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OTTOMAN POPULATION RECORDS AND THE CENSUS OF 1881/82-1893

I. INTRODUCTION

Population movements have always played a dynamic role in the transformation of human society throughout history. Indeed, there is not a single phase of history anywhere in the world which has not been related in some way to low or high rates of birth and mortality, to migration and settlement and to their social, cultural, economic, and political effects. The history of the Middle East supplies excellent examples to support this contention. The Muslim calendar begins with an act of migration, that is the *hejira* of A.D. 622. Migrants going from the countryside to urban centers or fleeing from areas hostile to Islam have always exerted a crucial influence upon the social and political destiny of Muslim countries. The refugees from Spain to North Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the forced migration of Muslims from Russia (the Caucasus and Crimea) in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, the shift of population in India, Pakistan, and Palestine in the 1940s, to cite just a few examples, have been major factors accounting, at least in part, for the social transformation of the Muslim world in general, and of the Middle East in particular.

The sociopolitical and economic history of the Middle East in the nineteenth century was in large measure the consequence of major population movements which produced increased social mobility, changed rates of birth and mortality, intensified rural migration, and generated a variety of related changes. Yet, despite their obvious importance, population movements in the Middle East have not been studied yet within a broad historical and conceptual framework. The few existing studies deal essentially with isolated demographic problems ignoring conveniently their broader historical, political, and regional dimensions. Few scholars nowadays seem to have the time and patience to pore over hundreds of documents for months on end in dusty archives to extract information that can be condensed in a few pages and may remain long unnoticed or unappreciated. It is understandable, therefore, that considerable ingenuity and imagination have been invested in devising 'concepts', 'theories', and 'models' to explain in a few pages the entire history and transformation of a society. In some cases these 'theorists' have made sweeping false assertions while interpreting certain Middle East situations based on preconceived Western concepts or on scattered impres-

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sions regardless of limitations imposed by culture, historical experience, and goals on the range of their applicability. Yet, paradoxical as it may sound, a major shortcoming of Middle East social studies in general and of population studies in particular derives from the lack of concepts and theories capable of expressing the social and historical experience of the Middle East within its own value system and patterns of change and acculturation. One should add immediately that the development of such concepts and theories depends first on the accumulation of suitable empirical data. Anyone attempting to study population problems in the Middle East, especially with relation to more precise topics such as the rate of fertility, mortality, or family size in a given period of history or region, is faced with insufficient data on the size of population, and knowledge about procedures for registering births and deaths. Indeed, the studies on the history of population in the Middle East, besides failing to apply methods and techniques adapted to its own sociocultural conditions, suffer also from lack of information on the size of its population, census, and population registration methods. The archives in the area, especially those in Istanbul and Ankara, contain a large body of materials dealing with the size of the population and its registration systems. But little, if any, of this material has been sorted out and used to study specific demographic problems.¹ Therefore, the first task facing the scholars interested in the social history and the transformation of the Middle East, southeast Europe, and North Africa is to assemble, systematize, and analyze the population data available in the Turkish archives and other places and to study also the procedures used in gathering these data. This is particularly true for the nineteenth century when population movements influenced more than ever the social and political transformation of the Ottoman state, that is, of the Middle East and the Balkans, and knowledge about the size of its population became a vital administrative necessity for the government.

There is no dearth of writings concerning the population of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, but most of these are ethnographic works. It

¹ There are exceptions to this statement. In addition to O. L. Barkan's works mentioned later, see M. A. Cook, Population Pressure in Rural Anatolia: 1450-1600 (London, 1971); Ronald J. Jennings, 'Urban Population in Anatolia in the Sixteenth Century: A Study of Kayseri, Karaman, Amasya, Trabzon, and Erzurum', International Journal of Middle East Studies, 7, 1 (Jan. 1976), 21-57; Wolf-Dieter Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century (Erlanger 1977). A survey of the bibliography on Ottoman population in the nineteenth century is in Engin Akarli, 'The Ottoman Population in the Nineteenth Century', M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin (Madison, 1970). See also Marc Pinson, 'Demographic Warfare: An Aspect of Ottoman and Russian Policy, 1854-1866', Ph.D. diss. (Harvard, 1970). Source material concerning population figures in the nineteenth century can be found in special statistics published by the Ottoman government in its Yearbooks, Devleti Aliye Salnameleri, or Salname for short, 68 vols., 1847-1918. For further bibliographical information see Kemal H. Karpat, The Gecekondu, Rural Migration and Urbanization (New York, 1976), and idem, 'Ottoman Immigration Policies and Settlement in Palestine', Settler Regimes in Africa and the Arab World, I. Abu-Lughod and B. Abu-Laban, eds. (Wilmette, Ill., 1974), pp. 57–72. For a general survey of current population studies, see Georges Sabagh, 'The Demography of the Middle East', Middle East Studies Association Bulletin 4, 2 (15 May, 1970), 1-19.

is true that these are, in a way, indispensable to any study dealing with the population of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth century. The value of most of them, however, is undermined by at least three shortcomings. First, only a few of these studies are based on reliable statistical information stemming from actual counts of population. Second, they often were undertaken by Western observers to advocate the case of certain ethnic or religious groups and, besides demonstrating an appalling lack of information on practically every aspect of Muslim life, they reflected the political biases of the scholars involved or of their informants. Third, most of them dealt with the European part of the Ottoman state and often left Anatolia and the Arab-speaking countries unaccounted for. In fact, after most of the Balkans became independent in 1878, thus achieving the hidden purpose behind the manipulation of some population statistics, the number of studies on the Ottoman population dropped spectacularly.

The best examples illustrating the above points are found in the monumental five-volume bibliographical work by Nicholas V. Michoff.² The essence of this work is in the first volume. The rest comprise additional titles omitted in the first. The fifth and last volume deals with Russian works dedicated to population problems in the Ottoman state. Michoff's study was undertaken in part to justify the Bulgarian claims to nationhood and, indirectly, to advance the Bulgarian claims to Macedonia, and to refute the Greek and Serbian efforts to regard the Bulgarians as part of their own groups. Though a permanent historical source and a monument to Michoff's dedication to industrious scholarship, the work has basic weaknesses. The first four volumes include the titles of 3,050 books and articles together with extracts containing statistics and information on Bulgarian history and society. These titles include 1,126 citations from the German, 1,123 from French, 731 from English, 63 from Italian, and the rest from other European languages, but absolutely none from Turkish. The work includes practically no direct quotations from the official Ottoman censuses, except a reference to Salahaddin Bey's figures, although Michoff refers to writings and figures given by Western authors who used Ottoman statistics, such as David Urquhart, A. Ubicini, and A. Boué, and to statisticians and demographers such as E. G. Ravenstein and H. Kutschera. It is interesting to note that Michoff finds the scarcity of official censuses in the Ottoman state a normal occurrence since even Europe itself did not begin to conduct regular and systematic censuses until early in the nineteenth century. Michoff notes that many of the authors he cited estimated the Ottoman population according to their own subjective judgements or false information supplied by natives. As an example, Michoff cites the fact that travelers estimated the total number of Bulgarians in 1800-78 as varying between 500,000 and 8 million people. A similar misrepresentation had been noted earlier by W. Eton who dismissed the claim by the Greeks that they numbered 8 million people at the

