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THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY
OTTOMAN VİLAYET-İ KEŞİŞLİK:
ITS LOCATION, POPULATION AND TAXATION

Nothing better serves to illustrate the deplorable state of Ottoman studies in the field of historical geography than a case study of the region known as the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*, or the "Province of the Monks". This enigmatic area of the Ottoman Balkans, while frequently mentioned in the contemporary 15th century documents, has yet to be even identified as to its location,¹ while scattered references to it in secondary literature raise far more queries than they succeed in answering. Of the four present-day scholars who have mentioned its existence (Gökbilgin in 1952,² Todorov in 1960,³ Barkan in 1964,⁴ and Beldiceanu-Steinherr in 1967⁵) the first places it in the vicinity of Selanik (Thessalonica),⁶ the second and third wrongly identify it as the Peninsula of Mount Athos,⁷ and the fourth makes what we shall see is a questionable linkage of its name with that of the Monastery of St. John Prodromos to the

¹ The meager level of our knowledge is attested to by the fact that such standard reference works as the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and the recent work by Apostolos E. Vacalopoulos, *History of Macedonia 1354-1833*, Thessalonica, 1973, do not even acknowledge its existence. The most valuable work in this field is still T. Halasi-Kun's 1950 study entitled: "Avrupa'daki Osmanlı Yer Adları Üzerinde Araştırmalar" which appeared in *Türk Dili ve Tarihi Hakkında Araştırmalar* I, Ankara, 1950, pp. 63-104.

² M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *XV.-XVI. Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livası (Vakıflar-Mülkler-Mukataalar)*, İstanbul, 1952. (Hereafter: Gökbilgin: 1952).

³ Nikolai Todorov, "La Situation Démographique de la Péninsule Balkanique au Cours des XV^e et XVI^e Siècles" (In Bulgarian with a French Summary), *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia—Faculté de Philosophie et d'Histoire*, Tome LIII, 2 (1959) pp. 192-232. (Hereafter: Todorov, 1959).

⁴ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "894 (1488/89) Yılı Cizyesinin Tahsilâtına ait Muhasebe Bilâncoları" *Türk Tarih Kurumu Belgeler*, Vol. I, 1-2 (1964), pp. 1-118 (Hereafter: barkan, 1964).

⁵ Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur les Actes des Règnes des Sultans Osman, Orkhan et Murad I*, München, 1967. (Hereafter: Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 1967).

⁶ Gökbilgin, 1952, p. 591.

⁷ Todorov, 1959, p. 204, Barkan, 1964, p. 31. In the latter work note the map of the Balkans which follows p. 118.

north of Siroz (Serres).⁸

The intent of the present examination is fourfold: first, to review the hitherto published references to the area; second, through analysis of extant 15th century Ottoman documents to determine the province's administrative boundaries; third, to propose an answer to the intriguing question of when and why the name ceased to be used during the 16th century; and finally, to see what happened to its former territories.

The first modern scholar to mention the existence of the area was Tayyib Gökbiçgin, who in his study of the administrative areas (*livas*) of Edirne and Paşa, and more specifically, of the *vakıfs* (religious foundations) and various types of private properties found in them, published several documents which included mention of the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*.⁹ For our purposes the most important information published by Gökbiçgin is a passage from a *Mukata'a Defter* (revenue survey) from the year 1489 (h. 894). Under the heading "*Vilayet-i Keşişlik*" we are told that the area was occupied by 1,289 Christian *hanes* (households headed by an adult married male), plus an additional 249 Christian households headed by widows (*bives*).¹⁰ If we translate these numbers into population figures, it would appear that in 1489 the area had a Christian population of approximately 7,441.¹¹ The entry further provides data on the taxes these people paid on their agricultural produce, and on such manufactured items as candles and linen cloth. In short, the tax and population figures of the 1489 *defter* attest to the existence of the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*, but never mention its location. From the fact that the *Keşişlik* entry is preceded by those of the *Vilayet-i Siroz*, *Vilayet-i Zihne* and the *Vilayet-i Drama*,¹² we may logically infer that *Keşişlik* was located near them, somewhere in south-central Macedonia. That Gökbiçgin accepted this conclusion is apparent. The index to his work lists *Keşişlik* in the vicinity of Selanik (Thessalonica).¹³

In his study of the population of the Balkan peninsula in the 15th and 16th centuries, the Bulgarian scholar Nikolai Todorov used a *cizye defter* (capitation tax register) from the year 1490 which included entries for the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*.¹⁴ This register provides the information that there were

⁸ Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 1967, pp. 180-182.

⁹ Gökbiçgin, 1952, pp. 44, 144-45, 147.

¹⁰ Gökbiçgin, 1952, p. 145. For a recent discussion of the various categories of taxpayers appearing in the Ottoman *defters*, see: Heath W. Lowry, *The Ottoman Tahrir Defters as a Source for Urban Demographic History: The Case Study of Trabzon (ca. 1486-1583)*, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1978, pp. 248-276.

