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Concept on Albania and Albanian regions in the beginning of 19th and 20th century.

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Abstract

On the 19 century begins to take life science of Albanology which over time will draw the attention of foreign intellectual authors of the time. The unknowns of the Albanian people begin to come to light, although under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Travellers in Albanian areas as Pukevil, Ami BOUE, Martin Leak, Ibrahim Manzur Efendi, and the author of this century as Jean Claude Faverial brought attention to our history but also the most important aspects of life, culture, spiritual-material aspects of life socio-economic, spiritual and cultural. For the first time of the 19 century have a variety of definitions of the concept Albania and Albanian ethnic territories. Information on Albania and Albanians 19th century early 20th century based on the analysis of the observations and impressions of passengers Albanian territories and the writings of foreign authors who threw bases albanology. Writings devoted to Albania and Albanians century writers. And early 19th century. 20 are in the form of memories and rarely they are found in the form of facts or historical documents. Although such they provide a sufficient information for the perception of Albanians, they carry in itself subjective and uncertainties, but when analyzed and confronted with evidence from different authors find undeniable truths.

Keywords: Concept Albania; Impressions; Foreign authors

1. Introduction

1.1 Geographical Albania

French authors of this period try to define the term Albania in their historical works, as an ethnic, geographical and climate notion, in a particular case as a political and geo-political notion.

The territories where our people dwelt at this time were called Albanie which in Turkish it means Arnautlık, while by Albanians was called "Shqipëri" (Efendi I. M., 2003, p. 47) Ibrahim Effendis will also give a geographical definition. "On the Northern side, Albania borders with Montenegro, Bosnia and Serbia, and on the east with Macedonia. On the south, it borders with the district of Ioannina and Arta. On the west side, it borders with the Ionian and the Adriatic Sea.

On the south it lies between latitudes $42^{\circ} 20'$ to $39^{\circ} 12'$, and longitude $16^{\circ} 15'$, and on east of the Paris meridian, up to $18^{\circ} 25'$. “ (Efendi I. M., 2003, p. 48), this statement seems to be correct because such a geographical definition is stated also by the English traveler William Martin-Leak who cites “ Albania occupies almost the entire coastline on the eastern side of the Adriatic and Ionian Sea, included between latitudes of 39° and 43° . In its longitude does not exceed more than 100 miles, and in the southern areas, not more than 30 miles.

On the northern side, it is bordering Montenegro. Southern borders of Albania along the coast reach near Preveza, and Souli is its last province. “ (Leake, 1830, p. 146). Although, geographical concept of Albanian territories is not similar from one author to another, it has already established its core. While, at the end of 19th century and beginning of 20th century another author will define: “Albania borders with Montenegro and Austria on the north, with Serbia on the east and with Epirus of Greece on the south. Adriatic’s eastern water drenches Albanian coast in a length of more than 200 miles. However, on the southern and northern parts, Albania has got amazing internal waters, such as: Ambrakis Bay and Lake of Shkodra. “ (Williams X. , 2003, p. 10).

Albania borders with Macedonia on the east, it is limited from Macedonia by some high mountain ridges, which allow only four communication possibilities/ways in case of aggression or protection. These are: the upper valley of the Vardar and Black Drin, the crossing road from Monastery to Oher (Orchids) and that from Goritza to Castoria, and the road of Mecova. (Boue, 1840) Regarding the north-south position, Ami cites: “Albania is a country with longer than wider, is currently separated from Greece by a narrow route/corridor which goes through Makronoros Mountain and Arta’s Bay “ (Boue, 1840, p. 44).

In early thirties of 19th century, Albanian territories extended from Mount Parnas to Pinda and to the Bay of Preveza and Lamis; regions inhabited by Albanians and Vlachs. (Faveiral, 2004, p. 51)

Regarding geographical setting of Albanian territories, even Pukevil provides data, but unlike the above mentioned authors, he does not convey them directly to us, does not mention borders, but they materialize from the content of his works. Thus, considering cities, villages, towns or settlements of this country, Pukevil, in the chapter of his work entitled "Albania", provides various demographic, topographical, archaeological notes about Prevez, Filat, Parge, Igumenica, Joannina, Arta, Salagore, Trikalla, Vonice, Mount Souli, Kumanovo, Skopje, Tetovo, Prizren, Tivar, Ulcinj, (Pouqueville, 1829, p. 435) regions which currently do not belong to political Albania.

