

## **Corpus of Ottoman inscriptions in Southern Albania**

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**Abstract** This is a study and edition of Ottoman Inscriptions in Southern Albania, defined as the area between Valona and the Greek border. During the last years, many new inscriptions (mainly tombstones) have been discovered by foreign and local researchers. Known inscriptions from literature (Evliya Çelebi and others) have been added here to these new discovered inscriptions. 25 inscriptions from the year 1542 BCE until 1897 BCE from the region are published here as part of the Corpus of Ottoman Inscriptions in Albania. The inscriptions are studied in their historical and cultural context. They contain information about building activities and the life and culture of the Ottoman centuries of Albania.

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**Keywords** Ottoman. Epigraphy. Albania.

### **1 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Corpus of Ottoman inscriptions in Southern Albania (tombstones and foundation inscriptions)**

Southern Albania is not very rich in Ottoman inscriptions. Between Vlore and the Greek border there are only 25 inscriptions recorded. Four of these inscriptions (nos. 2-5) are known from the works by Evliya Çelebi

and the literature. These inscriptions nowadays are lost. However, they are important for the history of the region to include them here in our Corpus. The other 21 are still existing and are published mostly for the first time in this contribution. The inscriptions are generally in bad state of conservation and mostly damaged. Particularly during the communist regime, the inscriptions were deliberately destroyed.

When the readings are not sure we have indicated this in the transcriptions. Wherever appropriate, inscriptions will be accompanied with relevant sections of descriptions of cities and buildings by Evliya Çelebi.

Table 1. The inventory of the inscriptions

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Avlonya (Vlorë), Sultan Suleyman Mosque	935 AH-1528-29 BCE
Avlonya (Vlorë), Ilyas Paşa Fountain (Evliya 140)	949 AH-1542 BCE
Kanina, Sultan Suleyman Inscription	1528 BCE-1542 BCE
Ergirikasri (Gjirokastër), Sultan Beyazid Mosque	1645 BCE-1669 BCE
Ergirikasri (Gjirokastër), Tekke Mosque	1145 AH-1732-33 BCE (?)
Delvina, Baba Aziz Tekke	1173 AH-1759-60 BCE
Ergirikasri (Gjirokastër), Bazar Mosque	1177 AH-1763-64 BCE
Delvina, Xhërmëhallë, Tombstone	1211 AH-1796-97 BCE
Ergirikasri (Gjirokastër), Şeykh Hasan Halveti Türbe	1221 AH-1806-07 BCE
Tepelenë, Mosque in the Citadel	1819 BCE
Delvina, Tombstone	1240 AH-1824-25 BCE
Ergirikasri (Gjirokastër), Seyh Suleyman Halveti Türbe	1268 AH-1852 BCE
Ergirikasri (Gjirokastër), Avli Manat Fountain Inscription	1273 AH/1858 BCE
Libohova, Tombstone	1278 AH-1861-62 BCE
Libohova, Tombstone	1283 AH-1866-67 BCE
Ergirikasri (Gjirokastër), Hajji Murad Mosque and fountain	1284 AH-1867-68 BCE
Libohova, Tombstone	1287 AH-1870-71 BCE
Ergirikasri (Gjirokastër), Dunavat Mosque	1304 AH-1887 BCE
Libohova, Tombstone Malik Pasha	1309 AH-1892 BCE
Delvina, Xhërmëhallë, Tombstone	1315 AH-1897 BCE
Libohova, Tombstone Saffet Bey	Undated
Tepelenë, Tombstone of the commander of the Ali Paşa army	Undated
Tepelenë, Preveze and Korfu War	Undated
Delvina, Graffitto on Gjin Aleksî Mosque	Undated
Delvina, Graffitto on Gjin Aleksî Mosque	Undated

Table 2. The inscriptions are published hereunder according to the cities where they were found

Avlonya (Vlora) and Kanina	3 inscriptions
Ergirikasrı (Gjirokastró)	9 inscriptions
Libohova	5 inscriptions
Delvina	5 inscriptions
Tepedelenë	3 inscriptions

There are nine tombstones that survived from the 20th century vandalism and there are 16 building or restoration inscriptions, and two graffitos, which were discovered recently (no. 24); the other graffiti has gone long time ago (no. 4).

## 2 Vlora (Valona, Avlonya)

Vlora, the second port of Albania today is situated in a magnificent natural harbour. It served as a basis for the operations of 1480 against Southern Italy, the campaign of Fatih Sultan Mehmed and Gedik Ahmed Pasha; in 1537 Sultan Suleyman stayed for more than one month in Vlore during the Corfou campaign. During its time, he ordered some important works in the castle of Kanina, had a fine little mosque built in Vlore and the castle of Vlore. There are 3 inscriptions from the time of Sultan Suleyman, all described by Evliya Çelebi. Only the inscription from the Mosque has survived.