² Nicholas (Nicolas) V. Michoff (Mikhov), Naseleniento na Turtsiia i Bulgarii, prez XVIII-XIX, La Population de la Turquie et de la Bulgarie au XVIII^e et au XIX^e siècles, 5 vols. (Sofia, 1915, 1924, 1923, 1935, 1968).

end of the eighteenth century.³ Many of these inflated figures were put out in order to back the claims of these ethnic groups to nationhood. V. Teplov, for instance, who undertook a study of the Balkan population under the auspices of the Russian government, used in addition to the *Salnames* issued by the Ottoman government, information supplied by churches and native informants. On the basis of such materials, he concluded arbitrarily that a Muslim family had 5 members while the non-Muslim family had 6–9.37 members.⁴ The fallacy of these estimates is clearly shown in an actual count of family members undertaken by W. L. Stoney in the Philippopoli (Plovdiv) area of Bulgaria in 1877. To answer the request of some Englishmen demanding accurate information on family size in Bulgaria, Stoney, a British consular official, surveyed 50,622 people or 10,110 families, in 55 villages having a predominantly Bulgarian population and arrived at the conclusion that each had an average of 5,007 members.⁵

In view of the questionable statistical bases of these ethnographic studies it is absolutely necessary to go to the basic sources on the Ottoman population in the nineteenth century. The Salnames contained official population figures, but these derived from more complete census figures which were seldom made fully public. These Ottoman censuses provide by far the most reliable figures available concerning the population of the Middle East and the Balkans in the nineteenth century. There is no question that they had shortcomings. The first censuses were based on counts of individual hanes or families which in a number of cases were households composed of several nuclear families. At times, only the taxable males or those able to perform military service were included in censuses. Some of the early counts, especially of non-Muslims, were taken from information of varying accuracy supplied by communal heads or local officials. Yet, despite all these shortcomings, the official Ottoman censuses still supply useful data because their margin of error was far less than the figures given by observers, travellers, and biased informants, as shown by various comparative tables. There are several arguments that sustain the value of these censuses. As indicated later, they had to be accurate and complete since they provided the only factual basis available to the government for levying taxes and conscripting men into the army. The government itself constantly tried to improve its census results by introducing new methods, seeking the advice of outside experts, and using European models.

The purpose of the present article, part of an extensive research project on Ottoman population movements and their sociopolitical effects, is to study briefly the Ottoman census, the evolution of its methods, and the establishment of a permanent registration system, and to put forth the most reliable results of all this effort: statistical tables of the Ottoman population in 1893. These tables are based on a census which began in 1881/82, and include extensive quantitative

³ W. Eton, A Survey of the Turkish Empire (London, 1799). For another effort to show the Armenian Catholics as more numerous than their actual number, see n. 49.

⁴ V. Teplov, Materialy Dlya Statistikii Bolgarii, Trakii i Makedonii (St. Petersburg, 1877).

⁵ Great Britain, House of Comn. ms, Accounts and Papers, vol. 92 (1877), p. 14.

information concerning the population of the Balkans, Anatolia, the Middle East, and, somewhat less, North Africa. The value of this census becomes selfevident when its figures are contrasted and compared with the random estimates and the plain guessing that formed the basis of most studies made on the Ottoman population in the nineteenth century.

II. PLACE AND FUNCTION OF CENSUSES AND POPULATION REGISTERS IN THE MODERNIZATION OF THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT

Population censuses, land surveys, and eventually the permanent population register system were of vital importance for the Ottoman government in the nineteenth century. Centralization forced it to assume new administrative responsibilities which depended on an accurate knowledge of the empire's human and financial resources. Indeed, the recruitment of a modern army and its organization into active and reserve units relied on accurate information concerning the number and age of the male population. The conscription system introduced by Mahmut II in 1838 for Muslims, and then the general conscription introduced in 1855 but never applied to Christians, and finally the division of the male Muslim population into four service groups could have been carried out only if assisted by a sound registration system.

Muslim males were divided into four age groups, and their military obligations were defined accordingly. The first was the *muazzaf*, or the active duty group, whose obligations began at the age of twenty and lasted for four years; the second was the *ihtiyat*, or active reserve group, under duty for two years; the third was the *redif*, or inactive reserve group, which was under obligation to serve for fourteen years; and the fourth was the *mustahfiz*, or territorial or local militia group, kept for four years.⁶ A male Muslim thus was under some sort of military obligation for twenty-four years. It is quite understandable, therefore, that the military was the first to show keen interest in population records and to put major pressure on the sultan and the government to undertake censuses and establish a regular population registration system. In fact, army officers took active roles in the Ottoman censuses and kept their own registers for the Muslims and cooperated closely with civilian population officials throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The importance of conducting new population censuses and establishing a modern register stemmed also from the need to find new sources of revenue to finance the modern army and a variety of new administrative functions assumed by the government. This was particularly true in the case of the non-Muslims who paid the *jizye* (head tax) which was converted in 1857 into the *bedelat-t* askeriye (tax instead of military service). Many non-Muslim communities used old records to show their numbers as low as possible so as to pay the least pos-

⁶ The service duration of the last two categories was seven and eight years respectively when the system was first introduced in 1848. See Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. II (New York, 1977), p. 100.

sible tax. The government, therefore, became keenly interested in updating its records of the non-Muslim population by using its own personnel rather than relying on the figures given by communal heads.⁷ This issue acquired special urgency after a series of old taxes were abolished by Mahmut II and the tax revenues showed a sharp drop.

The knowledge of the size and change in the composition of the population became important also for administrative reasons, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, as roads, railways, bridges, irrigation schemes, and a variety of professional schools were planned in accordance with population density.

The growing importance attached to accurate population censuses and statistics comes clearly out of a report by the Şuray-1 Devlet (Council of State) concerning the census of 1881/82.⁸ The Council stated:

It is a duty to mention before everything else that the interest of a government in compilation of systematic population statistics does not stem solely from military considerations. To know the exact number of its own population is a great achievement in matters of order and regularity for a government interested in law, property safeguards, financial stability, and municipal order and security. The European States attach great and continuous care to the collection and distribution of information on the [entire] population. It is imperative, urgent, and essential for us to accomplish this important task [census and registration] in a perfect fashion.⁹

This keen interest of the Ottoman government in the adoption of modern statistical methods was shown also during a reception given for the American ambassador in 1886, when he spoke about a recently concluded census in the United States and was asked for assistance.¹⁰

⁷ These communities often paid less than their number would warrant. The number of non-Muslims once established remained unchanged for long periods for lack of proper registers to follow population changes. For instance, Rev. William Jowett mentions the fact that the population of Mount Athos consisted of about 6,000 people but 'they pay to the Turks as for three thousands' (Richard Clogg, 'Two Accounts of the Academy of Ayvalek [Kydonies] in 1818–1919', *Revue des etudes sud-est européennes*, 10, 4 [1972], 652).

⁸ The correspondence referred to in this article took place between the Mabeyni Humayun (Secretariat of the Imperial Palace) and the Sadaret, the Premier's office, or Porte. Reports and regulations on population were issued by the Şuray-1 Devlet, the Council of State, either through its Tanzimat Bureau or its General Council (Şuray-1 Devlet Umumi Heyeti). The references to correspondence are henceforth shortened as M to S or vice versa, that is, from the Palace to the Prime Minister (Mabeyni Humayun'dan Sadarete), followed by the date of communication, the archival reference, such as Başve-kālet Arşivi (BA), and the latter's respective section and number. Although most of the documents used in this study have both the *hijri* (H) and *mali* or *rumi* (R) years (about one or two years difference between them) we shall give only the *hijri* data followed by the *miladi*, or solar calendar date (A.D.).

