

# **OSMANLI ARAŐTIRMALARI**

## **XVIII**

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Sahibi: **ENDERUN KİTABEVİ** adına İsmail ÖZDOĞAN

Tel: (0212) 518 26 09 Fax: (0212) 518 26 63

Yazı İşleri Sorumlusu: Nejat GÖYÜNÇ

Tel: (0216) 333 91 16

Dizgi: **GİRİŞİM DİZGİ**

Tel: (0212) 513 28 29

Basıldığı Yer: **KİTAP MATBAACILIK**

Tel: (0212) 567 48 84

Cilt: **FATİH MÜCELLİT**

Tel: (0212) 501 28 23 - 612 86 71

Adres: **ENDERUN KİTABEVİ**, Beyaz Saray No. 46 Beyazıt - İST.

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**THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISTRICTS OF  
PALESTINE, ACCORDING TO THE  
OTTOMAN YEARBOOKS, 1864-1914**

David KUSHNER

Scholars researching themes relating to Ottoman government and administration during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have already been making good use of the different Ottoman yearbooks appearing from the early years of the Tanzimat. These yearbooks (sing. *salname*) are, as is well known, of different types, the main ones being - The Central Government Yearbooks (*Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye*) appearing annually beginning in the year A.H. 1263 (1846-47); the provincial yearbooks, published in most *vilayets*, on a rather irregular basis, beginning as early as A.H. 1284-1286 (1867-1869), namely, after the enactment of the *vilayet* law; yearbooks occasionally put out by various government ministries and institutions; and a number of private yearbooks.<sup>1</sup> To varying degrees, they all yield invaluable information and data concerning the government apparatus, official positions and the people who filled them, descriptions and listings of different government departments, demographic and economic statistics, and the like.

There are, of course, wide differences between one type of yearbook and another, as well as between different issues in any one category. All yearbooks tended to become bigger and more detailed over time, but as noted by McCarthy and Hyde, for the central government yearbooks the *hijra* year 1300 is a sort of dividing line between two types - the ones appearing before that date contained information on many administrative and economic aspects of the Ottoman Empire, while those which fol-

<sup>1</sup> For a complete list of *salnames* see *Osmanlı Yıllıkları*, pub. by İslam Konferansı Teşkilatı, İstanbul 1402-1982.

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lowed tended to be no more than long lists of officials.<sup>2</sup> As for the provincial yearbooks, they varied greatly from one another in content, detail and regularity, reflecting to some degree the relative development of the province, its proximity to the capital Istanbul, and the degree of its supervision and control by the central government.

This lack of uniformity can be a handicap for the researcher who wishes to ascertain certain facts, follow them over time or compare between different areas. One other obstacle is that the data appearing in the yearbooks cannot always be regarded as correct or up-to-date, which makes the task of determining the exact dates of certain changes and developments most difficult. On the whole, however, there is much in the yearbooks which cannot be found in other sources and this much can be said: that the yearbooks can still supply us with data which do not exist elsewhere and can show some trends of development in the different areas with which they deal. In such a way it is possible to make some broad generalizations comparing the state of affairs of one period with the other, or, alternatively, to compare between one geographical-administrative region and another.

This article is an attempt to look at what can be gleaned from the yearbooks on the topic of the administration of the three districts, *mutasarrifliks* (or *sancaks/livas*) into which Palestine was divided during the fifty years or so which elapsed from the enactment of the *vilayet* law of 1864 until the outbreak of World War I, which brought about the end of the Ottoman Empire. The *mutasarrifliks* in question were Jerusalem, Balqa-Nablus and Acre. They had earlier belonged to the *eyalet* of Sayda-Beirut but the new *vilayet* law made them part of the newly formed *vilayet* of Syria. Around 1872-73 the *mutasarriflik* of Jerusalem, was made an "independent" *mutasarriflik*, connected directly with the center, but the other two remained within the boundaries of Syria until 1888, when they were incorporated once again into the recreated *vilayet* of Beirut. This remained valid until the end of Ottoman rule. The article does not attempt to cover all aspects of administration or all the kinds of information that can be derived from the yearbook. Rather, it is concerned with one particular subject, namely the administrative apparatus itself - the administrative divisions into which these *mutasarrifliks* were divided and the kind of bodies and positions created in them in conformity with the various state laws.

The selection of the yearbooks to peruse has been made accordingly. Unfortunately we have no separate provincial yearbooks for the "inde-

<sup>2</sup> *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1979, p. 10.

pendent" *mutasarriflik* of Jerusalem, but we have more or less equal information on all three in the central government yearbooks, and in the Syrian yearbooks until the one which appeared for A.H. 1288 (1871-72). From then on only Balqa-Nablus and Acre appear in provincial yearbooks - until A.H. 1304 (1886-87) in the Syrian ones and from then on in those of Beirut, beginning with that of A.H. 1311-12 (1893-95). The provincial yearbooks are obviously more detailed in the information they contain than the state yearbooks, and this factor must be taken into consideration in any attempt to compare the development of the three districts after 1873. This is one reason, among others, why in this survey of administrative changes based on the yearbooks, it is extremely difficult to go into too much detail and why by the nature of things only the broader and more salient features can be listed and discussed.<sup>3</sup>