Evliya Çelebi describes Vlora as follows:

### *The harbour and fortress of Vlora*

Vlora was founded by Sultan Suleiman who ordered it to be built in the form of a courtyard (avlu) overlooking the sea to protect the Bay of Vlora from attack by the Venetians, and when it was finished, it was given the name Avluya. The name figures in the Offices of the Imperial Registry as the sandjak of Vlora-Avlonya. The fortress of Vlora is built on a low sandy spit at the entrance to the Bay of Vlora and the Bay of Dukat. It is octagonal in shape and is very strong and solid, a veritable great wall of Sultan Süleiman. People say the Ottomans do not know how to build fortresses, but anyone who has not seen the fortresses of Szeged on the frontier of Eger, the fortress of Bender on the banks of the Dniester river on the frontier of Ochakov, and this fortress of Vlora, cannot understand how masterful Ottoman construction work can be. (Trans. by Dankoff and Elsie 1999, p. 135)



Figure 1. Inscription of Sultan Suleyman

## 2.1 Inscription of Sultan Suleyman

This is by far the most historic and important inscription from our Corpus (Fig. 1). Because it refers to two important personalities, the first is a religious leader and the other is Sultan Suleyman. The inscription is now walled up in the Pashallerreva Mosque, which was built in the 20th Century by Reshid Pasha. The inscription was copied by Evliya Çelebi in his famous *Seyahatname*, without mistakes:

In all, it has [...] prayer-niches. Among them is the lovely Sultan Suleiman Mosque with a chiselled stone dome covered in lead and with a fallen minaret. Over the qible door is the following chronogram: This mosque is a site of great spirituality. (Trans. by Dankoff and Elsie 1999, p. 138)

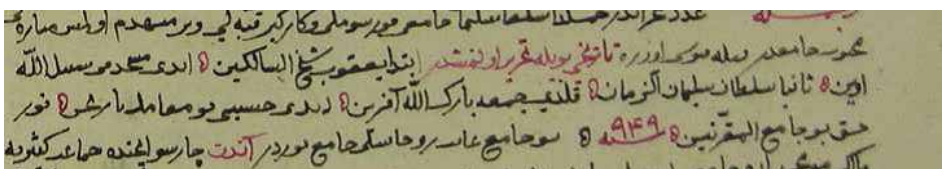


Figure 2. Manuscript of Evliya Çelebi where the text of the Vlora inscription is given

ابتدا يعقوب شيخ سالكين \* التدي مسجد في سبيل الله اوليه  
 ثانيا سلطان سليمان الزمان \* قلدي جعمه ا بارك الله افرين  
 دي حسبي بو ماقمك تاريخن \* نور حق بوال (ل) جامع المقر بين  
 في 1542/1543 ٩٤٩

*İbtida Yakub Seyh-üs Salikin  
Etdi mescid fi sebilillah evin  
Saniyen Sultan Süleyman-uz-zeman  
Kıldı Cuma barekellahu aferin  
Dedi hasbi bu makamın tarihin  
Nûr-ı hak bu cami-ul-mukarrabîn sene 949*

First, Yakub, sheikh of the devotees,  
Made his house into a mosque (mescid) for the sake of God.  
Second, Sultan Suleiman, Solomon of the Age,  
Turned it into a congregational mosque (cami') - bravo!  
Hasbi has composed the chronogram of this temple:  
Find the light of truth: Mosque of those brought near to God.  
Year 949 A.H. [1542 BCE]

This inscription (Fig. 2) is important because it refers to Sheyh Yakub of the Halveti order who preached in Southern Albania. The Mosque is referred as Sheikh's House, converted into a *mescid*. Later Sultan Süleyman turned it into a Mosque. Hasbi has composed a Chronogram (an *ebjad* date) which counts to the date of 957, which differs 8 years from the year that is written numerically in the inscription. Another peculiarity of the inscription is the reference to Sultan Suleyman, as 'Salomon of his Age'. Suleyman loved to be compared to the biblical King Salomon. There are 2 inscriptions in Jerusalem, where this reference is used (Tütüncü 2006, pp. 34-35 and 38-39).

## 2.2 İlyas Paşa Çeşmesi (Fountain of İlyas Pasha)

A second inscription noted by Evliya Celebi is the inscription of a fountain. This fountain is located near the *Tekke* of Yakub Efendi and is called İlyas Pasha's fountain. This inscription with the fountain was demolished long time ago.

From Evliya Çelebi: «There are 4 khans and 8 fountains, the best known of which is the fountain of İlyas Pasha near the tekke of Yakub Efendi, with the following chronogram»:

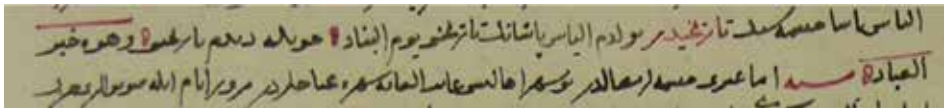


Figure 3. Manuscript of Evliya Celebi where the text of the İlyas Pasha Fountain is given

*Bulдум İlyas Paşanın tarihini yevmü't-tenad  
Çünkü dedim tarihini ve-hüve hayrül-ibad/ Sene...*

On the day of assembly I found the date of İlyas Pasha

Since I pronounced its chronogram: «And he is the best of God's servants».

Year... (Trans. by Dankoff, Elsie 1999, p. 141)

The last line contains an *ebjed* date which counts to:

*ve-hüve hayrül-ibad* 17+810+108 = 935

935 AH is 1528/15 29 CE.

This fountain dates also from the times of Sultan Suleyman. If the *ebjed* date is correct, this is the oldest inscription of Southern Albania.

### 2.3 Kanina fortress inscription

In Kanina, a mountain overlooking Avlonya, its bay and surroundings, a fortress was built. This fortress had, according to Evliya Celebi, an inscription (Fig. 4).

