

FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY – HELLAS
INSTITUTE FOR MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES

Halcyon Days in Crete VII

A Symposium Held in Rethymno
9-11 January 2009

Political Initiatives

‘From the Bottom Up’
in the Ottoman Empire



Edited by
Antonis Anastasopoulos

CRETE UNIVERSITY PRESS



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C R E T E U N I V E R S I T Y P R E S S

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ABBREVIATIONS

BOA:	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul, Turkey
TSMA:	Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, Istanbul, Turkey
<i>ActOrHung:</i>	<i>Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
<i>ArchOtt:</i>	<i>Archivum Ottomanicum</i>
<i>BSOAS:</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>EB:</i>	<i>Études Balkaniques</i>
<i>IJMES:</i>	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
<i>IJTS:</i>	<i>International Journal of Turkish Studies</i>
<i>JAOS:</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JESHO:</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JTS:</i>	<i>Journal of Turkish Studies</i>
<i>NPT:</i>	<i>New Perspectives on Turkey</i>
<i>OA:</i>	<i>Osmanlı Araştırmaları</i>
<i>RMMM:</i>	<i>Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée</i>
<i>SF:</i>	<i>Südost-Forschungen</i>
<i>SI:</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
<i>TD:</i>	<i>Tarih Dergisi</i>
<i>TSAJ:</i>	<i>The Turkish Studies Association Journal</i>
<i>EP²:</i>	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition (Leiden 1960-2002)</i>
<i>EP³:</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam – Three (Leiden 2007-)</i>
<i>İA:</i>	<i>İslâm Ansiklopedisi (Istanbul 1940-1979)</i>
<i>TDVİA:</i>	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (Istanbul 1988-)</i>

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

All terms and phrases originally written in non-Latin alphabets have been transliterated into the Latin script.

A simple system of transliteration from the Arabic into the Latin alphabet has been adopted, and most diacritical marks have been omitted.

No final -s- is added to plural nouns, such as *ayan*, *ulema*, and *reaya*.

INTRODUCTION

POLITICAL INITIATIVES ‘FROM THE BOTTOM UP’

Antonis ANASTASOPOULOS*

THE TITLE OF THIS VOLUME, ‘Political initiatives “from the bottom up” in the Ottoman Empire’, reproduces that of a short, ground-breaking article of Suraiya Faruqi of 1986.¹ This article provided the inspiration for the Seventh Halcyon Days in Crete Symposium of the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH, held in Rethymno on 9-11 January 2009. It is hoped that this volume remains faithful to the purpose of the symposium from which its 19 essays emanate.² Rather than an enthusiastic endorsement of the feasibility of studying ‘bottom-up’ political initiatives from such an angle, the symposium and the subsequent volume should be seen as an invitation to the scholars involved to explore both what they take to be ‘political initiatives’ as well as the significance of and problems related to studying them in a ‘bottom-up’ direction. The result, it is hoped, is a collection of articles which are solidly grounded on archival and narrative sources of the Ottoman era, yet avoid a sterile empiricism, and fruitfully raise issues which surpass the limits of their particular case studies.

In her 1986 article, Faruqi points out that it is misleading to interpret the Ottoman political system through the lens of Oriental despotism, and seeks to highlight the political role and initiatives of those who did not belong to the circle of governmental office-holders. Thus, her concept of the ‘bottom’ is not restricted to only the weak or poor members of Ottoman society; for instance, provincial notables occupy a central place in her discussion of ‘political initiatives “from the bottom up”’. However, it is worth noting that in many cases they do so as representatives or leaders of the people of the settlements or regions where they lived, as Faruqi stresses the importance of collective political ac-

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I wish to thank Drs Eleni Gara, Elias Kolovos, and Marinos Sariyannis for reading and commenting on this introduction.

1 S. Faruqi, ‘Political Initiatives “From the Bottom Up” in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Some Evidence for their Existence’, in H. G. Majer (ed.), *Osmanistische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vančo Boškov* (Wiesbaden 1986), 24-33. I would like to thank Suraiya Faruqi and Harrassowitz Verlag for their kind permission to use the title of the article for this volume.

2 The Symposium also included papers by Cemal Kafadar and Onur Yıldırım, who were in the event unable to submit them for publication.

tion (within groups such as the guilds or local communities). As for the main mechanism through which the people expressed their political demands and initiatives, this was the lodging of complaints, about which Faroqhi dismisses the idea that it had to do only with grievances of a private nature. Furthermore, Faroqhi cautiously suggests that the crisis of the late sixteenth century may be a crucial explanatory factor behind an increase in the politicisation of Ottoman subjects, but claims that this increased politicisation concerned mostly the urban population, noting that, when under pressure, peasants usually did not have many options other than to abandon their lands or find themselves a patron. She also points to the fact that the main sources of information about political initiatives ‘from the bottom up’ are record books of the central administration (*mühimme defterleri*, *şikâyet defterleri*) or the local judges (*kadı sicilleri*), which often do not clarify the identities of the individuals or groups who petitioned the central authorities. Even though Faroqhi draws her examples from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as indicated in the title of her article, she actually extends the validity of her argument to the period up to the inauguration of the centralising policies of the nineteenth century. As for the examples of political initiatives that she cites, most of them refer to financial grievances about tax collection, the functioning of the market, prices, and the currency. These issues were not purely financial: in the view of the petitioners, they had repercussions which menaced social stability and the continuing existence of their communities and guilds.

The issues of politicisation in Ottoman society, the relation between the sultans and their subjects and sultanic legitimation continued to concern Faroqhi in her later work as well.³ Thus, in a longer article of 1992 she focuses her attention on how the Sultan’s subjects presented their arguments in their petitions so as to achieve their desired goals, and on how the phrasing of their petitions and that of the state decrees issued in response reproduced and interacted with the official discourse of legitimising sultanic rule.⁴ The cases that she cites in this article as examples of “political activity among Ottoman taxpayers” can be briefly described as instances in which individuals (usually with a public role) or groups of townsmen or villagers complained to the Sultan about the abusive attitude of state officials and tax-collectors (but also of other law-breaking individuals, unrelated to the state apparatus) and their disrespect for the rights or privileges of the *reaya* and waqfs. The range of complaints discussed is quite broad: from exacting illegal amounts of taxes to breaking into houses and plundering them to denying a person the

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- 3 See the studies collected in S. Faroqhi, *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1720* (Istanbul 1995), but also her later publications, such as ‘Coping with the Central State, Coping with Local Power: Ottoman Regions and Notables from the Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century’, in F. Adanır and S. Faroqhi (eds), *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne 2002), 351-381; ‘Guildsmen Complain to the Sultan: Artisans’ Disputes and the Ottoman Administration in the 18th Century’, in H. T. Karateke and M. Reinkowski (eds), *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (Leiden and Boston 2005), 177-193; *Artisans of Empire: Crafts and Craftspeople under the Ottomans* (London 2009), esp. 142-159.
 - 4 Eadem, ‘Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)’, *JESHO*, 35 (1992), 1-39.

right to build a coffee-house against the town wall. Two features which bind these and many other seemingly disparate cases together are (i) that directly or indirectly, in one way or another, they concerned a local community or a group of people (rather than only an individual), often by menacing or upsetting public peace or order, and (ii) that the central authorities were asked to intervene and provide a solution.

In the context of the present volume, the question that Faroqhi's argumentation in these two articles immediately raises is that of the definition and use of the two terms which constitute the basic elements of the shared title of the 1986 article and this volume: 'bottom up' and 'political'. Obviously, a discussion of them as an introduction to the 19 essays which follow will be incomplete without being also expanded to the third significant constituent element of the title, 'initiatives'.

As a general comment, I think that the ideas, questions, and approach that Faroqhi has put forward in the two articles discussed above still provide a solid conceptual framework today. For the purposes of this brief introduction, I would like to dwell and expand on five interrelated points.

One, when one uses such sketchy terms as 'bottom' and 'up' in studying political relations in the context of an absolutist state with no recognition of the 'people' as a political actor, it makes sense to perceive the 'bottom' and the 'top' as categories in which political characteristics (principally office-holding) take precedence over socio-economic ones. This is not to say that political and socio-economic characteristics can be divorced from each other or that the different socio-economic identities of those who form the 'bottom' and the 'top' are irrelevant, but that, in exploring the forms and bounds of political expression of imperial subjects who did not have civil and political rights in the way that citizens in modern democracies do, it is permissible to put emphasis on who holds formal authority and who does not as a distinguishing line to the detriment of more refined taxonomic criteria. Furthermore, in this particular context, attention needs to be drawn to the fact that 'bottom' and 'up' should not be confused with describing social groups; had they done so, the absence of at least a 'middle' would have been all too obvious and even then the idea of the possibility of analysing society by dividing it in only three groups would still have been misguided. But in the case of the title of this volume, what 'bottom' and 'up' in fact do is to indicate a hierarchically upward direction in political activity.

Even though an approach which takes office-holding as its axis echoes the official separation of the population of the Ottoman Empire between *askeri* and *reaya* or between a decision-making sultan and the rest, it is simplistic to dismiss it as state-centred, since we have to consider that official ideology and the law were not mere theoretical constructs, but agents which affected the Sultan's subjects' everyday scope for legitimate or legally-protected political action.