¹¹ While scholars working in this field have yet to reach a consensus regarding the average size of the Ottoman *hane* (household) the most commonly used figure is 5. While in no way vouching for its accuracy, I have used this figure to convey an idea of the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik's* population. To transform *hane* and *bive* figures to population data the following formula is employed: (*hanes* x 5) + (*bives* x 4) = total population, i.e., (1,289 x 5) + (289 x 4) = 7,441.

¹² Gökbiçgin, 1952 ; pp. 144-45.

¹³ Gökbiçgin, 1952, p. 591 (see *Keşişlik* entry).

¹⁴ Todorov, 1959, p. 204.

1,289 Christian *hanes*, 197 *bives*, and 56 *mücerreds* (unmarried adult males) in the province paying the *cizye* levy.¹⁵ Todorov simply identifies Keşişlik as *Sveta Gora* (Bulgarian: *Sveta* - holy, *Gora* - woods or mountain), the Bulgarian name for Mount Athos.¹⁶ Presumably he made this identification by simple logic: the "Province of the Monks" (Keşişlik) must be the place where the most monks were, namely Mount Athos.

Todorov's identification was accepted by the late Ömer Lütfi Barkan in his 1964 publication of the *cizye* budget for the Balkans from the year 1489 (h. 894).¹⁷ On the otherwise useful map which accompanies this valuable study, Barkan has labeled the Athonite peninsula as Keşişlik.¹⁸ To explain his reason for so doing, Barkan cites two sources: 1) Todorov's identification of Keşişlik as *Sveta Gora*; 2) the 19th century German cartographer, Kiepert, in his *Generalkarte der Südost-Europäischen Halbinsel* (Berlin, 1885) has equated *Hagion Oros* (Greek: holy mountain) with *Monte Santo* (Italian: holy mountain). *Monte Santo* equals Todorov's *Sveta Gora* (Bulgarian: holy woods, or Mount Athos), which in turn is the same as *Aynaroz* (Turkish form of *Hagion Oros*).¹⁹ Aside from a lack of logical internal progression, Barkan's method fails to link Keşişlik to Mount Athos, not surprisingly because, as we shall see, they were two completely separate areas.

Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr recognizes Barkan's error and, in her analysis of a document granted by the Ottoman sultan Murad I in favor of the Monastery of St. John Prodromos, argues that the Ottoman *defter*s of the 15th and 16th centuries establish it as the area between Serres and Zihne. As such, she claims, it corresponds to the area of the Monastery of St. John Prodromos (Turkish: Margarit), and hence its name, Keşişlik (the place of the monks).²⁰ While

¹⁵ Todorov, 1959. On p. 202 the author identifies the *defter* as OAK 214/5 (the Bulgarian Archives classification?). Despite the apparent discrepancy between the figures given here and those presented by Gökbilgin above (see footnote 10), we are clearly dealing with the same raw data preserved in two different forms. While both these accounts report that the *Vilayet* of Keşişlik contained 1,289 Christian *hanes*, Gökbilgin's source states that in addition there were 249 *bive* (widow) headed *hanes*, and Todorov's lists 197 *bives*, plus 56 *mücerreds* (unmarried adult male taxpayers), i.e., in addition to the 1,289, a total of 253 (*bive* plus *mücerred* entries). It would appear that Gökbilgin's source has simply lumped the *bives* and *mücerreds* together (probably due to the fact that they were taxed at the same reduced rate) while Todorov's has listed them separately. The difference then is between the figure of 249 (Gökbilgin) and 253 (Todorov) one which is well within the range of scribal error.

¹⁶ Todorov, 1959, p. 204. There we read *Sveta Gora* (Keşişlik).

¹⁷ Barkan, 1964, p. 31. The *cizye* budget published by Barkan in this study is the same *defter* from which Gökbilgin (see fn. 1) excerpted his figures for the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*. For the Keşişlik data in Barkan's study, see p. 46.

¹⁸ Barkan, 1964, ff p. 118. The map is entitled *H. 894 (1488-1489) yılı cizyesinin tahtil bölgelerini gösterir harita*.

¹⁹ Barkan, 1964, p. 31.

²⁰ Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 1967, p. 181 and fn. 17. In support of her claim regarding the contents of the 15th and 16th century *defter*s, Beldiceanu-Steinherr cites *Tapu-Tahrir Defter*

intriguing, this explanation overlooks the fact that the *defters* she refers to contain separate sections for the *Vilayet-i Siroz* and the *Vilayet-i Zihne*, which already account for all of the area between them.²¹ Were we to accept her proposition, we would be faced with two distinct administrative entities occupying the same territory.

However, though failing to identify the actual boundaries of *Keşişlik*, Beldiceanu-Steinherr's work does point us into the proper direction, i.e., to an intensive examination of the extant 15th and 16th century Ottoman *tahrir defters* (cadastral registers) covering this area of Macedonia.