Evliya describes Kanina as follows:

The fortress of Kanina has three gates, one facing south-east which links the fortress to the open town on that side. The second faces north and opens onto the road which descends to Vlora. The third faces south and opens onto the small extramural settlement (*varoş*). Near this gate is the citadel which has one gate facing east and communicating with the main fortress. The citadel contains only 20 houses built in the old style with tiled roofs. It also has storage houses for grain and munitions and cisterns for water. Above the northern gate there is an inscription in celi script on a square slab of white marble indicating the date when Sultan Suleiman repaired and reconstructed the fortress. The roads in this fortress are all up and down. There are no bazaars, khans, bathhouses or public buildings inside the walls, but the open town to the south of the fortress contains 300 stonework houses with tiled roofs and gardens and vineyards, all piled up on top of the another. Here, too, there is no sign of bazaar. There is only the spacious Mosque of Sinan Pasha with its high and elegant minaret. There is also a *tekke* of Hadji Bektash Veli here, which was also endowed by Sinan Pasha. This *tekke* is famous throughout Turkey, Arabia and Persia. Here one finds many devotees of the mystical sciences and the dervish life of poverty. Among them are lovely young boys. Visitors and pilgrims are fed copious meals from the kitchen and pantry of the *tekke* because all the surrounding mountains, vineyards and gardens belong to it. Near the *tekke*, the benefactor of the endowment, Ghazi Sinan Pasha, lies buried along with all his household and retainers in a mausoleum with a lofty dome - may God have mercy on their souls. In short, it is a rich and famous *tekke*, beyond my powers to describe. (Trans. by Dankoff, Elsie 1999, pp. 131-132) (Fig. 5)



Figure 4. Kanina Fortress

Figure 5. Tombstone of Sinan Pasha

The founding inscription of Kanina fortress by Sultan Suleyman is now gone. A tombstone on the edge of the citadel refers to Sinan Pasha's burial place. The tombstone has a head dressing with a double-headed sword. This model sword is the so-called 'Zulfikar of Caliph Ali', apparently done to mark the relation of Sinan Pasha to the Bektashi order as stated by Evliya. This is the earliest reference to the establishment of the Bekatshis in Albania.





Figure 6. General View of Ergirikasri from the Citadel



Figure 7. Fortress of Gjirokaastro



### 3 *Ergirikasrı* (Gjirokastró)

We do not exaggerate as we state that: *Ergirikasrı* is the most important urban center of southern Albania and at the same time the most beautiful city of the entire country and the most picturesque of the Balkans. The city spreads over several hills. The widely spread settlement is dominated by a citadel. Gjirokastró has the most beautiful and original houses and mansions of the 18th and 19th century residents. It has been preserved from destruction of Albanian Communists because it was the birthplace of Enver Hoxha. Gjirokastró houses several mosques, 2 Halveti *tekkes*, a Medrese, original ottoman fountains and Bektashi *tekkes*, a Bazaar Mosque, and a tekke Mosque. There are some inscriptions in Gjirokastró which were not published. During our expedition we have taken photographs of these inscriptions.

#### 3.1 *Ergiri Kasrı* Sultan Beyazid Mosque

Evliya Celebi states that there was a graffito written on one of the columns inside the Mosque of Sultan Beyazid (Figs. 6-7).

There are eight prayer-niches in all. Up in the fortress is the Mosque of Sultan Bayazit II the Saint. On a column is the following inscription in celi script:

*Bu şehirden Kandiye gazasında yediyüz aded hanedan sahibleri şehid haneleri mesdud kalmışdır. Ve yedi bin added hüddaman bu şehirden Kandiye'de şehid-i şehadet camın nuş etmişlerdir. Deyü tahrir etmişlerdir*

«Seven hundred householders from this town fell in the battle of Candia as martyrs to the faith. Their houses are closed down. And seven thousand servants from this town also quaffed the cup of martyrdom in Candia».

Indeed, many homes are closed down and their servants have married their former masters' wives. (Trans. by Dankoff and Elsie 1999, p. 75)

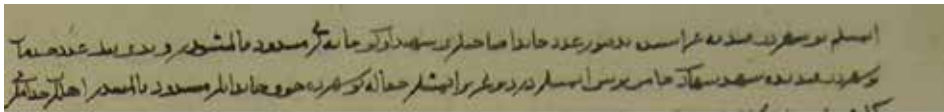


Figure 8. Manuscript of Evliya Celebi where he gives the text of Beyazid Mosque in Gjirokastró Fortress

### 3.2 Tekke Mosque (1145)

According to Frasheri and Dashi,<sup>1</sup> there was an inscription stating that it was built in 1145 (BCE 1732/1733). This mosque must be the one that is described by Evliya Çelebi as *Tekke Mosque*. Locally it is also called Meshit Camisi. According to Machiel Kiel (1990, p. 142) it was still standing in 1967, but it must have been demolished short afterwards. We have no idea what was written in this inscription out of the statement by Frasheri and Dashi.

### 3.3 Ergiri Pazar Mosque

The only intact Mosque that has survived the demolitions is the Pazar Mosque (Fig. 9). There is an inscription high above left entrance signaled by Machiel Kiel (1990, p. 142). As Kiel earlier signaled, only 4 small lines of the inscription are barely readable. The first one contains the introduction as «The owner of good Works» and second and third line contain the name of the patron which unreadable due to the dirt. The last line contains the readable date of 1177.