On the basis of the above, the 'top' can be taken to be the central authorities in Istanbul and those who held state offices, high ones in particular,⁵ while the 'bottom' can consist of

5 H. Gerber, 'Ottoman Civil Society and Modern Turkish Democracy', in K. H. Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne 2000), 134, suggests that the state can be viewed "only as the sultan and his closest aides".

the large bulk of the population, the *reaya*, regardless of their socio-economic status, but also of minor officials who were subject to the authority (and abuse) of their superiors, as well as of such people as the many provincial Muslims who, from the seventeenth century onwards, had obtained janissary and thus technically *askeri* status, but in actual fact belonged to the middle and lower strata of their societies. In less strictly defined terms, the 'bottom' is all those who formally were or felt weaker than or inferior to the ones whom they addressed, denounced or moved against, and absolutely not (or, more accurately, absolutely not exclusively) a marginal social group, an impoverished proletariat, or the lowlife. Adapted accordingly (i.e., with taking the holding of local authority or power as an axis of analysis), this definition of 'top' and 'bottom' also applies to cases of local, intra-communal antagonisms, such as those analysed by some of the authors of this volume, in which the state authorities were not directly or not initially involved.

Two, still because in the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman state there were very few formal political processes which officially involved those who today would be described as 'the people', defining 'political' on the basis of strict, formal criteria would produce too poor and unrepresentative results. Instead, it is reasonable to define 'political' broadly as everything which concerned or affected the lives of local communities or groups of people and had a bearing on their position as subjects of the Ottoman Sultan as well as on their relations with the state and its agents, without excluding intra-communal relations, i.e., those situations which had to do with the internal, so to speak, social and power balance of local communities.⁶ Certainly, it is important to distinguish between political initiatives and private grievances or disputes; not everything which happens within the confines of a community is political. For one thing, 'political' has by definition a public element built into it. It is not necessary that it involves people who hold state offices or other formal capacities, but it is inextricably associated with matters which trouble or preoccupy an individual or a group of people in relation to the narrower or larger political entities within which they live. In this respect, having recourse to political authorities, such as the Sultan or a district governor, is not a factor which automatically turns the private disputes of the Ottoman subjects into political affairs, but is, nevertheless, one which, through the involvement of the authorities, renders them public and, therefore, adds a 'political' dimension to them.

Thus, the fact that the Ottoman Empire was not a democratic polity did not mean that the people would not, individually or in groups, engage in political activity; what it meant was that, together with the technological limitations of the time, the lack of democratic institutions worked against co-ordinated political activity which would spread across the Empire or the establishment of formal political groupings.⁷ Other than that, the politicisation of Ottoman society is evidenced by the forms of political expression cited in item Four below (petitioning, rioting, fleeing), but also by many other, such as the political antagonisms observed in the context of local communities, for instance, between *ayan* or between groups of differing social status and access to power. In general, Otto-

6 See also how Faruqi defines "everyday politics" in *Artisans of Empire*, 142-144.

7 Cf. K. Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (New York 2008), 9-13.

man sources suggest that political processes among the Ottoman population, especially in the provinces, intensified from the seventeenth century onwards, as a result of various developments, such as the dismantling of the *timar* system and the overall decrease in the presence of the state in the provinces, as well as changes in tax collection; however, this is not to say that there was not political activity in Ottoman society in earlier periods, which after all are more poorly documented. In her latest book, which deals with the question of the longevity of the Ottoman Empire, Karen Barkey interprets the eighteenth century as a period of political empowerment of various social and professional groups, while flexibility, negotiation, and adaptation are key concepts in her analysis of the attitude of the state towards its subjects.⁸ On his part, Baki Tezcan has made a bold statement by speaking of ‘proto-democratisation’ in the political structure of what he describes as the ‘Second Ottoman Empire’;⁹ despite objections that one may have about his choice of terminology, Tezcan’s discussion of the limiting of sultanic authority also sheds light on political processes ‘from below’ in Ottoman society with a focus on Istanbul. The essays collected in yet another recent volume revolve around the theme of ‘popular protest and political participation in the Ottoman Empire’, demonstrating how the Sultan’s subjects actively expressed their demands and defended their interests in a number of ways, while the editors’ introduction provides a critical discussion of the relevant literature and research questions and desiderata.¹⁰ So, overall, it is important to stress that the existence of political processes and popular political initiatives does not depend on the formal existence of civic or political rights or of participatory procedures.¹¹

Three, ‘bottom-up’ initiatives are principally accessible to us through the lens of the ‘top’, since most of the sources available to or actually used by scholars who base their research on Ottoman material emanate from the state authorities in Istanbul and the provinces or by Ottoman historians associated with the state. The original petitions of those petitioning the authorities or ‘non-official’ sources, such as memoirs, local histories or narratives, or private correspondence, are usually lacking, or become available only in later periods and not always in great numbers. This fact creates an imbalance of which the modern historian has to be aware so as to avoid an uncritical adoption of the state agents’ narration and interpretation of the facts, but which is often difficult to overcome. Besides, one has to consider that various incidents, especially minor ones, have probably not left a written record (illiteracy and an absence in many local societies of a tradition of systematic record-keeping being factors which contributed to that as well), or that in some cases the formulation of the sources is such that either the political side of an incident is not evident or it is difficult to understand the details of what happened.

8 Ibid. Chapter Six is entitled ‘An Eventful Eighteenth Century: Empowering the Political’.

9 B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge 2010). The ‘Second Empire’ covers the period from 1580 to 1826. On p. 233, Tezcan specifies ‘proto-democratisation’ as “*relative* democratization of political privileges”.

10 E. Gara, M. E. Kabadayı, and C. K. Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire. Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi* (Istanbul 2011).

11 Cf. Faroqhi, ‘Political Activity’, 1-2.

Four, individual or group petitions to the Sultan or provincial state authorities (often through their reproduction or summary in the decrees issued in response) provide the most easily detectable and tangible evidence of ‘bottom-up’ political initiatives in the Ottoman Empire.¹² Petitioning (with court action initiated locally against the abuses of the powerful qualifying to be considered a variation of it) constituted the legitimate form par excellence of expressing political initiatives, in accordance with the official ideology which represented the Sultan as the guarantor of justice and redresser of wrongs.¹³ On the other hand, revolts, rebellions, and riots were the principal forms of illegitimate political action. Violence was a prominent feature of such acts of non-compliance, which in fact is a term which covers a wider repertoire of initiatives or reactions to state decisions or practices. For instance, fleeing individually or en masse one’s village in reaction to excessive taxation or other forms of oppression was another expression of non-compliance, as shown by Faroqhi and others,¹⁴ one which shared the peaceful nature of petitioning without partaking in the latter’s legality and state approval.

Five, it is not always self-evident which cases of political activity can be classified as ‘initiatives’ and which not, as it is clear that there is no parthenogenesis in public life: all political actions are reactions to circumstances or incidents which spark them. What is important for the purposes of this volume is that political activity does not consist in submissively carrying out governmental orders (such as when the people of a district undertake a collective *nezir* commitment following a state decree which demands that they do so¹⁵), but that it involves the free will of and independent action by those who stand ‘below’ those to whom it is addressed. On the other hand, even when the inhabitants of a town, a village or a district perform an action following instructions by the government, there may be space for initiative, as when they decide themselves how exactly to mobilise and organise themselves as a group. In fact, how the people of a district organised

12 There is abundant literature on petitioning in the Ottoman Empire. See E. Gara, C. K. Neumann, and M. E. Kabadayı, ‘Ottoman Subjects as Political Actors: Historiographical Representations’, in Gara, Kabadayı, and Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest*, 21-22 and n. 62. For petitions in other political contexts see L. Heerma van Voss (ed.), *Petitions in Social History* (Cambridge 2001) [*International Review of Social History*, Vol. 46, Supplement 9].

13 On the questions of official ideology and legitimization of sultanic rule, see Karateke and Reinkowski (eds), *Legitimizing the Order*.

14 See, for instance, H. İnalcık, ‘Adâletnâmeler’, *Belgeler*, II/3-4 (1965), 86; A. Singer, *Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials: Rural Administration around Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem* (Cambridge 1994), 107-108; K. Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca and London 1994), 147; L. T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1996), 290-291.