9 Report of Şuray-1 Devlet, Tanzimat Dairesi, No. 438, 21 Cemaziyulevvel 1248 (21 April 1881), BA, Irade, Şuray-1 Devlet, 3148.

¹⁰ During the reception, Ambassador S. S. Cox, who replaced General Lewis Wallace, the author of *Ben Hur*, mentioned that the United States had compiled new population statistics which were of great use to his country and suggested that such statistics would be useful also to the Ottoman government. He was told that an actual census (the one

III. THE OTTOMAN CENSUSES AND POPULATION ADMINISTRATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The topic of this study is the census of 1881/82–1893. Since this census and the population registration system developed at this date represent the culmination of an evolutionary process, it is necessary to trace their development from the beginning. Census taking was a well-established Ottoman tradition. The early Ottoman governments took censuses and conducted property surveys after each new territory was conquered, and repeated the process regularly at thirty-year intervals.¹¹ This tradition was apparently abandoned in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although there is some evidence to the contrary.¹² Yet it is basic to remember that until the nineteenth century the Ottoman

under discussion in this article) was being conducted. The sultan asked the ambassador to send him a statistical review found in the American Embassy. Eventually, the ambassador sent with the interpreter of the Embassy two volumes of the review for translation into Turkish. The sultan told the ambassador that he was very interested in such works and pointed out that it was his high hope to compile a complete and systematic statistical record of the entire population in his realm and that he had issued an order to this effect (M to S, Letter by the sultan's private secretary, Sureyya, of 21 Cemaziyulevvel 1303 (Feb. 25, 1886), BA, Irade, Dahiliye, 77419).

All this is confirmed by the American Ambassador, Samuel S. Cox, who, as the Chairman of the Census Committee, was instrumental in passing the census legislation in the U.S. Congress. In his memoirs he writes: 'In some meetings which I had with the Sultan, and in reply to his curiosity as to the miraculous growth of our own land in population and resources, I told him that the only way in which he could possibly understand our advancement would be to take the salient points out of our Census reports, and especially the Tenth Census (1880), have them suitably translated, and apply them to his own land. He would thus see what an advertisement a good census would be of the vast resources of his own empire.'

According to Cox the sultan was presented later with census data and concluded that 'with such data for administrative policies we [Americans] could not be other than prosperous'. Cox continues: 'The Sultan with intelligent grasp, comprehends their [census data] utility, and the need of their application to his own country. Then he reminds me of our conversation about a census for his own country, and said that he had directed his Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, to organize a commission to begin the work. He was anxious as to its costs... He asked me if I would aid it by my advice, when the commission was formed. To which I responded that, consistent with my duties to my country and health, I would do so, if the President did not object. The law, the instructions to superintendents, enumerators, and blanks for returns, and the *modus operandi* of special experts, were fully detailed by the printed papers in the envelopes which were in the box. These envelopes he sealed with his own hand, and gave them direction at once. So that probably Turkey may, if peace prevail, have a census of her own' (S. S. Cox, *Diversions of a Diplomat in Turkey* [New York, 1887], pp. 37, 44).

¹¹ The Ottoman censuses of population and surveys of the land in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are known from O. L. Barkan's pioneering works: 'Tarihi Demografi Araştırmaları ve Osmanlı Tarihi', *Tarih Mecmuası*, 10 (1953); 'Essai sur les données statistiques des registres de recensement dans l'Empire Ottoman au XV^e et XVI^e siècles', *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, I, I (Aug. 1957), 9–21; and 'Research on the Ottoman Fiscal Surveys', in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, M. A. Cook, ed. (London, 1970), pp. 163–171. See also Leila Erder, 'The Measurement of Preindustrial Population Changes: The Ottoman Empire from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 11 (3 Oct. 1975), 284–301.

12 I believe that further research in the Ottoman archives may yield substantial infor-

government never developed a regular population registration system to record births, deaths, and migrations, as was done in some parish registers in Western Europe and England. The birth, death, and marriage registers supposedly kept by some Ottoman non-Muslim communities, to my knowledge, have never been unearthed.

The first Ottoman government census in the nineteenth century took place in 1831-38 but it covered only certain parts of the empire and was based on a count of households, not individuals.¹³ At this time, individuals were given a mürür tezkeresi (travel certificate) in order to prevent mass migration and to keep track of substantial increases which were taking place in the population. After the proclamation of the Tanzimat Edict in 1839, a second, but partial, census was conducted in 1844, despite considerable popular opposition, in an effort to provide statistical information on population, land, and revenue as a basis for the forthcoming reforms.¹⁴ This census has not been published in its entirety, but much of it is known in piecemeal form from the works of A. Ubicini and Eugene Boré who, while questioning its total accuracy, were convinced that its figures were essentially correct but made their own adjustments of the final results.¹⁵ It is important to note that Ubicini, Urquhart, Boré, and other European observers who knew the language and were familiar with conditions in the Ottoman Empire and its bureaucracy accepted as reliable the figures given by the Ottoman officials. Actually, the census that was started in 1844 continued well beyond this date as the government tried also to count the nomadic tribes, as indicated by the appointment of census officials in the vilayets of Aydın and Mentese, in 1851,16 and by some other efforts to expand further the census taken in Cyprus in 1857.17

mation on population figures, even for the later centuries. The existing records on taxation and the distribution of *miri* (state) land to cultivators could yield excellent figures on the Ottoman population in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. For instance, the *yoklamas*, censuses of the timars in 1596, 1606, 1672, 1691, 1694, 1698, and 1715 indicate that the tradition was not abandoned altogether. These surveys show a continuous preoccupation with the size of cultivable lands, at least with those given as fiefs to the *sipahis*, and with their revenue. See V. P. Mutafcieva-Str. Dimitrov, Sur l'état du systeme des timars des XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles (Sofia, 1968).

¹³ Enver Ziya Karal, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı, 1831 (Ankara, 1943).

¹⁴ 'Traduction d'un memorandum de la Sublime-Porte, adressé aux missions étrangères à Constantinople, et relatif au recensement général decrété par S. Hautesse', *Le Moniteur Universel*, 248 (4 Sept. 1844).

¹⁵ A. Ubicini, Lettres sur la Turquie (Paris, 1853). Eugene Boré, Almanach de l'Empire ottoman pour l'année 1849 et 1850 (Constantinople, 1849–1850).

¹⁶ The census of the nomadic tribes in these two provinces was carried out by army officers belonging to the units stationed in the area (S to M, Letter of 7 Sefer 1268 [2 Dec. 1851], BA, Irade, Dahiliye, 14855). See also F. Kanitz, Donau-Bulgarien und der Balkan, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1875); idem, La Bulgarie danubienne et le Balkan: Etudes de voyages, 1860–1880 (Paris, 1882).