*Sahib ul hayrat vel hasenat*

.....

*Sene 1177 = 1763/1764*

### 3.4 Hadji Murad Mosque inscription

There is a Mosque with half demolished Minaret in *Ergirikasri*.

This must be the Mosque that is described by Evliya Çelebi as follows:

At the foot of the bathhouse, the Mosque of Hadji Murad. It is reached by way of a stonestaircase. It is a lofty stonework building with a well-constructed minaret and a fountain of excellent-tasting water. Inside the mosque the ceiling is finely decorated.

The description by Evliya Çelebi (cfr. Dankoff, Elsie 1999, pp. 76-77) can still be observed. It is square in plan and its minaret is half broken. It is being used as a house. There is a well, under the Mosque, which still has excellent tasting water. There is another fountain at the foot of the minaret. There is a stairway leading to the entrance to the Mosque, which has surely more than

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1 Frashëri, Dashi (1987, p. 73) gives as year of construction 1742-1743 but gave as the Hijra year 1145 which instead corresponds to BCE 1732/1733.



Figure 9. Ergirikasri  
Pazar Mosque  
Inscription



Figure 10. Ergiri Haci  
Murad Mosque

6 step stones, and the courtyard of the Mosque is still full of trees and the surroundings are populated by old buildings. The fountain built over the well shows an inscription which names the Mosque as «Haci Murad Mosque».

The inscription gives the name of the patron Haci Murad (Fig. 11). But this Mosque was later rebuilt by somebody else, called Muin Arslan. The inscription is undated. Therefore, we have no information when this re-building activity has been undertaken.

1	<i>Havz ile yapılmışdır ki fâide-yi ziyâde ola</i>	2	<i>Esâsından yapıdıran ki duâda artık ola</i>
3	<i>Câmi' ile berâber müessisi Haci Murad</i>	4	<i>Havzı yabdıran (cami) berâber cennetle şâd</i>
5	<i>Cümle ehl-i îmân ve havzile yabdırana</i>	6	<i>Muîn Arslan nâib yeğen sâhib İbn Güfte</i>
7	<i>Bu gün bana yarın sana işte gitti enbiyâ</i>	8	<i>Lutf ile ihlâs ile cümleye münâsib duâ</i>

This is built with a pool to have great benefit  
 He who built should receive much praises,  
 The construction was at the orders of Haci Murad  
 He who built the the pool with mosque should be happy in Paradise,  
 All believers and the one who built the pool  
 Is Muins Arslan, governor Yegen Sahib Kufte  
 One day for me the other day for you so they have all gone  
 Please make with respect a prayer for their soul.

حوضيله یا{لمشدر که فائده زیاده اوله  
 اساسندن یا{دیران که دعاده ارتوق اوله  
 جامع ایله برابر مؤسسسی حاجی مراد  
 هوضی یا{دیران جامع بارابر جنتله  
 جمله اهل ایمان وحوضيله یا{دیرانه  
 معین ارسلان نائیب یکن صاحب ابن کفته  
 بو کون بکا یارین سکا ایشته کیتدی انبیا  
 لطف ایله اخلاصیله جمله یه مناصب دعا

The last line contains an *ebjad* date and when we count the letters into their numerical value it gives the date of 1284 AH.

لطف ایله اخلاصیله جمله یه مناصب دعا

75+184+93+77+767+46+119 = 1284  
 1284 AH is 1867/68 BCE.



Figure 11. Ergiri  
Haci Murad Mosque  
Inscription



Figure 12. Ergiri Dunavat Mosque (1304/1887)



Figure 13. Ergiri  
Dunavat Mosque  
Inscription

## 3.5 Dunavat Mosque

This Mosque is now used as a depot. Its name is the name of the neighborhood where the Dunavat Mosque is located.

There is an inscription from year 1304.

1	<i>Makâm-ı mescidgâhı ravza-i pür feyz-i mevlânâ</i>	2	<i>Harâb olmuş idi bûd u nâ-vât câmi-i ulyâ</i>
3	<i>Zamâniyle bu hayrî bânî-i mûkerremîn hayr eylemiş bünyâd</i>	4	<i>Ve lakin pek harâba yüz tutup kalmış tek tenhâ</i>
5	<i>Ki sâhib-i hayr bânisi demektir Karagöz-zâde</i>	6	<i>Edîb bin Ömer sarf etti nakd-i himmeti ihyâ</i>
7	<i>İlahi kudretinle isti'ân et yevm-i mahşerde</i>	8	<i>Meded sen afv-ı gufrân-ı hüdâsın evvel ve âhir</i>
9	<i>Salâ ve nesrin okunsun şarkı her dem tarih-i tâmmın</i>	10	<i>Temelden kıldı bu Edîb Efendi câmii inşâ</i>
11	<i>Min gurreti'-ş-şehri zilhicce senetin</i>	12	<i>Erbaa ve selâse ve selase mietin ve elf sene 1304</i>

This place of worship and a garden for learning and science for our Lord  
 This elegant Dunavat mosque was in ruins  
 In old times some person of beneficent Works has constructed it  
 But later it became isolated and in a ruinous state  
 The establisher was called Karagözzade  
 Edib Bin Omer has spent money for rebuilding  
 O My God, please help us in the day of judgement  
 Help you are the one who forgives Us My God before and after  
 Sala and Nesrin will be read everytime on its date  
 Edib Efendi has built from the ground this mosque  
 At the beginning of the month of Zilhicce in the year 1304.