#### Administrative divisions

The terms of the 1864 *vilayet* law, dividing Ottoman domains into *vilayets*, *mutasarrifliks*, *kazas*, *karyes* and *nahiyes* are well known and do not seem to require separate discussion.<sup>4</sup> There also seems little need for elaboration on the application of this law in Syria and Palestine as far as the larger administrative units are concerned. The formation of the Syrian *vilayet* was an expression of the Ottoman statesmen's wish to bring about the consolidation of their rule over the regions of Syria through the better integration of their population and was based on the bitter Ottoman experiences of the Egyptian occupation in the 1830's and especially the intercommunal upheavals of the early 1860's.<sup>5</sup> The creation of the *vilayet* of Beirut incorporating, among others, the *mutasarrifliks* of Acre and Balqa-Nablus in 1888, was in turn the embodiment of quite a different approach - that of better control through division. Beirut, it should be remembered,

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this discussion use has been made of the collection of *salnames* available at the University of Haifa library supplemented by several libraries in Turkey. In Turkey, too, there is no public library which contains a full collection of the *salnames* in question and in attempting to peruse the entire body of relevant *salnames* for the sake of this study recourse was made to a number of libraries in Turkey, most useful proving to be the Fatih Millet Kütüphanesi, the Arkeoloji Müzesi Kütüphanesi and the Türk Tarih Kurumu Kütüphanesi. I am grateful to the directors of all these libraries for facilitating my work. I am also grateful to Mr. Taner Zorbay for helping with the searching for and photocopying of several volumes.

<sup>4</sup> The *vilayet* law was, strictly speaking, applied first only for one province, the Danube, and only in 1867 was it made to apply to all provinces. For a discussion of the Ottoman provincial system see Carter V. Findley, "The Evolution of the System of Provincial Administration as Viewed from the Center", in David Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation*, Jerusalem, 1986, pp. 3-29.

<sup>5</sup> Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Establishment and Dismantling of the Province of Syria, 1865-1888", in John P. Spagnolo (ed.), *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in honour of Albert Hourani*, Reading, 1992, pp. 7-26.

had been the capital of the Sayda province before the law of the *vilayets*, and the protracted pressure exercised by the leading classes in Beirut to restore the status of their city must have played a role in this decision. But it was particularly the outcome of rising Ottoman fears from the growth of foreign, particularly French, interests and the need the government felt for keeping a close watch over the affairs in the area.<sup>6</sup> Similar considerations were also responsible for turning Jerusalem into an “independent” *mutasarriflik* in 1872-73, directly linked to Istanbul. It was a consequence of its strategic importance – being situated on the frontier of semi independent Egypt – and its delicate position as the site of the Christian Holy Places and a host of new European institutions.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, the idea of raising the rank of the Jerusalem *mutasarriflik* and combining it with its neighbors to the north did occur to the Ottoman government from time to time and measures were taken in this direction. But these experiments – the last one taken just before Jerusalem was made “independent” – were short lived insofar as the idea of something like a Palestinian entity, which might increase European aspirations in the area rather than mitigate them, did not in the end appeal to the Ottoman rulers.<sup>8</sup> The Ottoman government preferred to have Palestine divided and dependent administratively on outside centers as it had always been.

Some of the changes which occurred in the boundaries of the the *mutasarrifliks*, and in their internal division into *kazas*, are also well known. Hebron, which had prior to the *vilayet* law been a center of a *nahiye*, still appears as such in the first two state *salnames* examined, that is in the years 1864-66<sup>9</sup> but is then raised to the level of *kaza* and joins the other *kazas* which were part of the *mutasarriflik* of Jerusalem, namely, Jaffa and Gaza – apart from the central *kaza* of Jerusalem itself.<sup>10</sup> The decision to raise the administrative level of Hebron seems to have been prompted by Hebron’s own traditional religious and administrative importance, as well as by the difficulty with which the government was faced in trying to effectively control this particularly rough area. This division of the *mutasarriflik* remained steady for many years to come. A change came only around 1899 when Beersheba was created as a *kaza* as a step toward strengthening Ottoman hold over the strategically important Negev, encouraging the settlement of the Bedouins in the area and bring-

6 idem.

7 Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Rise of the Sanjak of Jerusalem in the Late 19th Century”, in Gabriel Ben-Dor (ed.), *The Palestinians and the Middle East Conflict* (Tel-Aviv, 1979), pp. 21-32.

8 Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856-1882*, Washington D.C. 1993, p. 14.

9 *Salname-i Devlet-i Osmaniye* (hereafter *S.D.*), 1281, p. 189; 1282, p. 176. All years indicated in the notes are *hijri*, unless otherwise stated.

10 *S.D.*, 1283, p. 173. Amin Masud Abu Bakr, *Kada al-Khalil, 1864-1918*, Amman, 1994, p. 107.

ing about an improvement in their conditions.<sup>11</sup> In the *salnames* Beersheba first appears as a *kaza* in 1902-03.<sup>12</sup> An attempt to create yet another *kaza* in the Negev, at Hafir, in 1908, was prompted by very much the same reasons, but the place, although it had a *kaymakam* appointed to it, seems to have never established itself properly as a civilian sub-district,<sup>13</sup> and the *salnames*, curiously, mention it as a *nahiye*.<sup>14</sup> Of a different rationale was the temporary transfer of the *kaza* of Nazareth, between 1906-1909, from Acre to Jerusalem. This change was meant to facilitate pilgrimage to the Christian Holy Places, by removing the need for a special permit when moving between provinces, but proved awkward and was abolished.<sup>15</sup>