15 On the *nezir*, see S. Faroqhi, ‘Räuber, Rebellen und Obrigkeit im osmanischen Anatolien’, in Eadem, *Coping with the State*, 163-178; I. Tamdoğan, ‘Le *nezir* ou les relations des bandits et des nomades avec l’État dans la Çukurova du XVIII^e siècle’, in M. Afifi *et alii* (eds), *Sociétés rurales ottomanes/Ottoman Rural Societies* (Cairo 2005), 259-269; A. Anastasopoulos, ‘Political Participation, Public Order, and Monetary Pledges (*Nezir*) in Ottoman Crete’, in Gara, Kabadayı, and Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest*, 127-142.

themselves into self-governing and largely self-regulated groupings which constituted their localised political communities, as well as the factionalism involved therein, are important aspects of political initiatives ‘from below’ in Ottoman society. These collective institutions presumably fostered the further and more elaborate politicisation of local societies, and often served as the stable basis on which political initiatives of a more transient nature, such as petitions and revolts, rested.¹⁶

In conclusion, I would like to put stress on two of the points made above. One, the biggest gain in studying political initiatives ‘from the bottom up’ in the Ottoman Empire is highlighting the fact that in a polity where the vast majority of the population was without political rights or a formal political role, political processes still took place and there was space for developing political initiatives. Two, it is important to distinguish between ‘bottom’ and ‘top’ as social categories and ‘bottom up’ as an upward direction of political activity. This volume is concerned mostly with the latter, which obviously cannot, as noted above, be totally separated from the former. In this respect, it is also useful to point out that studying political initiatives ‘from the bottom up’ does not automatically equal ‘telling history from below’ in the way that subaltern studies and others who share similar ideas (seek to) do. Such methodological approaches have attracted attention among Ottomanists, but overall they have not had a very strong impact on Ottoman studies.¹⁷

16 See T. De Moor, ‘The Silent Revolution: A New Perspective on the Emergence of Commons, Guilds, and Other Forms of Corporate Collective Action in Western Europe’, in J. Lucassen, T. De Moor, and J. Luiten van Zanden (eds), *The Return of the Guilds* (Cambridge 2008) [*International Review of Social History*, Vol. 53, Supplement 16], 179-212, esp. 191-193. De Moor calls the institutionalisation of guilds and commons in late medieval western Europe a “silent revolution”.

17 The association between subaltern studies and Ottoman history has mostly concerned historians who work on the late period: see, for instance, U. Makdisi, ‘Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate: The Revolt of Tanyus Shahin in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42 (2000), 180-208; Idem, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 2000); S. Deringil, “‘They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery’: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45 (2003), 311-342; D. Quataert, ‘Pensée 2: Doing Subaltern Studies in Ottoman History’, *IJMES*, 40 (2008), 379-381; M. Fuhrmann, ‘Down and Out on the Quays of İzmir: ‘European’ Musicians, Innkeepers, and Prostitutes in the Ottoman Port-Cities’, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 24 (2009), 169-185. But see also B. Ergene’s essay in this volume. References to the work of James C. Scott, especially *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London 1985), are not infrequent in Ottomanist literature: see, for instance, Singer, *Palestinian Peasants*, 125; Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, 147; S. Faroqhi, ‘Introduction’, in Eadem, *Coping with the State*, XVII; Darling, *Revenue-Raising*, 119, 290-291; B. Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 1995), 290, 295; M. V. Petrov, ‘Everyday Forms of Compliance: Subaltern Commentaries on Ottoman Reform, 1864-1868’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 46 (2004), 758-759. In *Crime and Punishment in Istanbul, 1700-1800* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 2010), F. Zarinebaf shows concern for “lend[ing] a voice to the man accused of theft, the woman accused of prostitution, and the vagabond rounded up

Volume Structure and Content

The essays in Part I deal with cases of political mobilisation in the Ottoman provinces, and cover the period from the mid seventeenth to the mid nineteenth century. More specifically, Leslie Peirce's essay centres on court action that various individuals and groups in Harput took in 1632 against the *sipahi* Halil (probably also involved in tax collection) and his men, who were accused of oppression and criminal behaviour towards the local people. Peirce places Halil's attitude and the *reaya*'s reaction within the wider context of governmental instability in Istanbul, the Celali revolts in Anatolia, and centre-periphery relations, but also focuses her analysis on other issues, such as the importance of obtaining consensus against Halil among the various social and interest groups of Harput in order to win the case against him, or the possible impact that the court's scribal practice has on the portrayal of the people's action against the *sipahi*.

Hülya Canbakal takes as her point of departure urban unrest in late eighteenth-century Ayntab, and the motif of the clash between two factions, janissaries and *sadat*. Focusing on an analysis of local conditions in the long duration and of the socio-economic characteristics of the town population, she demonstrates that a systematic examination of such parameters is necessary for investigating and interpreting instances of real or alleged popular unrest and rebellion. Furthermore, she discusses the concept of bottom-up political initiatives, and notes that even when factional politics prevail, the factions are not necessarily coherent in socio-economic and political terms.

Elias Kolovos examines some cases of peasant unrest in the district of Salonica in the early eighteenth century. All the cases are tax-related, and Kolovos argues that at the base of unrest lay the reform of the method of collection of the poll tax (*cizye*) in 1691, which resulted in higher quotas for the non-Muslim villagers, but also the abusive practices of the tax-collectors. The author discusses these incidents against the background of the literature about peasant protest and riots in the rest of early modern Europe, and also poses the question how the Ottoman peasants may have influenced, through their various forms of protest against tax officials, the development of the state concept of benign, *reaya* (or, more specifically, peasant)-centred sultanic justice.

Eyal Ginio describes how the Jewish community of Salonica gradually came to operate as a single entity, which was represented by one or more centrally appointed agents, while at first each congregation administered its internal affairs and external relations quite independently of the others. Ginio treats this initiative, which he dates to the second half of the seventeenth century, as a reaction of the Jewish community to deteriorating economic, social, and political conditions. A unified representation of the whole community fitted better the requirements of the Ottoman tax system, but also enhanced the Salonican Jews' political weight and efficacy in their relations with the state authorities and other denominational groups, like the Christian Orthodox.

and expelled from the city" (ibid., 6-7), for "real voices from below" (ibid., 6), or for "who made up the underclass and the poor in eighteenth-century Istanbul" (ibid., 35), but does not inscribe this concern within a school of thought.

Sophia Laiou discusses the conflict between two factions within the Christian Orthodox community of the island of Samos in the early nineteenth century. The ‘Karmanioloï’, who represented the emerging, largely commercial, bourgeoisie which heretofore did not have access to communal offices, challenged the authority of the traditional leadership of the Christian community, the so-called ‘Old Notables’, or pejoratively ‘Kalikantzaroi’ (Goblins), while they also expressed their discontent with the abuses of the Ottoman officials, especially in the area of tax collection. Eventually, the Old Notables seem to have prevailed, as they managed to portray their rivals as a threat to public order, and, thus, obtain *fermans* in their favour.

Finally, Andreas Lyberatos takes the deposition of the Archbishop of Filibe (Bg. Plovdiv; Gr. Philippoupolis) by the local guilds in 1818 as his starting-point, and interprets this incident as the culmination of the gradual strengthening of the guilds, with that of the *abacıs* at the forefront, to the detriment of the traditional hereditary lay elite of the ‘*çelebis*’, the Archbishop, and the local higher clergy. Lyberatos suggests that what was at stake was control of the affairs and funds first of the guilds and then of the Christian Orthodox community, as non-elite social strata who were represented through the guilds sought to translate their socio-economic progress into political power within and through the institutional framework of their community.

The next four essays, in Part II, focus on the right of the Ottoman subjects to petition the Sultan, and discuss the strategies that they adopted in this respect as well as the contexts and implications of their petitions. Thus, Nicolas Vatin analyses the circumstances under which the Jews of Istanbul were obliged to gradually abandon the cemetery of Kasımpaşa in 1582-1592, and start to bury their dead at a new one in Hasköy. More specifically, he argues that, as local Muslim activism put pressure on the authorities to this end, it eventually obtained the consent of the Sultan to discontinue Jewish burials at Kasımpaşa, thus influencing the imperial policy on this issue. In their petitions, the Muslims complained about the presence of an ‘infidel’ burial ground next to their houses and mosques, and, when the Jewish community continued to make use of its old cemetery despite the *fermans* which forbade it, they accused the Jews of disrespect for sultanic authority.

Rossitsa Gradeva analyses the procedure according to which non-Muslims obtained permission to repair their houses of worship and, at times, even to construct new ones despite the prohibition imposed by Islamic law. Gradeva examines in detail each step of this procedure, and discusses possible variations. Given the legal discrimination that the non-Muslims suffered in the Ottoman Empire, the strategies that they pursued with regard to renovating their houses of worship were in essence political, since, at the practical level, they had to work their way through the local and central Ottoman political system, and, more important, in doing so they asserted the existence, self-consciousness, cohesion, and rights of their communities.

Demetrios Papastamatiou bases his argument on the study of the contents of the eighteenth-century *Mora Ahkâm Defterleri*. He argues that in various cases the petitions reflected local political antagonisms, even when this was not stated clearly. Furthermore, petitioning the Sultan was a form of political initiative from the bottom up, because, on the one hand, it allowed the weaker members of society to turn against powerful members of

the provincial elite and state administration, and, on the other, it was a channel of communication through which the subjects of the Sultan informed Istanbul about developments in the provinces, and, thus, indirectly influenced political decision-making at the centre.

Finally, Evthymios Papataxiarchis analyses the effect of the diffusion of the printing culture on the tradition of petitioning the authorities. Through the study of a revolt which emanated from factional strife within the Greek-speaking Orthodox community of Ayvalık in 1842, he shows that recent technological and political developments, such as the circulation of newspapers, the legacy of the Greek War of Independence, the ideals of the Enlightenment and constitutionalism, and the establishment of the Greek state as an antagonist of the Ottoman Empire for control of its Greek-speaking communities, influenced both the form and the content of the petitions, which were transformed from 'secret' administrative initiatives into 'public', published texts.

