlora had participated in the congress which declared the Albanian independence. (Lef Nosi, *Dokumenta historike për t'i shërbye historiës tone kombëtare*. (Translated from the Albanian by Robert Elsie), Tirana: Instituti i Historisë 2007, pp. 99, 176-179). Also, in 1912, Sami Bey Vryoni and Suraya Pasha Vlora were members of the Ottoman Parliament (*Meclis-i Mubasan*). (<http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~fisher/hst373/Meclis-iMubasan1912.htm>).

94. Ahmet Uzun, *op.cit.*, Table 2, "The Çiftliks of Ali Pasha..." (1234-36/1818/21), pp. 34-35; Dennis N. Skiotis, "From Bandit to Pasha: First Steps in the Rise of Power of Ali of Tepelen, 1750-1784," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 2, No 3 (July 1971), p. 221, note 1.

95. Ahmet Uzun, *op.cit.*, Table 1 "The Revenues of Ali Pasha and his Sons in various Vilayets" pp. 32-33.

96. Georgios Vavaretsos, *O Ali passas apo tin alli plevra* [Ali pasha from the other side], Athens 1968, pp. 36-37; Sp. Aravantinos, *op.cit.*, p. 345.

97. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

98. Ars, *op.cit.*, p. 334.

99. Omer Vryoni, defended with his corps the mountain passes of Pindus, with orders to prevent the passing of the sultan troops. He united, however, with the forces of the Porte and let the Ottoman troops which were coming from Larissa to advance towards Yannina (August 1920). *Ars op.cit.*, p. 335.
100. Kokolakis, *op.cit.*, p. 126.
101. On the activity of Omer Vryoni in the military operations against the Greek rebels, see, Christos Vlassopoulos, *To Hemerologion tou Agonos* [The Journal of the Struggle], Athens 1930, pp. 34, 44, 70, 78, 80, 96, 122, 128, 146, 154, 172, 194, 204, 208, 239, 250, 266.
102. Nikolaos Kasomoulis, *Apomnimonevmeta tis Epanastaseos ton Ellinon, 1821-1833* [Memoirs on the Revolution of the Greeks, 1821-1833] Athens, s.a., Vol II, pp. 122-125.
103. Lewis, *op.cit.*, Vol I, pp. 146-156; Avraam Vaporides, *Viographiki Istoria ton Sultanon tis Othomanikis Aftokratorias* [Biographical History of the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire], Istanbul, 1885, pp. 158-168.
104. Vaporides, *op.cit.*, pp. 174-186; About the elimination of janissaries see, Lewis, *op.cit.*, pp. 187-191; Patrick Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire* London 1977, pp. 456-457; David Nicolle, *The Janissaries*. Osprey Publishing, London, 1995, p. 7; Jason Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire*, H. Holt, New York, pp. 296-299.
105. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, pp 7-8.
106. *Op.cit.*, p. 8.
107. P. Aravantinos, *Chronographia...*, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 261, 288, 306, 319, 328-329, 383, 400-401, 409-10; Miller, *op.cit.*, p. 194; Dionysios Kokkinos, *I Elliniki Epanastasi* [The Greek Revolution], Athens 1960, p. 56, notes that Ismail Bey "killed while he climbed the stairs of the governor's palace." Miller, *op.cit.*, p. 194, notes, also "that Resid Pasha executed by fraudulence the powerful Bey of Valona."
108. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 8.
109. Polo-Puto, *op.cit.*, p. 141; M. Konitza, *The Albanian Question*, Vatra, 1918, p. 12.
110. Georges Castellan, *I Istoria ton Valkanion*, s.a. p. 449 [French original edition: *Histoire des Balkans*, Fayard, 1991; Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 9.
111. Marmullaku, *op.cit.*, p. 21.
112. Kokolakis, *op.cit.*, pp. 130-131.
113. P. Aravantinos, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 408.
114. Labëria as a region of the Toskaria, located between Valona and Sarandë, which expanded east to Tepelen. The *Kanuni i Labërisë* (or *Kanuni i Papa Zhulit*) was applied in the southern Albanian districts of Valona, in the Kurvelesi of Himarë and in Tepelen, and particularly in the region called "area of the three bridges" (Drasovitsa, Kalasa, Tepelen.). On the various *Kanuns* (e.g. *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit*, *Kanuni i Skënderbeut*, *Kanuni i Malsisë së Madhe* etc), prevailed in the mountainous Albanian communities, on which, actually, was never imposed the Islamic law (Sharia), see, Robert Elsie, *A Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology, and Folk Culture*, Hurst & Company, London, 2001. pp. 146-150.
115. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 9.
116. Kokolakis, *op.cit.*, p. 132.
117. So called the Albanians steam powered ships, Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 9.
118. A. Popovic, "Mustafa Pasha Bushatli," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 720.
119. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 12.
120. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 15.
121. *Op.cit.*; V. Ch. Skafidas, "I Elliniki Epanastasi tou 1854, en Epiro kai Thessalia kai i katastrofi tou Metsovou" [The Epirot Revolution of 1854 and the destruction of Metsovo], *Epirotiki Estia*, Vol. III, Yannina, 1954. On the attitude of the Greek Kingdom towards the Crimean War, see, among others, Tryfon Evangelides, *Istoria tou Othonos, Vasileos tis Ellados, 1832-1862* [History of Otto, King of Greece, 1832-1862], Athens pp. 531-532; Spyros Markezinis, *Politiki Istoria tis Neoteris Ellados*, [Political History of the Modern Greece], Vol. I, 1828-1862, p. 238; Stefanos Papageorgiou, *Apo to*

