

A Prosopographic Study on some ‘Albanian’ Deputies to the First Ottoman Parliament

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Introduction

This article presents the biographies of some ‘Albanian’ deputies elected to the first Ottoman parliament. Of course the term ‘Albanian’ is problematic. In fact at the beginning we considered covering all the deputies of the provinces of Yanya (Ioannina/Janina), İşkodra (Shkodra/ Shkodër) and Kosova (Kosovo) (i.e. the central-western fringe of the Balkan Ottoman territories), on whom we had some material. However, as specialists of Ottoman-Albanian studies, we found that our material was silent on deputies who were not considered without hesitation as ‘Albanian’. More precisely, looking at the lists of the deputies from Yanya given by Robert Devereux and Hakkı Tarık Us, we were not able to trace the three Christian deputies of the first session (Nicolas Chanaka – also present in the second session, Algivaydi Lambi and Argiri Kantarji from Volos). Probably there is more information to be found in Greek sources on these deputies, as well as on Davicho Levi, a Jew from Yanya. For the *vilayet* of İşkodra, we present all the deputies except Angeli Efendi, deputy in both sessions. Of him, we only know that he was also known as Ejll Paloka, a Catholic from a notable family in İşkodra, and member of the commercial court there, and that he was sent to the first Ottoman parliament to represent the Catholics of the *vilayet* instead of Aleksandër Bonati. He died in the Ottoman capital on April 10, 1878, shortly before his planned return to İşkodra. For the *vilayet* of Kosovo, which comprised also the districts of Niš, Sofia, and Samokov, we present only a single biography, that of Ömer Şevki Efendi, because we were unable to find information on other deputies such as Zeynelabidin of Prishtina.

The data in this study were almost all drawn from secondary sources, which are not very reliable by nature: they are either studies with a strong (nationalist or communist) bias or texts that have some similarities to oral history. They give us not only a partial, but also an incomplete image of the persons in question. Further research, using Ottoman and, above all, diplomatic sources is needed in order to correct and complete this account. The nationalist bias in the historiography is closely linked to the context of the opening of the parliament. Let us recall that the Constitution was proclaimed by Sultan Abdülhamid, the elections for the parliament organized and the parliament convened, partly because of intense troubles which broke out in the Balkan Ottoman territories directly threatening the essence of the Ottoman state. The revolts in Herzegovina and Bulgaria in

1876, the preparation of insurrections in Epirus and Thessaly, the Russian-Ottoman War between April 1877 and January 1878, concluded by the San Stefano Treaty (March 1878), had all led to the real or potential loss of a great part of the Empire's European territories. Faced with this menace, different actors in the Balkans reacted. In particular, the context favoured the manifestation of an Albanian nationalism in connection with different solutions to the crisis that were envisioned within the Ottoman framework or outside of it. One of these reactions was the famous "League of Prizren" which, as a mythologized moment, became the key episode of the Albanian nationalist narrative. As can be expected, this narrative systematically and exaggeratedly linked many deputies who came from these regions and participated in meetings, protestations, and/or negotiations with the 'League'. All these attempts to respond to the crisis are generally interpreted as steps towards independence, or at least towards an autonomy designed to put an end to 'Turkish' (i.e. Ottoman) rule. This, of course, was not always the case. Despite the lack of sources and the bias in the existing ones, the collected data in this study allow us to confirm the fact that all deputies were notables. As far as the *vilayet* of Yanya is concerned, all the Muslim deputies were members of the important *bey* families of the northern and western part of the *vilayet*. As for the non-Muslims, we only know that one of them was a wealthy tobacco merchant from the north of the *vilayet*. In the smaller *vilayet* of İskodra, the elected persons were members of *bey* families who represented central Albania: a mufti, deputy from Podgorica in the northern part of the *vilayet*, and three deputies from İskodra, each one representing a religious community (Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox) and all apparently members of local wealthy families involved in commerce and themselves members of local courts. Last but not least, the deputy of the *vilayet* of Kosova, whose biography we were able to draw up, was also from a wealthy family and additionally enjoyed personal religious authority as a *müdderris*.

We must also add that our study is mainly prosopographic. We have therefore mostly neglected the political activities of these deputies in the parliament (both in the plenum and in the parliamentary committees). These activities need to be analyzed in a separate study. Furthermore, it is important to underline that the general problem of insufficient primary and secondary sources on the election and the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities of the 'Albanian' deputies in the first Ottoman parliament also applies to the deputies from other regions of the Empire. The essential lack of the official minutes from the parliamentary sessions, which were lost in a fire in later years, prevents us from drawing a reliable and comprehensive picture of the activities in parliament. Hence, based on the informal minutes published by Hakkı Tarık Us, which rely mainly on the press of that time, we would have to confine ourselves here to stating that Abdül Bey and Mehmet Ali Bey, two deputies of Yanya in the second session who occupy rather prominent places in our study, were also among the most active deputies in the parliamentary negotiations in general.

Finally we would like to add two technical remarks: While the various versions/spellings of the names of deputies in different sources will be indicated in this work, the Ottoman-Turkish version appearing in Hakkı Tarık Us' work will serve as our standard here: e.g. Abdül Bey, instead of Adyl Beu or Abdullah Hüsnü; Ömer Şevki, instead of Ymer Prizreni; etc. As there are also different versions/spellings of the place names including the constituencies in the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman-Turkish version appearing in Hakkı Tarık Us' work will be given first followed by other versions in brackets: e.g. Yanya (Janina/Ioannina), İşkodra (Shkodra/Shkodër), etc.

Deputies

Abdül (Abdullah Hüsnü) Bey (Yanya, Muslim) (1839-1892)

He was a deputy for Yanya province [Janina/Ioannina], today a city in northern Greece, in the second session of the first Ottoman parliament between December 13, 1877 and February 14, 1878. Abdül has been glorified as one of the fathers of Albanian nationalism in the modern Albanian historiography with the name Abdyl Frashëri and was awarded by the socialist Albanian state the title "Hero of the People" in 1978. It is not surprising, therefore, to observe that extensive information on him can be found in different sources and studies in different languages, where one encounters various versions/spellings of his name: Abdül Bey; Abdyl be Frashëri; Abdyl Frashëri; Abdoul Phrashari; Abdoul Bey [of] Phrachari; Abdul Bey Frassari; Abdulj Frašeri; Abdyl Frasher; Abyl Fracheri; Abdul Bey [Beu]; Fraşarlı Halid oğlu Abdullah Hüsnü; Abdyl Hysni; Abdullah Hüsnü Fraşheri; Abdullah Hysni; Abdül Fraşeri; Abdül Fraşeri; and Fraşarlı Abdül Bey.

The construction of Abdül's image as the heroic leader of the national struggle had started already at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Albanian press and folk songs. This image was consolidated in the scholarly and popular historiography in twentieth-century Albania. Abdül is represented in the official encyclopaedia of socialist Albania, *Fjalori enciklopedik shqiptar* (1985), as a "distinguished patriotic democrat, one of the progressive ideologues of the national awakening [Rilindja Kombëtare], one of the main pioneers of the Albanian League of Prizren [Lidhja Shqiptare të Prizrenit], and Hero of the People."

The eldest of the famous *Frashëri Brothers* (Abdül and his younger brothers Naim [1846-1900] and Shemseddin Sami [1850-1904]), who have been glorified in Albanian historiography for playing a decisive role in the Albanian nation-building process, Abdül was born on 29 August 1839 in the mountain village of Frashër, then a relatively large village in the Premedi (Përmet) district in the Ergiri (Gjirokastër) sub-province of Yanya province (*vilayet*) – today a small village in the Përmet district in southern Albania. The grandfathers of Abdül's father Halid Bey (1797-1859) had supposedly moved to this village from Berat in southern Albania

where he used to own the fief (*timar*) to Frashër. Halid's second wife and Abdül's mother, Emine (1814-1861), was from an aristocratic family of *Imrahors* in Görice (Korça), their history going back to the illustrious Koca İmrəhor İlyas Bey of the fifteenth century. Abdül had younger sisters, Nefise (b. 1841) and Shanisha (b. 1848); and five younger brothers: Sherif (1843-1874), Naim (1846-1900), Sami (1850-1904), Tahsin (1853-1876) and Mehmed (1856-1918).

Coming from a Bektashi family, Abdül spent his childhood in his native village, where he, like his younger brothers, was partly educated by Baba Alushi in the Bektashi lodge (*tekke*), while probably also attending the conventional primary school (*sibyan mektebi*) there. According to his brother Sami's encyclopaedic entry on Abdül, the latter was barely fourteen (1853) when together with his father he took part in the military campaigns on the Ottoman-Greek border.

Having already been engaged with business together with his father in Yanya, Abdül continued doing business in Yanya also after his father's death in 1859. After the death of his mother in 1861, Abdül, as the eldest of the eight orphaned children, took on the burden of raising his family through his activities as a minor merchant in the region. In 1865 he moved his family to Yanya, where his younger brothers attended the Greek *Zosimea* secondary school. While working in Yanya as a merchant, Abdül had the opportunity as an entrepreneur to travel in the region and to learn the political, cultural and economic relations in other countries during his activities in business. He is supposed to have known Albanian, Greek, Turkish and French.

At the beginning of the 1870s, Abdül's family was going through significant changes: his younger brother Naim left Yanya for Saranda (in today's southern Albania) to work as a customs officer there, and Sami left for Istanbul to become a writer/journalist. His sister Nefise died of tuberculosis while his younger sister Shanisha left the family when she married Ibrahim Starova. Abdül himself married Ballkëz (Balkız/Belkız) in 1874, whose family was originally from Frashër, now living in Yanya. After his brother Sherif married and left the house during this period, Abdül and his wife were living together with Abdül's two younger brothers Tahsin and Mehmed, who were both still attending school. His brother Sherif died in 1874 in Yanya and his younger brother Tahsin died in 1876 also in Yanya.

