

Tuz Kitabı

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KİTABEVİ

*Salinas And Salt In Greek Lands
During The Ottoman Period*

— *Evangelia Balta** - *Fehmi Yılmaz*** —

Since once again we are responsible for the topic of the conference inaugurated by Emine Gursoy-Naskali at Marmara University, we ought to explain why we have offered salt as our subject. The main reason is the scarcity of studies on salt in the Ottoman Empire which had practically made the salt-bearing Mediterranean and the chief salt-producing Black Sea its own private lakes. We are limiting ourselves to sea-salt not forget of course, midland Cappadocia, so rich in salt with Kızılırmak, flowing through it – Kızılırmak, the Halis of antiquity which, according to Strabo is called Halis for its abundance of salt (*halas* = "salt" in Ancient Greek). And also, of course, we do not overlook the famous salt mines of Kastamonu which were exploited by Rum banker Georgios Zariphis in the final decades of the 19th century. It's puzzling, therefore, that for the Ottoman Empire, so rich in salines and salt mines there should have been no systematic studies on the utilisation of a basic constituent of human, and not only, nutrition. However, it is a fact that, on the whole, in Ottoman Studies, research concerned with the humble, but at the same time, basic elements of daily life, is very rare. The series of conferences at Marmara University are designed specifically to cover this lack.

We have stated that studies on salt in the Ottoman Empire do not exist. This does not mean, however, that there is a complete lack there-

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of. In 1963 Lutfi Güçer was the first to provide an excellent study on the salt monopoly in the Ottoman Empire of the 15th and 17th centuries. In passing we should mention that Lutfi Güçer has written, and it is no accident, an equally splendid study on grain. Two Bulgarian historians, Stefan Andreev and Elena Grozdanova in 1982 published a book entitled "Salt Production on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast under Ottoman Rule during the 15th – 19th centuries" based exclusively on Ottoman archival material in the Oriental Department of the Cyril and Methodius National Library which provides an account of the sea salt production at Sozopolis (Sozopol), Anchialos (Ahyolu) and elsewhere. In 1988 Minhai Maxim produced his study "On the Wallachian Salt in the Ports on the Lower Danube in the second half of the 16th century", based on Ottoman archival material. It is a work that concludes that salt was one of the greatest natural resources of the Romanian Principalities in this period and recently Saim Savaş has presented an interesting study on the salt production of Sivas.

However to come directly to our subject. There are no works devoted to the production and commerce of salt in present-day Helladic regions. At the conference dealing with salt which was held in Greece in November 1998, only two presentations referred to the Ottoman centuries and what is more to the 19th century. Based mainly on Greek sources they centered their attention on the sea salt production of Archipelagus and Western Asia Minor and on the salt monopoly of Cretan State (Cretan Politeia, 1898-1918).

The most well-known centers of salt production since Venetian times have been the Ionian islands and this is due not so much because their output was the most important as much as it is due to the fact that certain scholars devoted their research to the available materials in the Venetian archives. One can easily confirm this fact by consulting the classic study by the patriarch of the subject Jean-Claude Hocquet "La sel et la fortune de Venise" as well as the partial studies by Greek historians on the salt production of Leukada and Zakynthos. From the Venetian archives we learn that in the western Peloponnese beginning in the 13th century the Venetians provided themselves with salt from the salines of Coron, Modon and Kyllini (also known as Chiarenza in Venetian times) which is situated in the mouth of the plain of Elis. On the Aegean side of the Peloponnese were the most important saltworks of the whole Levant, the natural salines of Thermissia, under the protection of the homonymous Venetian fortress, in the jurisdiction of the city

of Nauplion. Angeliki Panopoulou devoted a study to the salines of the Morea in the 13th-15th centuries, in which she maintains that the salt of the Peloponnesian salt did not occupy a significant position in the catalogue of the revenues that La Serenissima received from the territories of Romania. The greater portion of the requirements of Venetian commerce was supplied by salt from Cyprus which was so even before the conquest of the island. For these centuries Panopoulou states that there is no clear information about the magnitude of the commerce in the Greek regions as well, while information of this type can be easily discovered in subsequent periods as for instance at the end of the 17th century. Finally Kostas Tsiknakis using the Venetians archives making a study of the sea salt production of Crete at the end of the 16th century and we are awaiting with keen interest the results of his research.