¹⁷ It appears from official correspondence that the census of the Muslim population in Cyprus was concluded by 1861, and that a census of the non-Muslim population was ordered in 1862, with the purpose of reforming the tax system. The census of the non-Muslims in Cyprus was carried out by four teams, each consisting of one Muslim and one

The next Ottoman census, decreed by Mithat Paşa, and carried out between 1866 and 1873, provides an even better insight into the evolution of the Ottoman censuses. It was taken only for the Danube province, which comprised most of Bulgaria of today, and part Iraq, and was not published in its entirety, although the Salnames (yearbooks issued by the government for the entire realm beginning in 1846, and sporadically for various vilayets) published most of its contents. The census was taken by using multiple registers which were eventually reduced to a single one. Officials went from house to house to note the number of people in a household, their age, marital status, occupation, and real estate properties.18 Special lists indicated the number of household heads together with their real estate wealth and the rent derived from it, their occupation, and income. All these findings were summarized in a fourth category of lists which indicated the actual number of the taxable population and its ethnic composition, the number of dwellings, the total income of the population, the total value of real estate, and the tax collected.19 The information in this census material is so ample and unique as to make it a permanent source of information for studying the social and demographic history of the European possessions of the Ottoman state. Professor N. Todorov, a member of the Bulgarian Academy, who was the first to use, in detail, this census material in conducting his study of the Balkan towns and their social structure, has acknowledged explicitly their value and reliability.²⁰

One of the purposes of the census of 1866 was to issue to all Ottoman subjects a *tezkere-i osmaniye*, or Ottoman identity card, and then to use it to register changes in the individual's status. Preparations were made to print and distribute 5 million cards in the Tuna (Danube) vilayet and, in anticipation of a countrywide census, another 15 million for the rest of the realm.²¹

Concomitant with this interest in population matters, the government appointed after 1839: *nüfus nazırıs* (inspector-ministers of population) in the eyalets (provinces), *nüfus memurs* (population officials) in sanjaks and kazas, and mukayyids (registrars) to record births and deaths and to periodically compile

Christian official plus a secretary. It was expected that the census of the non-Muslims living in villages and towns would take 4-5 months. The Porte debated at length whether the expenses of the census should be covered from the general treasury or from a levy of a tax of one *kurus* on each Muslim and non-Muslim or deducted from the annual tax collected from Cyprus (S to M, correspondence of 28 Sefer 1279 [25 Aug. 1862], BA, Irade, Meclis-i Vala, 21366).

¹⁸ This material, under the serial number PC 79/8, is found in the oriental section of the National Library of Bulgaria in Sofia. For further details see Nicola(i) Todorov, 'The Balkan Town in the Second Half of the 19th Century', *Etudes Balkaniques*, 2 (1969), 31-50.

19 Ibid., n. 3.

²⁰ N. Todorov, *Balkanskiat Grad XV-XIX-vek* (Balkan Towns in the XV-XIX Centuries) (Sofia, 1972). An English translation of this book is to be published by University of Washington Press, Seattle.

²¹ The *tezkeres* for the Tuna/Danube province were to be printed by Boyacioğlu Agop at a cost of 1,250,000 *kurus*. Actually, the printing of various forms associated with the census and population registration provided good financial stimulus for the burgeoning printing business in the Ottoman Empire. See S to M, communication of 9 Rebiulahir 1282 (I Sept. 1865) BA, Irade, Meclis-i Vala, 24167.

cedvels (lists) indicating the total number of people in each district. These officials were attached to the Ceride-i Nüfus Nezareti (Ministry of Population Registers) in the capital.²² Owing to a variety of internal causes, this ministry was abolished soon afterward and the provincial population offices were placed under the Tahiri Emlāk Idaresi (Office of Property Surveys) and then, for a short period, under the Military Affairs Office. During this period, the maintenance of the registers deteriorated until a new interest in population censuses began to emerge in the late 1860s.²³ After the Suray-1 Devlet (Council of State) was established in 1867, it assumed jurisdiction on all population matters. In 1874, the Council introduced a series of measures for taking a census and establishing a registration system. In 1881/82 it secured the establishment of a General Population Administration (Nüfus-u Umumi Idaresi) attached to the Ministry of Interior, where it remained until the end of the empire. Later in the 1880s, a statistical office attached to the Ministry of Trade and Construction (later reorganized into the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture) was established; it issued population statistics on the basis of information supplied by the Population Administration.

IV. THE FIRST ATTEMPTS AT ESTABLISHING A MODERN POPULATION REGISTRATION SYSTEM, 1874

It is important to stress that after 1870, census taking and the establishment of an accurate, permanent registration system became a matter of priority both for the sultan and for the Office of the Prime Minister, as attested by their frequent orders to the concerned offices. It should be repeated that the nüfus defters, or permanent population registers, were established first in the 1830s to follow up the *tahrir* (census) and were charged with the registration of births, deaths, and migrations. These registers, however, became useless for want of proper care and maintenance and especially because of the influx of millions of migrants into the empire. Between 1862 and 1870, close to two million Muslims fled from the Caucasus into the Ottoman Empire, forced out of their ancestral homes by Russian pressures for conversion to Christianity, service in the army, and settlement in the unhealthy plains of the north Caucasus. Moreover, the urbanization that followed the increase of trade and economic relations with Europe after 1856 produced a shift of population from the rural interior toward the coastal towns. Finally, the establishment of new provinces, through the vilayet law of 1864 and its amendment in 1871, led to the abolition of the positions

²² The name *ceride* given originally to some of the land and population registers came later to mean 'newspaper'. The name *ceride-i nüfus* (population register) was changed later to *nüfus sicilli* and *nüfus kütüğü* in order to show its role as the source of all population information.

²³ Some information on the history of population administration is found in the reports of the Şuray-1 Devlet, number 438 of 21 Cemaziyulevvel 1298 (21 April 1881) BA, Irade, Şuray-1 Devlet, 3148; S to M, communication of 7 Sefer 1268 (2 Dec. 1851), BA, Irade, Dahiliye, 14855.

assigned to population officials and to the allocation of the funds for their salaries to other purposes. All these events produced further disorder in the deteriorating situation of the population registers and undermined the collection of taxes and conscription of Muslims into the army. Consequently, the Şuray-1 Devlet appointed a special committee to study the possibility of taking a new census and of establishing a new register system. In effect, this committee reported that the synchronization, updating, and correction of the existing population defters would take a very long time; that the influx of the ecnebi (bona fide foreigners) and the rapid increase in the number of the mahmi (Ottoman-born non-Muslims obtaining passports from European powers to become native protégés serving foreign interests) aggravated further the registration process. Consequently, the committee recommended and the Council of State agreed that the best solution was to conduct a new census and to establish new defters to cover the entire country, except for Hejez and Yemen.²⁴ In 1874, Şuray-1 Devlet issued an order and three regulations to carry out a new census and to establish a new registration system. The first regulation concerned the census methods, the second dealt with the establishment of a registration system based on three types of defters or registers, and the third dealt with the appointment of population officials. These will be studied briefly in that order.

The census was to be taken by a committee established in each kaymakamilk (kaza or district). It consisted of one government official, a Muslim, one non-Muslim chosen from among community leaders, a secretary, and his assistant.²⁵ It was instructed to use the old population registers when possible but to conduct the census mainly by going to each village and mahalle, or town district, in its respective area. All male inhabitants, including children living in the locality, had to appear before this committee and the village ihtiyar meclisi (council of elders) and register their age, künye (nickname), color of eyes and skin complexion, and special physical disabilities 'which will not fade with age'. The census committee were instructed to see even newborn babies 'with their own eyes', study each claim to exemption from military service, and see to it that nobody remained 'hidden' and unregistered.26 Each family had to be registered as a unit. The roster of the resulting village census was approved by the elders' council and a copy of it was given to the population office at the kaza center. The kaza official in turn would send a cumulative list of the number of males in his district to the superior administrative unit, which would convey the lists to the ultimate authority at the center, the Defteri Hākāni (Ministry of Property Records). Officials in each kaza were obliged to send copies of the registers of Muslim males to the regional army offices and to be the repository of all village

²³ See report of the Şuray-ı Devlet, *Tahriri Nüfusun Suret-i Icraiyesini Mutzammin Talimattir* (Instructions Concerning the Conduct of Population Census), S to M of 1 Rebiyulevvel 1291 (18 April 1874), BA, Irade, Meclis-i Mahsus, 2089.