Recently, in the course of a wider study of the effects of the Ottoman conquest upon former Byzantine territories,²² I had occasion to examine in detail the collection of *tahrir defters* housed in the *Başbakanlık Arşivi* (Prime Minister's Archives) in Istanbul. As one focus of the larger study is an examination of the status of monastic properties under the Ottomans, I was particularly interested in references to Mount Athos. Initially, misled by the Todorov/Barkan identification of *Keşişlik* as Mount Athos, I paid particular attention to references concerning the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*. It soon became apparent that this particular Ottoman province appeared only in those *tahrirs* which have survived from the 15th century: extant 16th century registers made no mention of it at all.²³ Specifically, the province appeared in *Tapu-Tahrir Defter No. 3*, a *mufassal* (detailed) register compiled in 1465, and in *Tapu-Tahrir Defter No. 7*, a *mufassal* survey from the year 1478-79.²⁴ Both of these registers gave the names of the villages attached to *Keşişlik*, those of its tax-payers and the taxes to which they were subject as well as the names of the fief holders (*erhab-i tumar*) who benefited from these taxes. A cursory examination of the place names contained in these two 15th century *defters* had established

No. 7, a cadastral register from the reign of Mehmed II in the collection of the Istanbul *Başbakanlık Arşivi* (Prime Minister's Archives) (Hereafter: *TT No. 7*). As our subsequent examination will illustrate, in addition to *TT No. 7* (which is dated 1478-79) the Istanbul archives also contain an earlier *defter* covering the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*: *Tapu-Tahrir Defter No. 3* (date 1465). (Hereafter: *TT No. 3*, 1465). Contrary to Beldiceanu-Steinherr, while there are extant 16th century *defters* covering the area [e.g., *Tapu-Tahrir Defter No. 70* (1519), *Tapu-Tahrir Defter No. 143* (1527) and *Tapu-Tahrir Defter No. 403* (undated: Süleyman, 1520-66)] they conspicuously lack any mention of the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*. As will become clear in the course of this paper, their silence reflects the fact that by the 16th century, *Keşişlik* has ceased to exist as a separate administrative entity.

²¹ See: *TT No. 3* (1465), *Vilayet-i Siroz*, pp. 155-298 and *Vilayet-i Zihne*, pp. 422-481; also *TT No. 7* (1478-79), *Vilayet-i Zihne*, pp. 114-158 and *Vilayet-i Siroz*, pp. 220-351.

²² This research was undertaken as part of the joint Dumbarton Oaks (Trustees for Harvard University) - University of Birmingham project entitled: *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society: Case Studies from Macedonia, Lemnos, and the Pontos*. I should like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Professors Giles Constable (Director, Dumbarton Oaks) and Anthony Bryer (Director, Centre for Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham) for their support of this work.

²³ See fn. 20 above.

²⁴ *TT No. 3* (1465), *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*, pp. 332-420 and *TT No. 7* (1478-79), *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*, pp. 160-218.

that they were not those of sites on or near Mount Athos. I therefore decided to try to determine the boundaries of the 15th century province on the basis of the toponyms provided. Table I represents the first step in this effort. It lists the names of the villages (in the order they appear in *TT No. 3*), and the numbers of their tax-paying inhabitants (divided according to tax category). For purposes of comparison it also includes the same data from *TT No. 7*.²⁵

The *defters* contain two clues which are of particular value in attempting to locate the sites listed in Table I. First, a number of villages are shown as being attached (*tabi'*) to Serres, Zihne or Drama, thus indicating that we should begin our examination in the general area of south-central Macedonia; second, several of the villages are shown as paying taxes on *dalyans* (fishing stations)²⁶ and/or *iskeles* (landing places)²⁷ indicating that they were located on or near bodies of water. Guided by these two pieces of information the logical place to begin attempting to locate Keşişlik is south of Serres, Zihne and Drama, along the shores of Lake Tahinos. That this was indeed the site of the 15th century *Vilayet-i Keşişlik* can be seen by referring to Map I: *Vilayet of Keşişlik*. There, aided by a number of 19th and 20th century maps,²⁸ I have shown the location of those 15th century sites which were still identifiable at the end of the *Turkokratia*. While not all the villages mentioned in the *defters* have been located, those whose names appear on the map account for over 70% of the region's 15th century population, and therefore allow us to state with a fair degree of certainty that the dotted line on Map I represents the approximate

²⁵ While both *defters* list the first four villages in the same order, thereafter the similarity ends. To facilitate comparison, I have matched the entries in *TT No. 7* (when possible) with the order in which the villages are given in *TT No. 3*. The column headed "NO." for the data from *TT No. 7* gives the actual order in which these villages are listed therein.

²⁶ For a description of this type of fishing station, see: Henry and Renée Kahane and Andreas Tietze, *The Lingua Franca In The Levant*, Chicago, 1958, (Hereafter: Tietze, 1958) pp. 477-481. The authors note that Gökbilgin, 1952, pp. 140-141 mentions taxes on the *dalyanhâ-yi göl Siroz* (the fishing stations on the Lake of Serres, i.e., Lake Tahinos).