مقام مسجدکه ی روضهء ارفیض مولانا  
 خراب اولمش ایدی بودناوات جامع علیا  
 زمانيله بو خیری بانیء مکرمین خیر ایلمیش بنیاد  
 ولکین ک خاربه یوز طوتوب قالمش تک تنها  
 که صاحب خیر بانسی دیمکدر قاره کوززاده  
 ادیب بن عمر صرف ایتدی نقد همتی احیا  
 الهی قدرتکله استعن ایت یوم محشرده  
 مدد سن عفو غفران خداسک اول و آخر  
 صلا و نسرين اوقونسون شرفی بر دم تاریخی تامک  
 تملدن قلدی بو ادیب افندی جامع انشا

من غرة الشهرى زى لحجه سنة  
اربع و ثلاثماية و الف سنة

The second line of the fifth distich contains a date written in *abjad*. The letters equivalents in numerals give the date of 1304 which is also written fully in the last distich:

تملن قلدى بو اديب افندي جامع انشا

$352+114+145+17+8+144+524 = 1304$

The first days of *Zilhicce* in Arabic correspond to 21-23 August 1887.

### 3.6 Seyh Hasan and Huseyin Halveti tomb (1181/1767)

In Gjirokastro there is an Halveti Tekke (Fig. 14). In the garden of this tekke there are 2 türbes with inscriptions. One turbe has a very damaged inscription (Fig. 15). It gives the date of death of Seyh Hüseyin (1181) and rebuilding of the Tekke by Muhtar pasha in the year 1221, some 40 years later. Muhtar Pasha was one of the sons of Ali Pasha Tepelene.

*Tarih merhum ve Magfur lehu halife??*

*Seyh huseyin Halife Salfi....*

*Vefat tarih sene 1181 = 1767/1768*

*... (Tamir) Muhtar pasha 1221 = 1806/1807*

تاريخ مرهوم و مغفور له خليفة  
شيخ حسين خالفة سلفى سنة  
وفت تاريخ ١١٨١ 1767/1768  
.....

تعمير محتار باشا سنة ١٢٢١. 1806/1807

The date of the late and halife....

Shaikh Huseyin Halife Salfi....

Date of passing 1181

Date or renewal 1221 by Muhtar Pasha.





Figure 14. Seyh Hasan Halveti *Tekke*



Figure 15. Seyh Huseyin Halveti *Türbe*  
Inscription



Figure 16. Sheikh Suleyman inscription



Figure 17. Avlumanlat Fountain

### 3.7 Seyh Suleyman Halveti Tekkesi Recep 1268-Nisan May 1852

Another Halveti *tekke* is also located in Gjirokastró. An inscription is placed at the entrance of one of the buildings (Fig. 16).

1. *Bu makamı İnşa edüb*
2. ....
3. *mekan olub innege*
4. *makbul olsun*
5. *İçler ile*
6. *hayr neva ali olub*
7. *sene 1268 mah receb Seyh Suleyman Halveti Tekke*

تملدن قلدی بو اديب افندي جامع انشا  
بو ماقم انشا ايدوب  
مکان اولب انمکه  
ماقبول اولسون  
او- لر ايله

حیر نوا علی اولوب  
سنة ۱۲۶۸ ماه رجب

This blessed place has been built by...  
It is a holy place let it be accepted  
As a work of generosity  
In the year 1268 on the month of *Receb*.

### 3.8 Avlumanlat Fountain (1273/1858)

This inscription has been found in the *Tekke* of Zellish. It is an inscription with a local flavour. *Avli manalat* is the name of a neighbourhood of Gjirokastrò and the family name of Buzgu is of Albanian origin (Fig. 17).

*Sahibul Hayrat*  
*Avli Manalaat mahallí*  
*Bende-i Alı Aba Salih Aga*  
*Buzgu Hak Teâlâ hayrat*  
*ve hasenâtlarin kabul eyleye...*  
*Amin sene 1273*

The owner of good works The servant of the Holy prophet's Family in the neighbourhood of Avli Manalat Salih Aga Buzgu. Let God accept his works and alms. Amen year 1273.

### 3.9 Fragmentary tombstone

The name of the deceased person is not preserved (Fig. 18).

*Ah Mine-l-mevt*  
*Bu Cihan başına geldim bir mürüvvet görmedim*  
*Derdime derman aradım bir ilacın bulamadım*  
*Ah ila zad kılarak tazeliğime doymadım*  
*Çün eceli peymanesi dolmuş murad almadım.*  
*Hasretâ fâni cihanda tûl-ı ömür sürmedim*  
*Firkatâ takdîr bu imiş tâ ezelden bilmedim*

This is a part of a tombstone with a very ancient and famous Ottoman poem complaining about death and departure. Since there is neither a name nor a date that can identify the buried person, we have omitted the translation.