26 Ibid., art. 2.

²⁴ Report of the Suray-1 Devlet, number 695 of 29 Zilhice 1290 (17 Feb. 1874), BA, Irade, Meclis-i Mahsus, 2086. All these reports concerning the census of 1874 are found in one folio.

population registers. The census committee was empowered to use force to bring before the registration officials those who refused to appear, although it was instructed to act with tolerance and respect toward villagers, and to refuse anything offered by individuals.²⁷ The census instructions contained a series of provisions concerning the registration of those absent from the locality, of the foreigners, and of 'protected' people, the latter two being registered in special registers.

In 1874, the Suray-1 Devlet envisaged the establishment of census systems based on three types of registers.²⁸ The esas defter, or the basic register, was to include all males living in a village and in a mahalle or town quarter (the vilayet law of 1871 defined a mahalle as a cluster of at least fifty houses), by numbering consecutively in the first column the number of the individuals and in the second, the families and their respective members. The register to be kept by the official in the kaza center included columns for registering the individual's age and changes in his military and personal status. The second register, *icmal* (summary), contained the total number of people found in the villages and towns within a kaza, and it was compiled on the basis of information derived from the village and mahalle registers. One column in the summary registers divided the subjects according to their millet (religious and ethnic affiliation) into Muslims, Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, Jews, and others. A third register, yevmive vukuat (daily events), kept in the kaza, registered new births, deaths, and changes in the individual's military status as reported by mukayyid (registrars), the muhtar (village head), and the elders' council. Every six months, the total number of births and deaths was added or subtracted from the *icmal* register. Models for each one of the defters were drafted by the Şuray-1 Devlet.

The administrative structure of the census and register system planned in 1874 consisted of a *nüfus nazırı* (population minister-inspector) at the provincial level, a *mukayyid* (registering official) at the *kaza* level, and two secretaries for each official.²⁹ These officials registered all births, deaths, migrations, and changes in the status of males in their district based on the information supplied by the *imam* (religious head), *muhtar*, and the village elders' council who filled this information in a special *ilmuhaber* (information certificate) supplied by the government. The population officials were obliged to take trips into the country-

²⁷ Ibid., art. 8-10. Boys under the age of three, the sick, and others who had valid excuses could be registered by proxy.

²⁸ See report of the Suray-1 Devlet; Tahrir-i Nüfus Için Ittihaz Olunacak Üc Türlü Defterin Suret-1 Istimalini Mübeyyin Tarifnamedir (Information [Description] Concerning the Use of the Three Registers To Be Created for Conducting the Population Census), S to M of 1 Rebiyulevvel 1291 (18 Aug. 1874), BA, Irade, Meclis-i Mahsus, 2089.

²⁹ See report of the Şuray-1 Devlet, Memaliki Mahsusa-i Şahanede Tahrir-i Nüfus Icra Kılınan Mahallerde Istihdam Olunacak Nüfus Nazirlari ve Kātipleri ile Mukayyiterlinin Suret-i Tertip ve Tayinleri ile Vazifeleri Hakkında Talimattir (Instructions Concerning the Organizations, Appointment, and Responsibilities of the Population Inspectors, Secretaries, and Registers To Be Appointed in the Localities of the Realm Where Census Has Been Conducted), S to M of 1 Rebuyulevvel 1291 (18 April 1874) BA, Irade, Meclis-i Mahsus, 2089. side to study the situation on the spot and to report all changes to their superiors and, eventually, to the Defter-i Hākāni Nezareti (the new name acquired by the old Defterhane in 1871) in the capital. A copy of the registers kept in areas inhabited by Muslims was to be sent to the proper military authorities. Those failing to report births, deaths, and changes in personal status were subjected to various penalties.

All these instructions were submitted by Premier Hüseyin Avni Paşa to the sultan who approved them and issued a special order for their execution.³⁰ Preparations were made, but the census and registration system devised in 1874 could not be carried out. There were several reasons. Revolts in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1875, the abdication and suicide of Sultan Abdulaziz, the proclamation of a constitution, and accession to the throne of Sultan Abdulhamit II in 1876, and, especially, the disastrous war with Russia in 1877/78 and the resulting loss of territory substantially upset Ottoman internal order. In addition, the influx of large numbers of Muslim refugees from the Balkans in 1877/78 and thereafter, and the need to settle them, created new demographic problems not foreseen in 1874. Delay therefore resulted until they could be worked out.

V. THE CENSUS AND REGISTRATION SYSTEM OF 1881/82

As soon as the political situation stabilized, the sultan issued an order for carrying out a new census. The sultan complained through his secretary that the country did not possess registers indicating the exact number of male subjects and therefore could not estimate the exact number of soldiers available for active and reserve duties, nor could it carry out a planned reorganization of the army. Consequently, in 1881, the Palace charged the War Ministry with the duty of counting Muslim males, whereas officials in the Ministry of Interior counted the non-Muslims.³¹ As usual, the issue was referred to the Şuray-1 Devlet. This modern-minded office, eager to adopt advanced techniques of organization, debated the issue and came out with a series of recommendations which were based in large measure on the 1874 regulations.

These recommendations and the resulting regulations became, in effect, the basis for the census and registration system used after 1881.³² They were broader in scope and different in essence from the sultan's directives. The Şuray-1 Devlet acknowledged that the census of 1874 could not be carried out because of internal reasons, although the knowledge gained in devising it was very useful in planning the new one. It agreed with the military authorities that the division of the Muslim population into age groups was a matter of vital practical importance. It stressed also the necessity of providing each Ottoman citizen with a *tezkere*,

³⁰ See correspondence S to M of 8, 9 Rebiyulahir 1291 (May 25, 26, 1874), BA, Irade, Meclis-i Mahsus, 2089.

³¹ M to S, order of 15 Recep 1297 (June 23, 1880), BA, Irade, Dahiliye, 65276.

³² S to M, Şuray-1 Devlet, Tanzimat Dairesi, Communication Number 438 of 21 Cemaziyulevvel 1298 (21 April 1881), BA, Irade, Şuray-1 Devlet, 3148.

identity card, to be used in the increasingly frequent contacts taking place between the government and individuals.