Abdül entered the service of the Ottoman Empire and was appointed at the beginning of 1877, according to the daily Istanbul newspaper *Tercüman-ı Şark*, as the head of the customs office in Yanya.

It was in this period of his life that he started writing for different periodicals in different languages. The earliest known text by Abdül is an article with the title "Albanian Language" sent from Yanya on December 18, 1875 to be published in the Istanbul newspaper *Basiret* by his brother Şemseddin Sami Frashëri who was among the publishers of this paper. The article couldn't be published, however, because the periodical was closed down by the government at the end of that

year. Sami informed his elder brother Abdül in a letter on 11 January 1876 that the article would be published as soon as the periodical was allowed to be printed again; however, this never happened. Hence, we know neither what the content of this article was nor whether it was later published anywhere at all.

After the first Ottoman parliament was convened and the Russo-Ottoman War broke out on April 24, 1877, Abdül co-organized a meeting among the local elite in Yanya in May 1877 to initiate a resistance movement against the Greek plans to capture some (allegedly Albanian) territories of the Ottoman Empire. According to the conventional historiographical narrative, the 'committee' formed during this meeting aimed to create a large 'Albanian' *vilayet* out of the four existing (allegedly mainly Albanian-speaking) Ottoman provinces (*vilayets*) of İskodra (Shkodra), Kosova (Kosovo), Manastir (Monastir) and Yanya (Ioannina/Janina); the new *vilayet* was to be administered by the Albanians, and Albanian schools were to be opened there. There is not enough evidence to suggest, however, that the demands of this meeting (and also of the later ones) organized by the Albanian elite went beyond demanding a union of the four *vilayets* in question and refusing any possible territorial annexation by their neighbours. It is important to emphasize that this (mostly shared) objection to the annexation was in favour of the Ottoman government's interests and that the local resistance movement was therefore initially supported (if not initiated) by the latter.

It was in the same year that Abdül led the first round of the covert negotiations with Greek authorities in Yanya (in July 1877) in order to achieve an alliance between Greece and the Albanians for the establishment of an autonomous Albanian state within Greece or in a sort of federative Greco-Albanian state. These negotiations ended, however, without any significant results.

Thus, when Abdül was elected deputy in November 1877 he had already been active in Albanian elite circles in Istanbul and Yanya, first as a modern entrepreneur and the head of the customs office and then as a local political activist.

Before going into his election as deputy, it must be clarified that the election of the deputies for the Ottoman parliament was taking place through the votes of the electors, who were the members of the local administrative councils under the direct influence of the governor of the province (*vali*). Still the voice of native social, political and economic circles were also playing albeit a small role in this election. The elections of the deputies of Yanya province, especially of Abdül, for the second session could be a good example for this: Three Muslim and three non-Muslim deputies were supposed to be selected by the 570 secondary electors chosen in January 1878 for the election of deputies from Yanya to the first session of the parliament. These electors, Kristo Frashëri guesses, must have been more independent in the November 1878 elections for the second session, because the *vali* and other top administrators could not apply their power to the usual extent due to the extraordinary conditions caused by the ongoing Russo-Ottoman war. According to Kristo Frashëri, the abovementioned 'Albanian committee' founded

in Yanya and headed by Abdül to fight against the annexation must have played a role in this election, and did mostly achieve its goals of sending deputies from their circles. A letter from the French vice-consul in Yanya on 9 November 1877 to the Foreign Ministry in Paris summarizing the news in the provincial (*vilayet*) official newspaper (November 8, 1877) about the elections in Yanya, stated that the rank of the Muslim candidates according to their votes was as follows: Mustafa Nuri Bey (Vlora) with 46 votes, Mehmet Ali Bey (Vrioni) with 39 votes, Rüstem Paşa (Leskoviku) with 27 votes, Abdül Bey (Frashëri) with 24 votes, Naki Bey (Llibohova) with 21 votes and Müslim Ağa (Vasjari) with 20 votes. Apart from Naki Bey, they were all members of the Albanian committee in Yanya; however, Abdül, as the fourth on the list, would not become a deputy with these results because only the first three Muslims were to represent Yanya in parliament. Nevertheless, Abdül became deputy because Rüstem Paşa (Leskoviku) stepped back. Kristo Frashëri claims that the reason for this must have been the efforts of the committee to send Abdül as one of the deputies of Yanya, although he does not offer any persuasive evidence for this claim.

After the elections in Yanya in November 1877, Abdül came to Istanbul to attend the second session of the parliament starting from December 13, 1877. While in Istanbul, Abdül took part in the foundation meeting of the so-called 'Central Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian People' (*Komiteti Qendror për Mbrojten e të Drejtave të Kombësise Shqiptare*) in December 1877 in Istanbul. It has commonly been stated in the historiography that Abdül and his younger brother Sami in Istanbul were among the founders of this society and that Abdül was supposedly elected as the head of this 'Central Committee', the activities and aim of which is still questionable although it has been univocally claimed in all Albanian and some international sources that it was founded to strive 'to obtain a certain autonomy for the Albanians within the Ottoman Empire'. It was also during this period of his stay in Istanbul that he led the second round of secret negotiations with Greek authorities in Istanbul in December 1877 in order to achieve an alliance between Greece and the Albanians for the establishment of an autonomous Albanian state within Greece or in a sort of federative Greco-Albanian state. These negotiations also ended without any positive results.

Regarding Abdül's activity in parliament, it must be underlined that, as a low-ranking bureaucrat and local political activist in Yanya, Abdül was actually not a well-known figure before or during his rather short membership of parliament. He became a historical personality rather due to his activities immediately after the closure of the parliament. He was later glorified by modern Albanian historiography also as a prominent active deputy with a clear ethnocentric Albanian attitude, although the first Ottoman parliament in general has been to a large extent overlooked by the same historians. It is emphasized in Albanian historiography that Abdül usually gave examples from Albania in his speeches in parliament and that he criticized the absence of any school teaching the Albanian language in the

region as well as the policy of the Ottoman government to prevent Albanian schools in general. One of the main reasons for these general statements about Abdül's allegedly ethnocentric efforts in parliament is a talk he delivered in parliament on January 14, 1878. What Abdül was actually advocating for in this talk, which represented a modernist discourse, was the inevitability of and necessity for the development of modern education in the Ottoman Empire in general, and thus he stressed the role of education in the wide-ranging modernization process in the Ottoman Empire.

Abdül's participation in parliament can be observed through his interventions during the discussion sessions and his memberships in different committees. Contrary to the common narrative in Albanian historiography, Abdül did not display any clear ethnocentric Albanianism in parliament, but rather demonstrated a progressive liberal attitude in his interventions, advocating the continuation and consolidation of the modernization process in the whole empire. Application of the current educational and administrative reforms and the enhancement of these reforms were the main motifs in his speeches on January 14, 1878, January 24, 1878 and January 30, 1878. One other piece of evidence used in the historiography to demonstrate his ethnocentric attitude is that he was sensitive to the issues in Albania and especially in the Balkans during these sessions; however, this is quite naturally to be expected in the attitude of any deputy caring for the region he or she represents.

Regarding Abdül's post-parliamentary activities after the closure of the parliament on February 14, 1878, as the now *de facto* redundant Yanya deputy staying in Yanya, Abdül was one of the main leaders of the activities of the Albanian elite in Istanbul and Albania against the new territorial regulations in the Balkans decided in the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878), which was signed after the ultimate defeat of the Ottoman army by the Russian forces on January 31, 1878.

Abdül's involvement in the resistance movement against the implementation of decisions of the San Stefano Treaty was first exposed through the publication of some articles in Ottoman, and other newspapers, reflecting the opposition against the annexation of the territories in question from the Ottoman Empire. He discussed the recent developments in the 'Albanian' *vilayets* and advocated the rights of the Albanians in his letter (memorandum) published in the Istanbul daily *Basiret* on 21 April 1878, two months after the closure of the parliament. Abdül discusses in this "Letter from Yanya," signed as "Deputy of Yanya, Abdül," the Albanian question within the current international and Ottoman context; and he concludes that nobody, not even the nominal ruler, i.e. the Ottoman Empire, had the right to stop Albanians from defending their territories. Adbül also published seven articles in the French-language periodical *Messager de Vienne* in Vienna advocating the Albanian cause on April 26, 1878, May 3, 1878, May 17, 1878, May 24, 1878, May 31, 1878, June 7, 1878 and October 24, 1878. In the same period he published an article in the Greek-language *Kleio* in Trieste on May

23, 1878 with the same aim of informing the foreigners about the Albanian question. In another article published in *Terciiman-ı Şark* on June 10, 1878, Abdül criticised the attitude of the Greek newspaper *Neologos* in Istanbul towards the question of the Greco-Ottoman border. Implying the first (albeit vague) ethnocentric claims by an Albanian-speaking Muslim elite it was through this article, according to Hasan Kaleshi, that the 'Albanian question' was introduced to the Ottoman public opinion. Abdül published articles in the same newspaper also on September 7, 1878 and September 15, 1878.

Abdül organized a meeting in the *Bektashi* lodge (*tekke*) of his native village Frashër at the end of May 1878 in order to organize local resistance against the implementation of the decisions of San Stefano and in order to influence the decisions of the upcoming Congress of Berlin. Following an invitation from the government, Abdül left Frashër for Istanbul while the meeting was in session and arrived there during the first days of June 1878. After an endless wait for a meeting with the prominent statesmen and the Sultan himself, Abdül and his friends decided to leave Istanbul in order to take part in the general assembly in Prizren due to start on June 10, 1878. Abdül left Istanbul on July 8, 1878 by train and arrived in Prizren, via Ferizaj (Firzovik), on July 9, 1878.