We have given a brief outline of the Greek bibliography for salt, which, as we have said from the beginning is based on Venetian sources. To continue we shall attempt to present entirely schematically the network of salines that functioned in Greek regions in the years of the Ottoman conquest. A hasty survey indicates that very many salines functioned in Helladic territories. We can refer to the most important starting from the south and continuing to the north. In Crete there were Suda and Spinaloga; in the Peloponnese there were more, however, the chief and the most long-lasting was at Thermissia in the Argolide. There are salines in the sancak of Euboea, that is in Athens and the area of Atalanta and Lamia. In Thessaly salines functioned at Volos and to the west in Epirus, the salines of Arta (Narda) were well-known. In documents in the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi reference is made to the saline of Kopraina of Arta. To the north of the salines of Thessalonike and Kitros in Karaferye predominate, and farther east, the salines at Orfan at the mouth of the Strymon, and the saline in Keramoti at Yenice-i Karasu at the mouth of the Nestos, and the rich salines in the area surrounding Gümülcine (Komotini). And today in the area of Komotini two salines are still functioning near the village of Néa Kessani and Messi. Leaving the mainland and crossing to the island we can stop at Mytillini and its active still today saline of Kalloni, and proceeding south, we point out the salines of Cos, which are listed in kanunnames of the 16th century, but also the salines of Patmos and Samos. Salt was also produced in Cyclades, that is in Paros, Naxos, Milos well as on other islands and shores of Greek territory, as would be natural from its geographi-

cal character. We realize that it is impossible to concern ourselves with all of them. We would hope that some day a team will be created to undertake the task. For the purposes of our paper we have chosen three salt producing areas: the Peloponnese, Crete and Thessalonike. Our aim at this phase is that definite elements of their history should be presented and that whatever of their sources we have gathered should be given in the hope that at the same time our paper will prove to be an incentive for further studies that will have as their subject matter the salt, and salines in the Greek lands of the Ottoman Empire.

The Peloponnese

The basic center of salt production during the Ottoman period continued to be Peloponnese. In the fragment of the register dated in 1460-1463 in which it is mentioned for the first time reference is made to two salines in the nahiye of Arcadia in the area of present day Kyparissia. At the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century reference is made in the kanunname of Bayezid II to four kadiliks that produce salt. They are Kalamata, Argos, Arcadia and Mystra. There can be no doubt there is implied reference to the salines of Methoni, Koroni and Argos (Modon, Koron, Arhos in Ottoman), well-known Venetians that passed progressively to the Ottomans; Koroni, Methoni and Argos in the 1500 and latter in 1540 Nauplion and Thermise. In the kanunnames which were issued by the sultans Bayazid II and Süleyman the Magnificent, there is a special article about the salines of the Morea, in which the taxation on salt is combined indissolubly with the corresponding taxation on livestock in the area, stating explicitly in this way a basic use of salt as a essential in the feeding of the flocks. In the kanunname of Bayezid II we read: «One sheep per hundred sheep has been collected from those possessing sheep in the province of the Morea, and they gave one muzur of salt. The value of this muzur is ten akçe». Or in the kanunname of Süleyman the Magnificent «And from ancient times ten akçe per 100 sheep were collected for the regular grazing of sheep in the Morea, and ten akçe worth of salt was given to the master of the pasture land. At this juncture a noble, illustrious decree arrived from the Treshold of Felicity and it was established, according to the noble command, that it be ordered that five akçe be collected from every hundred sheep, and five akçe worth of salt be given from the salt works». In the kanunname of Süleyman it is stated that the salt producers should keep the sixth and the remainder should be handed over to the govern-

ment ; the law was categorically clear about the punishments that would be imposed on those who would attempt to cheat the state. This is not the moment for us to refer to the measurements and prices of salt that are mentioned. This kind of informations will be contained in the printed form of our paper.

