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URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=9565>

Περίληψη :

The diocese of Prousa experienced a period of flourishing during the Ottoman era, due to its proximity to Constantinople, as well as due to the presence of a numerous Christian flock and the economic prosperity of the region. Its territory is located in the eastern part of the Bithynian plain and the seafront, from Elegmoi (Kursunlu) to Triglia (Zeytinbağı / Trilye).

Άλλες Ονομασίες

Γεωγραφική Θέση

North-western Asia Minor

Ιστορική Περιοχή

Bithynia

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1. History- General

1.1. 14th-17th centuries

Most of the ecclesiastical provinces of the Ecumenical Patriarchate that survived in Asia Minor during the Ottoman period were dioceses of high prestige due to their antiquity and their important historical past. The case of Prousa is an exception, for the bishopric of Prousa was upgraded to metropolis as late as the Palaeologean period; up to then it formed the bishopric of Prousa, which belonged to the metropolis of Nicomedia.[1] As a bishopric, the ecclesiastical province of Prousa had a long history, reaching far back into the Early Byzantine period, although the city itself was not among the largest or most important of Bithynia during the Roman period and Late Antiquity. The enhancement of the city's importance, and, by extension, that of its ecclesiastical authority represents a phenomenon linked to the shrinkage of the Byzantine-controlled territories in Asia Minor during the Late Byzantine period and the city's later rapid development during the years of Ottoman rule.

During the 14th and the early 15th centuries the diocese of Prousa (Bursa) undergoes a period of instability and crisis, like most of the ecclesiastical provinces of Asia Minor, caused by the difficulties of the long-term pressure preceding the city's capture (1326) and, subsequently, by the adverse consequences of the capture itself. Synodic documents dating to 1315 reveal that the then metropolitan of Prousa was present in the meetings of the Holy Synod in Constantinople.[2] This did not mean he was systematically absent from his seat, for the proximity of Prousa to Constantinople allowed him to attend the meetings of the Holy Synod without neglecting his pastoral duties in his diocese. This fact was a special advantage that the hierarchs of the Bithynian dioceses enjoyed, as it became clear in the 18th century with the establishment of the institution of the so-called gerontism.

Already by 1318 it is attested that the metropolitan of Prousa was in an unfavourable position because of the increasing Ottoman military pressure and the besiegement of the largest cities of Bithynia. The reaction of the Church of Prousa to this situation was to undertake the administration of the ecclesiastical province of Apameia (Mudanya), as well as have the patriarchal monastery of St Eustratios, situated in the city, assigned to it. It appears that conditions in Prousa during the 50 years following its capture were critical, for in 1327 and again in 1331 its metropolitan appears as the president of Vizye in Europe; a regular metropolitan appears only in 1347.[3] Another indication that the Church of Prousa was in a critical state is the fact that between 1347 and 1386 no metropolitans are mentioned. The last known assignment of the Prousa diocese to another metropolitan occurred in 1381, when it is ceded to the newly-elected metropolitan of Nicaea Nikolaos due to the insufficiency of his province's resources.

The reorganized diocese of Prousa and the return of a prelate at its throne apparently begun in 1386. The metropolitan of Prousa undertakes the administration of the Church of Cotyaeaum (Kütahya), while in 1401 the Church of Nicomedia comes under the purview of this diocese.[4] The final reorganization of the Church of Prousa occurs after the conquest of Constantinople and the concomitant institutional incorporation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate into the Ottoman state, which for Asia Minor signals the

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reorganization of the ecclesiastical dioceses, which now are naturally much fewer than in the past. From this point on there is no problem of succession or of permanent presence of a metropolitan in Prousa; the first attested metropolitan following the conquest of Constantinople is Theodoulos, whose tenure spans the period of 1467-1483/1484. The return of the Prousa ecclesiastical authority to a condition of smooth operation is also confirmed by the inclusion of its metropolitans in the episcopal catalogues of the Ecumenical Patriarchate thought to reflect the 16th century situation, as well as in two surviving patriarchal berats of 1483 and 1525.[5]