The meeting in Prizren took place on June 10, 1878 and mainly (but not only) Albanian and Muslim delegates from all over the western Balkans participated in this assembly with the knowledge that it was implicitly supported by the Ottoman state. Abdül, who was supposedly representing the 'Central Committee in Istanbul' and the Albanians of southern Albania, is claimed to have given a speech in the first meeting of the League; however, this information is rather arguable. The resolutions (*Kararname*) of the League signed by some Albanian local notables (forty-seven *beys*) on June 18, 1878 refused to recognize the foreseen annexation of any territory to Serbia, Montenegro or Greece, and demanded formation of an autonomous (Albanian-speaking) province.

The general assembly in Prizren ended on June 17, 1878, and Abdül and another deputy of Yanya Mehmet Ali (Vrioni) were elected (probably in their absence) to the commission for foreign relations/affairs. According to Kristo Frashëri, Abdül left, together with Jani Vreto, for Berlin immediately after the opening meeting of the Prizren League (on June 10, 1878) for Berlin, where he met Bismarck during the Congress of Berlin. He returned from Berlin to Prizren at the end of June 1878.

Abdül and Mehmet Ali (Vrioni) sent a petition to the Sultan on June 23, 1878 appealing for the rejection of the implementation of the decisions of the Congress of Berlin regarding the handover of the Albanian territories to neighbouring Balkan countries. It was stated in this memorandum that Albanians were "... ready to fight to the end for the defence of their national identity and the territorial integrity of the Albanians.

Ultimately, the Congress of Berlin (June 13 – July 13, 1878) confirmed the independence of Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and did not recognize the claims of the League (and indeed the very existence of the Albanians as a separate ethnic group). The Congress also foresaw the annexation of some Ottoman territories (claimed to be Albanian-speaking and hence Albanian in the nationalist discourse) to Montenegro, Serbia and Greece. It was decided in the Congress of Berlin on July 5, 1878 that some Ottoman territories in Thessaly and Epirus were to be annexed by Greece, whereas the details of these new frontier settlements were left to a future international committee.

Immediately after returning from Berlin, Abdül took part in the meetings in Prizren on July 1 and 2, 1878 summoned to rephrase the rather conservative and pro-Ottoman decisions of the previous meeting ending on June 17, 1878 while Abdül had been in Berlin.

In mid-July 1878 Abdül was in southern Albania to organize local committees (branches) of the League and gather troops to fight against the annexation of Ottoman territories in Yanya by Greece. The struggle in the South was also supported by the Ottoman government, who wanted to represent it as the voice of the native people who could influence the attitude of the international committee set up after the Congress of Berlin to decide the new boundary between the Ottoman Empire and Greece. According to Hasan Kaleshi, the struggle of the Yanya committee in the South under Abdül's leadership towards organizing a resistance movement in southern Albania was much more successful than similar efforts in the North. Accordingly, there were copious telegrams from the region against the new settlement of the Greek border. As a part of these efforts, Abdül first managed to bring Muslim and Christian elites together for an assembly at the Bektashi monastery in his native village Frashër at the end of July 1878. The resolutions of this assembly were signed on July 24, 1878, and were apparently more radical than those of the League of Prizren in June 1878, as they included clearer demands of autonomy. The assembly sent a telegram to the Sultan on August 4, 1878 protesting the plans for the annexation of territories to Greece.

On August 29, 1878 Abdül wrote a letter to the Istanbul-based Ottoman-Turkish newspaper *Tercüman-ı Şark*, which was published by his brother Sami, in response to an article published in the Istanbul-based French-language periodical *Phare du Bosphore*. This "Letter from Yanya" was published in *Tercüman-ı Şark* on September 7, 1878.

- After the assassination of Mehmet Ali Paşa in Yakova (Gjakova) on September 6, 1878, Abdül went to Istanbul. Abdül was in Istanbul in mid-September and there took part in a secret meeting of the Central Committee of Istanbul. A more radical program with demands for autonomy from the Ottoman government was formulated during this meeting. This program was published by Abdül's brother Sami in the daily newspaper *Tercüman-ı Şark* in Istanbul on September 27, 1878 and it was going to be recognized on November 27, 1878 also

by the League of Prizren, which had been going through a process of radicalization among the remaining Albanian opposition led by Abdül after the separation from the Ottoman state. From Istanbul, Abdül returned to Yanya again, in order to proceed with his activities in the region. Before leaving for the Albanian cities in the North, Abdül wrote an article in French with the title "Albanian League" to be published in *Messager de Vienne* on October 24, 1878. As part of his activities in the region between Debre (Dibër, Dibra) and Avlonya (Vlora) aimed at organizing networks of resistance during this period, Abdül, as the representative of southern Albania, took part in the convention of Debre (Dibër), which issued a five-point memorandum on November, 1 1878 demanding publicly from the Ottoman government the creation of an autonomous unified Albanian province. This memorandum, signed also by Abdül, was submitted through a delegation headed by İlyas Paşa Debre to the Sultan in January 1879. Leaving Debre for a propaganda trip in the southern cities of Elbasan, Berat, Fier, Vlora, Gjirokastro and Delvina, Abdül took part in organizing the assembly in Prevezë starting on January 11, 1879 and issuing a memorandum on January 28, 1879 to protest against Greek demands for the annexation of the Ottoman ('Albanian') territories in Epirus (today's southern Albania and north-western Greece). Some historians have maintained that during the organization of this assembly in the second half of January 1879, Abdül severely opposed the plans for the control of the Epirus region by Greece in discussions with Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Paşa, the head of the Ottoman delegation in the commission for the settlement of the Greek border in Prevezë. In the assembly Abdül was elected to serve as head of the delegation to be sent to Istanbul to discuss with the government the formation of an autonomous Albanian *vilayet*. After the Ottoman-Greek negotiations for the settlement of the frontier changes foreseen in the Congress of Berlin started on February 6, 1879, Albanian representatives still in Prevezë issued on February 28, 1879 another memorandum prepared also by Abdül and addressed to the governments of the Great Powers, repeating the demands contained in the previous memorandum of Prevezë. As the program of the Prevezë convention was not recognized by the Sultan and because the Ottoman-Greek negotiations met some difficulties, making the role of the intervention of the Great Powers in this issue more important, another memorandum was issued on March 22, 1879 by the Albanian elite led by Abdül. This memorandum again was addressed to the governments of the Great Powers.

After their failure to secure the support of the Great Powers through these conventions and memorandums, Abdül and Mehmed Ali Vrioni (also deputy of Yanya in the second session of the Ottoman parliament) travelled in spring 1879 to the European capitals Rome, Paris, London, Berlin and Vienna in order to propagate against the Greek territorial claims and to defend the Albanian/Ottoman cause. Abdül and his companion left Prevezë for Italy on March 31, 1879. In Rome, while negotiating with the Italian government in May 1879, a memoran-

dum signed by Abdül and his friends was sent to the French, German, British and Austro-Hungarian governments. During his trip to the European capitals, Abdül himself is supposed to have written memorandums and petitions declaring the existence of the Albanian nation, which had been denied its right of existence and identity because of the European powers' predatory interests. During this period Abdül published in *Moniteur Universel* on May 2, 1879 his last article known to us.

After returning from this rather unsuccessful European journey to Yanya, Abdül Bey travelled together with other two deputies Mehmet Ali (Vrioni) and Vey-sel (Dino) to Istanbul on August 13, 1879 to try to assume any role possible in the Ottoman and Greek negotiations on border issues about the resumption of which they had been informed as representatives of the local people.

During his stay in Istanbul this time, Abdül took part in the foundation of the 'Society for the Publication of Albanian Writing' (*Shoqëria e të Shtypuri Shkronja Shqip*) founded in October 1879 in Istanbul. He was one of the signatories to the Statute of this society dated October 12, 1879.

Following his failed efforts to achieve union among Albanians in all regions, Abdül managed to organize an assembly of the elites of southern Albania in Ergiri (Gjirokastër) on July 23, 1880 in which some delegates from the North also took part. This assembly produced the most explicit revolutionary program to date, strongly demanding the union of the supposedly 'Albanian' *vilayets* that they believed should have an autonomous status as one integrated *vilayet* in the Ottoman Empire. Similar demands and complaints about the policy of the Ottoman government in the region were summarized also in a memorandum (*layiba*) signed by "Abdullah Hüsnü" and addressed to the Sultan on October 13, 1880, archived in the State Archive in Istanbul. Abdül advocated this program in the second general convention of Debre (Dibër) starting on October 20, 1880, where the radical wing of the movement was gathered. Apparently, Abdül spent the following few months in Istanbul propagating this program.

The ultimate resolution of the question of the new Ottoman boundaries with both Montenegro in the North and Greece in the South was reached in late 1880 and early 1881 through the intervention of the international forces, but was opposed by the League. This opposition changed the image of the now disobedient Prizren alliance into a dangerous illegal movement in the eyes of the Ottoman state, who decided to put the opposition down through military force. Although the radical program was not accepted by the moderates, Abdül decided to try to implement a policy of armed struggle together with his comrades, also from Kosovo: Although he was under strict police surveillance because of this new development, Abdül managed to go to Prizren in December 1880 and take part there in a meeting starting in December 1880 and ending in January 1881. After Mitrovica (January 18, 1881) and Prishtina (January 25, 1881) came under the control of the forces of the so-called 'Provisional Government', in January 1881 Abdül deposed the local governor (*mutesarrif*) of Debre (Dibër), which was also in-

cluded in the territory claimed by the resistance movement, in order to put this city also under the *de facto* administration of the 'Provisional Government'. Abdül had to leave Debre on March 4, 1881, travelled within Manastır *vilayet* for a few weeks and then returned to Prizren on March 20, 1881.