Figure 18. Fragmentary Tombstone

## 4 Tepelene

Tepelene is a tiny mountain settlement. It was founded by the Ottomans in 1482 as a stronghold to control the pass and the roads. Tepelene became famous as birth place of Ali Pasha Tepelene, Vizier of Janina, who, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, brought the whole Southern Albania and most of mainland Greece under his own rule. The citadel was built in 1820 and remained unfinished. There are 2 inscriptions which can be found in Tepelene which remember Ali Pasha and its activities. The next 3 inscriptions were discovered and photographed by Mr. Auron Tare, who has generously offered this for our study (Fig. 19).

### 4.1 Tombstone of Binbaşı of Ali Paşa

هوالباق  
بر مراد ايدا بهدر  
دنياده مثلى نادر  
تبه دلفلى على باشا  
افندمرك بيك باشه سى

*Huvel Baki*  
*Bir Murad ede Bahadır*  
*Dünyada ismi nadir*  
*Tepedelenli Ali Paşa*  
*Efendimizin Binbaşısı*

He is the only Living  
And gives happiness to all  
He has no other comparable  
The Colonel of Ali Paşa  
Tepedelene [died].  
[Inscription 38 × 24 cm]

This is a tombstone of a person whose name has been lost. But from the preserved text we can read that he was an officer of Ali Pasha Tepelene who had established a semi-autonomous state in Janina. He had his own servants and officers. This person designates himself as «Colonel of Ali Pasha's army». This is a testimony of the autonomous and authoritarian character of the ruler Ali Pasha.

#### 4.2 Tepedelen Preveze Fragment of a partly preserved (building) inscription

...الله اي و[ير كامكار \* افرين صد افرين  
دولتدرکه در جنک ابتدا \* برقه قوزر  
حصوصا بو نجه کوهر لر ظهور \* احمد محمد  
نهاری خیره حاربدن دم \* ک

*Allah ey vezir-i kâmgâr Aferin sad (binlerce) aferin...*  
*devlettir ki der ceng-i ibtidâ Breveze-i korfu [...]*  
*hususu bu bahr-i gevherler zuhûr Ahmed-i Muhammed...*  
*hayra*

This fragmentary inscription (38 × 33 cm) (Fig. 20) looks very old. Judging from the style it could be of the times of Suleyman the Magnificent and the Battle of Preveza (28th September 1538).

#### 4.3 Tepelene inscription in Greek with the date of 1819

This remarkable inscription is written in Greek and Arabic letters. It contains the name of Ali Pasha and the date 1819. In addition, it shows the central image of a Mosque. It was reported by Machiel Kiel that it was at the entrance of the Fort of Tepelene (cfr. Machiel Kiel 2013, pp. 475-479)



Figure 19. Tepelene Binbaşı Tombstone



Figure 20. Tepelene Preveza Inscription



Figure 21. Tepelene Inscription of Fortress in Greek and Ottoman

## 5 Delvina

Established as the capital of a Sanjak was once an administrative and military center. The great amount of monumental works: Citadel, Mosque, Halveti *tekke*, *Hamam* and Bektashi *tekke* remind of its glorious past. In Delvina there are some inscriptions, mainly tombstones, and also some graffittos in the portico of the 'Gjin Aleksi' Mosque. The small inscriptions are invocations and some simple verses of the pilgrims who visited this important place. Delvina was also center of the Halveti dervishes which was spread in the direction of Albania about 937/1530 by Yakub efendi who established a *Tekke* in Vlore. But there is also a Bektashi *tekke* in the Xhermahalle section of Delvina. Much of Delvina has been burned out short after the Balkan wars and during the 1st World War by Greek brigands.

For a description of the cultural and architectural heritage of Delvina see two excellent articles by Gianclaudio Macchiarella (Macchiarella, 2012a, 2012b; Macchiarella, Tütüncü 2012).

### 5.1 Delvina Baba Aziz Tekkesi (1173/1759-1760)

The oldest inscription in Delvina is placed on Baba Aziz Tekke (Fig. 22):

Delvina's second *tekke*, known locally as Baba Haziz's, seems to be connected to the first Halveti missionary wave at the end of the 16th c. The *tekke* is situated downstream the creek running at the base of the sharply tapering cliff of the fortress. The *tekke* was connected to the watermill which lays now in ruins close to the circuit walls and the river. Two *türbe*-s are still standing in the garden, one covered by tiled roof, and still well kept, which hosts the cenotaphs of five Islamic saints; the other largely collapsed and roofless. The *tekke* was originally conceived as a small enclave protected by walls and huge plant trees with the main gate on the river side leading, through a vaulted passageway, to the area of the *türbe*. (Macchiarella, Tütüncü 2012, p. 551)

There is an Inscription which was not published earlier. Unfortunately, the inscription is white washed and due to the calligraphic qualities difficult to decipher. I have partly read the inscription and the date is from year 1173 that is 1759-60. This is the second oldest inscription from the Ottoman times that has survived (the oldest one is the Suleyman inscription [no. 1] in Vlora from year 1542). The other inscriptions (nos. 2-5) are all damaged.