The council emphasized the fact that population statistics were useful for administrative as well as for military purposes. This was particularly true in the case of the non-Muslims, who paid the bedelat-1 askeriye (tax instead of military service). The tax had been levied in the past on entire communities without ascertaining the exact number of its members. Since the number of non-Muslims was higher than that indicated in the tax rolls, there was a significant loss of revenue. All this necessitated a new census. The Council, however, pointed out that a 'census showed the size of the population at a given moment. The population changes being continuous and ... natural, it was necessary to devise a sound basis, a new system which would record all [population] changes and thus derive the utmost benefit from a census.'33 In other words, the Suray-1 Devlet regarded the census not as a goal in itself as in previous times but as a means for compiling population statistics and establishing a register of population. It emphasized the importance of statistics. Indeed, beginning roughly in 1878 the Ottoman government showed increasing interest in modern statistics, beginning to publish some and eventually establishing a statistical office.³⁴ It worked in collaboration with the General Administration of Population and came to be headed largely by professionals, many of whom were non-Muslims or foreigners.35

The Council affirmed boldly that in order to conduct a proper census and compile accurate population statistics it was necessary to look at the practices of other countries in Europe and America and to take them as models. It proposed to unify and consolidate all the elements involved in population matters, including census taking, population registration, and administrative organization. Different from the past centuries when *tahrir* or *yoklama* (census taking) was regarded as the chief goal of the endeavour, the Şuray-1 Devlet defined the census only as a provisional measure necessary to establish the statistical foundation for a permanent register system which would record continuously

33 Ibid.

³⁴ The Ottoman government began to compile regular statistics concerning foreign trade beginning in 1294 (1878). The statistics for 1878–1900 are available in their entirety. The statistics for 1900–13 are sporadic. See Osmanlı Imparatorluğunun Ticaret Muvazenese, 1878–1913, No. 123-73, General Directorate of Statistics (Ankara, 1939).

³⁵ I tried to find the names of the individuals who directed the statistical office of the Ottoman Empire. Continuity of directors and their ranks could indicate the degree of professionalism and the importance attached to, and hence, the quality of the statistics. A search through the *Salnames* of 1310 (1892) to 1334 (1916) with the exception of 1911–1914, when no *Salnames* were issued, showed that the office of statistics was headed by high-ranking non-Muslim officials and foreigners for about thirteen years out of a total of nineteen for which precise information is available, as shown in the table opposite. It is also interesting to note the effort of the Ottoman officials to disseminate information on statistics. A statistical publication prepared by Mehmet Behiç, showing the demographic economic, financial, and other characteristics of the Ottoman state in 1310 (1894) begins with a general introduction discussing the meaning and importance of statistics. See *Sicill-i Nüfus Idare-i Umumiyesi, Yevmiye Kātibi Mehmet Behiç Tarafından Tenzim Olunan Istatistik Defteri*, Istanbul Universitesi Kitaplığı, Türkçe Yazmalar, 9075.

all births and deaths and provide general statistical information on the entire population. Consequently, all the previous provisions concerning the census and and registration system were combined into one single regulation, Sicilli Nüfus Nizamnamesi (Regulation for Population Registers).³⁶ These Regulations were debated and approved by the General Committee of the Şuray-1 Devlet, and promulgated by the sultan in 1881.³⁷

<u></u>	Years								
Hijri	Rumi or Mali	A.D.	G	eneral I of Sta	Direct	tor	Assis Gener	tant to al Dire	the ector
1310	1308	1892	Nuri B	ey					
1311	1 309	1893	Fethi E	Bey ^a					
1312	1310	1894	,,	,,					
1313	1311	1895	Fethi H	Franko I	Bey				
1314	1312	1896	,,	,,	,,				
1315	1313	1897	Migird	iç Sinat	oyan l	Efendi⁰			
1316	1314	1898	,,	,,		,,	Mehme	t Behiq	; Bey
1317	1315	1899	,,	,,		,,	,,	,,	,,
1318	1316	1900	,,	,,		,,	,,	,,	,,
1319	1317	1901	,,	,,		,,	,,	,,	,,
1 3 2 0	1318	1902	,,	,,		,,	,,	,,	,,
1321	1319	1903	Rober 1	Efendi°			,,	,,	,,
1 3 2 2	1 3 2 0	1904	,,	,,			,,	,,	,,
1323	1321	1905	,,	,,			,,	,,	,,
1 3 2 4	1 3 2 2	1906	,,	,,			,,	•,	,,
1325	1323	1907	,,	,,			,,	,,	,,
1 3 2 6	1324	1908	Mehme	et Behiç	Beyd				
1327	1325	1909	,,	,,	,,				
1 3 2 8	1326	1910°	,,	,,	,,				
1329	1327	1911	,,	,,	,,				
1330	1 3 2 8	1912	,,	,,	,,				
1331	1 3 2 9	1913	,,	,,	,,				
1332	1330	1914	,,	,,	,,				
1333	1331	1915							
1334	1332	1916							

Officers of the Ottoman Empire's Directorate of Statistics

^a Fethi Bey apparently was Jewish.

^b Migirdic Efendi, an Armenian, was Assistant Director of Trade in 1892–96, and after 1902 became Assistant Minister of Trade.

^c Rober (Robert) Efendi was apparently an American employed as Director General of Statistics because of his expertise.

^d Mehmet Behiç produced several works on statistics. He evidenced talent, and while Assistant to the General Director Director of Statistics became an equally good statistician.

^e In 1910 the Trade Ministry was detached from the Construction Ministry and combined with the Agriculture Ministry, and the Statistical General Directorate was placed under its jurisdiction.

³⁶ See Sicill-i Nüfus Nizamnamesi of 8 Şaban 1298 (5 July 1881), BA, Irade, Şuray-ı Devlet, 3148. All reports and correspondence concerning the census of 1881/82 are in one folio.

³⁷ See Şuray-ı Devlet, Umumi Heyeti Mazbatası, of 8 Şaban 1298 (5 July 1881), BA, Irade, Şuray-ı Devlet, 3148. Of the twenty people who participated in the debate only two voted against the proposal. All the three non-Muslims, Yanko, Constantin, and Nuryan, voted for it.

The Regulations consisted of fifty articles, divided into nine sections. The first thirty-eight articles, comprising eight sections, were devoted to the organization of the register system while the last twelve, assembled under the heading *ahkām-1 muvvakate* (provisional regulation), dealt with the census itself. Following its own reasoning, the Council considered the census as an ad hoc project while its by-product, the register system, was a permanent one. We shall study the census first.

The census consisted essentially of registration in the sicil, or register. It was carried out by committees established in each kaza. Each committee had one member from the kaza administration council, another from the municipal council, the population official, and a redif (reserve military officer). In the kazas that had different religious groups, one additional member was selected from the most numerous non-Muslim group. A population secretory and his assistant accompanied the committee (art. 39-40). The registration included the respondent's name and nickname, his or her father's name, and the address, age, religion, occupation and profession, electoral status, physical disabilities, and civil status. The non-Muslims supplied the same information, but were registered in a different register so as to facilitate the tax levy. The information was supplied directly by the person involved, but exceptions were recognized in legitimate cases when a third person accompanied by two witnesses over the age of twentyone provided it for an absent party. (This provision apparently was intended to excuse women from appearing before the census committee since for the first time women were also counted and registered.) At the end of the census of a village or mahalle (town district), the accuracy, completeness, and authenticity of the census results were certified by the imam, muhtar, and the community councils.38 The kaza population official was obliged to compile, within three months after the end of the census, a list of all inhabitants in his district and send it to the province capital, which sent it ultimately to the Nüfus-u Umumiye Idaresi (General Administration of Population).