²⁷ Tietze, 1958, pp. 568-572. See in particular pp. 569-570 where an example from an unpublished work of Kemal-i Zerd (ca. 1480) records the following usage: *gümrük alına cemü iskelelerde* (a tax is to be collected at all landing places).

²⁸ Each of the sites identified on Map I appear on one or more of the following maps:

- a) Austrian General Staff Map scale: 1:500,000, Vienna, 1826.
- b) James Wyld, "A Real Map of Greece", London, 1827.
- c) Ottoman Ministry of War: "Rumeli-i şahane haritası", scale: 1:210,000, Istanbul, 1899. (For full title, see fn. 40).
- d) Austrian Staff Map, "Former Turkey in Europe", scale: 1:200,000, K und K Militär-geographisches Institut, 1903-1909.
- e) British Staff Map, "Former Turkey in Europe", scale: 1:250,000, War Office, 1908.
- f) Erhard, "Carte des écoles chrétiennes de la Macédoine", scale: 1:400,000, 1908.
- g) British Admiralty War Staff, Intelligence Division, "Maps of Serbia, Macedonia etc." No. 7, scale: 1:400,000, London, 1916.
- h) D. Iaranoff, "Carte de la Macédoine", scale: 1:300,000, Sofia, 1933.
- i) Greece Sheet D10, Rodholivos, scale: 1:100,000, August, 1944.
- j) Guillou, André, "Carte de la région du Mont Ménécée". See fn. 42.
- k) Jacoby, David, "Carte de la Macédoine Occidentale". See fn. 42.

boundaries of the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*.²⁹ From the map it is clear, contrary to Beldiceanu-Steinherr, that the province was located, not between Serres and Zihne, but rather to the south of these cities along the banks of the Strymon River and Lake Tahinos.

In rejecting Beldiceanu-Steinherr's identification of Keşişlik's location, and in the process her rationale for its name as well, i.e., its proximity to the Monastery of St. John Prodromos, we are left with the question of the meaning of its name, "Province of the Monks". Where did this name come from and why was it applied to this particular region in the 15th century?

In the normal Ottoman practice the name of a province was most likely to be that of its largest town or city, i.e., its administrative center. When we look at the names of the other *vilayets* appearing in *TT No. 3* and *TT No. 7*, those of Demirhisar,³⁰ Nevrekop,³¹ Serres,³² Zihne³³ Drama,³⁴ and Selanik,³⁵ we see that they follow this pattern. But far from being a city, Keşişlik does not even appear as a village in the fifteenth century *tahrirs*. Indeed the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik* does not even appear to have had an administrative center of its own. All the sites it contained were classed as villages (*karye*), none bore the title of *şehir* (town or city), the usual mark of a *vilayet* (capital). While each of the surrounding provincial centers, Serres (population: 4,500-6,000),³⁶ Zihne (population: 2,500-2,700),³⁷ and Drama (population: 1,300-1,450),³⁸ appear in the *defters* as *şehirs*, Keşişlik's largest settlement, Ezdravik, with about 900 inhabitants, is merely a village (*karye*)³⁹ — nor are we given any

²⁹ Those sites identified on *Map I* are marked with an * on *Table I*. In *TT No. 3* (1465) they account for 1,921 out of a total of 2,694 *hanes* plus *bives* while in *TT No. 7* (1478-79) they represent 1,771 out of 2,484.

³⁰ *TT No. 3* (1465) *Vilayet-i Demirhisar*, pp. 1-123 and *TT No. 7* (1478-79) *Vilayet-i Demirhisar*, pp. 400-522.

³¹ *TT No. 3* (1465) *Vilayet-i Nevrekop*, pp. 124-154 and *TT No. 7* (1478-79) *Vilayet-i Nevrekop*, pp. 352-381.

³² *TT No. 3* (1465) *Vilayet-i Siroz*, pp. 155-298 and *TT No. 7* (1478-79) *Vilayet-i Siroz*, pp. 220-351.

³³ *TT No. 3* (1465) *Vilayet-i Zihne*, pp. 422-481 and *TT No. 7* (1478-79) *Vilayet-i Zihne*, pp. 114-158.

³⁴ *TT No. 3* (1465) *Vilayet-i Drama*, pp. 484-490 and *TT No. 7* (1478-79) *Vilayet-i Drama*, pp. 24-112.

³⁵ *TT No. 7* (1478-79) *Vilayet-i Selanik*, pp. 524-646. *TT No. 3* (1465) does not include a section for Selanik. This *defter* is missing its opening section which may account for this fact.

³⁶ For an article dealing with the information as contained in *TT No. 3* and *TT No. 7* pertaining to the provincial capitals of Serres, Zihne and Drama, see: Nasturel, Petra et Beldiceanu, Nicoara. "Les Églises Byzantines et la Situation Économique de Drama, Serres et Zichna aux XIV^e et XV^e Siècles", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, XXVII, 1978, pp. 269-285. (Hereafter: Beldiceanu, 1978) For the population of Serres, see pp. 271-272.

³⁷ Beldiceanu, 1978, p. 273.