The essays in Part III analyse cases of rebellion against the Sultan, his authority and his entourage, and/or instances of popular political activism and unrest in the Ottoman capital. First, Dimitris Kastritsis places the Şeyh Bedreddin and Börklüce Mustafa uprisings in 1416 within the context of the politically turbulent period which followed the Ottoman defeat in Ankara (1402), but also within that of the religious and intellectual history of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Kastritsis argues that these uprisings expressed the political feelings and ambitions of lower and middle social strata, and poses the question why elite figures such as Bedreddin were involved in them. Furthermore, he demonstrates how a careful examination of the few existing fifteenth-century sources combined with a solid knowledge of the period can throw new light on the uprisings and their elusive protagonists.

Then, Baki Tezcan discusses the rebellion of 1622, which resulted in the deposition and murder of Osman II, from the point of view of historiography. More specifically, he analyses and compares seventeenth-century Ottoman narrative sources about this incident, and remarks that there were various factors, such as political allegiance, ideology, expedience, and distance from the centre of power, which determined which version of the events gained wide currency and which were disregarded. An important issue which was raised at the time, and which was discussed by the chroniclers, was whether the dethronement of Osman II and, especially, his subsequent execution were legitimate acts, and whether man or God (or fate) was responsible for them.

In his essay, Marinos Sariyannis discusses the 'second wave' of the Kadızadeli 'fundamentalist' movement in the 1650s, when, as he argues, the movement's popular following reached its peak, and associates the Kadızadeli-Halveti antagonism with the political goals of various groups and social strata in Istanbul. In this context, he focuses on the idea that the Kadızadeli ideology became a useful vehicle for new mercantile strata who wished to promote their interests and enhance their political role at a time of political and economic instability which had detrimental effects on their activities and wealth. In this respect, he also proposes to compare the Kadızadeli ideology with the Western 'Protestant ethic'.

Finally, Aysel Yıldız studies the military personnel of the forts of the Bosphorus, the *yamaks*, who were the protagonists of the 1807 revolt that led to the dethronement of Se-

lim III. First, she analyses, in the light of Ottoman sources, the identity of the *yamaks* in order to demonstrate that many among them were rather young men of often lowly socio-economic background, who, to a considerable extent, also shared common geographical origins, which enhanced their homogeneity. Then, she examines acts of disobedience and disorder in which they engaged, and, finally, discusses the revolt of 1807 as a political initiative from the bottom up with emphasis on the characteristics, attitude, and targets of the insurgents.

The two essays in Part IV introduce a 'top down' perspective in their examination of the interaction between the state authorities and the Sultan's subjects. Suraiya Faroqhi, the Symposiarch, analyses the contents of a register of the central bureaucracy which lists the identities, professions, places of residence, and total cost of 399 men who were sent to Hotin in 1716 in order to repair and improve the local fortress and its infrastructure. Faroqhi does not limit her discussion to the information that the register provides, but also articulates research desiderata, such as knowing the criteria on the basis of which the authorities decided to draft and hire the people that they sent to Hotin. In relation to this, she puts forward a tempting hypothesis, namely that the authorities gave priority to unskilled young men, Albanians in particular, who, if in Istanbul, were viewed as likely participants in political upheavals or revolts.

Svetlana Ivanova investigates if the Ottoman subjects in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Rumelia were cognisant of political and military events. She argues that, since the sultanic decrees, especially those which imposed taxes, did not simply contain orders, but also discussed the political and military circumstances within which these orders were issued, they raised the political awareness of the subjects. The *reaya* communities were further politicised by the tax system, which was largely based on self-regulation regarding tax allocation and collection. The principal aim of the sultanic decrees was to legitimise sultanic rule, but, as they were popularised by the *kadı* court and the *reaya* elite, they also produced informed subjects.

The essays in Part V raise methodological and theoretical issues by critically examining certain concepts used in history-writing. Thus, Boğaç Ergene adopts a critical stance towards the concept of writing history 'from the bottom up', and centres his argument on the study of the Ottoman legal system. On the one hand, he points out the shortcomings of *kadı* court registers as a source for studying the inner workings and balances of local communities and their members, especially those belonging to subaltern groups. On the other, he criticises the bipolar separation of the court of law from the local community within which it functioned, as much of the literature does. Finally, Ergene notes that he does not reject 'history from below', but asks for caution in the study of subaltern groups when the sources do not favour investigating their attitudes, motives, actions, or ideas.

Next, Eleni Gara deals with collective action in the Ottoman Empire from the mid sixteenth to the late eighteenth century as an expression of political participation by the Ottoman subjects. She associates collective action with increased politicisation and factionalism within the *reaya* communities, as a result, among other factors, of the enhanced role of the representatives of the local population in the handling of state affairs and easier access to the loci of sultanic authority, such as the *kadı* court and the imperial council. Gara

argues that collective action had a large repertoire in terms both of form and substance, and points out that the image of the submissive *reaya*, as found in petitions to the Sultan, is principally the product of bureaucratic conventions.

Finally, Antonis Anastasopoulos treats 'civil society' as a concept which is compatible with a 'bottom-up' perspective of history, but also as one which is West-specific. The aim of his essay is to discuss whether this concept, as defined for the Western socio-cultural and political context, may be applied to the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire. His conclusion is that, if one considers the key attributes of 'civil society' in a systematic fashion, it is not easy to argue for its existence in the Ottoman Empire, although it is possible to discern some traces of it. On a wider scale, his argument is related to the hegemony of analytical categories drawn from the Western paradigm, and the prerequisites under which these may be transferred and used for societies and states which fall outside it.

PART ONE

STARTING IN THE PROVINCES

TALKING BACK TO TYRANNY: THE PEOPLE OF HARPUT AND THE CAVALRYMAN HALİL

Leslie PEIRCE*

IN THE LATE SIXTEENTH AND THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES, a striking number of Ottoman soldiers assigned to provincial posts engaged in lawless conduct that brought great suffering to segments of the Empire's population. One of them, the cavalryman (*sipahi*) Halil Beg, stationed in the eastern Anatolian city of Harput, is the subject of this essay. In the spring of 1632, at the Harput court, a diverse group of Harput residents denounced the malicious acts of Halil and his followers, repeatedly labeling them "oppression and tyranny", *zulm ve taaddi*. This familiar term was standard rhetoric for abuse of the *reaya*, the vast tax-paying population of the Empire, typically by agents of the government. However, as the court records of the censure of Halil Beg suggest, it took some effort to build a consensus against him, as the sizeable contingent of the aggrieved apparently struggled to draw others to their side. Finally Halil was indicted before the Harput judge in April 1632. As the summary statement of his crimes alleged:

The aforementioned Halil Beg, a *sipahi*, has until the present time committed four or five unjustifiable murders in our province, and he raids homes and abducts boys, and has forcibly seized many women from their husbands and caused the latter to repudiate them. Consequently, as a result of his oppression, we have no tranquility. The poor have suffered excessive oppression and tyranny.¹

The murders, abductions, and rapes were perhaps the worst of the crimes, but the gang's repertoire of violence included numerous other forms of assault on the local population.

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I am grateful to the Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, where much of the research for this article was accomplished. I thank Hasan Karataş, who helped with the reading of difficult patches in the court records discussed here; I also thank Başak Tuğ and James Baldwin for answering queries about petitions.

1 Harput Şer'iye Sicili 181, p. 11, case 1. I thank the İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi (Center for Research on Islam) in Istanbul for making a xerox copy of the Harput court records available to me. The term 'censure' has no technical meaning in Islamic or Ottoman legal procedure; I use it as appropriate characterization of the court action against Halil Beg.

That Halil Beg was hardly unique as an outlaw servant of the state is clear from the regular influx of petitions from around the Empire that were dispatched to Istanbul in complaint of disturbances by the sultan's men. Not only did local authorities hope that the disorder they documented would draw a direct response from the central government, but the petition itself was a necessary trigger that set off the process of imperial review of the situation, possible investigation and, ultimately perhaps, prosecution and punishment. Until the mid seventeenth century, our knowledge of outlaws, petitions, and government responses derives primarily from the *mühimme defters*, registers of decisions taken by the sultan's *Divan* (the Imperial Council).² It is reasonable to assume that the goal of the court action was a petition of complaint to relieve Harput of Halil Beg's destructive behavior, whether it was destined for the Imperial Council or an agent of the sultanate closer to home.

While many original petitions survive in Ottoman archives, they have not been much studied.³ What survive in greater numbers and have been amply studied are the summaries of original petitions that are inscribed in the Council's response to the provincial authorities initiating the petition. The imperial orders catalogued in the *mühimme* registers are not concerned with the local prequel to petition, but rather emphasize the unity in provincial diversity that the typical petition highlighted in order to validate its claim against the accused. The affair of Sipahi Halil thus provides an unusual opportunity to gain insight into challenges to the consensus building that was the bedrock of the Ottoman regime's vaunted petitioning system. The two entries in the court register that detail the effort to censure the cavalryman cast a rare light on to the processes, potentially conflictual, by which a united voice was forged from varied provincial constituencies. Indeed, as we shall see below, the principal action at court was a collective effort by the injured parties to call others in the province to account by demanding that

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- 2 Suraiya Faroqhi has analyzed petitions and the process of petitioning in several writings, including 'Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Some Evidence for their Existence', in H. G. Majer (ed.), *Osmanistische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vančo Boškov* (Wiesbaden 1986), 24-33, and 'Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)', *JESHO*, 34 (1992), 1-39. The lodging of complaints via petitions has been studied by H. G. Majer, *Das osmanische "Registerbuch der Beschwerden" (Şikâyet Defteri) vom Jahre 1675. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. Mixt. 683* (Vienna 1984). As Majer noted, in the mid seventeenth century imperial responses to provincial petitions began to be removed from *mühimme* registers and kept in separate 'registers of complaints' (*şikâyet defteri*).
 - 3 Faroqhi, 'Political Activity', 4-5, points out that virtually no petitions from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries deal with complaints; rather, they concern routine administrative matters. Recently, original petitions have begun to attract scholarly interest; for example, Başak Tuğ has analyzed the petitioning process for eighteenth-century Anatolia in 'Politics of Honor: The Institutional and Social Frontiers of 'Illicit' Sex in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Anatolia', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 2009, and James Baldwin for seventeenth and eighteenth-century Cairo, in 'Petitioning the Sultan in the Ottoman Empire', *BSOAS* (forthcoming).

they acknowledge the heinousness of Halil Beg's crimes and their grave consequences for the province.