As the issue of the new Ottoman-Greek frontiers was finalized in the Second Conference of Istanbul on March 25, 1878, the Ottoman government, no longer in need of the local representatives' pressure on the Great Powers against Greek territorial demands, reacted fiercely to the action in Debre and to other attacks by the local Albanian resistance movement in the region and in spring 1881 sent in troops under the command of Derviş Paşa to repress the resistance movement, which was only temporarily able to stand firm in some places. Before the re-capture of Prizren on April 23, 1881 by state forces, Abdül managed to leave for Debre to organize the local resistance there. The notables there instigated an assassination attempt against Abdül, during which Abdül managed to escape while two of his companions were wounded. After Prizren fell into the hands of state forces, sporadic local resistance in the region continued until autumn 1881; however, following the defeat in Debre during the last week of April 1881, Abdül was forced to escape. Derviş Paşa, the head of the state forces, apparently had promised a prize for Abdül's capture.

Abdül was arrested while crossing the Shkumbin River near Elbasan on his way to the Adriatic coast via Debre and Tirana, in an attempt to escape abroad. He was first sentenced to death by a military court in Prizren, but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. After spending three years in jail and twenty months in exile (internment), Abdül was pardoned in late 1885 or early 1886 (supposedly through the mediation of Gazi Osman Paşa, the heroic Ottoman champion of Plevne) and went to Istanbul. According to Abdül's brother Sami, after the former was pardoned and came to Istanbul, he became a member of a municipal council ("Şehremaneti meclisi azalığı"). He held this position with a small salary from 1886 to 1888 until he became bedridden due to his deteriorating health. In this period Abdül prepared in 1887 and in 1888 two memorandums on the present and future problems of Albania, addressed to the Italian prime minister Francesco Crispi (1860-1900), whom the former had met during his visit in Italy in Spring 1879 when Crispi was not yet prime minister. Still bedridden, Abdül prepared another memorandum in 1890 addressed to Crispi.

Abdül died on October 23, 1892 after a long illness and was buried in Merdivenköy, in the cemetery of the bektashi *tekke*.

Abdül's brother Sami states in his encyclopaedic entry on Abdül that he left behind two children: a toddler daughter and a son, who were adopted by Sami when their mother Ballıköz (Balkız/Belkız) and Sami started to cohabit in 1894, following Abdül's death in 1892 and the death of Sami's wife Emine Veliye in 1893. We don't know much about Abdül's daughter Emine; however, his son Midhat (1880-1949), who lived in Istanbul from 1883 on, and later on became an

Ottoman administrator in Salonica, was going to play an important role in the Albanian history of the first half of the twentieth century, as an important actor in the development of Albanianism in the Ottoman Empire, and then in the Albanian state. As a leader of an anti-communist resistance movement, he fled abroad in 1944 and died in New York in 1949. The vast collection in his personal library, which was confiscated by the new socialist regime in 1945, was to form the main basis of the current National Library in Tirana.

Abdü'l's remains were transferred from Istanbul to Albania and reburied in Tirana in 1978 during celebrations of the centenary of the League of Prizren, while Abdü'l was designated "Hero of the People."

Sources:

Devereux 1963:212 and 271; Frashëri 1981; Frashëri 1984; Frashëri 1985; Rexha 2003; Rizaj 1978; Rizaj 1978a; Rizaj 1978b; Rizaj 1979; Rizaj 1982; Kaleshi 1974 (Alb.: Kaleshi 1996a); Prifti 1979; Alpan 1978:14-19; Shuteriqi 1955: 256, 257; Shala 1972:200-201, 201; Haxhihasani 1962: 24 and 27; Faensen 1980:42, 43, 99-102, 106, 108, 109, 116 and 129; Alpan & Kaçi 1997: 70-71; Elsie 2004:147-148; Elsie 1995:226-229, 248, 326-329; Hutchings 1996:95-96; Rexha 1979: 134 and *passim*; Rizaj 1978:*passim*; Totraku 1979/81; Kofos 1975:124-125, 144-147; Korkuti 1979/81:87-102; Ippen 1916:342-385; Skendi 1953:219-232; Bartl 1995:282-283; *Accounts and Papers*, 37, 1878-79, LXXVII (77), p. 430 (See Rizaj 1978:256 and 121); *Accounts and Papers*, (36), 1878-79, LXXVII (7), pp. 433-434 (See Rizaj 1978:257-258 and 122-123); *Accounts and Papers*, 36, 1878-79, LXVII (77), pp. 32-393 ; *Accounts and Papers*, 39, 1880, LXXVII, 78, p. 362. (See also Rizaj 1978:130); TA – Abdü'l Bey 1989; Sami 1896; Günaydin 1978; Aruçi 1996; Bozbora 2006; Kılıç 2006; Clayer 2007:*passim*.

Ali Naki Bey [Lebhova] (Yanya, Muslim) (1842-1904)

One of the three Muslim deputies from Yanya [Janina/Ioannina] province in the first session, various versions/spellings of Ali Naki Bey's name can be found in different sources: Ali Naki Bey, Lebhovalı Ali Naki Bey, Neki Paşa Libohova and Neki Beu [Bey].

Ali Naki Bey was born in 1842 in Lebhova [Libohova], a town not far from Gjirokastër in southern Albania. His father, Malik Naili Paşa (Janina 1810 – Libohova 1892), *beylerbey* of Rumelia, was a scion of the famous and rich landowning *Libohova-Arslan Paşalı* family, named after this small city where Ali Paşa Te-pedelenli had built a fortress for his sister Şahnişa (or Shenisha).

Before being elected as a deputy, Ali Naki Bey was governor of Gjirokastër. He became *paşa* and member of the State Council in Istanbul. Regarding his election as a deputy, it was stated in a letter from the French vice-consul in Yanya to the Foreign Ministry in Paris on November 9, 1877 (summarizing the official *vilayet* newspaper report (November 8, 1877) about the elections in Yanya) that Naki Bey also took part in the elections in Yanya for the second session of the parliament but failed, getting only 21 votes, which made him fifth on the list.

Regarding his extra-parliamentary activities during his parliamentary membership, it must be stated that Ali Naki Bey took part in the convention/assembly of Gjirokastra.

Ali Naki Bey died in Istanbul in 1904.

His spouse Behixhe Hamza was a Circassian from Taupse, sister of the third wife of Mehmed Ali Vrioni (another deputy of the *vilayet*), with whom he had four sons and one daughter. Among his sons, there were Ahmet Myfid (1876 Libohova – 1927 Saranda), who was in the Ottoman diplomatic service and later became a minister in independent Albania, and Mahmut Ekrem Bey (born in Gjirokastra in 1882), who occupied high offices in inter-war Albania. Under the Italian occupation during the Second World War, he took part in the government. He died in Rome after the war.

Sources:

Vlora 1973:267-268; Mile 1978:101 [AMPJ LPK, Vol. 9, pp. 168-173]; Devereux 1963:263; Bartl 1979a:30; Bartl 1979b:31-32; Us 1954: *passim*; Aristarchi Bey 1878:351; Güneş 1998:14 and 714; Kim 1993:127. (For pictures of Ali Naki Bey, see Güneş 1998:218-219; Dilo 1979/81:109; Omani 1985:895.)

Filip Ağa Rosto (Şkodra, Orthodox Christian)

Serving as the deputy of İşkodra [Şkodra/İskodra] in both sessions, Filip Ağa Rosto is known also as Filip Efendi, Filip Aga [Agha] Rosto, Filip Risto Vučković or Philippe Effendi.

A Christian Orthodox, Filip Risto Vučković (probably from the small Orthodox community of İşkodra, if we consider the family name “Vučković”), was born into a quite wealthy family from İşkodra, where he became member of the court of appeals.

Elected as a deputy to the first Ottoman parliament, after returning from Istanbul, he retired in Elbasan (central Albania), where he had relatives and where he died when around the age of 100.

Sources:

Bushati 1998:539-40; Devereux 1963:264 and 272 and *passim*; Us 1954: 18 and *passim*; Güneş 1998:12 and *passim*, 17; Kim 1993:124 and 131; Dilo 1979/81:109.

Mehmed Ali Bey (Yanya, Muslim) (1842-1895)

Deputy of Yanya (Janina/Ionnina) in the second session, Mehmed Ali Bey was from Berat. His name is spelled variously in different sources: Mehmed Ali Bey, Mehmet Ali Vrioni, Mehmet Ali Beu [Bey], Mehemed Ali Bey of Berat, Mehemed Ali Vrion, Mehmet Ali Vrioni, Mehmed Ali Vrion and Mehmet Ali Berati.

Mehmet Ali Bey (1842-1895) was from the famous Albanian landowning *bey* family of Berat (southern Albania) named Vrioni, a family that increased its wealth and power during the modernization process in the Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century. The French vice-consul in Yanya described Mehmet Ali's family, in his letter to the Foreign Ministry in Paris dated November 9, 1877, as one of the 'best' landowning families and the wealthiest Albanians in Berat. Mehmet Ali was a grandson of Ömer Paşa, one of the generals of Tepedelenli Ali Paşa, and later governor of Epirus, and the son of Hüseyin Paşa, who was governor of Berat between 1845 and 1863. His mother was Sabush Hanım Toptani, daughter of Ali Bey Toptani of Tirana. In his abovementioned letter the French vice-consul in Yanya wrote that Mehmet Ali Bey had received a quite good education in Istanbul and therefore, without the help of his origins or support from his family, he had prospects of making a good administrative career. He spoke Albanian, Turkish, Greek and French.