³⁸ Beldiceanu, 1978, pp. 270-71.

³⁹ While there is no clear distinction, populationwise, between a village (*karye*) and a town

indication in our sources that Ezdravik or any other village in the *vilayet* actually served as a provincial capital.

Interestingly, in the late 19th century this region did contain a village named Keşişlik. As can be seen on the Ottoman Staff Map of 1899,⁴⁰ this village was located about 10 kilometers southeast of Serres, and as such fell well within the boundaries proposed for our 15th century province of the same name (see Map I). What, if any, the connection between these two Keşişliks may have been is a matter for conjecture. Noting the absence of a settlement with this name in our 15th century *defters*, it is extremely unlikely that our province was named after this village. The likelihood is greater that with the disappearance of the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik* as a distinct administrative region in the 16th century, its name was taken over by a newly established village.

Given the absence of confirmed evidence for the existence of Keşişlik as a 15th century toponym, we must assume that the normal Ottoman practice of adopting an existing place or area name was not followed, and that "Keşişlik" is a descriptive title, literally "The Place of the Monks". Against this argument is the fact that neither of the 15th century *defters* include a single reference to monasteries or monastic holdings in the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*, while their sections on the neighboring *vilayets* of Serres, Zihne and Drama abound with references to monasteries and their properties located in those areas.⁴¹ Our knowledge of this region prior to the Ottoman conquest confirms that several of the Athonite monasteries, as well as those in the Serres region, held properties here.⁴² However, were it not for the fact that two of the monasteries of Mount Athos left their names as toponyms in the area (the villages of Iveros⁴³ and Esfamino⁴⁴) there would be nothing in the *defters* to indicate even a former

(*şehir*) in the 15th and 16th centuries, a close examination of the Macedonia *defters* shows that with the exception of Keşişlik every province (*vilayet*) had at least one *şehir* which (we may assume) served as its administrative center and gave its name to the province.

⁴⁰ Officially titled: *Rumeli-i şahane haritası. Saye-i fuyuzat-ı sermaye-i cenab-ı zillallahide erkan-ı harbiye istikşaf postaları taraflarından tashi ve erkan-ı harbiye-i umumiye dairesi beşinci fen şubesi marifetiyle tersim olunarak bu kere daire-i mezkure matabaasında tabi ve temsil olunmuştur. Sene: 1317 (1899)*, this map in 75 sections and drawn on the scale of 1:210,000 is the best available Ottoman map of the Balkans. For Keşişlik, see: #29/Sitoz.

⁴¹ See: Beldiceanu, 1978 for frequent references throughout, in particular pp. 282-285.

⁴² For a current bibliography for the ongoing publications of the *Archives de l'Athos*, see the latest volume in this series: P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos et D. Papachryssanthou, *Actes de Lavra III*, Paris, 1979. Specific references to individual holdings of Athonite monasteries in the Strymon are found in: André Guillou, *Les Archives de Saint-Jean-Prodrôme sur le Mont Ménécée*, Paris, 1955 and Jacques Lefort, *Actes D'Esphigménou*, Paris, 1973, as well as *Lavra III*, cited above. For an overview of monastic holdings in this region, see: David Jacoby, "Phénomènes de démographie rurale à Byzance aux XIII^e, XIV^e et XV^e siècles", *Études Rurales*, V-VI, 1962, pp. 163-186; and the more recent work by Angeliki E. Laiou-Thomadakis, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire*, Princeton, 1977.

⁴³ *TT No. 3* (1465) p. 339 where the name appears as Iver and *TT No. 7* (1478-79) p. 164 where it is given as Iveros.

⁴⁴ For the village of Esfamino, see: *TT No. 3* (1465) pp. 333-334 and *TT No. 7* (1478-79)

monastic connection.

If the name Keşişlik stemmed from a monastic attachment, we would logically assume (as did Todorov and Barkan⁴⁵) that it denoted that area of Macedonia most closely identified with monastic life, Mount Athos and its immediate hinterland, Chalkidiki. Alternatively, we have Beldiceanu-Steinherr's explanation linking the name to the important Monastery of St. John Prodromos.⁴⁶ Did this monastery not fall within the boundaries we have established for Keşişlik (see: Map I), and were it not itself included as part of the *Vilayet-i Siroz*⁴⁷ this would be a plausible hypothesis. In the process of identifying the boundaries of Keşişlik we have eliminated the most likely explanations for the derivation of its name.