Ghenos sto Ethnos. I Themeliosi tou Ellinikou Kratous, 1821-1862 [From *Rum Millet to Nation-State. The foundation of the Greek State, 1821-1862*], Athens 2004, pp. 468-475. On the Crimean War and the irredentist Greek rebellions, see. K. A. Papageorgiou, "I Epirotiki Epanastasis tou 1854" [The Epirot Revolution of 1854], *Epirotiki Estia*, Vol. IX, Yannina 1959.

122. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*

123. Around this time upgraded, economically, Suraiya Bey Vlora, cousin of Mahmud Bey, who will become one of the richest men of southern Albania, and he will claim the leadership of the Vlora house. His son, Eqrem Bey Vlora, in his *Memoirs*, notes that his father, increased impressively his fortune, earning 20 million German marks within 20 years.

124. George W. Gawrych, "Tolerant Dimensions of Cultural Pluralism in the Ottoman Empire: The Albanian Community, 1800-1912", *Journal of the Middle East Studies*. Vol. 15, No 4 (November 1983), pp. 519-536, *passim*.

125. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

126. M. şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 66-67.

127. Nathalie Clayer, *op.cit.*, pp. 332-333.

128. Sommerville Story, *op.cit.* p. 372. This is a popular Albanian national myth. According to this, the flag of the great Albanian medieval warlord Skanderbeg, which was guarded for centuries – nobody knows how, where and by whom – was found in Valona, coincidentally on the date of proclamation of national independence. Actually the truth is less dramatic. The flag which was hoisted on the balcony of the house of the Vlora family, it was in the possession of Eqrem Bey Vlora, nephew of Ismail Kemal. Eqrem Bey had taken the flag by Don Juan Aladro Castriota de Perez y Velasco, a wealthy Spanish businessman who had "bought" titles of nobility, claimed, falsely, that was a descendent of the Skanderbeg, and used the double-headed eagle in his coat of arms and as emblem of his personal banner. Aladro would be, the next year, one of the many claimants to the Albanian throne.

129. Nathalie Clayer, *op.cit.*, p. 624; Pollo-Puto, *op.cit.*, p. 209.

ABSTRACTS

This article tries to trace the policy of a powerful administrative, economic and military provincial elite of the Ottoman-Albanian southern provinces, that of the beys of Toskaria through the typical family of the Beys of Valona, from the mid-18th to the mid-19th centuries.

In this period took place an important development in the wider area: the decay of the timariot system (*dirlik*) and the predominance of the large estates (*çiftlik*s). This development vitiated the already weak central ottoman government –the Sublime Porte– and consolidated the power of the landowners-beys.

The absence of a central authority, however, created a status of lawlessness and anarchy, a problem which was treated–not by the intervention of the Sublime Porte–, but by the creation of the great Paşalik of Yannina. Ali Pasha, the vali of Yannina, an Albanian bey from Tepelenë, filled the vacuum of power that left the inability of the Porte and, gradually, managed to bring under his control all the southern provinces of Albania. In the ensuing conflict between the Porte and Ali Pasha, the Beys of Toskaria allied themselves with the Sultan's forces expecting to regain all those privileges which had abolished the Albanian toparch. The Porte, however, did not show willing to restore the ancien regime of the pre-Tepelenli period and imposed forcefully its power,

as well as the administrative and tax reformative measures of Mahmud II, in the wider area. The beys rebelled but they lost the battle and were forced to reassess their attitude towards the Porte. So, they chose to return back to the Ottoman legitimacy and thus tried to regain their lost prestige, power and wealth, not as unruly regional chieftains but as loyal Ottoman administrative or/and military officers.