Mehmet Ali Bey was elected deputy to the second session of the first Ottoman parliament with 39 votes, giving him the second best result in the election for the *vilayet* of Yanya. Mehmet Ali's name is not included in Hakkı Tarık Us's list of deputies because it was missing in the Official Yearbook (*Devlet Salnamesi*) that he used. Only the three non-Muslim deputies of Yanya are on his list. The author does note, however, that this must be a mistake, and, as it was also reported by the newspaper *Basiret*, that Beratlı Mehmet Ali Bey must have also been an elected deputy because his name appears in minutes and on commissions.

Regarding his activities in parliament, it is of note that Mehmet Ali Vrioni was a member of the special committee at the beginning of the second session tasked with drafting the reply of the Chamber of Deputies to the speech by the Sultan. In general, he was a quite vigorous deputy in parliament, actively taking part in discussions on a variety of issues and in forming different commissions in parliament.

As regards his extra-parliamentary activities, Mehmet Ali Vrioni was, according to Albanian historiography, a member of the Albanian Committee (*Komiteti Shqiptar*) of Yanya founded in May 1877. He had led a large militia force with at least one thousand men, and he had been successful as the leader of a 1,500-thousand strong militia force in the fighting in Herzegovina in fall 1876. He wanted to repeat this in Epirus (southern Albania), but he was elected deputy of Yanya. According to mainstream Albanian historiography, Mehmet Ali Vrioni, who had come to Istanbul as deputy of Yanya, was, together with some other Albanian deputies, one of the founders of the *Komiteti Qendror për Mbrojtjen e të Drejtave të Kombësisë Shqiptare* (Central Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian People) founded by members of the Albanian elite in Istanbul in December 1877. Together with Abdul Bey Frasher, he led negotiations with the Greek authorities in July and December 1877 in order to achieve an alliance. In spring 1879 he visited, with Abdul Bey and Abidin Dino, the main European capitals (Rom, Paris, Berlin, Vienna) in order to defend the fate of the Albanian territories.

While taking part in the organization of the resistance movements, Mehmet Ali Vrioni, like other deputies, still saw himself as a deputy of the (albeit suspended) Ottoman parliament, and, hence, having learned of the resumption of the Ottoman and Greek negotiations on border issues, he, together with two other deputies from Yanya, Abdül Bey and Veysel (Dino), travelled on August 14, 1879 from his region to Istanbul to try to play any role possible as a representative of the local people in those negotiations in the capital. According to Albanian historiography, he remained one of the members of the central committee of the “League of Prizren” from its inception to its end. With the repression of the “Albanian League,” he was arrested in 1881 but was able to flee to Corfu. According to the nationalist narrative in the official Albanian encyclopaedia, his last known ‘patriotic act’ was the signing of a memorandum in 1890 together with Abdül Bey.

Mehmet Ali died in 1895.

He had married two wives of relatively local important families – Emine Hanım Klisura and Hüsnîye Hanım Vokopola – and a Circassian woman, Mihri Hanım. With Hüsnîye Hanım he had a son, İlyas Bey (born in 1882 or 1883). İlyas Bey Vrioni studied at the *Mekteb-i Milkiye*, became mayor of Berat after the Young Turk revolution, participated in the Assembly of Vlora in 1912, which declared Albanian independence, and was twice prime minister of Albania, and several times member of parliament, minister and ambassador in the new Albanian state before his death in 1932. He married a woman from the well-known Dino family (from Preveza), and had three children with her, among them Yusuf Vrioni, the translator of İsmail Kadare into French.

Sources:

Clayer 2005; Devereux 1963: 208 and 208 fn. 57, 215 and 215 fn. 79, 271 and *passim*; Elsie 2004: 444, 444-445; Kaleshi 1974:536, [Alb. translation: Kaleshi 1996a:85]; Faensen 1980: 18 and 18 fn. 107, 43, 100; Frashëri 1984:80-86, 91-103 ; Frashëri 2004:287; Hutchings 1996:250; Korkuti 1979/81: 92-93; Pollo & Pulaha 1978, 83-88; Kofos 1975:124-125, 144-147; Alpan 1979:308; Mehmeti & Frashëri 1985:1178; Myzyri 1985:501; Us 1954:20, 23, 35-41, [fn. 58], 154, 181-187, 304, 388, and *passim*; Güneş 1998:19; Kim 1993:133; Mile 1978:101 [AMPJ LPK, Vol. 9, pp. 168-173]; Pollo & Buda 1965:147-148; Rizaj 1978: 115, 128-130, 250, 264-265, 320; Rizaj 1978b; Vrioni 1998; Vlora 1968:139, 145; Vlora 1973: 278-279; Vlora 1911:61-65; *Accounts and Papers*, 37, 1878-79, LXXVII (77), p. 430 (See Rizaj 1978:256 and 121); *Accounts and Papers*, (36), 1878-79, LXXVII (7), pp. 433-434 (See Rizaj 1978:257-258 and 122-123; *Accounts and Papers*, 36, 1878-79, LXVII (77), pp. 32-393; *Accounts and Papers*, 39, 1880, LXXVII, 78, p. 362. (See also Rizaj 1978:130); Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv (Wien), PA XXXVIII/443, Ranzi, 12/8/1905; *O Neos Kuvaras*, No II, 1962, pp. 140-152 and 152-177.

Mihail Harito Efendi (Yanya, Orthodox Christian) (1836-1897)

Deputy of Yanya in the second session, Mihail Harito Efendi is named differently in various sources: Hiristo Efendi; Mihail Efendi; Mihail Hiristo Efendi; Mihal Harito Efendi[u]; Mihal Haritoja, Harito E. or Mihal Kristo.

Mihal Harito was from a wealthy Orthodox Christian family from the Albanian-speaking village of Nivan, in the mountainous Zagori region, north-east of Ergeri [Argirikastro/Gjirokastër], in the north of the *vilayet* of Yanya/Ioannina. He and his brother, Qiro Harito, had bought the tobacco trade monopoly in the kaza of Avlyona [Vlora/Vlonja] and Arnavut Belgradi [Berat], as well as the administration of the post of Ergeri [Argirikastro/Gjirokastër]. They also controlled a caravan transport between Gjirokastër and Thessaly.

In his letter to the Foreign Ministry in Paris, sent on 9 November 1877, the French vice-consul in Yanya describes Mihail Harito as a "Hellenized Albanian," who was "not lacking in intellect, criticism or education." He could speak Albanian, Greek and Turkish. He also states that Mihail Harito had held the presidency of the commercial court in Prevezë [Preveza] and Ergeri [Argirikastro/Gjirokastër], and also served as the director of the exclusively Christian town of Himara; however, his staff was not satisfied with his work and attempted to replace him with a Muslim statesman. Still this 'strange' event does not seem to have affected Harito's career very much.

Mihal Harito was a benefactor for the Christians in his native region: in 1861, with his brother, he built a church, and in 1881, with Petro Kondi, he founded a school. He is said to have been in favour of an Albanian Orthodox Church.

In 1877, he became a member of the first Ottoman parliament. In a letter from the French vice-consul in Yanya on 9 November 1877 to the Foreign Ministry in Paris summarizing the news in the official *vilayet* newspaper (November 8, 1877) about the elections in Yanya, it was stated that Mihail Hristo [Harito] Efendi obtained only 14 votes and actually came in sixth in the election for the non-Muslim deputies of Yanya, from where three non-Muslim deputies were supposed to be sent to the parliament. However, in the end Harito Bey was sent to parliament as the third non-Muslim Yanya, because the other non-Muslim candidates Algiviyadi Lambi Efendi (29 votes), Kantarci Efendi (28 votes) and Zoidhi Efendi (15 votes) decided not to take part in the parliament. The reason for this decision seems to be that their business had suffered much during their service in Istanbul as deputies in the first session as they had had to stay away from their hometown for a long period of time.

According to the dominant narrative in Albanian historiography, Mihail Harito, who had come to Istanbul as the deputy of Yanya, was one of the members of the Central Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian People (*Komiteti Qendror për Mbrojtjen e të Drejtave të Kombësise*), the association founded in 1877 by a group of Albanian intellectuals in Istanbul, three Albanian deputies of Yanya (Abdül Frashëri, Mehmet Ali Vrioni, Mustafa Nuri Vlora) among them.

Regarding his participation in parliament, it must be stated that he took part in several negotiations in the chamber, and on one occasion on January 9, 1878, for instance, Mihail Hristo was involved in the discussions in the Chamber about the

responsibility for the failure of the Ottoman Empire in war against the Russians, questioning the interference by Istanbul and the incapability of military commanders.

He died in 1897 at the age of 61.

One of his sons, Petro Harito, was a member of the Albanian parliament several times during the inter-war period.

Sources:

Laska 2001:195-198; Pirro Loli, Itaka brenda meje, Athinë, November 2003-2004, <http://www.albnet.gr/book/zagoria/memorandum.htminternet>; Devereux 1963:214 fn. 77, 271; Dilo 1979/81:110; Us 1954:20, 155 ; Kim 1993:19; Mile 1978:101-102 [AMPJ LPK, Vol. 9, pp. 168-173]; Alpan 1978:39; Alpan 1979:308, 311; Güneş 1998:19; Buda et al. 1985; Mehmeti & Frashëri 1985:1178; Myzyri 1985; Frashëri 2004:287.

Mustafa (Nuri) Bey (Yanya, Muslim) (1830/31-1885/86)

Deputy of Yanya in both sessions, Mustafa (Nuri) Bey was from Avlonya [Vlora/Vlonja]. Different versions of his name can be encountered in different sources: Mustafa Bey [Beu]; Yanyali Mustafa Bey; Yanyalı Ahmed Paşazade Mustafa Bey; Moustapha Bey; Mustafa Paşa; Mustafa Paşa Vlora; Mustafa Nuri Bey Vlora; [Yanya Mebusu] Mustafa Efendi[u].