It may be the very difficulty we have in tracing the origin of this name that will aid us in explaining why the province ceased to exist as such in the 16th century. The absence of a town or city to serve as an administrative center, and the province's proximity to the already flourishing towns of Serres, Zihne and Drama may have made its continued existence redundant. Its absorption into these neighboring *vilayets* by the early 16th century is attested to by the information of their relevant *tahrir defters*.⁴⁸ That this process was already underway in the 15th century can be shown by comparing the three sets of population data we possess for that period: *TT No. 3* (1465), *TT No. 7* (1478-79), and the *Mukata'a defter* of 1489 used by Gökbilgin and Barkan.⁴⁹ Leaving aside a relatively small Muslim population, for which the 1489 *defter* does not provide figures,⁵⁰ we see that while the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik* had a Christian population of approximately 12,598 in 1465,⁵¹ thirteen years later it stood at 11,735,⁵² and by 1489 it had shrunk to 7,441.⁵³ Clearly, with each new administrative survey the number of residents decreased as more and more Keşişlik villages were enrolled in the neighboring provinces of Serres, Zihne and Drama. Lacking an administrative center and its complement of Ottoman officials, the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik* simply lacked a *raison d'être*. Indeed, if we

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⁴⁵ See above, fn. 16 and 19 respectively.

⁴⁶ Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 1967, p. 181 and fn. 17.

⁴⁷ Beldiceanu, 1978, p. 276.

⁴⁸ An examination of the village names listed under the *Vilayets* of Drama, Zihne, and Serres in *TT No. 143* (1527) pp. 53-68 (Drama), pp. 69-92 (Zihne) and pp. 93-126 (Serres) shows that the former villages of the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik* have been divided up between these three neighboring provinces.

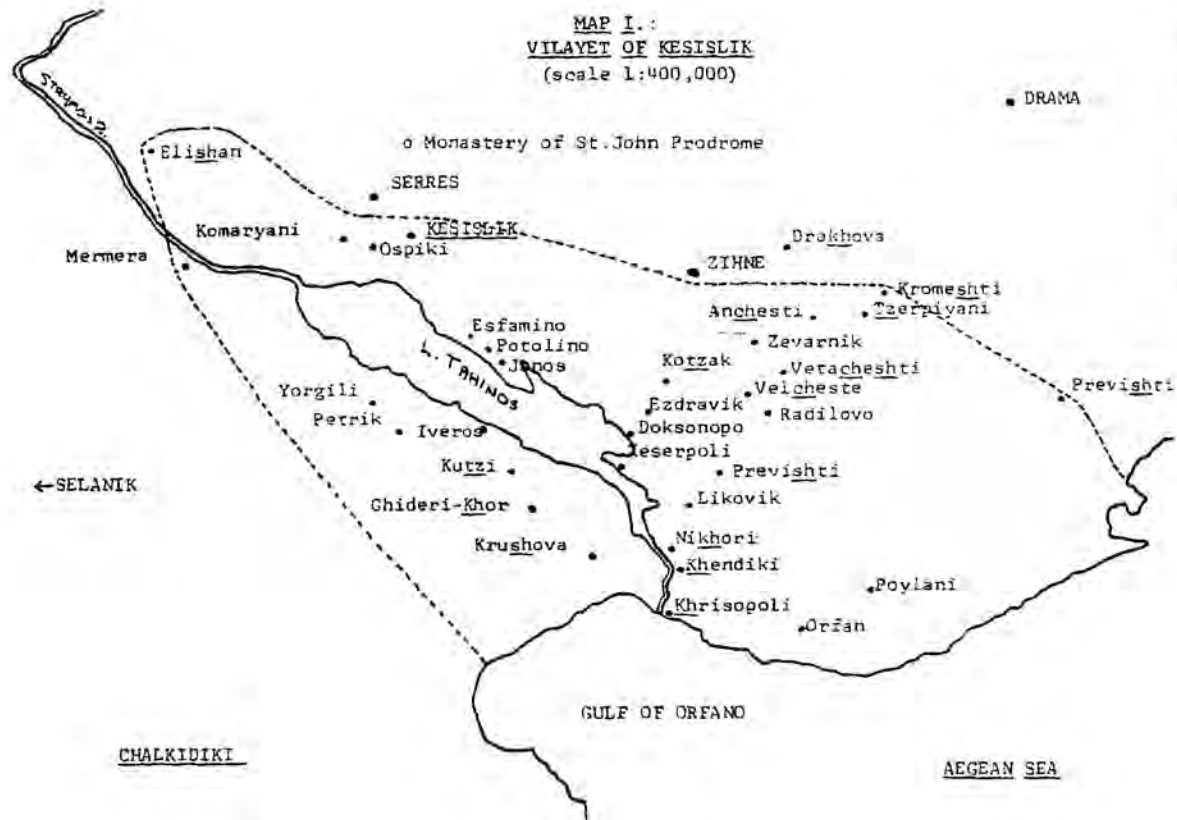
⁴⁹ Gökbilgin, 1952, p. 145 and Barkan, 1964, p. 46 respectively.

⁵⁰ As may be seen from *Table 1* there was no significant Muslim settlement or conversion to Islam in the *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*. The Muslim population accounted for only 50 out of a total of 2,694 *hanes* in 1465 (less than 2%) and for only 76 out of 2,484 *hanes* in 1478-79 (slightly over 3%). The absence of the Muslim population from the 1489 *defter* reflects the fact that they were not subject to the *cizye* levy.