The great concentration of dioceses in the area of Bithynia (Chalcedon, Nicomedia, Nicaea, Prousa, Cyzicus), in a period when only few diocese survived throughout Asia Minor (and covered extensive areas), is a result of the high status of some of these dioceses as cities where Ecumenical Councils had taken place and of their high rank in the hierarchy (Chalcedon, Nicomedia, Nicaea), but also of a more practical reason, their proximity to Constantinople; at that time this proximity allowed prelates to frequently attend the Holy Synod in Constantinople, or even dwell there permanently, managing also to maintain steady contact with their dioceses. In the case of the diocese of Prousa, apart from its proximity to Constantinople, its survival was the result of the city's impressive development after the Ottoman conquest, when it became the first capital of the Ottoman Empire and later one of the largest and wealthiest cities of the empire, with a remarkable development in the field of mercantile and handicraft activities, especially in textiles.

The economic conditions in Prousa obviously helped the diocese survive. Although the majority of the city's population were Muslims, a relatively small Christian community did survive, which, due to its participation in the intense entrepreneurial activities of the city, managed to support a diocese and the presence of a metropolitan. The records of the peşkeş and the patriarchal contribution of the years 1641-1651 and 1644-1665 indicate that the diocese of Prousa, notwithstanding its limited territory, is classed fourth among the dioceses of Asia Minor, after the dioceses of Trebizond, Cyzicus and Ephesus.[6] By the 14th-15th centuries already, the city's Christian element comprised emigrants from various places of Asia Minor, who either moved willingly for economic reasons, or in the context of the organized population movements conducted by the Ottoman administration. For example, emigrants from Philadelpheia (Alaşehir), as well as from the city of Simavna, were perhaps forcibly relocated by Bayazid I. Before the conquest of Constantinople there is evidence for the existence of a wealthy Orthodox community there. In 1487 there were 276 Christian families in Prousa, but this number diminished dramatically in the following years, so that in 1522 there were only 69.[7] For the state of the Christian community of Prousa during the 16th and 17th centuries we can draw evidence from the sources as well, for instance a register of contributions for the Temple of the Holy Sepulchre in codex 496 of the Jerusalem Patriarchate referring to the years 1543-1589 and 1618-1630, as well as the testimony of the traveller Gerlach (1576).[8]

The aforementioned register of the patriarchate also records Christian inhabitants of Prousa, 'needle-workers' originating from Thessaly, Trebizond, Kalolimnos (Propontis), Thessalonica, the Peloponnese, Crete, Eurytania, obviously attracted to the city because of its developed textile industry. The city perhaps also contained a small Armenian population, probably increased during the 17th century, since Tournefort (1701) mentions the existence of 500 Armenian families and 300 Orthodox families.[9] The diocese was preserved not only thanks to the city's small but wealthy Orthodox community, but also thanks to the significant Christian presence in the region, notwithstanding its small extent.

According to the information provided by Gerlach in 1576, the Orthodox population inhabiting the Kaya-Başı and Demir-Kapı quarters was serviced by only one operational church, the then cathedral of Agioi Apostoloi (Holy Apostles), where was also the metropolitan's place of residence. The metropolitan was aided by three more priests, while there was one more church, of Agios Nikolaos (St Nicholas), in which, however, services were infrequently held. The community of Prousa started acquiring more churches in 1642, and as a result the church of Agios Ioannis Theologos (St John the Theologian) in the quarter of Balık-Bazar became the catrhedral. The Orthodox population started residing in its surroundings, while the building remained in use as a church until 1923.[10] The importance of the Prousa province for the Ecumenical Patriarchate can also be seen in the existence of four patriarchal monasteries within its territory, the monasteries of Medikion and Pelekete in Triglia (Trilye), St Averkios in Elegmoi (today Kursunlu) and St George in Peladari.[11]

1.2. 19th-20th centuries

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In the mid-19th century the Orthodox population of the Prousa province experiences the historical developments connected with the population increase and economic growth of the Orthodox Christians in western Asia Minor and in Bithynia in particular, the institutionalized elevation of its metropolitans to top representatives of the Orthodox communities in the provincial administration, the flowering of education, largely through institutions controlled by the ecclesiastical authorities, and the surfacing of modern ideological movements related with issues of identity and nationalism.

