Συγγραφή : *Χαριτόπουλος Ευάγγελος*
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URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=7200>

Περίληψη :

The history of the Diocese of Amaseia from the 15th century until the exchange of populations. Through the history of the diocese, information on the economy, population and cultural life of the region is also provided.

Γεωγραφική Θέση

North coast of Asia Minor

Ιστορική Περιοχή

Pontus

Γεωγραφικές Συντεταγμένες

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1. Location – Historical Information

The ecclesiastical division of the Pontos during the Early Byzantine period was identified with the political division. Therefore, the borders of the metropolis of Amaseia coincided with the borders of the province of Helenopontos and incorporated six bishoprics: Amisos, Sinope, Ivoron, Andrapon, Zalichou, Zelon. During the 10th century, the metropolis of Amaseia ranked 11th among the metropolises of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. However, during the reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos, it was downgraded in rank 15. This is probably related with the weakened role and functions of the metropolis , the deactivation of its bishoprics and the shrinking Christian population brought about by the Turkish conquest from the 12th century onwards. Nevertheless, the metropolis (from now on: diocese) of Amaseia, in contrast to the other ecclesiastical provinces of the Pontos, does not present any signs of long-term desolation since it has been constantly in operation from the 15th century. At this point, the diocese of Amaseia is similar to the diocese of Trebizond. The significant difference, however, is that in the case of the former, the Turkish domination was a reality since the 12th century, while in the latter, it started only with the Ottoman conquest in 1461. Characteristically, during the 15th century, the diocese of Amaseia ranked in the 13th place, while later on it returned to the 11th place.[1]

Some names of the 15th century metropolitans are known today – Joasaph (1434-1439) and Daniel (1450)–,[2] while shortly before 1470 Pachomios, who left the diocese for the ecclesiastical province of Kapha in Crimea, is also reported. There are also reports on metropolitans in 1499 and 1546.[3] From the mid-16th until the 20th century, the series of the metropolitans begins with Savvatios (1547) and is continued as follows: Gennadios (1563), Joasaph (1572-1578), Gregorios (1617-1630), Zacharias, Meletios, Ezekiel (1635-1641), Metrophanes (1641-1644), Arsenios (1644), Parthenios (1645), Kyrillos (1651), Kosmas (1652-1656), Gerasimos (1656-1660), Kosmas (1667-1668), Gerasimos (1668), Joasaph (1668-1671), Gerasimos (1672), Dionysios (1717-1720), Agapetos (1725), Kallinikos (1732), Beniamin (1756), Gabriel (1766), Dionysios (1771-1780), Paisios (1780-1795), Constantios (1798), Neophytos (1809-1826), Dionysios (1826-1827), Neophytos (anew 1827-1827), Meletios (1828-1830) Dionysios (anew 1830-1835), Kallinikos (1835-1847), Kyrillos (1847-1855), Sophronios (1855-1863), Sophronios (1863-1887), Anthimos Alexoudis (1887-1909) and Germanos Karavaggelis (1909-1923).[4]

The borders of the diocese of Amaseia in the northeast followed the shores of the Pontos, the eastern coast of the river Iris (Yeşil Irmak) and then, forming a bow to the south, ended northwest in the Black Sea, west of Istefan.[5] This territory was mainly identified with the sancak of Amasya (Amaseia) of the vilayet of Sivas (Sevasteia) and the sancak of Samsun of the vilayet of Trabzon (Trebizond), but extended also over a small part of the vilayet of Kastamonu (in the district of Sinop).[6] The spiritual jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Amaseia was rather limited, compared to that of the metropolitan of Neocaesarea; the province of Neocarsarea surrounded the province of Amaseia, although the latter had a larger Greek Orthodox population, especially in the districts of Samsun and Bafra.