⁵¹ $(2,022 \text{ Christian } hanes \times 5) + (622 \text{ Christian } bives \times 4) = 12,598.$

⁵² $(2,103 \text{ Christian } hanes \times 5) + (305 \text{ Christian } bives \times 4) = 11,735.$

⁵³ $(1,289 \text{ Christian } hanes \times 5) + (249 \text{ Christian } bives \times 4) = 7,441.$



accept this hypothesis, the major unanswered question is not why the area disappeared as an administrative unit in the 16th century, but rather, why it had existed as one in the 15th century.

TABLE I: THE VILAYET OF KEŞİŞLİK IN THE YEARS 1465 AND 1478-79.

VILLAGE NAME	Extracted From T.T. No. 3 (1465)					Extracted From T.T. No. 7 (1478-79)						
	NO.	Pg.	MUS. HAN	CHR. HAN	B'YES	MUC.	NO.	Pg.	MUS. HAN	CHR. HAN	B'YES	MUC.
*POTOLINO: #	1	332-	3	33	13	3	1	160-	SH&3M	41	4	2
*ESFAMINO: #	2	333-	0	16	5	4	2	161	0	21	4	0
*KUTZI / KOCHI: #	3	334-	0	19	14	2	3	162	0	19	7	0
*KRUSHOVA:	4	335-	0	44	9	8	4	162-	0	13	5	0
*KHENDIKE (also: Heniker) # (Bagar-i Eksunbilyo)	5	337	0	12	15	0	7	216-	0	40	22	3
*IVER / IVEROS: #	6	339	1	12	5	0	8	164-	IH&JM	12	0	2
KHOTLOVA / KHOTOLIOVA:	7	340-	1	12	0	3	9	165	1	11	0	2
ZSRPIYANI / ZERPILANI:	8	341	1	113	52	18	33	183	4	115	17	11
KHOTLOVA:	9	344	0	7	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
KALJOVIR-KHOR:	10	344-	0	3	1	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
*ANCHESTI:	11	345-	4	111	26	7	78	214-	0	123	9	5
*VECHESTE:	12	348-	3	88	23	6	60	201	2	88	20	7
*KOZAK / KOJAK:	13	351-	1	13	7	2	16	172-	0	11	1	0
JANOS: #	14	353-	1	68	32	12	71	210	0	55	3	5
*VETACHSHIT:	15	354-	3	35	10	4	64	205-	SH&3M	24	3	3
KOSTOROMBO / KOSOROMBI:	16	356-	1	30	11	5	65	206-	0	33	3	2
PRISHOVA / PERISHOVA (Zitate)	17	357	0	10	2	3	66	207	0	16	1	2
SHPIZANI / SEPIZE (Drama):	18	358	0	4	0	0	68	208	0	4	0	0
EVA KHISHITI:	19	358-	1	2	0	0	67	207	1	8	0	0
*EZDRAVIK:	20	359-	6	121	45	14	29	180-	5	99	20	8
*DOKSONOPO / DOKSOPINO: #	21	362-	1	85	35	9	46	192-	0	88	7	2
*EZDRAVIK:	22	365-	0	7	3	0	22	176-	0	5	2	1
*KESERPOLI: #	23	366-	0	4	3	0	53	197	0	4	2	1
KOSTOMBO / KHOSTONBO:	24	367-	0	45	18	4	34	185-	0	48	8	3
KHOMENKOVA / KHOMENKOR:	25	368-	0	38	19	4	35	186-	0	49	13	3
KHODNIA / KHORNIA: #	26	370-	0	6	2	0	39	187-	0	5	2	0
*ORFAN:	27	371-	2	27	13	4	12	168	1	27	0	1
*PREVSHITI:	28	372-	1	54	16	8	57	189-	4	53	7	4
*DRAHOVA (Zitate):	29	374-	0	8	3	0	58	201	0	6	1	0
*PREVSHITI:	30	375-	1	21	3	3	19	174	1	21	2	2
DRAVOCHESTI (Ser-es):	31	376	0	0	1	0	28	180	0	0	0	0
*KROMFSHITI:	32	376-	5	50	12	5	47	194-	5	60	6	4