It should be noted that there are a number of unclarities with regard to certain administrative units, particularly in the earlier *salnames*. Thus, for example, Balqa-Nablus – as a *liva* or a *kaza* – appears in some years right after the promulgation of the *vilayet* law within the confines of Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup> This may have been related to a kind of “interlude” in the late 1860’s when Acre and Nablus were made subordinate once again to Beirut and Jerusalem, respectively,<sup>17</sup> perhaps as the consequence of yet another experiment at expanding the district of Jerusalem. It is similarly unclear whether one place or another listed as possessing a certain administrative status, was, in fact, so. There are, particularly in the *salnames* of the first few years of our survey, ambiguities between *kazas* and *nahiyes*. This may have stemmed partly from the 1864 *vilayet* law itself, which although recognizing *nahiyes* subdivided the *kazas* directly into villages causing some “established” old time *nahiyes* to be “promoted” to a higher status.<sup>18</sup> Lydda and Ramle, for example, appear in the early years of our period as *kazas*,<sup>19</sup> but they probably continued to function, in effect, as a *nahiye* and they appear as such in later *salnames*.<sup>20</sup> This ambiguity regarding *kazas* and *nahiyes* in the early period is true for certain places listed within the *mutasarriflik* of Balqa-Nablus, as well.<sup>21</sup> In any event, it

11 Haim Gerber, *Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem, 1890-1914*, Berlin 1985. pp. 237 ff. The *kaymakam* of Beersheba was to hold the title of assistant *mutasarrif*.

12 *S.D.* 1320, p. 760.

13 Gerber, p. 93.

14 *S.D. mali* 1326, p. 826. 828.

15 Gerber, pp. 93-94.

16 *S.D.* 1283, p. 173; 1284, p. 184; 1286, p. 202; 1288, p. 250.

17 Schölch, p. 17; Abu Bakr, p. 108.

18 *Düstur*, 1st ed., I (1289), p. 608; Findley, p. 7.

19 *S.D.* 1281, p. 189; 1284, p. 184.

20 E.g. *S.D.* 1285, p. 186.

21 E.g. *S.D.* 1281, p. 189; 1282, p. 176.

disappeared as time went on and as the *nahiyes* were instated as a definite intermediary between the *kaza* and the *karye*.

In the *mutasarriflik* of Balqa-Nablus, which from the late 1860's included parts of Transjordan, there were at first no *kazas* on the Western side of the Jordan, with the exception of the central *kaza* of Nablus itself, and – perhaps for a number of years – Jenin.<sup>22</sup> Those which were situated east of the Jordan were Karak, Salt, and sometimes Ma'an. The formation of the *vilayet* of Beirut signalled the separation of the Transjordanian *kazas* from the Nablus *mutasarriflik*, but even before that date new *kazas* west of the river were created, as if to "compensate" it for the loss. These were, once again, Jenin, mentioned first in the Syrian *salname* for A.H. 1300 (1882-83),<sup>23</sup> and Bani Sa'b and Jama'in, which first appear in the Syrian *salname* for A.H. 1303 (1885-86).<sup>24</sup> This administrative map was to undergo just one major change around A.H. 1320 (1902-03) when Jama'in was relegated back to the status of *nahiye*,<sup>25</sup> a consequence, as we are informed, of the unruliness of the dominating clan of al-Qasim.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the period the *mutasarriflik* of Acre displayed significant stability in its administrative divisions. Right from the start there were, apart from the central *kaza*, the four *kazas* of Haifa, Nazareth, Tiberias and Safad. With the exception of the temporary transfer of Nazareth to Jerusalem, between 1906-1909, already mentioned, there was no change in this picture.

The story of the smaller administrative districts, the *nahiyes*, was a more complicated one. Here there seems to have been frequent, and not always clear, changes, and the pattern is more difficult to follow, especially since we lack, in the case of Jerusalem, the benefit of a detailed provincial *salname* after 1872-73. Apart from that, and aside from the ambiguity prevailing between *kaza* and *nahiye*, mentioned above, discrepancies and contradictions make it difficult to determine whether this or that place had, in fact, the formal status of *nahiye*. *Nahiyes*, as an old Ottoman form of local organization, had, of course, existed all along, were not totally abolished even under the 1864 law, and were clearly instated in the hierarchy of provincial organization by the revisions and additions to the *vilayet* law in 1871 and 1877.<sup>27</sup> There are, for example,

22 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye* (hereafter S.S.), 1288, p. 89; 1289, p. 161. This came after Jenin had already been listed as *nahiye*, S.S. 1285, p. 59.

23 S.S. 1300, p. 239.

24 S.S. 1303, p. 153-154.

25 S.D. 1322, p. 626.

26 Ihsan al-Nimr, *Tarikh Jabal Nablus w'al-Balqa*, vol. 3, Nablus, n.d., pp. 62-63.

27 Findley, p. 13. Texts in *Düstur*, 1st ed., 1 (1289), p. 636; 3 (1293), pp. 24-37.



long lists of *nahiyes* in some of the earlier state *salnames* as well as in the Syrian *salname* of A.H. 1288 (1871/72), where population statistics are given.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, in the lists of *nahiyes* which appear in the later yearbooks the numbers are greatly reduced and some of the places mentioned elsewhere as *nahiyes* are not listed. It may be that certain villages or groups of villages which had that status in previous days, were not specifically named as such under the new provincial laws perhaps because they did not meet the requirements led by the law or because they were not duly approved by the authorities. We know, in general, that the actual creation of *nahiyes* lagged behind the stipulations of the law, which had they been implemented in full, would have resulted in recognition of many more administrative units of this type.<sup>29</sup> In any event, we shall refer only to the more "formal" *nahiyes*, or those which appeared more or less regularly in the yearbooks.