*Delvina Baba Azız Tekkesi 1173 = 1759/1760*

*Satır 1: Nedir bu Resûlullah(?)*

*Satır 2: Bu kâfidir.....uşşâkın .....ra'nâ...*





Figure 22. Delvina Baba Aziz Tekke Inscription

Satır 3: .....olup ol feth-i ebvâb-ı safâ  
Satır 4: Sanma kim sâhib  
Satır 5: Bu âlî .....alâmâtı .....nâir olup her dâim mele'-i a'lâ  
Satır 6: .....Şehsüvâr-ı kahramân-ı âlemin  
Satır 7: Şâh-sûret sâfi-sîret ol Hazret-i Muhtâr Paşa  
Sene 1173

## 5.2 Delvina Xhermahalle Tombstone inscription (1211)

This tombstone from the year 1796/1797 is the oldest tombstone of our Corpus. It is located in the Xermahalle tekke and is in the name of Ahmed, who died in 1211. Unfortunately, the inscription has been too damaged for a full reading (Fig. 23).

دریغا کیم فنادان ایلدی رخلت افندی احمد مطر او  
بکایا افتخار ادوب بهشت عزمینه طوتدی یول  
معتادی امر بالمعروف هر دم



Figure 23. Delvina Xhermahalle Tombstone  
Inscription year 1211/1796

Figure 24. Delvina Xhermahalle Tombstone  
Inscription year 1240/1824

*Sene 1211 = 1796/1797*

*Dirîgâ kim fenâdan eyledi rihlet efendi Ahmed-i mîr ol  
Bekâya iftihâr edüp bihişt azmine tutdu yol  
.....mu'tâdı(?) emr-i bi'l-ma'rûf idi her dem*

### 5.3 Delvina Xhermahalle Tombstone inscription Şeyh Emin Efendi (1240/1824)

تاریخ وقت مرحوم  
و غفور له جنتمکان  
الشیخ امین افندی  
ابن مصطفی ابو بکر  
دلوینوی روحی "ین الفاتخا  
سنة ۱۲۴۰

*Tarih vefat merhum  
We gafur Cennetmekan  
Al-shaykh Amin Afandi  
İbn Mustfa abu Bakr  
Devlvinevi ruhiyçün  
Al fatiha sene 1240*

This inscription is broken but nearly completely preserved (Fig. 24). It gives the date of death of a local *şeyh*, who was from Delvina, *Şeyh Emin Efendi*, son of Mustafa Abu Bakr. He died in 1240/1824. He was a *Şayh* from Delvina and was apparently leading the Xhermahalle convent.

This inscription is published (cfr. Macchiarella 2012, pp. 15-16).

#### 5.4 Tombstone (1315)

*Kıydı Yazık pençe-i mevt  
Tarih-i dar-ı fena oldu ufül itdi beden  
Ağlasun mader-ü eb ya da getirdkçe beni  
Sene 1315*

I have been seized by claw of death, alas!  
My body has dissolved leaving this ephemeral world  
Let my father and mother grieve for my memory.  
Year 1315 = 1897

The inscription is only a fragment and the upper part with introductory lines and the name of the deceased are missing (Fig. 25).

#### 5.5 Rusan 'Gjin Aleks'i' Mosque graffittos

Graffittos from Rusan Mosque

من اكرام عالما اكرم الله تعالى

Kim bir alime ikram ederse Allahda ona ikram eder.

God will help the people who help a scholar [man of learning].

كعبة العشاق بشد اين مقام  
هرکه ناقص امد ايذاجشد تمام



Figure 25. Delvina Xhermahalle  
Tombstone Inscription year  
1315/1897



Figure 26. Delvina Rusan  
Mosque and Türbe

This place became the Kaaba of the lovers [Sufis], who comes here with defects becomes a full person (Fig. 26).

يا محمد يا علي يا عمر يا حسين يا حسن يا ابو بكر يا مسطفي

Ya Muhammed Ya Ali Ya Ebu bekr Ya Umar Ya Osman ya Hsueyin Ya ebubekr Ya Mustafa

Oh Muhammed Oh Ali Oh Ebubekr Oh Umar Oh Osman Oh Huseyin O Mustafa.

Düşse zülfünden arak? zemheri? yar canan üstüne  
Güya şebnem? Düşen? en berk-i? [...] üstüne

If from your hair falls from like[...]  
That falls to a *berki handan*.

## 6 Libohova

Libohova is a small but important castle close to Gjirokastró, built in 1809 by Ali Pasha Tepelena as he was married to a member of the Libohova clan. His sister Şehinşah is buried in the village of Libohova. In the family cemetery of Libohova, the most beautiful tombstones in Albania from the Ottoman period are preserved. We have chosen 5 tombstones, photographed by Mr. Auron Tare (Fig. 27).

### 6.1 Tombstone of Ahmed Bek (1278/1861-62)

One of the longest inscriptions of Libohova is also the oldest dated inscription (Fig. 28). The inscription is dated 1278 but it is so much damaged and dirty that it was impossible to give a full reading. Only the name of the deceased person 'Ahmed bey' and the date of his death (1278) could be read.

### 6.2 Tombstone of Lady Reyhan (1283/1867)

The second inscription from Libohova is dedicated to a woman named Reyhan who is declared to be from the Kaza (district) of Cham (Chameriya) (Fig. 29). Her death is also mentioned of having been by martyrdom (*Şehadet devletk*). She is the «Mother of Hüseyin Efendi». Neither were we able to identify her nor her son. This tombstone is unique and important because it is the only tombstone of a woman we were able to identify.