Compliance with the census registration was insured by a rather compelling measure. Each registered individual was issued an official *nüfus tezkeresi* (population bulletin or identity card) which contained all the relevant information about the bearer in the register. This card came to be known later as *nüfus cüzdam* (population book). Each individual had to show it to the authorities before buying, selling, or inheriting property, before being accepted in an occupation or profession, for obtaining travel documents, or for conducting other official business. Those without such cards, besides unable to conduct official business, were punished by stiff fines and jail terms ranging from twenty-four

³⁸ During the debates in the Şuray-1 Devlet, the General Committee suggested that since some non-Muslim community leaders could not speak Turkish and consequently faced difficulty in filing the birth certificates, the population officers sent to these areas should be selected from those who spoke the native languages. In other words, instead of compelling the citizens to learn Turkish, the language of the administration, the Ottoman government sought at this date to teach its own officials the regional languages, a custom long in practice. hours to one month if they failed to present an acceptable excuse before the court (art. 5). Those failing to register in order to avoid military service were to be immediately conscripted.

The Population Administration consisted of a central administration with a Director General and a Secretariat attached to the Dahiliye (Interior) Ministry. Each kaza had a population official, while the special districts had a nüfus nazırı, both of whom were assisted by a population secretary and his assistant. Births, deaths, migration, and marriages occurring in the villages and mahalles after the census were recorded by the local officials (the *muhtars*) in one of four types of standard *ilmuhaber* (information certificate) in accordance with the instructions issued by the population official in the kaza (art. 11, 12). The latter in turn was obliged to forward the annual *icmal* (summary) of the village and mahalle population reports, after due inspection and approval by the kaza administrative council, to the superior offices not later than April 1. Eventually, the reports from all the vilayets reached the General Administration of Population in the Ministry of Interior: 'The copies of the registrations [births, deaths] reaching the Ministry of Interior would provide the General Administration of Population with [statistical data] necessary to compile the annual general statistics [of the population] and would be preserved intact. A list of people reaching military age together with the [description] of their identity will be compiled and forwarded to the Military Administration' (art. 14).

The Regulations issued by the Suray-1 Devlet contained other detailed instructions concerning the registration of births (art. 15-22), marriages (art. 23-26), deaths (art. 27-29), and migration (art. 30-31). They also contained a special section (art. 32-39) establishing procedures for the control and supervision of population registers, assuring a constant upward flow of information from villages to the superior population authorities, for registering those who might have failed to do so during the original census, and for correcting the registers' shortcomings, if any. The Regulations dealt with the financing of the register system by charging small sums for registering births and issuing travel certificates. All these proposals were accepted by the sultan who ordered their implementation as soon as possible.³⁹ It is important to stress the fact that the registration system, the nüfus tezkeresi (identity card), and the administrative organization established in 1881/82 were implemented, with certain expansions and modifications, throughout the remainder of the Ottoman Empire and have survived in a variety of forms in Turkey and other places in the Middle East right to the present day. A law issued in 1318 (1900/1) broadened considerably the registration provisions of the Regulations of 1881/82. Another law and the accompanying regulations issued in 1320 (1902/3) superseded the law of 1318 and brought further clarification concerning census taking and registration. Another census based on this law was apparently started in 1321 (1903/4).

³⁹ See exchange of letters between the Prime Minister's office and the Palace, and the latter's Irade (Orders) of 7 Şevval 1298 (1 Sept. 1881) and 8 Şevval 1898 (2 Sept. 1881), BA, Irade, Şuray-1 Devlet, 3148.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POPULATION CENSUS AND REGISTRATION IN 1881/82

The time needed for preparations did not permit the census and registration committees established at *kaza* level to begin their work until sometime in 1882. The census itself, that is, the registration of all the inhabitants in villages and *mahalles*, and the issuance of the *nüfus tezkeresi*, took far longer than expected because of the physical difficulties involved, such as lack of transportation and bad weather. The first results from the more accessible areas came in 1884/85. Some of these preliminary statistical results were published in a variety of places, including the *Salnames*, but have been used by just a few writers, and only recently.⁴⁰ Many other *vilayets* do not appear to have completed their

TABLE 1 Population of Istanbul in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Year	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
H 1260 (1844)	102,532	111,160	213,692 (males only)
H 1273 (1857)	112,162	124,162	236,092 (males only)
H 1298 (1882) ^a	118,535	101,410	381,376 (219,945 males; 161,431 females)
H 1302 (1885)	384,410	488,655	873,565 ^b
H 1314 (1896)	520,194	510,040	1,030,234
R 1330 (1914)	520,434	389,553	909,987

^a Incomplete census.

^b The figures indicating the population of Istanbul in 1803 are identical with the figures given earlier by the Ministry of Interior in 1885. The minister informed the premier's office that the population of Istanbul consisted of 384,910 Muslims, 359,412 non-Muslims, and 129,243 foreigners, or a total of 873,565 people. The Ministry reported that soldiers and a number of unregistered people were not included in the statistics. It seems that the compiler of the general statistics for 1893 used the old figure obtained in 1885, but updated the figures three years later. See prime minister's letter to the Palace, 28 Ramazan 1302 (11 July 1885), and the interior minister's communication number 393 of 26 Ramazan 1302 (9 July 1885), BA, Irade, Dahiliye, 73538. It is interesting to note also that the census statistics for Istanbul in 1844 and 1857 indicated that a total of 75,748 and 94,119 people, respectively, residing in Istanbul were bekar (single outsiders) or males who had come from the countryside to the city for commercial purposes. Approximately 43,000 outsiders in 1844, and 55,000 outsiders in 1857, were non-Muslims, indicating that the non-Muslim population was moving into urban areas to become involved in the expanding commercial activities. This trend was reversed toward the end of the century owing to an influx of Muslims from abroad and to the rise of a Muslim middle class. The latter tried to engage in the commercial activities monopolized by non-Muslims, and in the process the brewing nationality conflict acquired a new economic and political dimension. The Istanbul census for 1896 indicated the presence of 30,680 migrants (muhacir) in the city, of whom only 144 were Jews and all the rest Muslims. The head of the population census committee, Esseyit Mustafa Tevfik, reported that the increase of the Muslim population was due to migration, while the non-Muslims flocked into the city for commercial purposes. The census indicated also the presence of 5,560 students in the medrese.

⁴⁰ For a general reference, see Vedat Eldem, Osmanlı Imparatorluğu'nun Iktisadi Şartları Hakkunad Bir Tetkik (n.p., 1970), pp. 49–65. Eldem used some of the figures published in the official publication cited in n. 48. He does mention the fact that the census or to have established their register systems until 1886/87. For instance, even the city of Istanbul, which conducted five censuses in the century and was given priority, barely completed its census by 1885.⁴¹ Thus, the population of Istanbul in the nineteenth century (the city included the *dersaadet* [old city], the *bilad-1 selase* [the "three boroughs," originally Eyup, Galata, and Uskudar], and Beyoglu, which was added in 1894/95), is shown in Table 1.

One of the chief difficulties faced by the census committees in 1881/82, and especially by the population officials, was the double task of conducting the census in villages and of keeping up to date the registers of districts whose censuses were already completed. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that the population officials had to report every year the total number of people in their respective districts. Consequently, the census progressed rather slowly. In order to expedite the work, new census teams, called kol, were later formed in the vilayets.⁴² As the work in some vilayets appeared to near completion, the government decided late in 1885 to send specially qualified teams of inspectors to control the census results, to compile general population statistics, and to take whatever measures seemed necessary to insure a continuous and accurate registration of all population changes.⁴³ The vilayets chosen for inspection were Hüdavendigār (Bursa), Edirne, Trabzon, Cezaviribahrisefit (Aegean Islands), Adana, Sivas, and Karesi (Balikesir). Some time afterward, Trabzon informed the government that it had completed its census and, therefore, it was placed in the category of the first-class vilayets.44 The Palace showed constant interest in the matter and issued deadlines for its completion and the drafting of empire-wide population statistics.⁴⁵ It is safe to assume that the censuses of most of the Otto-

Ottoman government took a census in 1882-84 but does not elaborate further. Vital Cuinet also seems to have relied on the same source. See Syrie, Liban et Palestine: geographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée (Paris, 1896). For some information on the population of Palestine, see also Moshe Ma'oz, ed., Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period (Jerusalem, 1975).