Foreign travelers who have visited Albanian territories have provided various definitions on its geographic growth during 19th and 20th century, and consider Albania and the aforementioned areas as part/territory of Ottoman Empire, although inhabited by Albanians. Regarding the geographic location of Albania within the Ottoman Empire, it is regarded as a territory situated closer to Christian Europe (Efendi I. M., 2003, p. 47), and this gives it a more exceptional position than that of the other provinces of the Empire.

The concept on Albanian lands varies from one author to the other. The area, in which Albanians lived, sometimes is reduced in size and sometimes expanded without giving a certain idea on these lands. We can notice this for the areas which are considered as peripheral ones. An obvious

example is given through the incorrect classification of Korçe as a Greek city founded in 1770 (Fleming, 2003, p. 54).

In order to provide an overview and understand the uncertainties on the Albanian lands, I refer to French Albanologist, Jacque Bourcart. At the beginning of 20th century, he considers Albania as part of the Dinarides, a region that extends from the north, including Istrien, Dalmatia, Herzegovina and Montenegro, while on the south includes Epirus and Western Greece. (Bourcart, 2004, p. 21)

This statement does not prevail/exist for the beginning of 20th century where the ethnic Albanian lands are reduce or minimized or lined out a lot especially on the north borders, but it stands/remains for the geographical and historical aspect of ancient Albanian territories.

The geographical and ethnic concept on Albanian lands is not static it varies in time and space, this mainly due to external factors which have affected the continuous reduction of these lands, due to the congestions of different populations and the successive conquests.

2. Geo-political Albania

The Albanian lands have not been seen from French travelers simply as a geographical notion, but because of their missions in these areas, they have even paid attention to the geo-political aspect, where the most considerate of them is probably Ami Bue.

Although Albanian areas have experienced many foreign rulers, they are considered as a well-protected territory from any place that can be entered; this is due to the conditions offered by nature and terrain. (Boue, 1840, p. 48)

Frenchman Ami Bue has been discreet and analytical in his notes, he emphasizes that “ well-fortified Albania will be too difficult to be attacked, as well as too easy to be defended, except from the sea, where defense in this area should be a naval force, or otherwise join Greece ... “ (Boue, 1840, p. 52).

Ami Bue offers a special vision regarding the military perspective and geo-political importance of the Albanian lands, he does not regard these areas as an entire body, but even divided into provinces or special divisions within Albania, where as its weakest part is "Middle Albania", and its weakness is due to the smooth and hilly terrain that characterizes it. While areas in the north; Mirdite's town and surroundings, or in the southern areas; Tomor and the ridge of Gramoz, and even in the south, in Epirus, mountains of Agrafes, Aspropotamos, Souli and Akroceraus, have such a great position that would enable the locals to be well- protected against the attacks and be superior than enemies. (Boue, 1840, p. 49).

At the end of 19th century and beginning of 20th century, it is remarkable because Albania was not only considered a geographical notion, but also important in geo-strategic aspect, and as an important connection and commercial port and bridging Europe and Orient. One of the French authors cites; “Albania is located in one of the most coveted geographical positions in Europe; it is the gateway of the Balkan trade and the unconstrained way to the Orient. “ (Williams, Shqiptaret, 2003, p. 11). The above mentioned explains somewhat the fact why during the 19th century, Albanian lands became a study intend and travelling of foreign personalities, expressing progressively the Albanian world and reality of the time.

Regarding the political importance that Albania and Albanians have in the surroundings of the Ottoman Empire, we can say confidently that it constitutes a very important unit, and a factor of stability or barometer of political changes within this empire, where Bue will cite ; “ Albanians are the nursery of the Turks satellites. “ (Boue, 1840, p. 120).

Albanian areas will achieve a special importance by the end of the 18th century and beginning of 19th century; the time of wars ,revolutions and major alliances in Europe, especially southern areas being under the governance of Ioannina Patriarchy by Ali Pasha. During these years of political turmoil Albanian feudal rulers, where the most prominent, Ali Pasha, will create important military-political alliances of the time with European powers, such as: England and France who send their representatives to this Pasha, and also alliance with Russia, changed these regions, Albanians and their rulers into quite important factors. Ali Pasha demanded guarantees to detach from the Sublime Porte, and asked the European Powers to expand their areas of influence in the Balkans and in the territories ruled by the Sublime Porte. (Efendi I. M., 2003, pp. 73-116).