*Hüvelbaki  
nuş edüb çam-ı kazadan şerbeti  
eyledim fani cihandan uzleti  
kalmadı vaktim vasiyyet edeyim  
verdi hak bana şehadet-i devleti  
garibe idim bu vakt ey şah kim  
Hakka gurbetimle buldum rahmeti  
Hüseyin efendinin validesi Reyhan  
ruhuna fatiha  
fi 22 s sene 1283*

Figure 27.  
Libohova Family  
cemetery



Figure 28. Libohova Family  
cemetery Inscription from year  
1278



Figure 29. Tombstone of Reyhan  
Hanım

I have drunk the Sherbet (Syrup) in the District of Cham (Chameria)  
I have departed from this contemporary world  
I have no time to make a testament because  
God has given me the state of Shehadet (Martyrdom)  
I was a lonely person (garibe) until this time o my Shah  
I have found in this country (in exile) the mercy of God  
Reyhan the mother of Huseyin Efendi  
Fatiha for her soul.  
22 seval 1283 (27 February 1867)

### 6.3 Tombstone «...efendi son of Ali Şemsi Hoca»

The third inscription from Libohova is also damaged and we have a very bad photograph to read it from (Fig. 30). We could only partially decipher the inscription. It is the tombstone of Shemsi Hoja, who died in 1287.

1. *Böyle buldum bu civan alinin bir zıllı huda*
- 2....
3. ...
4. *Çün ezelden böyle takdim eylemiş ol hüda*
5. *Merhum cennetmekan Firdevs aşıyan eşraf*
6. *... efendi bin Âli*
7. *Şemsi hoca ruhuna fatiha*  
*sene 1287*

This was how God has decided,  
The late noble... efendi son of Ali,  
who'se destination will be the paradise,  
pray the fatiha for his soul.  
Year 1287 (1871/72)

### 6.4 Tombstone of Malik Paşa

The Fourth inscription from Libohova is from a personality of first importance (Fig. 31). It is the Malik Pasha's tombstone which was famous in the region. He descends from the Arslanpasha Family from Yanya (Janina) and also his father from the Army of Ali Pasha and treasurer. He died in 1893. The inscription is not written in relief but engraved in black basalt stone.

*Ah minelmevt*  
*Vezir şehid Yanyalı arslan*  
*Pasan sülalesinden ve tepe*





Figure 30. Libohova Family cemetery Inscription from year 1287 (1871/72)



Figure 31. Libohova Family cemetery Inscription from year 1309

*delenli Ali paşanın  
müşir-i ordusu ve hazinedari  
(mer)hum begin ogullarından Rumeli  
Beglerbegi payelulerinden Malik  
Paşanın ruhuna Fatiha  
sene 1309*

From the family of Vizier and Martyr Aslan Paşa of Janina and General of the army of Ali Paşa Tepedelen and son of the late *hazinedar* [treasurer] and bearer of Rumeli *Beglerbegi* [Commander of Commanders] rank Malik Paşa pray a *Fatiha* for his soul. Year 1309/1893

In the '*Sicilli Osmani*' this is confirmed with following information: Mâlik Nâîlî Paşa is Albanian. He has lived a long life and he was awarded with Rumeli *beglerbeg* order. He was 85 years when he died in Joannina on the 5th Ramadan 1309 (23

March 1893). His body apparently has been transferred to Libohova and buried there. In the *Memoirs* of Ali Kemalî we have further information about Malik Pasha and Libohova.

Towards the end of the month of September 1862, the Governor-General decided to undertake a trip through Albania. He asked me to accompany him, and I was very pleased to have the opportunity of revisiting my native country again after eight years of absence. So, leaving Janina, we first went to Voshtina, a small town which was the chief place in the district of Pogohia, on the frontier line between the Greek and Albanian elements. While we were there, Malik Pasha, grandson of the famous *Şahinşah* (Shanishah), sister of Ali Pasha of Janina, came to visit Akif Pasha and invite him to his house at Libohovo, which was then a fortress, built in the time of his grandmother. We accordingly went there next day, and left two days later for Argyrokastro. (Aksut, Ali Kemalî 1944, p. 237)

## 6.5 Tombstone of Saffet beg, son of Malik paşa

The last inscription from Libohova is in the name of Saffet beg, son of Malik pasha (Fig. 32). He is the imperial armies chief cannonier [Topçubaşı]. The date of his death is not visible in the photo we have received.

*Ah Minelmevt  
Malik Paşa hazretlerinin  
Mahdumu rikab-i humayun  
topcubaşlarından rifatlu  
Abd Muhammed Saffet bek  
Efendinin ruhuna fatiha sene...*

Oh Dead,  
Pray the fatiha for he soul of  
Muhammed Saffet Bek Efendi,  
son of Excellency Malik Pasha,  
and the royal commander of cannonniers.

## 7 Conclusion

These 25 inscriptions do not seem too much for some 400 years of Ottoman rule in Albania. Of course, there was much more but during the unfortunate times, it seems that they went dispersed or destroyed. Nonetheless, what is left and what we have published is an important contribution to the culture and history of Southern Albania. Hopefully, more inscriptions



Figure 32. Libohova Family cemetery Inscription (Saffet bek)

will be discovered, especially tombstones which are still buried or hidden in some places will be brought to light. I would like to thank the Director of the Albanian Coastline Agency, Hon. Auron Tare and Prof. Gianclaudio Macchiarella who have been of enormous assistance and helped locate and study the Ottoman inscriptions in Southern Albania.

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