Hebron as we have seen, started out as a *nahiye* but was promoted quite early in our period to *kaza*. Ramle and Lydda are mentioned in early *salnames* as *kazas*, but they were in reality *nahiyes*, if not one single *nahiye*. In the *salnames* of for A.H. 1285 (1868-69) Ramle appears indeed together with Lydda as one *nahiye*,<sup>30</sup> and though there is no supportive evidence for each year, seems to have maintained this status from then on. Majdal also appears as a *nahiye* early in the period,<sup>31</sup> then disappears, and, curiously, reappears as a *kaza* or a *nahiye*—the text is not clear on the point—in the *salnames* of A.H. 1294-1297 (1877-80).<sup>32</sup> It is likely that Majdal, like Ramle, had existed all along as a *nahiye*, although later on it disappears again. In A.H. 1301 (1883-84), a new (or rather old-new) *nahiye* of Baytlahm (Bethlehem) appears first in the *salname*,<sup>33</sup> probably reflecting the town's accelerated economic development as a center of pilgrimage and industry, and from then on is listed almost continuously. But by far the greatest leap forward in the creation of new *nahiyes* seems to have been around A.H. 1321 (1903-04). No less than 11 *nahiyes* are mentioned in the *salnames* from then on, including Baytlahm, Ramallah, Safa and Abwin in the Jerusalem *kaza*, Ramle and Na'lin in Jaffa, Majdal, Faluja, and Khan Yunus in Gaza, and Bayt A'tab and Bayt Jibrin in Hebron. Most of these *nahiyes* were not really "new", but they were now officially institutionalized and this must have reflected the government's

28 Discussion in Schölch, pp. 20 ff.

29 Findley, p. 13.

30 S.D. 1285, p. 189.

31 S.D. 1281, p. 189.

32 S.D. 1294, p. 491; 1297, p. 248.

33 S.D. 1301, p. 49.

determination to apply the law more efficiently and spread its control throughout the *mutasarriflik*. In line with Sultan Abdülhamid's active policy towards integrating the Bedouins and other nomads into the system, different Bedouin tribes were also registered from now on as constituting administrative units of their own.<sup>34</sup> A number of additional *nahiyes*, created in 1908 to include Mulayha, Hafir and Ariha (Jericho), appear in the *salnames* from A.H. 1327 (1909) onward, bringing the total to 14.<sup>35</sup> In the case of Mulayha and Hafir, included in Beersheba, the change had to do with the control of the Negev, very much in the fashion of Beersheba, with an eye on the British threat from the south. As for Jericho, dependent on Jerusalem, aside from serving as an outpost contralling the Jordan Valley and the roads to Transjordan, it had assumed new importance as being adjacent to the sultan's private lands and the mineral-rich Dead Sea. Balqa-Nablus, west of the Jordan, had a relatively large number of *nahiyes* from the outset, reflecting the particular conditions of the Nablus mountain, long divided between powerful rural chieftains. Like some *nahiyes* in Jerusalem and elsewhere, they appeared in the early *salnames* as *kazas* but were, in reality, *nahiyes*. Among them were Jenin and Bani Sa'b until they were promoted to the rank of *kaza*, as mentioned earlier.<sup>36</sup> There were also the *nahiyes* around Nablus itself - including Wadi al-Sha'ir, Mashariq Nablus, Mashariq al-Jarrar, Sha'rawiya Sharqiya, Sha'rawiya Gharbiya, Jama'in Awwal and Jama'in Thani.<sup>37</sup> All of these sub-districts, with the exception of Mashariq Nablus<sup>38</sup> continued to exist more or less regularly until almost the end of the period. They were incorporated in the new *kazas* when they were formed, and they were joined by Jama'in when this *kaza* was relegated to the status of *nahiye*. Jama'in, Jam'in Awwal and Jama'in Thani were included within the central sub-district of Nablus, Sha'rawiya Shrarqiya and Mashariq al-Jarrar in Jenin and Wadi al-Sha'ir and Sha'rawiya Gharbiya in Bani Sa'b. No doubt this division was an expression of the persistence of power centers throughout the district, or, seen from a different angle, an expression of the central government's policy of integrating these local power centers

34 S.D. 1321, p. 813.

35 S.D. 1327, p. 828.

36 E.g., S.D. 1281, p. 189. With regard to Jenin, it may have been placed for a short time in Acre. S.S. 1292, p. 101; S.S. 1295, p. 95. It then reverted back to Balqa. S.S. 1296, p. 90; S.S. 1297 (pp. 192-212) has Jenin in both! See also S.D. 1300, p. 325.

37 With the last four from S.S. 1286, p. 108-109. Each *nahiye* was dominated by one of the region's clans. See Schölch, pp. 183-186.

