

Author: Marianna Mastrostamati

Translated by: Mary Eliopoulou & Cynthia Alex Mitara

Alatsata (in Turkish language Alaçati) located in the western part of Ionic or Erythrean peninsula, opposite the island of Chios, within a distance of 10 km southwest of Tsesme and 70 km southeast of Smyrna.

The plain area where Alatsata city was situated became populated between 1640 and 1645. [1] The first settlers were Greek slaves from corsaired vessels, bought by the two squires of the region, Turgut Aga in the northeast and Hacı Memis Aga in the southwest part of the plain, in order to cultivate the land distributed to them after the conquest of Erythrea by the Ottoman Turks.

Upon their release, the slaves were given small pieces of land for their family needs. Legend has it that a man with the name of Makaronas pioneered their release.

The slaves were few in number and most of them were sailors who were unfamiliar to farm work. To supplement their labor force in times of sowing and harvesting the new farmers brought their families from the island of Chios. Many of them settled there permanently after they have been assured of their security, welfare, provision of housing and wages.

The two first settlements were founded in the areas surrounding the squire's lodgings (konakia), and eventually merged as result of the population growth. The settlement in the northeast of the plain was called «Upper Village» (in Greek: Pano Chorio), apparently from a house of payer on the island of Chios named "Anachoria" which pre-existed there. The other settlement was respectively called «Lower Village» (In Greek: Kato Chorio) and their junction point was called "Mid-Village" in Greek Mesochoriana.

In Alatsata, the residents were mainly Greeks and Orthodox Christians. There were also

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approximately 200 families of the Greek -speaking Muslims with origin from Peloponnese region, who moved there after Greece declared its independence. They settled in the wider area of the plain and also in Cesme. Approximately 25-30 Muslim families remained in the area and settled in the plain settlements along with the families of the Ottoman government officials who stayed in the city.

In the magazine titled «Statistics of Krinis and Aneon» (Krini is the Greek translation of Cesme. Anea – Aneon – is the old name of Soke city), according to Anthony G. Poulakis, the population of the city was 6.000, in 1821. In the book «Guide and Calendar of Smyrna, [2] it was noted that Alatsata had 10,000 inhabitants in 1889.

According to figures published in December of 1904, in the journal “Xenophanes” [3] the population was 15,500 Greeks and 50 Turks. The immigration waves of the Alatsatean - mainly to Greece and United States. of America, increased both from phylloxera (early 20th century) and from the imposition of the Ottoman military service to the Greeks. This significantly reduced the population of the city. According to the statistics of the of the High Commission of Smyrna, in May of 1914 the number of Greek inhabitants of Alatsata that were forced by the Turks to expatriated were 14.000

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Upon their return (1919 – 1920), according to Michali Notara who was an official of the High Commission of Smyrna, the population of Alatsata during the period 1921-1922 amounted to 9.950 Greeks, 50 Turks and 20 Gypsies. The latter lived in the neighborhood of “Atsinganaria” (the Gypsies’s camps). They spoke Greek and were dray makers, blacksmiths and iron-workers.

Until 1864, Erythrea fell under the Sancak (prefecture) of Chios of the eyalet (broad region) of the "White Sea" (Aegean Sea) which belonged to the jurisdiction of the kapoudan Pasha (Ottoman fleet Admiral).. Erythrea separated from the island of Chios in 1865 and split into two kaza (county provinces) of Cesme and Karabourna, which were included under the Sancak of Smyrna of the Vilayet of Aydin. Alatsata was a separate nahiye (sub province, large village) and under its administration fell Agrilia, Reisdere, Karmealesi and other small villages of the plain. After the conquest of Ionia by the Greek army and the return of Greek residents, the vice-governorship of Krini (Cesme) was formed, under which Alatsata fell for a short time. Then Alatsata detached and until 1922 fell directly under Smyrna administration as a municipality.

..... to be continued

[1] The Revd. Oeconomos Constantinos A. Vlamos, "Alatsata of the Ionic peninsula", Thessaloniki 1946

[2] Calendar and Guide of Smyrna, published by "Amalthia", 1889

[3] Magazine document of "the East" Association, Athens 1904

[4] "The Legend" Evangelidis Margaritis, Athens 1918

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