The political significance that the Albanian lands achieved during this periods, and particularly those ruled by Ali Pasha, are highlighted not only by the French travelers but also by English ones, such as: Martin Lik who writes that in Ali Pasha’s court live residents from Britain, France and Russia. He maintains independent correspondence with these Powers, and had drawn their attention for a long time, and had made Southern Albania and himself a ruler full of political importance in Europe. (Williams, Shqiptaret, 2003, p. 220).

It is worth mentioning the fact that by the end of 18th century and the beginning of 19th century, French authors highlight that the administration of the Albanian territories is based on building up construct massive Patriarchies, such as; the Bushatllinj, Shkoder as the center, and the Patriarchy of Ioannina headed by Ali Pasha, who are considered masters of the Albanian territories who acted and ruled within their Patriarchies, independent from Istanbul. (Efendi I. M., 2003, p. 49)

3. Albania, Ethnic Concept and Population.

Once we outlined Albania with its latitude meaning physical concept, and emphasized its geo-strategic importance, it is worth of paying attention to the assessments s that French authors and travelers, make for the parts or regions of the Albanian territories, dividing them in regions, not only in an administrative aspect, but also in the cultural and psychological particularities that their people represent. We would notice various definitions on Albanian lands as part of the Albania concept, some of them are transmitted earlier than 19th century. These administrative divisions and also provincial divisions unfold the natural territorial boundaries, such as, rivers or mountain ridges, and affirm a lot the relation of Albanian provinces among them.

At the end of the 18th and beginning of 19th century, we will encounter a conception about Albanian lands. It appears to be divided into two or three large blocks: "Upper Albania" and "Lower Albania," (Faveirial, 2004, pp. 391-438) but we will also meet even identifications, such as: Northern Albania, Eastern Albania and Southern Albania. A mere example of this definition is provided by Faveirial in his work, where he cites: “ Northern Albania, being loyal to the Sultan advances against Southern Albania. “ (Faveirial, 2004, p. 420).

We Upper and Middle Albania will be integrated some cities which are considered Albanian regarding their population, they are: Durres, Shkoder, Prizren, Gjakove, Diber, Korca, Berat, Vlore, Gjirokaser, Filat, Margarit and Prevez. It is clearly noted that as integral part of Albania are territories, which nowadays are not part of the political-administrative Albania. (Faveirial, 2004, p. 452).

This identification concept of Albanian territories is not the only one and sporadic, but also another well-known travelers that supports the division of Albania into two parts. That is Pukevil who divides Albania into Upper and Lower one. The author includes Joannina in the Lower Albania (as the center, 30 thousand Albanians), Epirus, where the majority of the territories are under the rule of Ali Pasha, while as the capital of Upper Albania allocates Shkoder. Pukevil is not able to indicate the population ratio with different nationalities in Epirus, which is inhabited by Albanians, Greeks and Bulgarians, the latter were brought by Ali Pasha in Ioannina surrounding areas, and they were predetermined to work in his land. What is striking is that the author rightly states that the dominant Albanian population. Pukevil considers Epirus part of Albania, which is inhabited by Albanians. But he adds that in ancient times it belonged to ancient Helen civilization (Greeks), and this, he was based on the history of ancient civilizations. (Pouqueville, 1829, pp. 185-186) .

The estimation of Pukevil that Epirus belonged to Helen civilization in ancient times is subjective and groundless. This is completely revealed by the author's own citation; “ Epirus lands can not belong to other people except the Greek one “ (Pouqueville, 1829, p. 172). Pukevil compared to Faverial, will be more accurate about the definition of Lower Albania. Even Ibrahim Effendis will have the same approach as Pukevil regarding Albania and Epirus, he traveled these places and even writes: “from the most southern part of Albania, which is Epirus. ‘ (Efendi I. M., 2003, p. 49).

Considering the various definitions about Albanian territories, it will be again Pukevil who broadens the scope and cites: “Dalmatic’s Albania, above Drin river, Illyricum in the north-east of the Black Drin which includes Kosovo, Prizren, Monastery and Albania, the lower part of Drin River “ (Pouqueville, 1829, p. 153). These definitions clearly signify a poor recognition of the Albanian territorial demarcation. This occurs because Pukevil addresses even the records/wardrobe of ancient times, and Illyrian term, Dalmatic Albania emerges from there. So, in Illyricum is including Vilayet of Kosovo and Monastery Albania, in Upper Albania is the Vilayet of Shkoder, and the regions above Drin river, in Lower Albania it is include the Vilayet of Ioannina and Epirus, while the western and central part is without a strong definition naming Albania. It is important even the fact that Pukevil often includes even the above concepts in the term Albania. He includes all the areas from Bar, which he labels it “ the last region of Turkish Albania” (Pouqueville, 1829, p. 190), on the North, the coastline up to Prevez and Art in South, and the Vilayet of Kosovo, which borders with Serbia on the North. The author states that: “Prizren Mountain serves as a natural border between Serbia and Illyria “ (Pouqueville, 1829, p. 139). He also includes the Vilayet of Monastir and Ioannina in Albania.