38 Mashariq Nablus mentioned for the last time in S.D. 1297, p. 244. The *nahiye* of Mashariq Baytawi appears in S.B., 1324, p. 230, and may have been a continuation of Mashariq Nablus. Schölch, p. 185.

into the civil system. Two new *nahiyes* had made their appearance in the 1890's - Bilad Haritha, an area dominated by the al-Jarrar family, in the sub-district of Jenin, and Haram, with a venerated Muslim shrine, Sidna Ali, in Bani Sa'b.<sup>39</sup> By A.H. 1324 (1906-07), the *çiftlik* of Beysan, had also been accorded special administrative status as comprising the sultan's private lands.<sup>40</sup>

In the *mutasarriflik* of Acre about ten *nahiyes* are listed in the first two *salnames* surveyed.<sup>41</sup> Only half of them persist in following years - Sahil Acca, Shaghur, Shafa'amr, Atlit and Jabal (Tarshiha), but with the exception of Shafa'amr even they appear in later years only sporadically. In the year A.H. 1307 (1889-90) three of them, Sahil Acca, Shaghur and Shafa'amr, all within the sub-district of Acre itself, begin to be listed together on a regular basis in the state *salnames*, and a fourth is added within the sub-district of Haifa, Kaysariya, where Bosnian refugees had been settled.<sup>42</sup> This division did not change until the end of the period, which points, once again, to the relative stability in this northern district. It is significant that the number of *nahiyes* in Acre was small, reflecting the absence of strong power centers in the district.<sup>43</sup>

Municipalities (*daire-i belediye*) along with their municipal councils (*belediye meclisi*) were regulated by the laws of 1864, 1867, 1871 and finally 1877. The centers of the *mutasarrifliks* were first to acquire municipal bodies. For the *mutasarriflik* of Jerusalem, we are hampered by the lack of detail on Jerusalem in the *salnames* after 1872-73, but we know from other sources that Jerusalem had a municipality from the mid 1860's and that it was followed by Jaffa by 1871.<sup>44</sup> Municipalities were probably created from then on in all other urban centers in the district although the *salnames* themselves do not supply us with such evidence. In Nablus we find the earliest municipality listed in the Syrian *salname* of A.H. 1288 (1871-72), but elsewhere we are told that it had one as early as 1868.<sup>45</sup> Other towns seem to have acquired their own municipal bodies when they became centers of *kazas*,<sup>46</sup> but their formation could have, of

39 Bilad Haritha appearing for the first time in *Salname-i Vilayet-i Beyrut* (hereafter *S.B.*), 1311-12, p. 456; and Haram in *S.B.* 1317, p. 222-23.

40 *S.B.* 1324, p. 240. Beysan as such or as part of Jenin had already appeared before. E.g., *S.D.* 1297, p. 244; 1300, p. 325.

41 *S.D.* 1281, p. 189; 1282, p. 176. See also Schölch, p. 23.

42 *S.D.* 1307, p. 506.

43 See Schölch, pp. 181-83.

44 Ruth Kark, "The Contribution of the Ottoman Regime to the Development of Jerusalem and Jaffa, 1840-1917" in Kushner, *Palestine*, p. 51.

45 *S.S.* 1288, p. 88; Nimr, pp. 65-67.

46 The earliest municipality mentioned for Jenin is in 1885-86 (*S.S.* 1303, p. 153) Jama'in in 1886-87 (*S.S.* 1304, p. 172) and Bani Sa'b in 1893-95 (*S.B.* 1311-12, p. 195).

course, preceded these dates. Turning to the Acre *mutasarriflik*, Acre itself already had a municipal council by 1868-69<sup>47</sup> while Haifa, Nazareth, Tiberias and Safad had them at least from 1878.<sup>48</sup>

### The administrative apparatus

The lists of officials with which the *salnames* provide us for the period under survey reflects, of course, the enormous expansion and diversification which occurred in government activities during and after the Tanzimat period. As is well known, the Tanzimat curtailed the authority of the traditional Ottoman governor, by separating the civil administration from the military authority, which was handed over to purely military commands spread throughout the Ottoman Empire. Gradually it also separated between administrative and judicial bodies, which formed a new independent judicial system. If the old Ottoman governor could in the past function at one and the same time as a military commander, a civilian governor and even a judge, he was now no more than a chief civil administrator, who could not trespass the authority of the new military and judicial systems established at his side. On the other hand, civil administration did expand during the Tanzimat period in an unprecedented way into areas with which it had never dealt before, giving the central government and its representatives in the provinces a whole range of new duties and activities. These comprised virtually all the functions which a modern state would handle and included such areas as population and land registration, communications, economic development, public works, education, public health and more. The various laws and regulations dealing with the provincial system spelled out not only the duties and responsibilities of the governors, but also those of a host of officials appointed to carry out the daily business of administration.

Another feature of the Tanzimat which had its implications on local government was introducing and applying the principle of the participation of the population in the workings of administration. This was aimed at making the population partners in the government's bid for better control of the territory, help the cause of reform and bring about better integration among the various communities inhabiting the Empire. In the provinces, the principle was applied first and foremost in the provincial councils (sing. *meclis-i idare*) established at each of the three highest provincial levels, but also in the municipal councils and in the partly

<sup>47</sup> S.S. 1285, p. 50.

<sup>48</sup> S.S. 1295, pp. 94-97.

elected courts. A significant innovation was also the use of public commissions to assist several government departments, and there were commissions (known mostly as *komisyon*) or else councils (*meclis*) and "chambers" (*oda*) for such matters as land, taxation, commerce, agriculture, the Agricultural Bank, public works and education. As elsewhere in the Empire, these bodies were also established in the *mutasarrifliks* of Palestine. The first commission listed in a *salname* was the *emlâk*, immobile property, commission, which appears in Nablus and Acre according to the Syrian *salnames* of A.H. 1296-1297 (1879-80),<sup>49</sup> and henceforth the number of such commissions grows steadily. Jerusalem then had only the short listings of the state yearbooks where no commissions are mentioned, but it no doubt had its own commissions established even earlier.