Was Harput typical in that opinion regarding a troublemaker was divided, or that there was at least an initial reluctance on the part of numerous residents to take sides against him? Harput probably *was* typical, at least to a degree. Although it might seem self-evident that a soldier who sanctioned, indeed ordered, extortion, murder, abduction, and rape should be prosecuted, there was, in this era of freebooting pashas and soldiers, a natural resistance to challenge such figures for fear of reprisal. But a deeper ambivalence was also at work, for the political outlaw was an ambiguous figure in such times.⁴ To some he was a hero who resisted the predatory state, his own depredations a lesser price to pay. To others he was a strong man, however threatening, who might fill the void left by a weakened sultanate unable to sustain local security. Such a man might be leader of a political faction who provided pay-off or favors in the form of offices, money, and status. To the pre-modern sultanate, which necessarily tolerated a low level of provincial violence, a local strongman with some knowledge of the region and its politics might offer a better alternative to other options. In the case of Halil Beg, there were particular regional dynamics that linked Harput to a constellation of instability and insubordination on the Empire's eastern frontier, with its well-known 'rebel' pashas and generals, though the phenomenon of the outlaw servant of the state troubled other Ottoman regions as well.

This essay tracks two lines of inquiry: the phenomenon of the 'brigand' soldier and popular responses to such a figure. The reconstruction of the affair of Halil Beg that follows is incomplete. We do not learn how he went about building his career of extortion and violence, nor does it become clear who was responsible for organizing the legal action against him. But if we locate the affair within the recent history of eastern Anatolia and Harput's own past confrontations with quasi-criminal authority, the story of Halil Beg becomes in part a reflection on the great challenge in managing remote parts of a far-flung empire. It also reminds us of the separate histories of regions that made up the Ottoman domain. As a form of communication between Istanbul and local centers, complaints, appeals, and formal petitions were indispensable tools in directing the sultanate's attention to eruptions of disorder in distant places.⁵

The People's Complaints

The multiple claims against Halil Beg are to be found in two separate entries or records (*sicil*) in the Harput court register of 1040-1041 (1631-1632); both are dated early April 1632 ("the middle of the month of Ramazan in the year 1041"). The first contains a long and detailed list of Halil Beg's abusive acts that were alleged by his and his men's victims. The second record is a kind of summary of the first, with the people of Harput now speaking with a collective voice. Whether individually or collectively, the protesters ap-

4 I have explored this question in 'Abduction with (Dis)honor: Sovereigns, Brigands, and Heroes in the Ottoman World', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 15 (2011), 311-329.

5 This point is well articulated in Tuğ, 'Politics of Honor', e.g., 93.

pear to approach the judge as a coalition. Their co-ordinated action at court and the catalog of their complaints underline the shared victimhood of Muslims and Christians (*zimmis*), urban and rural – a fact that they also voice pointedly in their testimony. The abuses recounted by the protesters exhibit purposeful vandalism, brutality, fiscal persecution, and humiliation. They also reveal Halil's broad reach through the doors of Harput homes. Some of the more outspoken complainants employ the rhetoric of suffering – lamenting over cruelty and oppression, despairing of salvation. The two case records end with the complainants' demand for a response from the city's notables.

Halil Beg's destructive actions were typical of the repertoire of violence perpetrated by the numerous 'brigands', civilian and soldier alike, who populated petitions submitted to the imperial *Divan*. But the *mühimme* summaries, which list only generic categories of illegal acts, lack the vivid detail that the local process of indictment yielded; hence I give much of the testimony against Halil Beg below in the order in which it was recorded by the court scribe. In the first of the two court records, 14 individuals and one village delegation asserted their charges against the cavalryman and his accomplices; they were followed by a group consisting of "various persons from the city and villages generally" who made additional charges. In addition, groups who did not testify were also present among the party of the aggrieved: villagers accompanying their spokesmen, imperial officials (*çavuş*), fief-holding military officers (*zaim*), and small fief-holding cavalry (*erbab-ı timar*).⁶

- Seyyid [Ferruh]: Acemzade Hasan Çelebi, the deputy of the soldier named Halil Beg, son of Küçük Hacı Mustafa Beşe, seized me and twice struck me for no reason.
- Kasab Hasan Ağa: The brothers Cafer and Hüseyin and [also] Mevlûd, [all sent by] the aforementioned Halil Beg, broke into my house and beat me severely inside my house for no reason. Moreover they [twisted my turban around my neck] and carried me off from the entrance to the judge's court [but] Muslims [men of good repute] gathered round and rescued me.
- Seyyid Ebu Bekir: Despite the fact that I hold the office of city steward (*şehir kethüdası*) by the most noble and honorable patent [of the sultan], Yusuf Çelebi, one of the followers of the aforementioned Halil Beg, took over the stewardship; and because I said "the sultan's edict is the law", they cursed me vituperatively.
- Osman, son of Mehmed Beşe: The aforementioned Halil Beg, on a winter day, forcibly seized my house, which is worth 200 *guruş*; overpowering me by force, he dumped a few *guruş* on top of me; he committed violence and injustice toward me.
- Can Ali and others from the village of Hal: The aforementioned Halil Beg sent [his] men and for no reason they beat two of the men in our village and caused them injury.

6 The translation of the complainants' remarks is for the most part, but not wholly, literal, as I have shortened a few of the statements. Unclear orthography and implied meanings are indicated in brackets. Regarding the legal form of the court action, the claims made by the victims of Halil Beg were not the evidence of witnesses (*şahid*) but rather verbal claims (*takrir-i kelâm*); the respondents spoke as witnesses, testifying to the validity of the complainants' statements.

- Orhan and others, Christians, from the village of Kerbek: The individual named Cafer, follower of the aforementioned Halil Beg, beat the *zimmi* named Manuk, a resident of our village, and killed him.
- The city-dweller Nurcan, a Christian: The aforementioned Halil sent [his] men and they raided my house and broke down five of my doors one by one and they seized my brother's son Kesbir and made him his [Halil's] boy, and they plundered like a horde [of ignorant beasts of prey].⁷
- Nurcan's daughter Yeşecan: The aforementioned Halil Beg sent his men and they raided my house and seized my young son and they broke down the doors of seven other houses.
- Keşmiş and others from the village of Yelend (repeating the testimony of Christians from the village of Murnik): Although we too had fulfilled our obligation to pay our taxes, the aforementioned Halil Beg bought [the tax farm for] our taxes from the official assigned to collect them [and re-imposed them]; he has committed oppression against us.
- The villagers of [Nermeşbend]: The aforementioned Halil Beg sent Kızıl Rumî Beg, one of his followers, to collect our taxes; he took two horses and a gratuity of 20 *guruş*. We have yet to be saved [from him].
- Mir Hacı son of Arslan: The aforementioned Halil Beg gets together with several brigands (*eşkıya*) who are his followers to hang out and drink, right next to my houses; one winter day, he forcibly and violently evicted my [servants] and my family from my house and occupied my houses, and added them to his own [stock of] houses.
- The wife of Kıtbaş Gâvur: The aforementioned Halil Beg sent Ümitzade Yusuf Beg; he seized my son Murad, claiming that his father owed him [Halil] some money, and they sold him.
- The mixed group of urban and village-dwellers: All during his time here, he has taken a gratuity (*hizmet*) for new wells. In violation of Sharia and *kanun*, he takes two *guruş* per village well and one *guruş* for each city well.

Following this litany of abuses, the last speakers (possibly the entire group of complainants) went on to sum up the irregularities they had just detailed and to present their demand for a response from leading figures in the province: "Now it is our request that the oppression and tyranny that the aforementioned Halil Beg has visited upon us and the circumstances of these events and all the instances of oppression and tyranny that have been cited be investigated ... and [the response] recorded [by the judge]".⁸

7 Door (*kapu*) may indicate individual units in a multiple-unit dwelling.

8 The people's 'request' (*sual olunub sicil olunması matlubumuzdur*) could also be translated more strongly as 'demand'.