VILLAGENAME	NO.	Pg.	MUS. HAN.	CHR. HAN.	BIVES	MUC.	NO.	Pg.	MUS. HAN.	CHR. HAN.	BIVES	MUC.
*GHIDERI-KHOR/GHIDER KHO	33	378	0	3	1	0	31	182-	0	2	1	0
YESNI / YESI	34	379	1	11	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
*PETRIK:	35	379-	0	24	8	4	73	211	0	19	2	0
MEZRA-I ESTAVROS	36	380	0	1	0	0	32	183	0	0	0	0
EVRAKI KASRI	37	381-	0	34	13	4	74	211-	0	36	6	3
LONDO:	38	382	0	10	5	3	30	182	0	5	0	0
*POYLANI / BOBLANI:	39	383-	0	36	8	4	14	170-	4	31	4	2
MINOLISHI / MESINOLISHI: #	40	385-	0	60	20	4	26	178-	1	41	5	2
*ZEVARNIK / REVARNIK:	41	387-	0	25	11	5	48	195-	2	24	4	2
*NIKORI:	42	388-	0	12	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
*MEZ. AYO YORGI/BIRAKOS (Sarres)	43	389	0	0	0	0	50	196	0	0	0	0
*NOSKI / OSPIKI / OSIKI:	44	389-	0	62	10	8	25	177-	0	71	5	3
KESHANI / KESHATI:	45	391-	0	40	8	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
*GHIDERI-KHOR / GHIDERKHO:	46	393-	1	12	1	4	43	191	0	19	0	0
*KUTZI / KOCHI:	47	393	0	10	1	0	44	191	0	2	0	0
DERISHITENI ZE:	48	394-	0	19	5	4	42	190	1	25	3	3
KIRDALANO:	49	395-	0	20	4	5	45	192	3	25	2	0
*PREVISHTE:	50	396-	0	18	6	3	27	179-	0	24	4	0
*GHIDERI-KHOR / GHIDERKHO:	51	397-	0	18	3	3	63	205	0	18	3	5
PERNAR / PIRNAR: #	52	398-	3	20	11	8	11	167	5	21	1	4
DOKALISHTI / VOKALISHTI:	53	400-	0	32	17	8	61	203-	0	48	0	11
*YORGHI: #	54	401-	2	24	5	5	62	204-	1	19	6	7
MEDRAPOLID / MERDARPOLID: #	55	402-	0	22	6	4	5	163	0	23	5	0
TRVA:	56	403	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
MEZ. TZIKERYONA:	57	404	0	0	0	0	6	164	0	0	0	0
MEZ. PETRA:	58	404	0	0	0	0	7	164	0	0	0	0
ALDOMESHITI / KEZOMESHITI:	59	404-	0	32	4	3	21	175-	2	35	8	3
*EZZRAVIK:	60	405	0	7	1	0	18	174	0	5	0	0
ZACHORTZE:	61	406	0	7	0	0	23	176-	0	11	1	0
ALDOMESHITI / KEZOMESHITI:	62	406-	0	20	2	5	17	173	0	18	3	0
*EZZRAVIK:	63	407-	0	6	1	0	52	197	0	10	4	3
MEZ. ACHLIPOR:	64	408	0	0	0	0	20	175	0	1	0	0
*RADILOFO:	65	408-	2	107	29	8	13	168-	6	114	22	5
*PREVISHTE:	66	411-	0	17	11	4	69	208-	2	28	6	0
MINOKHOR / MINOKHO: #	67	412-	1	56	9	8	10	166	0	42	3	2
*LIKOVIK:	68	414	0	5	0	0	75	212-	0	12	2	0
SOTIRKHOR / SOTIRKHOVA:	69	415	0	10	6	0	76	213	1	7	0	1

VILLAGE NAME	NO.	Pg.	MUS. HAN.	CHR. HAN.	B'YES	MUC.	NO.	Pg.	MUS. HAN.	CHR. HAN.	B'YES	MUC.
*KOMARYANI / KOMARANI:	70	415-	0	5	2	0	77	213-	2	11	0	1
SOTIR-KHO-#	71	416-	0	3	3	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
*NOSKI / OSIKI:	72	417-	0	51	5	6	15	171-	0	37	5	0
METOKLI / MINOMI:	73	418-	4	15	7	3	41	189-	2	18	2	0
*EŞİ ANI / EŞİ ANI:	74	419-	-	31	4	4	40	188-	5	45	7	5
MEZ. AĞLI LIFOR:	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	177-	0	1	0	0
MEZ. AYO KIRYAKI (Azrobit):	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	187-	0	0	0	0
MEZ. RUMI / DOMI (Azrobit):	-	-	-	-	-	-	37	187-	0	0	0	0
MEZ. PALO KASRI (Azrobit):	-	-	-	-	-	-	38	187-	0	0	0	0
KORI:	-	-	-	-	-	-	49	196-	0	9	0	3
MEZ. BAYRAKOS:	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	196-	0	0	0	0
EZIKLI:	-	-	-	-	-	-	54	197-	0	32	3	0
SERA İZ LO / SERAÇI LO (Langada):	-	-	-	-	-	-	55	198-	0	26	4	0
MEZ. PORTOVA (Langada):	-	-	-	-	-	-	56	197-	0	8	0	0
MEZ. LAPANIK/EZNI İZE (Langada):	-	-	-	-	-	-	59	201-	0	5	0	0
BÜYÜK DANIŞMEND (Gümülcine):	-	-	-	-	-	-	70	209-	7H&SM	0	0	0
*MERMERA:	-	-	-	-	-	-	72	211-	0	0	0	0
*KRISOPOLI / CHRISOPOLI:	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	217-	2	76	10	0
TOTALS:	74		50	2,022	622	268	80		76/12	2,103	305	140

* Those villages located on MAP I. VILAYET OF KEŞİSLİK.

Those villages identified as paying taxes on *dalyans* and/or *sikeles*.