Looking at the available data, it may be worthwhile introducing once again a word of caution. Apart from the inaccuracies and lacunae which the *salnames* contain, it is, of course, obvious that they themselves expanded over the years to include more names and details, so that if the early ones list only a few positions and names, it is by no means clear whether others did not in fact exist and were either hidden under other titles, omitted for reasons of space, or not deemed important enough to be included. As a consequence, an attempt to go into minute detail in scrutinizing the lists of officials and departments in each *mutasarriflik* seems somewhat hazardous. Nevertheless, the broad lines are clear, and one can still find some kind of pattern of development which is worthy of consideration. It is also possible to detect some significant differences between the development of the three districts. Whatever details will be mentioned are meant only to point to these general features.

Taking Jerusalem first, information may be gleaned, as mentioned above, from the state *salnames* as well as those for Syria until 1872-73. The early state *salnames* list only the governor (*mutasarrif*), and between A.H. 1286-1291 (1869-1874) also the chief judge (*naib*) and the accountant (*muhasebeci*).<sup>50</sup> But for the same period the Syrian *salnames* list—though not consistently—several more officials, the chief jurisconsult (*mufti*), the chief secretary (*tahrirat katibi*), the director of pious foundations (*evkaf müdiri*), the officials in charge of property registration (*tahrir-i emlâk memuru*) and land registration (*Defter-i Hakani* or *tapu memuru*), the director of excise taxes (*rüsumat müdiri*), the telegraph director (*telegraf müdiri*), and the like. Among the administrative and judicial bodies listed were the administrative council (*meclis-i idare*), the

49 Mentioned first in Balqa-Nablus (S.S. 1296, p. 88) and a year later in Acre (S.S. 1297, p. 190).

50 E.g., S.D. 1286, p. 140.

court (*meclis-i deavi* or *meclis-i temyiz*), the commercial court (*ticaret mahkemesi*) and the municipal council.<sup>51</sup>

From A.H. 1292 (1875-76) state *salnames*, still fairly concise, begin to list the pious foundations accountant (*evkaf muhasebecisi*, probably identical with the director) pointing to the relative importance of these foundations and the officials connected with them in Jerusalem.<sup>52</sup> But around the years A.H. 1300-02 (1882-84), they begin to noticeably expand their lists to include such positions as that of the roads and crossings head engineer (*turuk ve meabir baş mühendisi*, later *ser* or *baş mühendis*), the headmaster of posts and telegraph (*posta ve telegraf baş müdiri*), the forest inspector (*orman müfettişi*), the agricultural inspector (*ziraat müfettişi*), the director of tithes (*âşâr müdiri*) and the director of education (*maarif müdiri*). By then, it should be noted, the judicial system had also undergone major reforms, and the court was now listed under the name of court of first instance (*bidâyet mahkemesi*) with its two sections, the civil (*hukuk*), headed by the *naib*, and the criminal (*ceza*), headed by its own president (*reis*). The deputy public prosecutor (*müddei-yi umumi muavini*) is also listed.<sup>53</sup> The pattern continues, with the later addition of, among others, the director of the Public Debt Administration (*Duyun-i Umumiye müdiri*), the director of the property tax (*vergi müdiri*, sometimes appearing as *tahrir ve vergi müdiri*),<sup>54</sup> the census superintendent (*nüfus naziri*) and the official in charge of the local branch of the Agricultural Bank (*Ziraat Bank Şubesi memuru*).<sup>55</sup> There is, once again, a great leap forward around A.H. 1320 (1902-03), and the state yearbook for that year lists, among others, the commander of the Jandarmerie (*jandarma kumandanı*), the director of the foreign affairs (*umur-i ecnebiye müdiri*), the director of the archives (*evrak müdiri*), the commissioner of the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway (*Yafa Kudüs demiryolu komiseri*), and the inspector of public health and veterinary services (*sihhiye ve bitar müfettişi*). Interestingly, there are two *muftis* listed, one Hanafi and the other Shafi'i.<sup>56</sup> This is, once again, followed by several additions later on like the director of the sultan's private lands (*Arazi-yi Seniyye müdiri*) and the chief commissioner of police

51 E.g. S.S. 1285, pp. 37ff. The commercial court is last mentioned in Jerusalem in 1304 (1886-87). S.D. 1304, p. 426. A year later it appears in Jaffa, a town of commerce much more than Jerusalem. S.D. 1305, p. 336.

52 S.D. 1292, p. 183.

53 S.D. 1300, p. 328; 1301, pp. 543-44; 1302, p. 556.

54 S.D. 1306, pp. 702-03.

55 S.D. 1309, pp. 818-19.

56 S.D. 1320, pp. 758-59. The two *muftis* first appeared in S.D. 1318, p. 685. The practice may have been a reflection of Abdülhamid's Pan Islamic policy and an attempt to court the favor of predominantly Shafi'i Muslim citizens of the district. It was continued for three years.

(*polis ser komiseri*).<sup>57</sup> Then, all of a sudden; right, after the revolution of the Young Turks, there is a considerable reduction in the number of positions listed, and, significantly, among the "victims" are the chief commissioner of police, the director of the sultan's private lands, the director of foreign affairs and the director of the Public Debt.<sup>58</sup> All these posts were connected in one way or another with the *ancien regime* or with foreign influence. The Young Turks were hostile to both.