In contrast to the affluence of the Christian community in the Early Ottoman period, things are rather different now. Sia Anagnostopoulou believes that, contrary to other cities, Prousa could harbour a significant bourgeois class presence, if not as strong as that of Smyrna. This is due to the city's position and its economic fabric. However, "the community of Prousa had always been poor. An insignificant number of Greeks were into commerce and handicrafts".[12] Two are the main reasons why Prousa did not develop significantly as a local urban centre: the sudden disappearance of the local handicrafts and the supremacy of the Armenian community.[13] The silk processing workshops faced the antagonism of the textiles made up of a kind of synthetic silk. The infiltration of Western trade and the numeric superiority of the Armenians, who became representatives of the great Western trading houses, hindered the Greek-speaking population from entering into such activities.[14]

The Greek-Ortrhodox pursued professions that only allowed limited appropriation of the financial resources. This certainly affected the demographic picture in this area. This poor community owes its developed outlook mainly to the donations of its benefactors (Zarifis and Evgenidis), wealthy inhabitants of Constantinople who originated from Prousa.[15]

The financial affairs of the Prousa community were affected by the dominant ideology. According to Anagnostopoulou, although the majority of the coastal communities, whether these may be Adana or Trebizond, Ayvalik or Aidini (Aydın), placed their organization in the service of national ideology, and –even if in a limited extent for this period– irredentism, some other, although coastal, reacted to the community's new mission.[16]

Furthermore, the political and ideological orientation of the members of the Orthodox community is a clear example of deviation from the norm. The 'indifference' of the Prousan Greeks for some national issues, which at times caused reaction against any intervention by the Greek consulate, was one of the most important issues the Greek diplomatic authorities had to contend with, especially during the period of the 1912 elections: "[...] the patriotic feeling has only begun [...] to appear here. And the royal government has completely forsaken the Greek populations living in this province. [...]. One could say that in Prousa there exists no concord [...], and the Royal sub-consulate can exert no influence at all over the Christian population; the following phrase, which was heard after the mass, and was said by a certain notable named Chatziioannou, is characteristic: 'Now at least we have some bread to put on the table; should these come here [...] they will even take that away from us'. What is most saddening is that no one can place trust in the word of the inhabitants here; the lack of character is the main characteristic of the Greeks of Prousa".[17]

It is clear that the Greek-speaking Christian population of Prousa is not typical in terms of the official national ideology and defines its behaviour based on economic criteria. The question we should ask is to what an extent the diocese of Prousa contributed to the formation of this attitude, perhaps a subject for future research.

2. Geographical area and demographic conditions

The confines of the Prousa ecclesiastical province are precisely known only for the 19th and 20th centuries and up to the forced migration of the Greek-Orthodox and the exchange of populations (1922-1923). Nonetheless, the extent of the province would not have been very different from that of the time of the metropolis' inception. The territory of the diocese was generally located in the eastern part of the Bithynian plain and the sea-front from Elegmoi up to Triglia, stretching over 25 km of coast.[18] The extent of its domain was settled in the mid-17th century, with the incorporation of parts of the province which usually constituted patriarchal exarchies, like Elegmoi and Mudanya. The study of the institution of the patriarchal exarchy can help one understand the developments in terms of the extent and the flock of the diocese. In 1652 we have an affirmation of the exarchic status of Elegmoi and the information that at some point the settlement had together with Triglia become incorporated in the diocese of Prousa. More

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specifically, Patriarch Paisios cancels after September 1st 1652 the subsumption of the two patriarchal exarchies to the diocese of Prousa and cedes them to Demetrios, an official of the patriarchate: It is confirmed that the villages of Triglia and Elegmoi were, "since time immemorial", patriarchal, “being under the authority and administration [...] of the exarch”, thus their union with the diocese of Prousa is illegitimate. Any patriarchal letters in the possession of the metropolitan of Prousa stating the opposite is invalid. This decision confirming the status of the villages was given to “the most honourable and scholarly protokanonarchos” Demetrios of the Great Church.[19]