If, however, the kanunnames give us our first information about salt production in the Peloponnese the same tax records are a real treasure-chest of information since they list specifically those persons involved in salt production by reason precisely of their tax exemptions. It is from research in the tax records of the Morea that were assembled during the first Ottoman occupation that we have compiled a corpus of information about the location of the salt production centers, about the number and ethnic origin of the salt workers and the nature of their special privileges, since as we have ascertained not all of them had the same taxation category. Some paid *ispence* and *haraç* and were exempt only from extraordinary levies and services, while some others did not even pay *ispence*. Certain annotations in the Morea tax registers are particularly enlightening; they reproduce firmans of the sultans that were issued specifically for this purpose, as for example the *hüküm* of Selim I regarding the saline of Koron, which refers to previous times. We read: «The aforementioned salines were the *mülks* of the infidels of the aforementioned villages after the conquest of this vilayet twenty-two persons were appointed to be salt-producers. These same individuals were to retain one fourth of the production and remainder which belonged to the state was an annual income in the order of six-thousand *aspers*. Since, however, the location of the saline was not very high, water from sea poured into the channels causing damage. This was the situation when some one of the twenty-two salt producers of the aforementioned village came (and reported): we are exempted from *ispence* and *avariz divaniye* taxes and we accept that we shall pay as *mukataa* for this saline 10,000 *akçe* annually, and moreover if the official who is commissioned to collect the public revenue should fail to appear we ourselves shall deliver these 10,000 *akçe* annually to the *emin* of the bakeries. So that the official who will come (for the collection of the tax) shall not do us any injustice, that which has been said herein shall be entered into the tax register». After the interval in the Venetian occupation (1685-1715), the Venetians displayed intense interest in the salines of Peloponnese, as is apparent from the official reports (*relatione*) of the Venetian *provveditore* published by Spyros

Lampros and can also be seen in the unpublished material in the Venetian Archives that Angeliki Panopoulou has presented and which deal with the salines and salt production in the Peloponnese during the 17th century. She has based her study on the letters of the provveditore generale Antonio Zeno (1690-94) and on the reports of Grimani (1698-1700), presenting at the same time the designs of the salines of Methoni and Koroni.

Our knowledge about salt in the Peloponnese during the second Ottoman occupation (1715-1821) is limited to the salines of Thermissia, in Argos. The mukataa of salt of Mora bears its name; the testimony of the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi is sufficient to permit us to follow the development of production of these salines. In the year 1720, to provide an example, the output of salt is declared to be 27,000 kile, of which 16,400 were sold bringing in an income of 5,466 guruh. In the same year to supply a means for comparison, the tax on silk (resm-i mizan) for the approximately 14,000 okkas which were produced came to 2,097 guruh. The inhabitants of five villages worked in the salines of Thermissia and were exempted from a number of taxes from 1733 until 1812, when this special taxation procedure was revoked.

Crete

Venice took advantage of the salt from Crete since it has lost Cyprus. Yolanda Triantaphylidou-Baladié reports that in 1581 on Crete there were 175 salines in the bay of Suda and 45 in Spinalonga, on the bay of Merambelo. Each saltwork required the services of at least -on an average- ten workers. The annual output was 110,000 muzurs from Suda and 70,000 muzurs from Spinalonga. The production was conveyed, for the most part to Venice. In 1602, 153,000 muzurs were loaded at Cretan ports to be shipped to Venice while 180,000 were left undisposed of due to a lack of means of transportation. Local consumption was estimated to require 100,000 muzurs per year. The salines were rented out to the inhabitants of the neighboring villages and naturally it was Venice that imposed the conditions for their exploitation. After the conquest of Candia by Ottomans in 1669 the Venetians until 1715 retained possession of three maritime fortresses Grambusa, Suda and Spinalonga, in order to protect their maritime commerce. Could it have been mere chance that near two of them, Suda and Spinalonga, were located the largest salines in Crete?