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During the recent years, the seat of the metropolitan of Amaseia was in Amisos (Samsun in Turkish).[7] The city was the seat of the mutasarrıflık of Tzanik, of the vilayet of Trebizond, amphitheatrically built on the edge of a great bay, about 3 km from the ruins of ancient Amisos. The city was divided into two parts, Upper Amisos (Kadıköy) and Lower or main Amisos.[8] Forty-eight kilometres from the city, on the west end of the sancak, was Bafra, seat of the namesake kaymakamlık and the bishopric under the diocese of Amaseia.[9]

The jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Amaseia reached west as far as the district of Sinopi (Sinop); the city was the seat of the namesake mutasarrıflık that fell under the vilayet of Kastamonu and was built on the narrow strip of land of Buztepe Buruncape and the ruins of the ancient city. In the villages around Sinope lived a few Greek Orthodox, who ecclesiastically belonged to the diocese of Amaseia.[10] The city of Sinop, however, was under the metropolitan of Neocaesarea. To the west of Sinop there was the small seaside settlement Istefan (Stefani), seat of the kaymakamlık of Ayacık. In the mainland, to the south, on the right bank of Gök Irmak, a tributary of Alys (Kızıl Irmak), was Boyabat, the seat of a kaymakamlık inhabited only by Muslims.[11]

Amaseia (Amasya) belonged to the vilayet of Sivas (Sevasteia) and was the seat of the namesake mutasarrıflık. The city was built on the banks of Yeşil Irmak and was considered to be a location of particular natural beauty. P. Kontogiannis mentions that the Greek Orthodox of the city had a church dedicated to three saints, St George, St Charalambos and St Basil, archbishop of Amaseia.[12] The survival of the diocese was characterised by a constant battle with the adverse conditions which haunted it, as the small community was surrounded by Muslim populations and suffered economic problems and periodic absences of the metropolitan. Nevertheless, the diocese is mentioned in the patriarchal catalogues of the 15th century and continues to exist until the beginning of the 20th century.[13]

The problematic composition of the diocese's population is mentioned in the bleak descriptions of Dositheos, Patriarch of Jerusalem. As he recorded during his tour in the Pontos in 1681, the Christian population of Amaseia was much smaller than that in the neighbouring areas. However, he noticed there was desolation in Kerasounta (Gıresun) and the province of Trebizond as well, due to Islamisation and abandonment.[14] It is natural that there were serious problems in the operation of the diocese since the 14th century.[15] There is a testimony from 1523 that out of the 1403 families of Amaseia, very few were Greek Orthodox.[16] Because of the adverse conditions in the city, the seat of the diocese was moved to Amisos, where the conditions were more favourable.[17]

2. Population

According to P. Kontogiannis, Amisos had in the beginning of the 20th century 25,000 inhabitants, 12,000 of whom were Muslims, 11,000 were Greek Orthodox and 1,500 were Armenians.[18] For 1922, just before the forced migration of Greek Orthodox from Asia Minor, much bigger numbers are given – a total population of 40,000, with 20,000 of them being Greek Orthodox.[19] The city's population increased during the last quarter of the 19th century, with the migration of Muslims, Greek Orthodox (from Karamania, Cappadocia and Trebizond) and Armenians.[20]

Bafra had 11,00 residents.[21] Sinope's population rose to 15,000, with 5,000 of them being Greek Orthodox. Few Greek Orthodox lived in the villages around Sinop.[22]Istefan had a population of 1,200 and, in general, the population of the kaza of Ayacık was mostly Christian.[23] The city of Amaseia had about 30,000-40,000 residents and the Greek Orthodox amounted to about 2,000.[24] In general, in the 1910s the mutasarrıflık of Amaseia had 198,000 Muslims, 50,600 Armenians and 36,739 Greek Orthodox, in a total population of 285,339 residents.[25]

3. Economy

The city of Samsun (Amisos) was located at a commercially strategic point, being the natural port of a vast and wealthy mainland. The increased commercial activities of the city concerned the traffic of grain, tobacco and other agricultural products towards the big