Interrogation, Response, Consensus

Who were the individuals whom the complainants confronted with the demand for accountability, a demand that was more direct in the second court action? This sizeable group, which I will call ‘the respondents’, consisted of 23 named individuals, each apparently a prominent urban figure. Some were spokesmen for others of the same status or professional category who were also present at court – for example, the religious notables, the first to speak, consisted of four named preachers “and others”. Reminiscent of the ranked order in the sultan’s ceremonial parades, the preachers were followed by the *seyyids*, a rare blood nobility in the Empire, whose status depended on claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad;⁹ then the imperial officials Mustafa Çavuş, Müteferrika Bekir Ağa, and Miralay Mehmed Ağa; two *zaims* Ahmed Çelebi and İbrahim Çelebi; a group of *timar*-holding cavalry; three named cavalry officers, including Kâtib (Secretary) Mehmed Beg, “and others”; and six named janissary officers, including Serdar (Commander) Mustafa Beşe, “and others”. It is striking that the complainants and the respondents comprised parallel constituencies, each with their *seyyids*, their imperial officials, their military officers and rank-and-file soldiers. So, can we speak of two factions in Harput, one for and one against Halil Beg? The complexities alluded to above with regard to confronting local strongmen and the support they might garner from ostensibly law-abiding individuals render such an assumption tentative, at least at this point in our discussion.

In any event, consensus and censure were achieved. The respondents collectively testified that the complaints were justified: “Until the present time the aforementioned soldier named Halil Beg and his men have killed four or five men with no justification, and he raids houses and abducts boys, and he has committed in excess all the oppression and tyranny cited above toward both Muslims and non-Muslims; there is no dissent among them on this point.” The court record concluded in the usual manner: “Each one [of the respondents] having thus spoken by way of legal testimony (*alâ tarik-i şehadet*), what transpired was recorded at the request of the aforementioned Muslims and *zimmis*.” Note that the role of the respondents in this case was to provide affirming witness of the claims of the protesters. They do not ally themselves as fellow-sufferers.

The second *sicil* recounting the allegations against Halil Beg and his censure is a shorter version of the first – 17 lines in the record book versus 45 lines – with a single summary statement by the complainants and a summary response. Why take the trouble to recapitulate the court action? In the light of imperial responses to petitions recorded in the *mühimme* registers, we can see that the first *sicil* established the basis not only for the indictment of Halil Beg but also for potential damages that each complainant might hope to recover. Routinely, the *mühimme* of 1630-1632 instructed local authorities to first compensate the injured and then punish the guilty. What the second *sicil* accomplished was not only to summarize the court action in petitionary style but also, because the ul-

9 The court scribe marked the status of *seyyids* by writing the letter ‘s’ with a flourish. On the class of *seyyids*, see H. Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: ‘Ayntāb in the 17th Century* (Leiden and Boston 2007).

timate audience for this *sicil* was presumably an authority external to Harput, to amplify the rhetoric that would hopefully speed the wheels of justice. The complainants now pointed to *reaya* flight from the province, a standard trope (and reality) of mass desperation and, from the sultanate's perspective, the dreaded loss of tax revenue. Suraiya Faroqhi has aptly labeled the threat of flight as one of the 'trump cards' that petitioners deployed in 'bargaining' with authorities.¹⁰ The complainants also alluded to loss of sexual honor – not only their own but also, by implication, that of the sovereign who failed in his duty to protect their sons and wives from abduction and presumed rape. Here is the collective complaint against Halil Beg as it appears in the second record of court action:

The soldier named Halil Beg, son of Küçük Hacı Mustafa Beşe, one of the *sipahis* residing in the district of Harput, treats us with great oppression and tyranny such that nothing like this has ever happened before. Evil practices have appeared – for the tax on wells, he takes one *akçe* per city well and two *akçes* per village well. And while [it] is forbidden, he takes from the poor one and a half bushels from every *mudd* of grain.¹¹ Because of the oppression and injustice of the aforementioned, many people have fled and are in ruination. Moreover, he has raided houses and abducted young boys and has caused many husbands to repudiate their wives.¹² And he has conspired with the tax collectors who come ... and has collected taxes where there should be none. He spares no occasion for oppression and tyranny. It is our request that the notables of the province be questioned concerning the state of affairs regarding the aforementioned, and that [their response] be recorded.

This piece of rhetoric faulted the sultan and his government for their failure to uphold the fundamental contract between subjects and ruler, payment of taxes in return for the guarantee of security; by extension, the urban leaders of Harput are challenged to perform their role in the preservation of order. In their testimony validating the protesters' allegations (see the opening paragraph), the respondents now ally themselves with the *reaya* as fellow-victims of Halil Beg's "tyranny": "as a result of his oppression, we have no tranquility". They focus on the murders, the seizure and destruction of homes (bashing a door was a synecdoche for the violation of domestic privacy and honor), and the abductions. The most likely reason for this focus was that, unlike Halil Beg's many fiscal abuses, these were capital crimes that could warrant execution, their gravity underlining the threat to Harput. The well tax, clearly a particular outrage to the local populace, was subsumed under the rubric of excessive oppression of "the poor".

10 Faroqhi, 'Political Activity', 3.

11 The complainants appear to have used the coin denominations *akçe* and *guruş* interchangeably. One *mudd* equalled roughly 20 *kiles*.

12 The implication is that the women have been abducted and raped, and then, by common custom, divorced by their husbands. The absence in the first case record of allegations that wives were abducted is noteworthy; perhaps the husbands wished to avoid a public record of their dishonor.

Harput in 1632

How was such a man as Halil Beg, apparently not even a titled officer in Harput's contingent of cavalry soldiers, able to pursue a career of violence? Why had no one stopped him – local military officers, the governor of Harput province, or the governor-general (*beylerbeyi*) of Diyarbakır, to whose jurisdiction Harput city and province belonged? The answers to these questions lie partly in the recent history of the region in whose networks and political fortunes Harput was embedded. The affair of Halil Beg engages seventeenth-century ambiguities with regard to the legitimate uses of force.

Although not a major garrison city, Harput was an historic way-station on the roads crossing the zone that linked central and eastern Anatolia, a trapezoid formed in Ottoman times by Diyarbakır and Erzurum on the east and Sivas and Malatya on the west. To the northwest of Sivas was Tokat, winter quarters of and launching pad for military campaigns to the east. A city that had grown rapidly under the *pax Ottomanica* of Süleyman I's reign, Harput suffered a marked population decline in the seventeenth century (the complainants' citation of flight from the land no doubt hit home). More precisely, in the 100 years before 1632, Harput had experienced demographic fluctuations that virtually defy credibility, although the relative proportions of Muslims and Christians remained steady, with Muslims slightly outnumbering Christians. According to cadastral surveys, between 1518 (two years after the Ottomans took the city) and 1566 (the year Selim II succeeded his father Süleyman) the city population is estimated to have expanded by 122% to roughly 13.5 thousand, while the rural population exploded to roughly 88 thousand, a whopping 480% increase.¹³ The latter change reflects the greater sensitivity of rural settlements to disruptive forces, as opposed to urban settlements, especially those equipped with fortresses and city walls.¹⁴ The 1518 statistics no doubt reflect the disturbed condition of the Anatolian-Iranian frontier, resolved though never fully secured with Selim I's initial and Süleyman's subsequent victories over the Safavids, while the 1566 population reflected the fruits of security – of the frontier, of internal trade and communication routes, of imperial surveillance of local administration, and therefore of village life.

But security was never itself a secure thing. By the mid seventeenth century, the province's population was seriously depleted: a 1646 tax survey ordered by the Diyarbakır treasurer estimated a city population of 719 households (37 of them headed by widows), that is, somewhere between four and five thousand persons, and a total of 2,132 households for the province as a whole. The survey reported that 213 households were "missing" (presumably from the previous survey's count), suggesting continuing flight from the province.¹⁵ That the city had suffered shrinkage was confirmed by the courtier and

13 M. A. Ünal, *XVI. Yüzyılda Harput Sancağı (1518-1566)* (Ankara 1989), *passim*; the number of inhabited villages increased from 164 in 1518 to 186 in 1566, so the rise in rural population was not primarily due to new settlements but to growth of existing settlements; *ibid.*, 66.

14 See L. Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 2003), 54-55, for a similar phenomenon in Aleppo.

15 BOA, Maliye Ahkâm Defteri 3038, fol. 2; *TDVİA*, s.v. 'Harput' (M. A. Ünal), 233.

fabled traveler Evliya Çelebi, who reported in 1643 that it contained 1,000 households within its walls, the area outside the walls having fallen into ruin.¹⁶ Harput was no newly grown frontier town whose permanency in the flourishing sixteenth century was as yet uncertain; its pedigree as a desirable stronghold dated back centuries through the histories of several states and empires, and it had been one of the most important urban and military centers of the Akkoyunlu dynasty.¹⁷ Rather, it was the *pax Ottomanica* that was tenuous, especially in Anatolia, with its long history of tenacious local dynasties and tribal confederations, political rebels, and, in good times, an alluringly rich tax base. The sultanate's difficulties in acquiring and then maintaining control of Anatolia are certainly a comment on the challenge that the peninsula presented to an imperial capital that was not located within it. Brent Shaw has demonstrated these challenges for the Roman period, which witnessed similar contests for control between the imperial government and regional powers in Anatolia.¹⁸

In 1632, Anatolia was four decades into a prolonged time of troubles, the so-called Celali era, which featured powerful pashas and tribal chieftains who rose up against the sultanate, recruiting their own armies and exercising governing authority in their own names. These movements were a primary cause of peasant flight from the land, although the taxing and policing actions of the sultan's loyal provincial authorities were often equally hard on local taxpayers, especially in this time of economic downturn and climatic crises that made Istanbul's demand for revenues harder to meet.¹⁹ Harput itself experienced the ravages of one Celali, Tavil ('Long') Mehmed, who in 1605 took over the city and its elevated fortress, an excellent place from which to resist the government's search-and-seize missions. To fortify the city's deteriorating walls, Tavil Mehmed dismantled dwellings for their stone and timber, and, predictably, exacted heavy taxes.²⁰

Yet Harput suggests not an inexorable decline associated with this time of troubles but rather the effect of shifting imperial priorities. When Istanbul was focused on Anatolia or some part of it – when it had a particular need for order and revenue – it dispatched security inspection tours headed by viziers or special agents with armed retinues, commissioned new surveys of military fiefs and assessed their relationship to present reve-

16 *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi. Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 305 Yazmasının Transkripsiyonu-Dizini. 3. Kitap*, eds S. A. Kahraman and Y. Dağlı (Istanbul 1999), 135.