Cet article se propose de retracer la politique de l'élite administrative, économique et militaire provinciale puissante des provinces sud albano-ottomanes, celle des Beys de Toskaria, à travers la famille typique des beys de Valona, du milieu du XVIII^e siècle au milieu du XIX^e siècle.

Cette période fut celle d'un important développement dans une aire plus large : déclin du système timariote (dirlik) et prédominance de la grande propriété (tchifliks). Ces changements ont affaibli le déjà faible gouvernement central ottoman – la Sublime Porte – et consolidé le pouvoir des beys propriétaires terriens.

L'absence d'une autorité centrale cependant, créa un état d'anomie et d'anarchie, un problème qui fut traité non par l'intervention de la Sublime Porte, mais par la création du grand pachalik de Ioannina. Ali Pacha, vali de Ionnina, un bey albanais de Tebelen, remplit le vide de pouvoir que laissait l'incapacité de la Porte et réussit progressivement à prendre le contrôle de toutes les provinces méridionales albanaises. Dans le conflit qui suivit entre la Porte et Ali Pacha, les beys de Toskaria s'allièrent aux forces du Sultan dans l'espoir de regagner leurs privilèges abolis par le chef local albanais. La Porte cependant, ne montra aucun désir de restaurer l'ancien régime de la période pré-Tebelen et imposa son pouvoir, comme les réformes administratives et fiscales de Mahmud II.

Les beys se sont rebellés, mais perdirent la bataille et durent revoir leur attitude envers la Porte. Aussi choisirent-ils de revenir à la légitimité ottomane, essayant ainsi de regagner leur prestige, pouvoir et richesses perdus, non plus comme des chefs régionaux sans règles, mais comme de loyaux Ottomans, officiers administratifs et/ou militaires.

Αυτό το άρθρο σκοπεύει να εξιστορεί την πολιτική των διοικητικών, οικονομικών και στρατιωτικών αρχόντων στις νότιες αλβανο-οθωμανικές περιοχές, -των μπέηδων της Τοσκαριάς-, με την παραδειγματική οικογένεια των μπέηδων της Βαλόνας, από τη μέση του 18ου αιώνα ως τη μέση του 19ου.

Αυτή η περίοδος αντιστοιχεί σε μία σημαντική ανάπτυξη όένα ευρύτερο πλαίσιο: παρακμή του τιμαριωτού συστήματος [dirlik] και κυριαρχία του τσιφλικιού. Αυτές οι αλλαγές εξασθένισαν την ήδη αδύνατη κεντρική οθωμανική εξουσία -η Πύλη- και ενίσχυσαν την εξουσία των γεωκτημώνων. Η απουσία μίας κεντρικής εξουσίας δημιούργησε όμως μία κατάσταση ανομίας και αναρχίας, ένα πρόβλημα το οποίο λύθηκε όχι από την επέμβαση της Υψηλής Πύλης αλλά με την δημιουργία του μεγάλου πασαλίκιου της Ιωάννινας. Ο Αλή Πασάς, αλβανός βάλης της Τεπελένης, κατείχε το κενό το οποίο άφηνε η ανικανότητα της Υψηλής Πύλης και κατάφερε σταδιακά να ελέγξει όλες τις νότιες αλβανικές περιοχές. Στην σύγκρουση που ακολούθησε ανάμεσα στην Πύλη και στον Αλή Πασά, οι μπέηδες της Τοσκαριάς έκαναν συμμαχία με τις δυνάμεις του Σουλτάνου με την ελπίδα να επανακτήσουν να προνόμια τα οποία είχαν καταργηθεί από τον αλβανό τοπάρχη. Η Πύλη όμως δεν έδειξε καμμία προθυμία να αποκαθιστά το παλιό καθεστώς της προ-Τεπελένη περιόδου και επέβαλε την εξουσία του, όπως και τις διοικητικές και φορολογικές μεταρρυθμίσεις του Μαχμούτ 2ου.

Οι μπέηδες στάσιασαν αλλά έχασαν και αναγκάστηκαν να αλλάξουν στάση προς την Πύλη. Έτσι διάλεξαν τον γυρισμό στην οθωμανική νομιμότητα, ελπίζοντας να ξαναβρούν το κύρος, την εξουσία και τα πλούτη τους, όχι πλέον σαν άνομους τοπάρχες, αλλά σαν τίμιους οθωμανούς, διοικητικούς ή στρατιωτικούς αξιωματικούς.

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Mots-clés: Ali Pacha, Albanie ottomane, Vlorë-Valona-Avlon