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centres of the Ottoman state and the shores of the Black Sea.[26] It is mentioned that the area produced the best tobacco in Asia Minor, along with two other areas in the Pontos, Bafra (under the jurisdiction of the diocese of Amaseia) and Trebizond. The tobacco from Amisos was exported to Great Britain, Germany, the Russian Empire, Austria-Hungary and other smaller countries.[27]

Amisos was the seaport of a number of districts - Amaseia, Tokat, Yozgat, Kaisareia (Kayseri) and Sevasteia (Sivas) - and its commercial traffic was important, according to the information provided by P. Kontogiannis. In 1911, 700 steamships docked in the port of Amisos, resulting to imports of 28.5 million French francs and exports of 50 million francs. The mansions of rich Greek Orthodox and Armenias, built in the city's suburbs, were a sign of wealth.[28]

Sinop, on the other hand, despite its beautiful houses, had little commercial traffic during the same period. According to Kontogiannis, its excellent port had lost the importance it had enjoyed as a final destination of the road of the caravans from Cappadocia and the Euphrates regions.[29] Nevertheless, tuna fishery and tobacco production remained significant, while the city also had workshops for processing timber (which was available in a great amount) as well as numerous craftsmen.[30] As far as fishery is concernedö in the areas of the diocese of Amaseia, particularly in the downward course of Kızıl Irmak and Yeşil Irmak, sturgeon was fished; caviar was produced in Bafra.[31]

The area of Amaseia was abundant in grain and vineyard and also produced silk, opium, apples and okras, which were dried and sent in boxes to Constantinople as well as other destinations.[32] Three types of apples are particularly mentioned to have been cultivated in the area of Amaseia,[33] while the great production of barley and its export from Amisos,[34] as well as the red wine, renowned in the Pontos, are also mentioned.[35] The madder was also cultivated – natural colouring substances were extracted from its roots.[36]

The city of Amasya, which was by nature gifted with the natural course of Yeşil Irmak, had a great number of watermills (as well as steam mills in later years), which made the city an important centre of breadstuffs. The production of grain from the vilayets of Sivas and Ankara was gathered there and the mill products were sent to Samsun to be exported.[37] English sources note that, in the end of the 19th century (1898-1899), the city's exports in carpets were between 1,225 and 1,320 English pounds.[38] Every year on October 25 and for a period of three days a great trade fair took place there, where mostly animals were bought and sold.[39]

Regarding forest richness, the mountainous areas of Akdağ, near Amasya up to the coast of the Black Sea, the area between Samsun and Kızıl Irmak, and the extensive delta of the same river, were covered by rich forests which yielded important amounts of timber.[40]

4. Education – Culture

The relatively modest educational activities in the area were overshadowed by the brilliance of the educational development in Trebizond (at least for the decades before the exchange), as mentioned by the metropolitan of Trebizond, Chrysanthos. Students from the province of Amaseia, as well as from other provinces in the Pontos, streamed to the 'Frontistirion' of Trebizond – a great institution which housed two high schools, a commercial school, a school and a central girls' school.[41]

Regarding Samsun, it is known that it had primary schools, a semi-high school, a complete classical high school (whose graduates were appointed by the diocese as teachers in nearby villages), as well as unions and organisations. The city also had an orphanage and a home for the aged.[42]

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Γλωσσάριο :

kaymakamlık

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

mutasarrıflık

A medium-sized Ottoman administrative unit that replaced the sancak during the Late Ottoman Period, after the administrative reforms of 1864.

sancak (liva)

Medium sized unit of provincial administration of the Ottoman state, throughout its history. A subdivision of the early Ottoman eyalet (or beylerbeylik) and the later Ottoman vilayet. In the late Ottoman Period it was known also as mutasarrıflık.

vilayet (valilik)

The larger administrative unit in the Ottoman provincial administration system. The large provinces of the Ottoman Empire were previously called eyalet. The new regulation of 1864 introduced the vilayet as an equivalent of the French département - albeit of smaller size. The governor of the vilayet was called vali and had extensive authority.