17 On Harput's history, see *EP*, s.v. 'Khartpert' (C. Cahen); *TDVİA*, s.v. 'Harput'.

18 B. D. Shaw, 'Bandit Highlands and Lowland Peace: The Mountains of Isauria-Cilicia', *JESHO*, 33 (1990), 259-260; also Idem, 'The Bandit', in A. Giardina (ed.), *The Romans* (Chicago 1993), 300-341.

19 The literature on the Celali era is voluminous. Directly pertinent to this essay are A. Hüseyinklioğlu, 'Mühimme Defterlerine Göre Osmanlı Devleti'nde Eşkîyalık Olayları (1594-1607)', unpublished M.A. thesis, Fırat University, 2001, and O. Özel, 'The Reign of Violence: The *Celalis*, c. 1550-1700', in C. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (London 2011), 184-202. On the links between disorders in Anatolia and the climatic disruptions of the 'little ice age', see S. White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge 2011).

20 Ünal, *Harput Sancağı*, 196.

nues, and generally took whatever measures it could to tighten up security. Predictably, it was in times of war planning and mobilization that the sultanate flexed its muscles. A brief survey of government-ordered registers from the first half of the seventeenth century helps us locate times of imperial concern with Harput and lapses in that concern: during the heyday of Kuyucu Murad Paşa, grand vizier and commander of anti-Celali and anti-Safavid campaigns, Harput was in the scope of Istanbul's vision, but then did not really re-appear until the 1630s, when Murad IV focused seriously on the east.²¹ Harput in the year 1632 was on the cusp of a period of intensified interest in eastern Anatolia as Murad began to prepare for campaigns against the Safavids that would win him martial glory and at least a temporary reconsolidation of Anatolia. In other words, military mobilization could be a boost for internal security. The first of Harput's court records dates from 1624, the second year of Murad's reign, when government was dominated by his formidable regent mother Kösem; the inception of records at this date suggests intensified concern with imperial administration, evidenced perhaps in the elevation of the local judgeship with an appointment from Istanbul.

In times of lax imperial oversight, however, an ambitious servant of the sultan had room to maneuver. Emblematic of the entrepreneurial pasha and surely well known in Harput was the career of Abaza (the Abkhazian) Mehmed, one of the most successful 'rebel' statesmen of the era.²² When he was governor of Erzurum, Abaza Mehmed Paşa's policies (including a planned attack on local janissaries) aroused sufficient resistance that people of the province lodged a complaint against him. His response to the order for his deposition in 1623 was to defy the sultan by raising taxes and an army on his own, which he then marched westward, taking Sivas and Ankara but failing to secure the Bursa citadel. Defeated by the then grand vizier, he managed to retreat to his old stomping-ground, Erzurum, where he proceeded to massacre a large number of janissaries. When he was finally captured in 1628 by a new grand vizier, Hüsrev Paşa, Murad IV did not execute him but rather appointed him governor of Bosnia, a kind of honorary exile.

Abaza was just too big to eliminate, one concern no doubt being fear of reprisals by his followers (Abaza's own career had begun in the household of Canbulad, another notorious Celali). Murad IV even made the pasha a personal favorite, until 1634, when his enemies finally prevailed and he was executed. Even then, the sultan participated in his funeral and allowed him to be buried in the tomb of Kuyucu Murad Paşa, the great anti-Celali hero. The sultan would soon lead his armies eastward to Yerevan (Revan), passing through Erzurum, and perhaps wisely chose to placate the late pasha's sympathizers. They were many. Among those who mourned his death were Armenians of the region; the priest Grigor of Kemah explained that Abaza Mehmed's experience living among them in Erzurum had inspired concern: "he was a man who loved Christians and partic-

21 This comment is made on the basis of a cursory survey of registers in BOA's Maliyeden Müdevver series.

22 For a good short account of Abaza Mehmed Paşa's career see C. Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923* (London 2005), 205ff. See also the short piece in *EP*², s.v. 'Abaza Pasha' (C. Huart).

ularly the oppressed Armenian community; a man who served his country well and was solicitous of the weak of all (religions) without discrimination".²³ The priest's sentiments are an example of local loyalty to a figure branded as disloyal by the sultanate, a phenomenon not infrequently encountered in the age of Celalis.

While in Erzurum, Abaza Mehmed's conduct on the frontier with the Safavids had been especially threatening. Attention in those years was riveted on the eastern frontier because of the momentous loss of Baghdad in 1624 to the Safavid Shah Abbas I, which followed his recovery of Tabriz and territory in the Caucasus lost to the Ottomans in the 1580s. In 1628, Abaza Mehmed refused to relieve a border fortress that was under Safavid siege, and he even plundered a force sent to relieve the fortress and beheaded its commander. Worse perhaps, Eskandar Munshi, a Safavid historian of the period, noted that Abaza Mehmed twice made overtures to the shah, who, luckily for the Ottomans, merely saw him as an opportunist.²⁴ The memory of another perfidious pasha no doubt heightened wariness of Abaza, a man native to the Caucasus, and inspired the decision to keep him, once captured, far away from the east and close to the sultanate: the loss of Baghdad was attributed to the usurpation of the governor's authority by a military officer who then handed over the city to the enemy. To Istanbul, such men were traitors, but in reality the frontier's political geography was ambiguous. Not necessarily loyal to the Ottomans, local people were simply looking for a decent life, whoever its guarantor might be.²⁵ It is hard to say whether the 'perfidy' of Abaza Mehmed and the usurper in Baghdad included the calculation that not only they but their provinces too might fare better under the Safavids, whose empire was flourishing under the rule of its greatest monarch when Istanbul appeared to be mired in political chaos.

"This Is the Custom and the Rule in These Parts"

Harput had its own robust history of 'brigand' governors as well as a robust history of resistance to them. In the early 1570s, "the *reaya*" several times protested against the governor (*sancakbeyi*) Mehmed, who forced them to buy wheat and cotton at inflated prices, and moreover collaborated with the Harput judge to charge as guilty those who refused or were too poor to comply with the forced sales. The Imperial Council several times sent warnings, to no avail, although Mehmed Beg took this as provocation to kill three of the complainants. With the help of the Diyarbakır *beylerbeyi*'s own petition for his dismissal, Mehmed finally lost his governorship. That, however, was not the end of his career in Harput. In his fine study of Harput in the sixteenth century, Mehmet Ali Ünal links his account of abusive Harput governors to the province's political economy. Originally a classic Ottoman province parcelled among independent military fiefs, toward the late

23 Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 208, quoting H. D. Andreasyan, 'Abaza Mehmed Paşa', *TD*, 17 (1967 [1968]), 131, 142.

24 Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 206.

25 On the tendency of the Erzurum population to flee excessive state taxation, see Peirce, *Morality Tales*, 276.

sixteenth century, Harput province became a tax farm (*iltizam*) that was assigned to a senior state appointee to the province, typically the *sancakbeyi*. It was because Mehmed, the *sancakbeyi*, held the province as tax farm that he had been able to create a monopoly of the crops whose sale he forced by stockpiling them as they were collected as tax in kind. Despite his dismissal from the governorship, Mehmed re-acquired the tax farm six weeks later, on the condition that he compensate the injured *reaya*.²⁶

Mehmed's successor, one Mahmud Beg, likewise abused the people of Harput to the point that they lodged a severe complaint against him (*küllî şekva*), for "making excessive exactions in contravention of holy law and imperial law and [perpetrating] extreme oppression". Following in his predecessor's footsteps, Mahmud Beg was cited for forcing sales of grain at 180% of the going price and cotton at more than 200%, while extorting cash from villagers who refused to buy. It took repeated efforts involving the *beylerbeyis* of Erzurum and Diyarbakır and the judge and new *sancakbeyi* of Harput, not to mention the Imperial Council, to stop Mahmud. In response to the constant petitioning, the *sancakbeyi* retorted, "this is the custom and the rule in these parts" (*bu diyarın âdet ve kanunu budur*).

Harput's experience with yet another tax farmer-governor, Alaeddin Beg, revealed an additional harmful practice. Pleading the job pressures of tax-collecting, Alaeddin Beg and some of his fellow soldiers refused to muster in 1584 for the grand vizier Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa's (successful) campaign to take Tabriz; eventually they were forced to march. Alaeddin continued to purchase the tax-farm governorship, which in 1588 he contracted for 200,000 gold pieces. When however he lagged in paying the Imperial Treasury, Istanbul ordered the Diyarbakır *beylerbeyi* to make him pay up or else lock him up in the Diyarbakır fortress (a usual destination for convicted brigands and the like). One might well conclude that Harput was subjected in these decades to government by parolee.