The picture obtained from the lists of officials in the Jerusalem *mutasarriflik*, is then one of almost continuous expansion and diversification, which even if not comprehensive or accurate in its details, must reflect the actual reality. Jerusalem may not have formally been a *vilayet*, but comparisons with the positions and bodies which typically existed in *vilayet* centers do show that it certainly had almost all the necessary administrative apparatus for making it one.

Turning to the "ordinary" *mutasarrifliks* of Balqa-Nablus and Acre, the process of expansion and diversification was parallel, although it seems to have been slower. There was an obvious difference between them and Jerusalem, and there were some interesting differences between the two. Here, compared to Jerusalem, we are fortunate to have more data since both *mutasarrifliks* were and continued to be part of greater *vilayets*, first Syria and then Beirut, which, regularly or not, published their own detailed provincial yearbook. For the sake of convenience we shall consider Acre first.

Like Jerusalem, the state *salnames* list only two or three positions (governor, judge, accountant) in Acre in the early years, but the provincial yearbooks add many more. In the A.H. 1285 (1868-69) Syrian yearbook, the first to appear, there were, apart from the above, the *mufiti*, the chief secretary, officials in charge of land registration and excise taxes, and the telegraph director. Among the administrative and judicial bodies listed were the administrative council, the court, the commercial court and the municipality.<sup>59</sup> The picture remains more or less the same later on, with some additions like the property registration official,<sup>60</sup> the port directorate,<sup>61</sup> the property commission and the tax collection directorate.<sup>62</sup> The court had also acquired its new structure of civilian and criminal divi-

57 S.D. 1321, pp. 810-11.

58 S.D. *mali* 1326, p. 826.

59 S.S. 1285, pp. 49ff.

60 S.S. 1290, pp. 87ff.

61 S.S. 1291, pp. 74ff.

62 S.S. 1296, pp.92.

sions.<sup>63</sup> Like Jerusalem, the years A.H. 1300-02 (1882-84) seem to have witnessed particular progress. In the Syrian *salnames* of those years we find for the first time the *evkaf* director, the tithes department, the agriculture commission, a "branch" of the education council, the quarantine officer,<sup>64</sup> the director of the Public Debt Administration, the official in charge of Regie (the Ottoman tobacco monopoly), and the census superintendent.<sup>65</sup> A short time later the jendarmerie department, the police department and a forestry directorate also appear.<sup>66</sup> From then on we have almost a decade when no provincial *salnames* were issued, while the data in the state yearbooks are as usual very selective in their listings. When Acre appears again in the Beirut *salname* of A.H. 1311-12 (1893-95), the first for this newly created province, Acre already had an Agricultural Bank branch and a public works commission.<sup>67</sup> The years ahead witnessed even more development with the addition, for example, of a chief engineer<sup>68</sup> and many others. On the other hand, and contrary to the situation in Jerusalem, there were no more great leaps forward in later years and, similarly, there were no noticeable reductions in the listings when the Young Turks came to power.

Turning to Balqa-Nablus, and ignoring details, what emerges is the slower pace of development of its administrative apparatus and the absence of certain positions existing elsewhere. Some of the early state yearbooks do not list the accountant, which they do for Jerusalem and Acre, although this official does appear in the first Syrian *salname* of A.H. 1285 (1868-69). In that latter *salname*, Nablus possessed all that Acre did the same year, with the exception of a municipality and a commercial court,<sup>69</sup> which appear only in A.H. 1288 (1871-72)<sup>70</sup> and A.H. 1293 (1876),<sup>71</sup> respectively. On the other hand, Balqa-Nablus had from A.H. 1293 (1876) an accountant for the *evkaf*,<sup>72</sup> and from A.H. 1295 (1878) a *nakibüleşraf*<sup>73</sup> –later omitted– which Acre did not. Nablus for some years lacked officials connected with the Public Debt Administration, with the tobacco monopoly and with the excise taxes. Naturally it

63 S.S. 1297, pp. 190.

64 S.S. 1300, pp. 210ff.

65 S.S. 1302, pp. 151ff.

66 S.S. 1304, pp. 150ff.

67 S.B. 1311-1312, pp. 175ff.

68 S.B. 1319, p. 143.

69 S.S. 1285, p. 58.

70 S.S. 1288, p. 88.

71 S.S. 1293, p. 122.

72 S.D. 1293, p. 121.

73 S.S. 1295, p. 84.



did not have the port officials that Acre had, and the local commercial court seems to have been abolished from A.H. 1305 (1887-88) on. While the *salnames* frequently list consuls and consular agents residing in Acre, there were no such listings in Nablus. There were other differences, too, and, generally, the administrative apparatus in Nablus, as described in both the state and the provincial *salnames* appears to have been smaller.<sup>74</sup> It is only relatively late that there is evidence of considerable expansion,<sup>75</sup> and at the end of the period the two *mutasarrifliks* seem to have been on more equal footing.