Mustafa Nuri Bey Vlora was born in 1246/1830-31 into the famous *bey* family of Vlora (Avlonya) in southern Albania, in the *vilayet* of Yanya [Ioannina]. His father was Beqir Bey or Avlonyalı Hacı Ebubekir Bey, a treasurer, and the brother of Selim Paşa (b. 1820) who was *mütesarrif* [official local governor] of Gjirokastër sub-district. According to his biography in the Ottoman registers, he received a traditional religious education with a private professor. However he also studied other subjects, as he was able to speak, read and write not only Turkish, Arabic and Persian, but also French and Greek. He could also speak Italian and Albanian. After an unsuccessful rebellion by his family against the central authorities, he was banned to Konya, where he stayed with his brother and his cousins between 1848 and 1851. However, a few years later he began a career in the Ottoman administration. In 1854-55 he was appointed a member of *Seyyar Komisyonu* in the *vilayet* of Yanya, and the following year he became member of the *vilayet* assembly. He then occupied several posts of *kaymakam*: in Ergeri [Argirkastro/Gjirokastër] (1862-63), in Görice/Korçë (1863-64), and in Narda (1864-65). Then he was appointed Midhat Paşa's deputy, *vali* of the Danube *vilayet* (1865-66). In 1867-68 he was promoted to *mutessarif* and occupied different posts as such, successively in Resmo (Rethymno) 1867-1870 and in Kandiye (1870-71), both in Crete. In 1873, after a five-month stay in Vlorë, he was sent to Herzegovina as a *mutessarif*. In 1876, he stayed in Vlorë for seven months before being appointed councillor of the *vali* of Crete. In 1877, he resigned and remained without an administrative position for fourteen months.

A letter from the French vice-consul in Yanya to the Foreign Ministry in Paris on 9 November 1877 reported that Mustafa Bey was elected with the largest number of votes (46 votes). According to Albanian historiography, Mustafa Nuri, who had come to Istanbul as the deputy of Yanya, was, together with some other Albanian deputies, one of the founders of the so-called *Komiteti Qendror për Mbrojtjen e të Drejtave të Kombësisë Shqiptare* (Central Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian People) founded by the Albanian elite in December 1877 in Istanbul.

As pointed out by Robert Devereux, Mustafa Nuri Vlora (Yanya) was one of “[...] the ten most prominent opposition deputies [...]” who were going to be deported on 15 February 1878 from Istanbul after the Chamber was dissolved. Mustafa Nuri Vlora (Yanya) was, together with nine other opposition deputies, “[...] summoned [on February 15, 1878] to the Ministry of Police and informed curtly that, with the Chamber having been dissolved, they no longer had any business to transact in Istanbul and they were therefore required to leave the capital for their homes by the first available ship. The ten deputies protested the order as completely illegal and unconstitutional [...] the deputies had no choice but to board the Austrian ship Mars, which sailed from Istanbul on February [1878].” According to the correspondent of *The Times*, on February 25, 1878, the government even refused the deported deputies their travelling expenses, which they were indeed entitled to by the Constitution.

Regarding his extra-parliamentary activities, we know that at that time in Yanya (Janina/Ioannina), Mustafa Nuri mobilized volunteers to defend the Ottoman-Greek border against any attempted intrusion by the Greeks before he was elected deputy to the first Ottoman parliament. This is probably why in 1878-79 he refused an appointment as *mutessarif* of Görice (Korçë). As a consequence, he was dismissed and his salary was cut. In June 1878 he was elected the head of the Vlora branch of the 'Albanian League' (*Lidhja Shqiptare*) and took part in the preparations for the protests against the Great Powers at the Berlin Congress. According to Neil Shehu, the author of the entry on Mustafa Nuri in the official Albanian encyclopaedia, “the head of the Vlora branch of the League, Mustafa Nuri, in a conversation with the deputy consul of Austria-Hungary in Vlora, frankly expressed his opinion about the policy of Vienna, a policy intending to extend the conquest of the Balkans over a broader area, especially in Kosovo, Macedonia and up to the Aegean Sea. He did not believe the deputy consul's words about the 'help' for Albania, which he promised in the name of the Viennese government.” In February 1879 he represented Vlora at the Preveza meeting of the Albanians (*mbledhje e Prevezës*), summoned to discuss the ongoing problem of settling the border between Greece and Ottoman Albania. Mustafa Nuri was pursuing a kind of 'cultural Albanianism' by replying that 'the language of the region is Albanian and all correspondence should be in Albanian', when the Austro-Hungarian deputy consul in Vlora suggested to him that the Commercial Court should use Greek rather than

Turkish. On July 7, 1880 Mustafa Nuri Vlora, as the head of a commission from the South, visited İşkodra [Shkodra/Shkodër] to talk with the Albanians in the North about cooperation between the southern and northern Albanians in protecting the current (Ottoman) Albanian borders against the external plans for cession. In 1881, he was arrested with other Albanian leaders and exiled to Çanakkale, where he spent some time. In 1883, he was again appointed as a *mutessarif* in Menteşe district, a post from which he resigned at the end of 1884.

During a stay there, he had made several gifts (two fountains, a building for a *rüşdiye* and a street between the city and the port) to his native town.

He died in 1885 or 1886, in Minne while he was making the pilgrimage to Mecca.

He was married to Naile Hanım Yanina, of the Aslan-paşalı family, with whom he had four sons (Neşet Paşa, Mehmet Ferit Paşa, Süreyya Bey and Namik Bey) and two daughters (Nasip Hanım and Melek Hanım). Ferid [Ferit] Paşa became grand vizir in 1903.

Sources:

İsmail Kemal Bey 1920:27; Vlora 1973:275-277; Shehu 1985:1172; Kaleshi 1981:428 [Albanian translation with some mistakes: Kaleshi 1996b:127]; Kaleshi 1981:433 [Kaleshi 1996c:183]; Devereux 1963:247-248, 247-248 fn. 24, 248 fn. 26, 263, 271; Pollo & Buda 1965:147; Alpan 1978:36; Rizaj 2001:100 & 104 ; Frashëri 2004:287. Hysni Myzyri, “Komiteti Qendroti për Mbrotjen e të Drejtave të Kombësise,” Buda et al. 1985:501; Aristarchi Bey 1878:351; Us 1954:20, 79, 154, 410-411; Kim 1993:127, 133 ; Shehu 1979/81:112-114; Belegu 1939:69 ; Korkuti 1979/81:94-95; Güneş 1998:14, 19, 218-219, 714 and *passim*; Kutay 1960a:6207; Mile 1978:101 [The letter of the French vice-consul in Yanya on 9 November 1877 to Foreign Ministry in Paris summarizing the news in the official *vilayet* newspaper (08.11.1877) about the elections in Yanya for the second session. (Quoted from AMPJ LPK, Vol. 9, pp. 168-173)], *Sicill-i Alval defteri* n°1, p. 110; Haus-, Hof, und Staatsarchiv (Vienna), PA XIV/7, Liasse V/1, Ranzi, Valona, 18/4/1905.

Ömer Şevki Efendi (Prizren/Kosova, Muslim) (1820? 1887)

In the sources on the first Ottoman parliament the name of one of the deputies from the Kosovo province (*vilayet*) in the second session usually appears as ‘Ömer Şevki’, albeit with different spellings and with the epithet ‘Nardalı’ showing that he was from Narda/Narta in present-day north-western Greece and in the Ottoman province of Yanya of that time: Nardalı Ömer (Şevki) effendi; Ömer Şevki Efendi; Ömer effendi or Ömer Shevki Effendi or Nardalı Ömer Efendi. This “Nardalı Ömer Efendi” version also appears in some Ottoman-Turkish documents.

It is commonly accepted in Albanian historiography both in Kosovo and Albania, on the other hand, that this deputy was the well-known Albanian figure of that period Ömer Prizreni (1820/21-1887), whose name appears in a number of versions in various sources in different languages: Haxhi Ymer Prizreni; Haxhi

Ymer Efendiu (i Prizrenit) [Effendi]; Hadži Imer-efendi Prizreni; Hadji Omer Efendi; Sheh Umer Prizreni; Haxhi Ymer Efendiu; Myderiz Ymer Prizreni, Myderiz Omer Effendi, Sheh Omer Prizreni, Sheh Ymer, Ymer Efendi Prizreni; Omer Efendiu nga Prizreni; myderiz Omer Efendi(u); Ymer Prizreni and Prizrin'li Haci Ömer.

It can be inferred from this list (without speculating about the reasons) that the versions without 'Şevki' (Shevki) have prevailed in these sources. Exceptions to this can be seen in the collections of documents, where also the names Amer Chevki, Amer Shevki, Ymer Shefki[u], Omer Shevki and Omer Chevki are used for Ymer Prizreni.

Regarding the question whether the person named in all of these sources is, as commonly suggested, the same person, it must be noted that Narda/Narta was not in the Ottoman *vilayet* of Kosova but rather in Yanya, whereas the deputy in question was elected from Kosovo province. The minutes of the first parliament compiled by Hakkı Tarık Us, for instance, report that Ömer, the deputy of Kosova *vilayet*, was from Narda. The source for this information, which has been repeated in some other studies on the first Ottoman parliament, is totally unclear; it is striking, however, that no one has questioned how someone from the *vilayet* of Yanya became a deputy of the *vilayet* of Kosova in the Ottoman parliament.

Leaving aside the question of two different people with the name Ömer, we will focus here on Ömer Prizreni, who commonly has been suggested to have been the deputy of Kosovo to the first Ottoman parliament, while noting that we do not possess much information about Ömer from Narda/Narta.