During the period of the Ottoman hegemony the exploitation of the salines continued. In the kanunname of 1650 census it was noted that the workers who were employed at the saltworks could keep as their own one sixth of the salt they had gathered and were obliged to hand over five-sixths to the state. The existence of this law attests the fact that the salines around Elunda as well as others in the vicinity of Suda that passed over to the Ottomans.

In the documents from court records (kadi sicilleri) published in Greek by Nikolaos Stavrinidis we found some informations only on the salines of Spinalonga. At the end of Ottoman-Venetian War in 1715 these salines were in poor condition. They continued to be operated by the Greek reaya of the villages Epano (Upper) Fourni, Kato (Sower) Fourni, Kasteli Fourni, just as in the time of Venetian rule. However the production had diminished to 30,000 muzurs. Even as early as 1656, that is before the fall of Herakleion the Christians reaya were already paying to the province of Rethymnon, which was under Ottoman occupation, a salt tax (tuz hakkı) of 44 aspers per house. This was intended to contribute to the salaries of the Jannisaries of Hanya. In Herakleion in 1671 commerce in salt was handled exclusively at the outlets of the disposal centers of the Janissaries who bought an okka salt for one and a half aspers and sold it for two aspers. In 1694 among the mukataas that were not collected owing to the hostilities between the Ottomans and the Venetians, 102,000 aspers are recorded as income from the saltworks near the fortress of Spinalonga. As has already been mentioned this has to do with the salt work of Elunda, which we know to have functioned until 1960, before the whole area was transformed into a tourist summer resort. In 1725 the output of the salines of Merambelo, that is in the area of Spinalonga passed over into the hands of the local beys, who retained the tax which ought to have been given to the Custom House at Candia, when the salt was transported by ship. A special order was passed, which required them to pay the customs tax. We can ferret out certain information from the rich material in the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, information in which the salines of Suda are frequently referred to as the salines of Chania and correspondingly those of Spinalonga as salines of Candia. In 1746 salt that reached Chania in out-size caiques from Arabistan was sold quite cheaply with the result that the income to the State Treasury was seriously diminished, since the local salt was left unsold. In 1796 a tax of 4 piastres was imposed on and an order was passed prohibiting the sale of imported salt, if the salt of the state had not been previously disposed of.

Thessalonike

The salines of Thessalonike are attested to from Byzantine times. An edict of Justinian II (Sept. 688) granted to the Church of Saint Demetrios, in gratitude for the saint's help in the wars with the Slavs, the revenues of a saline near Thessalonike. The saline is called "entirely free", that is, it paid no taxes to the state; the clergy were exempted from giving contributions from the saline to any military person. The origin of the name Solun= salt city, that the Slavs gave to Thessalonike must certainly be due to its rich salines. The Ottomans bought salt from Thessalonike even before its conquest (1430), at the time that the city was in the hands of the Venetians. In 1468-69 according the research of Halil Sahillioglu the income from three years' working of its salines amounted to 9,000,000 aspers, a fact that would indicate the considerable output of salt in Thessalonike. In 1472 and 1481 the sources refer to a certain Peloponessian George son of Palaiologue (Morali Yorgi bin Paleologo) tax farmer of salines of Thessalonike, who is undoubtedly an offspring of the Palaiologue family of Morea. H. Inalcik reports that even Demetrius Palaeologus, the last despot of the Morea, was involved in this business. According to an Ottoman register of tax-farms, "Kir Demetrius Tekfur" possessed the poll-tax and other state revenues of Aenos on the basis of a timar.