⁴¹ A report by the head of the census committee (*nüfus tahrir komisyonu*) giving some estimates for 1882, indicated that this was the fifth census of the city but could not find the lists for the first two censuses. It appears from the existing information that the government empowered the Ihtisab, later Zaptiye (Interior) ministry, in 1265 (1848) to maintain population lists to be completed every year according to the deaths and births occurring in the country. The measure was abandoned and then revived after the Crimean war when population was given the first *nüfüs tezkeresi* (identity card). See reports in Istanbul Universitesi Kitaplığı, Türkçe Yazmalar, Number 8949. Other sources are in BA, Irade, Dahiliye, 24, 402. My detailed study of Istanbul's transformation in the nineteenth century, presented originally at a conference organized by AISEE and UNESCO in 1973, will appear elsewhere.

⁴² The orders for establishing new census teams were issues on 3 Nov. 1884, approximately three years after the census began.

⁴³ Letter from Premier's office, 20 Zilkade 1302 (31 Aug. 1885), BA, Irade, Dahiliye 76006.

44 Palace (Yildiz) letter of 9 Rebiyulahir 1304 (5 Jan. 1886) BA, Irade, Dahiliye, 80019.

⁴⁵ For instance, in 1886, the vilayet of Halep (Aleppo) demanded at least nine more months to finish its census. Indications are that it completed its census much later than that. See correspondence S to M of 19 Cemaziulevvel 1303 and 25 Cemaziulahir 1303 (23 Feb. 1886, and 31 March 1886), BA, Irade, Dahiliye, 77419.

man territories in the Balkans, Anatolia, and Syria (inclusive of Jordan, most of Lebanon, and Palestine) were almost completed by 1888/89. There still remained a few people not registered even in the areas where the census was declared to be completed. In a few inaccessible areas, populations, particularly the nomadic tribes, were not counted at all, but were estimated on the basis of information supplied by tribal leaders and local officials.

The Ottoman census and registration that began in 1881/82 represented a continuous endeavour. Consequently, it is extremely difficult at this stage of our ongoing research to state precisely when they ended, if they ended at all. One can, however, state that the population records issued in 1893 represent the most complete and reliable Ottoman population figures compiled in the nine-teenth century.

On 5 Sefer 1311 (17 August 1893) Premier Cevat Paşa submitted them in a bound manuscript to the sultan who had consistently pressed for their completion and accuracy.⁴⁶ Different from a variety of earlier general population statistics, these gave precise and detailed information on the population of all areas and noted the districts and regions where the census was not completed, while providing estimates for the people in these areas—mostly women and tribesmen—not subjected to individual census and registration.⁴⁷ The figures in these statistics were considered definitive and reliable and, therefore, were used as a basis for official statistics concerning the Ottoman population and for subsequent administrative measures.

The final question to be asked concerns the margin of error, which means unregistered people (mostly women), in the statistical tables presented below. It is impossible to provide a definitive answer to this question. My own view on this matter, stemming in part from the insight one gains by working with such materials, is that the margin of error in established communities located in the relatively developed areas with reasonably good communication was low, possibly between 2 and 5 percent. The practical need for every individual to possess a *nüfus tezkeresi* used in all dealings with the government forced practically everyone to register. The margin of error in remote areas probably increased to 6-10 percent.⁴⁸ Even here, the need for personnel in the army, and taxes, forced

⁴⁶ The letter states that the *defter* (register) submitted to the sultan was prepared by the Population Administration following the sultan's orders and that it included the number of the Muslim and non-Muslim population (*cemaat-i muhtelife*), and of the foreigners. Bab-1 Ali, Daireyi Sadaret, Amedi Divan-1 Humayun, 333, BA, Yıldız, Perakende, 11S 311, Number 215.

⁴⁷ See Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniyenin 1313 Senesine Mahsus Istatistik-i Umumiyesi (General Statistics of the Ottoman State for the Year 1313 [1895]), Ministry of Trade and Construction, Istanbul 1316 (1898). This latter publication was compiled by the Statistical office on the basis of information supplied by the Population Administration.

⁴⁸ The validity of the census results obtained in 1893 can be tested against some other reliable estimates. Fortunately, we have a number of estimates on the population of various important vilayets in Anatolia and Rumili. For instance, the British Consulate put together eight different population estimates for the population of Sivas. One of the estimates was issued by the Armenian Patriarch whose figures were grossly wrong both for Muslims and non-Muslims. The remaining seven estimates made by the Armenian the government to be as thorough as possible. It is my considered opinion that these statistics represent a reliable source for the study of Ottoman population at the end of the nineteenth century.

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bishop in Sivas, by foreigners and Ottoman officials acquainted with the local situation, show the population of Sivas in 1881 as varying between 708,550 and 895,682 people; the Muslim-Christian ratio as varying between 3.4-5.01, exclusive of 50,000 Circassians. The differences between these informed estimates does not differ greatly from

Source of statistics	Christians	Christian– Muslim ratio	Muslims	Total
Supplied by the Armenian Patriarch to Her Majesty's Ambassador	62,000	1-1.3	80,000	142,000
Supplied by the Armenian Bishop of Sivas to Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson, Jan. 1880	201,245	1-3.4	694,437	895,682
Lieutenant Chermside, Aug. 1880 Supplied by Abédine Pasha to Lieutenant-	201,245	1-3.4	694,431	895,676
Colonel Wilson, Jan 1880; statistics obtained by doubling the males Supplied by unknown to Lieutenant-Colonel	143,174	1–4.0	584,604	727,778
Wilson, Jan. 1880; statistics obtained by doubling the males Supplied by Government to Lieutenant	136,432	1-4.2	578,166	714,598
Chermside, Aug. 1880; statistics obtained by doubling the males Sivas Almanac for 1878; statistics obtained by	143,176	1-5.1	729,872	873,048
doubling the males	181,586	1-3.9	711,264	892,850
doubling the males	140,732	1–4.0	567,818	708,550

Statistics of Population of Sivas Vilayet compiled by the British

SOURCE: Great Britain, House of Commons, *Accounts and Papers*, vol. 100 (1881), No. 6, p. 99. Patriarch Hassoun's inflated estimates of the number of Armenian Catholics appears in the same source.

the figures obtained in 1893. The latter including new births since 1880 placed the total population of Sivas at 926,671 people of whom 766,558 were Muslims and 160,113 Christians. It is noteworthy that the Armenian Catholic Patriarch Hassoun IX in a letter to the British showed the Armenian Catholics of Sivas as numbering 10,000. The Ottoman census of 1893 showed the number of Catholic Armenians in Sivas province as 3,052 people, almost evenly divided between men and women. Other vilayets show more or less the same pattern.

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Total population of Ottoman State, 1893, by Province