In the above description of Pukevil, it is outlined the idea of dividing Albania in its four divisions which are: 1. Dalmatic, 2. Illyrian, 3. Epirus, 4. Central Albania.

In these divisions, it is well-expressed the original concept that he has created regarding the Albanian lands and it is also a political and historical conception of the division of these areas.

Regarding the confusion of Pukevil and of other French authors, I think it is undoubtedly affected by administrative divisions of Sublime Porte which has divided the Albanian regions in Sanjaks, including also regions of different ethnicities, such as Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian, and it has also had a negative impact the regional divisions and differences. Regional divisions and differences make Pukevil uncertain about the population of these areas, which affects the tribal-based grouping, the chimney of Albanian villages, such a phenomenon which you especially observe among Suli or northern highland population. (Pouqueville, 1829, p. 181).

Based on the ethnic structure, Pukevil has called these territories Albanian and it should be mentioned that in this case, he has been impartial. It is obvious that according to Pukevil classification of these territories as Albanian, it is not encountered any difficulty about these territories that today are declared as the ethnic Albanian body, and concerning those areas where the population is a mixture of other ethnicities, such as Greek, Bulgarian, Serb and Montenegrin, this issue is complicated.

A quite significant, specific and historically obvious conception, was presented by Ami Bue. He cites that "From the time of King Gent and Roman rule, Albania was divided into the northern and the southern part, which later will build Epirus, and later on another division was created under Justinian I, Prevalitania. Ancient Greek colonies: Dyrrah and Apollonia, and commonly many coastal places had a particular civilization, while Shqipet (Schkipes) were located in the mountains, where they were strengthened as Basques in Pyrenees, who (Shqipet) suffered less than their lowland and coastal neighbors by the barbarian invasions " (Boue, 1840, p. 412).

Concerning the number of population living in Albanian lands, there are only some records, but George Williams is the one who somehow enriched this figure. He states that by the end of the 19th century, the Albanian region considered "Epirus, there were 600 thousand people living in misery." (Williams, Shqiptaret, 2003, p. 12) The most remarkable data were provided about regional and cultural sharing of Albanian regions. One of the most accurate definitions is that of Ibrahim Mansur Effendis who cites: " Albanian nation is divided into four different main tribes where each of them which is divided in "fare" an Arabic word which means section, subdivision: Gheg living in the most northern part of Albania, in the districts of Shkoder, Durres, Elbasan, Tirane, Kruje, Diber ..., and Tosk, whose region is composed of provinces of Mallakaster, Berat, Mosakise (Myzeqe), Permet, Tepelene, Gjirokaster and Këlcyre –placed in the Central Albania, south of Gheg region. This part of the country is called Tosk ... Labs live in the territories called Laberia, which are located in a completely mountainous land between Tosk region, which borders it from the north to the east ... Chams occupy the southern and southwestern part of Albania and this inhabited land is called Chameria. The region that is bordered by Laberia on the north and northwestern, and on the east from the Ioannina region, on the south from that of Arte and on the west by the sea, is the province of Souliote (Souli), whose residents were called Suliots, all Christians, not Greek but Albanians from the language, customs and origin" (Efendi I. M., 2003, pp. 52-58).

Thus, Ibrahim Mansur Effendis is one of the first French authors who, after presenting the essential division in Gheg and Tosk, he provides an additional subdivision, the naming of the inhabitants according to the regions, such as: Gheg, Tosk, Lab, Cham, Suliot.

4. Conclusions

Among the residents who lived and developed in different Albanian territories, it is noticed a primary, ancient, geographical, anthropological and linguistic unity, which can be called the Illyrian provinces. Successive invasions minimized this region up to Albania today (the beginning of the 20th century), which was most significant area. Ever since the most ancient times, the Albanians have fought against all invaders, to preserve their political independence, language, and their habits and customs. (Bourcart, 2004, p. 11)

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