A text from 1658 suggests that Mudanya had seized to be a patriarchal exarchy and had been annexed to the province of Prousa. More specifically in 1658 the Synod decides to remove the metropolitan of Prousa Meletios for certain transgressions: “Meletios, metropolitan of Prousa, Moudania and Triglia, is removed from his office for failing to appear before the Synod to answer to the charge of improper conduct and receive judgement for the grave offences attributed to him by the clergy and the people of this diocese. His removal from office is announced by the Patriarch to the Christians of his diocese”.[20] As to the time Mudanya became incorporated into the diocese of Prousa, it appears that this occurred in May of 1657. When Parthenios of Prousa was elected Ecumenical Patriarch, his election text read: “The metropolitan of Prousa and Triglia Parthenios is elected Ecumenical Patriarch. The newly elected Patriarch is considered successor of ‘the unfairly sentenced to death’ Parthenios III, as Gabriel II’s very short incumbency is considered invalid, for the prelates had given their assent under pressure. Among the other candidates for the patriarchal throne were the metropolitan of Larisa Dionysios and Makarios of Smyrna”.[21] According to Paizi, this means that Mudanya had not at that point been incorporated in the diocese of Prousa and that Meletios, Parthenios’ successor, altered its ecclesiastical status.[22]

Paizi places the indirect testimony of Chrysanthos of Jerusalem on Mudanya into the same interpretation. The syntagmation compiled and published by him in 1715 makes no reference to Mudanya. It is possible that after Meletios’ removal Mudanya reacquired the status of a patriarchal exarchy. Perhaps this omission, however, indicates that Mudanya were at the time a parish of the diocese, and as such not worthy of a mention together with the other areas in the purview of the prelate of Prousa. To this last hypothesis also points a piece of information found in Chrysanthos’ account of his peregrination, relating to his visit to Mudanya in 1724. On the 9th of June he notes: “here the prelate of Prousa Kyrillos came out to greet us with his flock”, a ceremony unlikely to have taken place in Mudanya if at that point it formed a patriarchal exarchy.[23]

In 1883 Vasileios Kandis compiled a study on the city of Prousa. The figures he gives for the late 19th century are interesting.[24] Kandis mentions the kaymakamlık in the territory of the diocese of Prousa towards the close of the century: «Mihaliç (Melitopolis) at a distance of 13 hours, Edirnaz / Adranos (Adrianoi) 9, Kermasti (Kremasti) 12, Bilecik (Vilokoma) 18, Soğud (Thebasion) 24, Gülpazar 26, Lefki 18, Karace 25, Gemlik (Kios) 6, Pazarköy 10, Yenişehir 12, Mudanya 5, Triglia 7, Inegöl (Angelokoma) 10, Pazarcık 16, Dumanıç 18, Hermencik 12, Kökçe Dağ 16”.[25] He also mentions the villages and towns under the ecclesiastical authority of the Prousa diocese.[26]

According to the evidence gathered by Sia Anagnostopoulou, the list of settlements belonging to the diocese of Prousa in the early 20th century agrees completely with the above. The diocese featured 25 parish churches, 33 priests, 14 schools for boys and 7 schools for girls.[27] Finally, with respect to the numbers of the Greek-Orthodox element in the early 20th century, the figures reported for the above mentioned towns and villages, belonging to the kaymakamlıks of Bursa (Prousa), Mudanya and Gemlik (Kios), give us a population number of 25.692.[28] The data given by the Club of Anatolian Greeks “Anatoli” in 1931 which are supposed to reflect the condition during 1912, contain the exaggerated and untrustworthy number of 61,535 Orthodox inhabitants.[29]

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3. Βρυώνης, Σ., *Η Παρακμή του Μεσαιωνικού Ελληνισμού στη Μικρά Ασία και η διαδικασία του εξισλαμισμού από τον 11ο στο 15ο αιώνα* (Athens 2000) p. 257.

4. Πατρινέλης, Χ.Γ., «Ειδήσεις για την ελληνική κοινότητα της Προύσας (15ος-17ος αι.)», *ΔΚΜΣ* 7 (1988-1989) p. 23.

5. Darrouzès, J., *Notitiae Episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Paris 1981) p. 419; Ζαχαριάδου, Ε., *Δέκα Τουρκικά Έγγραφα για την Μεγάλη Εκκλησία (1483-1567)*, (Athens 1996) pp. 131, 157, 175.