In the same way, it may be possible to look at the *kazas*, which show a similar pattern of development, if on a smaller scale. In the case of the Jerusalem *kazas* we are handicapped again by the fact that only the Syrian *salnames* up until 1872-73 have relevant data, and in the later state yearbooks only sporadic and scanty information appears. While still in the confines of the Syria *vilayet*, the *kazas* of Jerusalem all generally had a governor (*kaymakam*), a judge (*naib*) a *mufti*, a treasury director (*mal müdiri*) and a chief secretary (*tahrirat kâtibi*). They all had, of course, an administrative council and a court of the first instance. Jaffa, a *kaza* of the first rank, was no doubt the most developed, followed by Gaza and Hebron (2nd and 3rd rank, respectively), while Beersheba, also of the first rank, does not appear to have caught up with the rest.<sup>76</sup>

In Acre, the early *salnames* for Syria give at first even less information on the positions in the *kazas*, but they gradually become more detailed. Because of the general uniformity in listings one does not recognize significant differences between the *kazas*, although there are certain features distinguishing one or the other like the fact that the *kaza* of Nazareth and, for many years Haifa, did not have a *mufti*. Gradually there developed a differentiation between Haifa and the other *kazas*, and in the later Beirut *salnames* Haifa appears as having, apart from the different port officials, several other positions like a forestry official and a chief engineer which did not exist elsewhere.<sup>77</sup> This corresponded, of course, to the higher rank (1st) given Haifa *vis a vis* the others (2nd).

In Balqa-Nablus, *kazas* on the West bank of the Jordan, appeared rather late, first Jenin and then Bani Sa'b and Jama'in. Because they were relatively new, they took time to develop, and generally lagged behind those of the other districts. They were all of the 2nd rank, and there were no significant differences between them, except that Bani Sa'b and Ja-

<sup>74</sup> E.g. S.S. 1304, pp. 164, 150; S.B. 1311-12, pp. 175, 188; S.D. 1312, pp. 580, 587.

<sup>75</sup> S.B. 1318, pp. 209, 273.

<sup>76</sup> E.g., S.D. *mali*. 1328, p. 885-86.

<sup>77</sup> E.g., S.B. 1326, pp. 275ff.

ma'in had to catch up with "older" Jenin.<sup>78</sup> Remarkably, Jama'in, before being abolished, showed a high degree of development, even at one time surpassing both Jenin and Bani Sa'b.<sup>79</sup>

### Conclusions

1. This exercise in the use of data from the Ottoman yearbook points again to the need for extreme caution insofar as the data are often riddled with inaccuracies, contradictions and gaps, which make them a doubtful source for anything like establishing exact facts and dates. To do that, there must be a corresponding use of other sources, notably the Ottoman archives themselves. Since the yearbooks also do not supply us with the reasons behind the changes, we must, here too, refer to other available sources.

2. Still, the broad lines of development which can be derived from the data are clear. The Ottoman yearbooks substantiate the fact that Palestine, which in the late Ottoman period, went through a radical process of transformation, was made to adopt modern patterns of administration, as well. The Ottomans, by creating new administrative divisions and expanding the activities of government into new domains, brought not only the presence of government but also the fruits of modernization to remote areas and to the deepest echelons of society. There is no doubt that by so doing the Ottomans created the administrative infrastructure for the future development of the land and accustomed its population to some features of more modern government.

3. As indicated by their deeds, and in spite of their general inefficiency in applying their own laws, the Ottoman authorities were ready to introduce changes in the administrative map as needs and interests dictated. Boundaries moved and administrative units were created, abolished, upgraded or relegated to a lower status. The general motive of the government was, of course, better control, and this is clearly shown in the creation of new *kazas* and *nahiyes* (and sometimes by their abolition). At the same time, accommodation with existing conditions was also called for, and the government, in its very drive for control, found it expedient to consider local interests, and the families behind them, which persisted all along. The best example perhaps is the maintenance of the Balqa-Nablus *nahiyes* throughout the period, and this may be contrasted with the smaller number of such units in Acre.

<sup>78</sup> E.g., S.S. 1303, pp. 152-54.

<sup>79</sup> S.B. 1319, pp. 177, 182, 187.

4. The development and expansion of the administrative apparatus was continuous, but it seems that the early years of the Hamidian period, around the *hijri* year 1300 (1882-83) were particularly important, and in Jerusalem, at least, the years 1321-22 (1903-1905) as well, which also witnessed the creation of new *nahiyes*. The Young Turk revolution seems, however, to have led to some overhauling of the administrative apparatus, which was reflected in the removal of certain officials from the lists, at least in Jerusalem.

5. There was an obvious effort to "standardize" the administrative apparatus in the various divisions, and make them as uniform as possible, taking their respective rank into consideration. Still, one can notice variations from one *mutasarriflik* or *kaza* to the other, reflecting local conditions. In Jerusalem and Balqa-Nablus, for example, there seems to have been more scope to such traditional Islamic institutions and functionaries, as the *evkaf*, the *muftis* or the *nakibülegraf*, than there was in the *mutaras-siflik* of Acre. Acre, on the other hand, as well as Jerusalem, had more officials connected with foreign interests than had Balqa-Nablus. In the district of Acre, predominantly Muslim Tiberias and Safad were somewhat more "traditional" than the more mixed Haifa and Nazareth.

6. Jerusalem, enjoying an "independent" status throughout most of the period, also possessed the most elaborate administrative apparatus. This was, of course, the reflection of its own inherent importance and its own development before and during the period, but there is little doubt that the administrative development of the city had important repercussions for the future, as well, and helped strengthen its leadership position in Palestine. On a smaller scale the same holds true for other administrative units. Acre was perhaps more developed administratively than Balqa-Nablus, and Jaffa and Haifa were more than other *kazas*. Here, too, the differences signalled and, reinforced, the lines of development in the future.