In the census of the city of Thessalonike for 1525 among the quarters (mahalle) there are also listed a group of 21 households that are described as "former workers on the salines". With the same descriptive title "cemaat-i tuzc_yan-i mensuh" there are also listed in the censuses of 1530 and 1568. In each case only their number differs. In the register TT 167 of the first half of the 16th century there are entries for two districts of salt-workers in Thessalonike:

1. Mahalle-i tuzciyan-i mensuh ki sâbıkda Gelemeriye tâbi-i Isbolos memlâhasında tuzculuk ederler. 5 hane, 5 mücerred, 14 bive.

2. Cemaat-i tuzciyan-i Isbolos, nefsi Selânikde mütemekkinler olub, memlâhâ-i mezbûrede edâ-i hizmet iderler, 35 nefera, 5 mücerred. Nefera 8. İşbu sekiz nefer zimmi-i mezburun Isbilos tuzcuları ile Isbilos memlâhasında tuzculuk işlerler. Amma ispencelerin ve sair rûsûmların edâ ederler. Hizmetleri mukabelesinde avarız'dan ve sair tekâlifdan muaflardır.

The annual income from the salines of Serres and Thessalonike which is recorded in the same register was 2,102,000 akçe. In the cen-

sus of 1568 it is reported that the income from the salines of Thessalonike alone 2,966,666 akçe, a really impressive sum for the period. The annual income from the salines of Thessalonike, which belonged to mukataa of Istanbul, continued at approximately the same level (2.700.000 akçe) in the middle of 18th century as well. The French consul Arasy in 1782 calculated the mukataa of its salt at 60,000 piastres. We shall bear in mind that in the registers of the 16th century there are listed in kaza of Thessalonike approximately 1,500 houses employed at the salines and having tax exemptions. Indirectly this would suggest that there was a very great salt production as well as many salines, which every effort should be made to locate. We should note that in Thessalonike there was not exclusive production of sea salt. From a published document of 1612 from the kadi sicilleri of Thessalonike we learn that the lake of Langada also produced salt.

In his study about the various tax categories of the population in the kaza of Thessalonike Vassilis Dimitriades refers to an entry of 1751-1752 (1164) which he found in the kadi sicilleri, in which the saltworkers are indicated separately as residents of the neighbouring villages and not as residents of the city. The nine villages of the salt-workers (Vasilika, Pisona, Mesimeri etc.) are located in the administrative district of Kalamaria (Gelemerye in Ottoman documents) and Pazarğiaqh, that is in Chalkidike. They paid in a "lump sum" the smallest one 520 guruh of these were paid by other groups. At the beginning of the 19th century, in 1807 the villages of the salt-workers had come to number 21, a fact which of itself proof of the intensification of salt production in the region. The inhabitants of these villages, both Christians and Moslems worked at the salines and were exempted from a series of taxes such as the ispence, salariye, services as ulak, etc, as they were also not required to provide biscuits (peksimed) for the army and their children were exempted from devishirme. In the material of the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi we have located a series of documents that attest Thessalonike's commerce in salt at the beginnings of the 20th century.

By now we must have exceeded our allotment of twenty minutes. At this point then we will end our paper dealing with salines in Greek regions during Ottoman times, well aware that most probably the density of the informations given has proved to be fatiguing. However, the prolixity of our paper is due to the need to demonstrate the wealth of materials in an entirely unexplored field. Without wishing to abuse your patience, permit us to point out some priorities in researching the topic we have touched upon in our paper.

The first task is to determine which were the salt producing areas of greater significance in Greek lands and to present their demographic and economic characteristics in 15th-19th centuries. The second is to study the privileges of the salt-workers. We believe that the type and number of privileges are inseparable bound to the level of the productivity of the salines where they work. This is an idea that deserves to be researched for all the salt producing regions of the Ottoman Empire. In setting those priorities we are not overlooking the fact that other topics must also be examined, such topics as the farming out the income from salt, the measurements prices and uses of the salt, the technology etc. This is virgin territory and whatever emerges will be useful and valuable.