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10. Πατρινέλης, Χ.Γ., «Ειδήσεις για την ελληνική κοινότητα της Προύσας (15ος-17ος αι.)», *ΔΚΜΣ* 7 (1988-89) p. 20-22.

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Γλωσσάριο :

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A sultanic decree that bestowed an office or a set of privileges on an individual or a group of people. They were given not only to all state officials, but also to the members of the high clergy, including patriarchs and metropolitans.

exarchy

An ecclesiastical province that does not belong to the nearest diocese, but is administrated either directly by the Patriarchate or by a patriarchal monastery.

gerontism

Administration system of the Ecumenical Patriarchate that was established during the tenure of the patriarch Samuil Chantzeris (1767). It was based on an ecclesiastical oligarchy consisting of the metropolitans of the dioceses that were near Constantinople (Heraclaea, Chalcedon, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Nicaea, and later Derkon and Caesarea). These metropolitans, called "gerontes" (elders), were responsible for the administration of the patriarchate in cooperation with the patriarch. In reality they could often impose on him their own decisions and could bring about his dethronement. Gerontism provided for administrative competence within the patriarchate, since the gerontes' prolonged stay in the capital rendered them particularly experienced in the management of eventual crises; on the other side, however, the system was a source of financial and other abuse, while it undermined the patriarch's status and autonomy. The system of gerontism was abolished after the adoption of the so-called "General" or "National Regulations" by the National Assembly that convened in Constantinople in 1858-1860. This was a result of the proclamation of the Hatt-ı Hümayun (1856), the imperial decree that among others provided for the reorganization of the millet, the etnhic-religious communities of the Ottoman Empire.

kaymakamlık

Ottoman administrative unit that replaced the kaza during the late Ottoman Period, after the administrative reforms of 1864.

patriarchal monastery (stauropegion)

A monastery under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate, autonomous from the administration of the local bishop. The term stauropegion applied also to villages, meaning that in tax matters (mostly in regard to ecclesiastical taxes) they were under the control of the Patriarchate and not of the local diocese.

peşkeş

Payment made by Christian church officials, at the time when their appointment was officially confirmed by the Ottoman government.

syntagmation

In the ecclesiastical terminology of the 19th and 20th century, the term indicates the texts containing a classification of the ecclesiastical authorities according to the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

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Βοηθ. Κατάλογοι

Population of Prousa, late 19th century

	Men	Women	Total
Muslims	13,209	12,099	25,308
Armenians	2,657	2,856	5,513
Christians	2,224	2,068	4,292
Jews	1,017	1,002	2,019
Refugees			3,000
Europeans			100
Total			40,232

Source: Κανδής, Β., *Η Προύσα ήτοι αρχαιολογική, ιστορική, γεωγραφική και εκκλησιαστική περιγραφή αυτής* (Athens 1883) p. 123.

Language of the Greek-Orthodox population in the towns and villages of the diocese of Prousa, late 19th century

Name	Churches and parishes	Language
Balık-Bazar	Ioannis Theologos	Greek
Kaya-Başı	Agion Apostolon	Turkish
Demir-Kapı	Taxiarchon	Turkish

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Susurluk	Panagias	Turkish
Kalasani	Taxiarchon	Turkish
Gepecek	Taxiarchon	Turkish
Demirtaş	Koimiseos	Greek
Platyanos	Agios Athanasios	Turkish
Peladari	Taxiarchon, Panagias	Greek
Elegmoi (Kursunlu)	Taxiarchon, Monastery of St Averkios	Greek
Neochorion (Yeniköy)	Taxiarchon	Greek
Mesaipolis	Agion Apostolon	Greek
Mudanya	Agiou Georgiou, Agias Theodosias	Greek
Arnavutköy	Agias Annas	Greek
Sigi (Kumyaka)	Taxiarchon	Greek
Trilye	Agiou Georgiou Kato, Agiou Ioannou, Agiou Kyparissotou, Pantovasilissis, Agiou Dimitriou	Greek

Source: Κανδής, Β., *Η Προύσα ήτοι αρχαιολογική, ιστορική, γεωγραφική και εκκλησιαστική περιγραφή αυτής* (Athens 1883) p. 142-143.