Ömer [Alb. Ymer] Prizreni is a historical figure that one comes across in almost every study on the history of Kosovo between 1878 and 1881, and has been glorified in Kosovo as one of the fathers of Albanian nationalism. He was described in a short entry on "Haxhi Ymer Prizreni" in the official encyclopaedia of socialist Albania as one of the "distinguished" activists of the National Movement, one of the main pioneers of the Albanian League of Prizren and head of the provisional government established at the end of the League." His recently mythologized image in the Albanian historiography in Kosovo can be seen as the counterpart to Abdül Frashëri's (Yanya) place in the Albanian historiography of Albania. This image of Ömer as "the heart and soul of the Albanian League" is believed to have been overshadowed in the historiography by that of Abdül, and Ömer Efendi is introduced as the "progressive cleric, enlightener, genuine son of the Albanian people, and patriot, who not only formed the Albanian League but also remained its devoted leader to the end."

Ömer was from a Muslim clerical family from Zgatar, a village near Prizren. As it is not known when his father Süleyman Efendi Zgatari (a religious instructor [*müdderîs*] in the religious school [*medrese*] of Bayraklı Mosque in Prizren) moved from Zgatar to Prizren, it is not clear in which of these places Ömer was born. Süleyman Efendi's father (i.e. Ömer's grandfather) Ali Nuhi, on the other hand,

had been the founder and the first imam of the Zgatar Mosque. Ömer had two brothers: Ali and Osman. Ömer Efendi was supposedly from a rich family that was one of the initiators of modern (capitalist) business in Prizren, and had steadily increased its wealth. Running a tannery, the family also owned land around Prizren and Opoje, the region in southern Kosovo where the family was from.

There is also disagreement about the date of Ömer's birth in the historiography; it is usually accepted, however, that he was born either in 1820 or 1821.

Ömer attended primary and secondary school in Prizren and graduated from a religious school (*medrese*) in Prizren, supposedly the 'Mehmed Paşa Medrese', and worked as a religious instructor (*müdderris*) in the same town from the 1860s on. It is sometimes claimed that Ömer studied law, philosophy and theology in Istanbul; however, no evidence is given for this information. It is sure that Ömer was a cleric (as a *müfti* of Prizren and as a religious instructor [*müdderris*] at the medrese of the Bayraklı Mosque in Prizren).

His Albanian biographers maintain that Ömer spoke "Albanian, Gorançë or Gorani, a Slavic/Bulgarian language spoken among the Muslim Slavs of the Opoja region, Turkish, Arabic, Persian and French, and understood German." This information is, however, rather unreliable, as it is doubtful that he knew French or German.

Belonging to the *Naqshbandi* mystical order (*tarikat/tariqa*), Ömer Efendi also carried the epithet *Hacı* following his pilgrimage, in addition to his other labels such as *Müdderris*, *Müfti*, *Sheyh* and *Hoca*.

He is supposed to have taken part in the preparations for the so-called 'Albanian League' (allegedly from the second half of 1877 on) by organizing the resistance of local forces against the military campaigns of the neighbouring countries into the Ottoman territories during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 and by fighting for the rights of the Albanians in the region. He organized a committee for self-defence in the district (*sancak*) of Prizren, which, like many other such committees in Kosovo, was preparing for military resistance against the annexation of the region by the Serbian forces and organizing help for many refugees escaped from the Serbian armies into Kosovo.

In 1877, the year Ömer was elected deputy of Kosova province for the second session of the first Ottoman parliament, he became a member of the so-called 'Central Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian People' (*Komiteti Qendror për Mbrojtjen e të Drejtave të Kombësise Shqiptare*), which was allegedly established in December 1877 in Istanbul under Abdül's (Yanya) leadership.

According to mainstream Albanian historiography, Ömer was the head of the commission that in spring 1878 prepared the general assembly of local elites to take place in Prizren in June 1878, during which the League of Prizren was founded. It has been claimed by one of his biographers that the assembly in Prizren actually did not start on June 10, 1878, as commonly believed, but with the meeting at the Bayraklı Mosque (Alb.: Bajrakli Xhami) on June 4, 1878, where

Ömer held the opening speech. Ending on June 18, 1878, this assembly supposedly elected Ömer as head of the 'central committee' (*Cemiyet-i Merkezîyye-i İttihâdiyye*) formed during the first assembly in Prizren, which was dominated by those from the radical wing not only fighting against the plans for the annexation of some territories by the neighbours, but also striving for a unified autonomous Albanian province under the Ottoman Empire. It is generally claimed that he was later elected on July 2, 1878 to the General Board of the League and on October 3, 1879 as the head both of the whole Albanian League and of the so-called 'Provisional Government.' According to Albanian historiography in January 1881 this government declared an autonomous Albania, which is of course a distorted vision of reality, even if Ömer did play an important role locally. One can find Ömer's signature ("Amer Chevki") under a memorandum written in French and addressed by "Des Délégués Albanais" to the British diplomat A. H. Layard, on July 10, 1879. During the organization of local forces fighting against the implementation of the resolutions of the Berlin Congress and secondarily striving for the formation of a unique and autonomous province, Ömer's role apparently became more important. In his report of June 12, 1880, the British consul in Prizren St. John, who gives a critical analysis of the meaning of this resistance movement, states explicitly that "[...] a person named Hadji Omer Effendi is exercising great influence at Prisrend. This man has now adopted the character of a 'dictator', taking a very active part in public affairs, political and judicial, the Mutessarif who nominally represents the Government being completely set aside." While the geographic scope and substance of Ömer's power may be disputed, it is clear from this report that Ömer had gradually built a power structure within a certain range.

Ömer Efendi was also one of the organizers of the second assemblies in Prizren on July 22, 1880 and in Dibra (Debre) between October 20 and 23, 1880.

The resistance of this rather faithful movement against the demands of first Montenegro and then Greece had proved very helpful for the Ottomans in their international negotiations over the new borders. However, once those borders had been settled on, some factions of this regional movement became undesirable for the Ottoman state so that in spring 1881, Dervish Paşa was commissioned by the Ottoman state to control or suppress these factions that had by then become disloyal.

After the suppression of the Albanian League of Prizren by the Ottoman armies in April 1881, which could not be overcome by the weak local armed resistance groups, Ömer managed to escape to Ulqin in Montenegro. While there are different speculations about his final destination, it is claimed by one of his biographers that Ömer left Prizren on April 30, 1881 for Durrës (Diraç). On his way to Diraç, Ömer secretly stayed in İşkodra in the house of Yusuf Efendi [Golemi], one of the leaders of the resistance movement in the region; after six days he left this city for Ulqin in Montenegro, where he arrived on May 18, 1881. Although

the Ottoman government had apparently sent him delegates in 1884 to call him back with the promise of amnesty, he is claimed to have refused to return to the Ottoman Empire and obtained refugee status from Montenegro.

While different years for his death are given in different sources, according to the inscription on his tombstone in Ulqin in Montenegro, Ömer died in Hicri 1304, i.e. between September 30, 1886 and September 18, 1887. Enver Baftiu, relying on a document he had, clarified that Ömer was killed in front of his house in Ulqin on “Hicri 20 Ramadan 1304,” i.e. June 12, 1887. His tomb remains in Ulqin in Montenegro to this day.

A Turkish encyclopaedia states that he (“Prizrin’li Hacı Ömer”) is the father of Besim Akalın (1862-1940); however this information is probably wrong as no relation between these two persons is mentioned in the entry on Besim Akalın himself in the same volume. Referring to a document dated “Hicri 13 ramazan [Ramadan] 1307,” i.e. May 3, 1890, some Kosovar historians have maintained, however, that Ömer Efendi was married to “Fatime” and had a daughter called “Ajshe” [Ayshe]. It is also stated that both Fatime and Ajshe were interned first in Thessalonica and later in Izmir for an unknown period, and returned to their “motherland” around 1890. Ayshe was married to an Albanian named Vehbi Fluku, who was supposedly Ömer Efendi’s student in the medrese. Relying on interviews with Ömer’s descendants, some Kosovar historians have claimed that Ömer also had a son who died very young.

Sources:

Altıparmak 1981; Pirraku 1978; Verli 2002; Verli 2003; Mataj 2002; Kolçe 1985; Pirraku 2002a; Pirraku 2002b; Pirraku 2003; Rizaj 2002; Baftiu 2002a; Baftiu 2002b; Kosova 2002; Rexha 1979; Mataj, Ferizi & Halilaj 1979/81; Devereux 1963:271.

Selim Ağa Göriz (İşkodra, Muslim) (?-1885)

Selim Ağa Göriz, also known as Selim Efendi; Selim Göriz Aga [Agha/Ağa] and Selim Aga Gjyrezi, was the deputy of İşkodra [İşkodra/Shkodra] to the second session of the first Ottoman parliament.

Selim Ağa Göriz (Gjyrezi in Albanian) was born in Shkodër into a rich family of merchants, who had also acquired lands. His father was involved in trade with Venice. He was himself a member of the *esnaf* of salt in 1846. In 1861, he was appointed president of the commercial court of the city, and he was elected deputy to the first Ottoman parliament. At that time, he became involved in the local movement against the cession of some territories to Montenegro, in particular against the cession of Ulcinj in 1880.

Selim Ağa died in 1885, in Shkodër, at a very old age.

His sons Ibrahim and Muhamet held political positions in inter-war Albania, the first as a deputy from 1923 to 1924, and the other as president of the Shkodër

municipality; however, they had to leave the country in 1925 because of their opposition to Ahmet Zogu.

Sources:

Bushati 1998:539, 554-555; Bushati 1999:174-176; Devereux 1963:272 and *passim*; Kim 1993: 124, 127, 131; Güneş 1998:17; Us 1954: 148, 155 and *passim*. Pollo *et al.* 1984:239

Toptanzade Sami Bey (Şkodra, Muslim)

Toptanzade Sami Bey, whose name appears also as Sami Bey or Toydanzade Sami Bey in different sources, was the deputy of İşkodra [Shkodër/İskodra] in the first session.

Devereux gives his name as "Toydanzade Sami B" and states that he is a Muslim Albanian, and that his "residence" and "occupation" are not known. Jongil Kim mistakenly states in his MA thesis that he is Arab [sic]. It is known, however, that his name was Toptanzade (and not Toydanzade) Sami Bey, and that he was a member of the famous Toptani family (originally from Krujë), which came to be the most powerful family in Tirana and surroundings, in central Albania, from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards. He was the son of Hacı Mehmed Paşa, and the grandson of Kaplan Paşa (d. 1816).

We know almost nothing about Toptanzade Sami except that he was elected to the first Ottoman parliament, and that in the parliament, according to Devereux, he was elected together with Yenişehirli Ahmed (Aydin) and Mihaliki Efendi (Selanik), as one of the administrative officers who "[...] were responsible for supervising the Chamber's clerical staff and other employees (doormen, ushers, etc.)."

His only son, Celal Bey, died in Plevne in 1877.

Sources:

Bakıu 1998: 33; Devereux 1963: 165 and 264 and *passim*; Aristarchi Bey 1878:348; Us 1954:18, 133, 415 and *passim*; Güneş 1998:12, 132 and *passim*; Kim 1993:14, 124

Veysel Bey [Dino] (Yanya, Muslim)

Veysel Bey was one of the deputies from Yanya to the first session of the first Ottoman parliament. Different versions of his name can be encountered in different sources: Veysel Bey, Veissel Bey, Vesil Bey, Vesel Bey, Vessel Bey, Vesel beg, Vesel beu, Vesel bej Dino and Vejsel Bey Dinua.

Veysel Bey was from the famous Dino family of Albanian notables from Çamëri (west of Ioannina). He was the son of Ahmet Paşa Dino (1785-1849) of the Preveza district, who died during the cholera epidemic during the 1880s in Ankara, where his son Abidin Paşa was serving as governor. His mother was Saliha Dino. His brother, Abidin Paşa Dino, *vali* and Ottoman Minister of For-

eign Affairs in 1880, was one of the founders of the Komiteti Qendorr për Mbrojtjen e të Drejtave të Kombësisë Shqiptare (Central Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian People) founded by the Albanian elite in December 1877 in Istanbul.

At the end of the 1870s, Veysel Bey Dino was head of the Military Commission of the *vilayet* of Ioannina.

In 1877, he was elected to the first Ottoman parliament. Relying on a report in the *Stamboul* newspaper (January 31, 1877), Devereux states that Veysel Bey was “[e]lected when Hüsnü B., a notable of Larissa, declined to serve.”

He was one of the leaders of the southern branch of the ‘Albanian League’ together with his brother Abidin Paşa Dino Preveza, Abdyl Bey Frashei (Yanya) and Mehmet Ali Bey Vrioni (Yanya).

Like Feyzi Efendi (also deputy of Yanya), Veysel Bey was, according to Devereux, a member of “one of the most important” special committees in the parliament – “[...] an eleven-man group, comprising four Muslims and seven Christians, created on June 6, 1877, to consider ways and means of raising the funds needed by the government for the prosecution of the war.”

He was a member of the so-called ‘Society for the edition of Albanian books,’ founded in the Ottoman capital under the leadership of Şemseddin Sami Fraşer [Frashëri] in 1879. In a letter from the British Vice-Consul in Preveza C. A. Blakeney, to Sir A. H. Layard on March 3, 1879, it was stated that “[a] deputation, consisting of four members of the Albanian League, two of whom were cadi [Kadi] of Prevesa and Vessel Bey, brother of Abedin Bey [Abidin Dino Paşa], called at this Vice-Consulate yesterday morning, and handed to me, under flying seal, a petition [with the date of February 28, 1879] addressed by them and their colleagues to the Marquis of Salisbury, [...] The above deputation also informed me that a similar petition has been addressed to the Consuls of Great Powers for transmission to their respective governments.”

The petition addressed “by the members of the Albanian League” in Preveza was protesting against the plans for the cession to Greece of the Ottoman (Albanian!) territories of Preveza, Arta and Yanya. Another petition by “[t]he Albanian League to Mr. Malet” himself, also enclosed in the same letter, declared that “[t]he territories of Prevesa [Preveza], Janina [Yanya] and Arta, which Greece claims, from *ab antiquo* an integral part of Albania, and the cession of these territories to Greece would be equivalent the extinction of the whole of Albania.”

Edward Malet, the British diplomat in the region, informed his government in a letter dated April 1, 1879 that “another petition addressed to the Marquis by the ‘Albanian Chiefs’ had been handed over to him by Vesel Bey. It was declared in this petition dated March 2, 1879 “[...] that if the Greek Government persists in its resolve to encroach upon the rights of the Albanian people, we must cast upon it all the responsibility of the consequences, since for our part we are determined to die in the defence of our nationality.”

Underneath another memorandum addressed by "the Albanian Delegates" to A.H. Layard on July 10, 1879, who forwarded it to the Marquis of Salisbury on July 20, 1879, we can see that the French text was signed *inter alia* by "Vassal Dino," whose name was translated into Albanian by Skender Rizaj, who published both the original and Albanian translation of this document, as "Vasal Dino." The person who signed this petition "protesting any portion of territory to a foreign power" was probably Veysel Dino himself.

While taking part in the organization of the resistance movement in the region, Veysel Dino, like all other deputies, still saw himself as a deputy of the (albeit suspended) Ottoman parliament, and hence when he was informed about the resumption of the Ottoman and Greek negotiations on border issues, he, together with two other deputies from Yanya, Abdül Bey and Mehmet Ali Vrioni, travelled on August 14, 1879 from the region to Istanbul to try to play any role possible in those negotiations in the capital as a representative of the local people.

Sources:

Clayer 2007:272; Mehmeti 1998:21, 77; Devereux 1963:168-169, 169 fn. 37, 263 and 266 fn. 36; Faensen 1980:43; Alpan & Kaçi 1997:75-76; Korkuti 1979/81:93; Rizaj 1978:128-130 and 264-265 ; Güneş 1998: 14, 218-219 and 714; Kaleshi 1979: 477-478; Us 1954:20 and *passim*; Kim 1993:127; Kutay 1960:6348; Kaleshi 1979:477; Aristarchi Bey 1878:351; Kim 1993:127; Rizaj 1978:321 (index) ; PRO 78/2939 (published in *Accounts and Papers*, 39, 1880, LXXVII, 78, p. 362); PRO F.O. 78/2936 (published in *Accounts and Papers*, 36, 1878-1879, LXXVII (7), pp.387-389. See also Rizaj 1978:250-255); PRO, F.O. 78/1879 (published in *Accounts and Papers*, 36, 1878-1879, LXXVII (77), pp.345-348. See Rizaj 1978:246-249).

Yusuf Ziyaeddin Efendi (İşkodra, Muslim) (ca. 1830-1901)

Deputy of İşkodra [Shkodra/Shkodër] in both sessions of the first Ottoman parliament, Yusuf Ziyaeddin Efendi has been named differently in various sources: Yusuf Efendi [Efendiu], Podgoričeli Yusuf Ziyaeddin Efendi, Youssouf Effendi, Jusuf Oruçi, Jusuf Uruçi, Jusuf Ziaeddin Podgoroci, Jusuf Efendi Podgorica, or Myderiz Jusuf Podgorica.

Generally called Yusuf Efendi Podgorica, or Yusuf Oruçi (or Uruçi), he was born around 1830 in Podgorica [Podgoriće/Podgorika in present-day Montenegro], into a family originating in the mountainous region of Trieshi (today in Montenegro). One of his ancestors is said to have settled along the Buna River. Later on, the family migrated to Podgorica, where they remained until 1879 when the city came under Montenegrin rule.

Yusuf Efendi himself studied with his father, Hacı Ibrahim Rustem Efendi Uruçi, then in the *medrese* situated in the bazar of Shkodër with the *ulema* Salih Efendi and Sali Efendi Pata, and later on in Istanbul. After completing his studies, he became mufti and *müdderris* in Podgorica. Because of that, he was named "fetfacia" (*fetvaci*), the one who issues *fetwas*. He was a learned *'alim*, who knew Alba-

nian and Serbo-Croatian, but also Turkish, Arabic and Persian, and he owned a big library.

Elected as a deputy of Podgorica to the first Ottoman parliament, it is known that he intervened at least twice during the discussions in the parliament, in April and December 1877, criticizing the Ottoman authorities and defending the integrity of the Ottoman lands against Montenegro. Devereux states that the newspaper “*Stamboul*, November 23, 1877, identified the second Muslim deputy [of İşkodra] as Davud E, provincial inspector of schools. Either the newspaper was in error, or Davud, having resigned before the session started, was replaced by Yusuf.” According to Devereux, Yusuf Efendi was one of the most active participants in the parliamentary discussions the on the ‘Montenegrin problem’ opposing the cession of any Ottoman-Albanian territory to Montenegro.

Also outside the parliament, he was one of the activists who fought against the transfer of Ottoman territories to Montenegro.

Two or three years after the inclusion of the Podgorica region into Montenegro in February 1879, he left for İşkodra because he opposed the schooling of Muslim children in Montenegrin schools. The Ottoman authorities helped him settle in İşkodra by giving him the administration of heritages (*miras*).

He died in 1901 in İşkodra, where he was buried.

He had four sons and one daughter. At least two of his sons performed religious functions.

Sources:

Aristarchi Bey 1878:348; Bushati 1998: 534-539; Devereux 1963:188-189, 264, 272, 274 fn. 39; Güneş 1998: 12, 17,132, 218-219, 714; Kim 1993:124 and 131; Pirraku 2003:32; Panorama 2006: 14-15; Pirraku (Radio Ylberi); Rizaj 2001:101-102; Ulqini 1982:22; Us 1954:18, 155.

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