Mehmed, Mahmud, and Alaeddin were all the sultan's appointed officials, even if their appointments came in exchange for a cash pipeline to the Imperial Treasury. It took a great deal of repeated effort by the people of Harput to bring these men to what can only be termed a limited justice. Neither was the corrupt judge who was Mehmed Beg's partner in crime a unique figure in provincial complaints and imperial responses. Although the Imperial Council attempted to solve problems by calling upon local authorities first – that is, by appealing to the Empire's judicial system before its military system – not much seems to have happened without the heavy hand of the Diyarbakır *beylerbeyi*, or the threat of it. In fact, Mahmud Beg was not far off the mark in pointing out that the liberties taken by governors were business as usual. His comment underlined a conundrum of Ottoman governance: fostering what appeared to be the rule of a brigand while using the rhetoric of vigilance against *reaya* oppression in order to distance the sultanate from

26 This account of Harput's governors is drawn from Ünal, *Harput Sancağı*, which extends beyond the sixteenth century, despite the book's title. The tax farm held by Mehmed Beg and others comprised the management of imperial domains within Harput province (*havass-ı hümayun eminliği*).

its own creation.²⁷ It is beyond the scope of this essay to determine how much the double authority exercised by these men – governorship plus major tax farm – contributed to their ability to get away with so much. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that Harput's transition from a province based on the independent military fief to a tax farm, or at least its occasional use as a tax farm, was one paving-stone on the road to the eventual dominance of Anatolia by provincial magnates. The *sancakbeyis* Mehmed, Mahmud and Alaeddin were early examples of the rise of the quasi-independent servant of the state.

What shall we make of Halil Beg in the context of this history? Much of his "oppression and tyranny" looks in retrospect like the kind of run-of-the-mill maladministration toward which the sultanate was frequently forced to turn a blind eye. Nor do the brave individuals who spoke out against him appear to be pioneers in Harput's struggle for tranquility. Halil Beg was no governor, and his gang – six individuals are named in the complaints – was not particularly large compared to those of contemporary 'brigand governors', whose retinues could amount to small armies. As the son of a mid-rank soldier, he probably enjoyed a modicum of status in Harput. What Halil Beg did have was access to tax revenues. The oblique reference by complainants to his taxing authority – "he bought [title to] our taxes from the official who was assigned to collect them" – may suggest a sub-contracted license to collect taxes (though that would not have authorized him to re-impose a levy already discharged). The villagers also noted that Halil Beg had been collecting taxes, legal and otherwise, since 1628. The *sipahi's* attempt to take over the city stewardship appears to be a move to aggrandize fiscal control in the city, since this office – its holder in some places elected by local tradesmen and merchants, here endorsed by imperial patent – acted as liaison between government and the urban community of taxpayers.

What or who afforded this *sipahi* the financial backing to purchase the tax farm and the impunity to create havoc through violence? Was Halil Beg the strong arm of men more wealthy and powerful? While he had "oppressed" villagers for several years, the willingness of the respondents to join the censure of Halil may reflect a recent swell of opposition to him, with city leaders – entrepreneurial, spiritual, and military alike – now finding themselves sidelined and their status threatened. One question that arises in this context is the absence in the court depositions of reference to a governor of Harput. We would be mistaken to assume that Harput was always governed by a career *sancakbeyi*. In 1600 the province had been given to a Safavid *amir*, Murad Han, who had defected some ten years earlier, apparently with the tacit blessing of Shah Abbas. The latter's suit for peace had gained him a truce signed in 1590 with the Ottomans.²⁸

As for Harput in 1632, sometime before the court action that spring, the governorship was again given to a renegade Safavid officer, a certain Haydar.²⁹ With Istanbul focusing on recovery of territory lost to Abbas (who had died in 1629), military advantage was presumably gained by having a man with fresh knowledge of Safavid affairs stationed in

27 Faroqhi, 'Political Activity', 14; Tuğ, 'Politics of Honor', Chapter Three.

28 Ünal, *Harput Sancağı*, 34.

29 Ibid., 34.

eastern Anatolia. In this light, retaining a modest province like Harput as tax farm – keeping it ready at hand as reward for a new vassal, rather like the robes of honor recycled at need from the Imperial Treasury for loyal or distinguished servants of state – could be a tool for flexibility. Haydar Beg, however, apparently felt that his tenure was insecure, for the sultan had to reassure him that the province was not about to be given to another.³⁰ Whatever the reason for his misgiving, the new governor was surely aware of the reckless power of Halil Beg.

It is now time to add the last piece of the puzzle to this emerging portrait of political confusion in Harput: a third entry in the Harput court register concerning tensions in the city. The evidence of this short *sicil* is inconclusive – it does not explain the sources of Halil Beg’s power – but it does make clear the existence of factional division in Harput, at least among rank-and-file janissaries and *sipahis*.³¹ The *sicil* consists of the joint statement of a group of local janissaries and *sipahis*, resident in Harput, and the request that their statement be recorded. They assert that the province is near ruin and that (despite that fact) local civic and religious leaders as well as military cadres have refused to allow turn of duty to agents sent by imperial command;³² the excuse given by these local elites is that the newcomers interfere and create “oppression and tyranny”. But this accusation is unjustified (*insaf değıldir*), say the janissaries and *sipahis* who have come to court, and they conclude their joint statement with a pledge that they will not interfere with those who have come with the imperial order. Moreover they will punish any of their number who do interfere.³³ Is it possible that the party with the imperial command, resisted by (some) local leaders, belonged to Haydar Beg, hence his concern that his tenure was uncertain? We can only speculate. One thing however is clear: Halil Beg’s depredations, coupled with political confusion and contention, came to a head in the spring of 1632 with the concerted resolve of some to register an appeal to higher authorities.

Fault Lines and Factions

Armed with some knowledge of recent developments in Harput and eastern Anatolia generally, let us review what we know about factional fissures among the people of Harput.³⁴

30 Harput Şer’iye Sicili 181, p. 155, case 2.

31 Ibid., p. 10, case 3.

32 The Turkish of the collective statement of the complainants is *ikrar ve takrir-i kelâm*, and of the ‘newcomers’ *emr-i şerifle gelân mübaşirler*.

33 This case record is not wholly clear in its meaning; I have chosen the reading that appears to best comport with other evidence regarding Harput in 1632. An alternate reading would have the newcomers complaining that they have not been allowed to take up office because of the opposition of local parties, but the structure of the statement (an *ikrar* by resident janissaries and *sipahis*) makes this reading suspect. In any event, it is clear that there is tension between local urban leaders and the party arriving by imperial command, whether or not the statement-makers are partisan or seeking neutrality.

34 On the role of factions in Ottoman domains, see J. Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions: Myth, Memory, and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen* (Albany 2003).

The court records concerning the affair of Halil Beg inform us that the rank-and-file military, janissaries and *sipahis* alike, were disunited: they appeared among both complainants and respondents in the court actions against Halil. (There is no overt evidence in this affair of the rivalry between *sipahis* and janissaries that threaded through events of the period.) Moreover, the pledge-making soldiers faulted their fellow troops. It is not clear, though, what motivated the pledge-makers – active partisanship with the ‘newcomers’, loyalty to the sultan, disaffection from local military leadership, and/or the desire merely to mark their neutrality? Likewise, the urban elite was not a monolith, although fewer spoke in the party of complainants. But, again, it is hard to tell if the large number of respondents, clearly identified as provincial leaders (*ayan ve eşraf-ı vilâyet*), had once been Halil Beg’s associates or beneficiaries, or had until now merely held aloof from the affair, and/or were genuinely grieved and angered by his conduct. In sum, it is still not possible to conclude more than the fact that Halil Beg was a divisive force in the province, and that a strong consensus was reached in April 1632 that punitive action was urgent.

Halil Beg was a small-town ‘celali’ whose ambitions may have reached no further than Harput province in 1632. But there were fault lines crossing the region and even the Empire that may well have created fissures among the people of Harput that in turn conditioned reaction to the lawless *sipahi*. Official sources like court records and *mühimme* registers deal with the facts of specific situations, and it is left to us to recreate the landscape within which these situations arose – in this case the unsettling politics of the previous decade, which spawned heated opinion and partisan camps around several large personalities. Hero to some and anti-hero to others, these included, in a kind of factional chain reaction, the sultan Osman II, whose death in 1622, the first regicide in Ottoman history, was prompted in part by his rumored intention to do away with the janissary corps; Abaza Mehmed Paşa, loyal to the memory of Osman and implacable enemy of the janissaries; Hüsrev Paşa, victor in 1628 over Abaza Mehmed, popular among soldiers despite his harsh disciplinary measures; and finally, Murad IV, younger brother of Osman, who suffered the cost of dismissing Hüsrev from the grand vizierate for his failure to recover Baghdad. This act, and the political rivalries that underlay it, touched off a bloody mutiny in the capital lasting from February until May 1632. Eventually emerging from the disorder more powerful, the sultan became the strong man many had yearned for, but at the cost of thousands of heads.

The censure of Halil Beg almost certainly took place in the midst of intense conversation about the meaning of the past winter’s events, the Istanbul mutiny, and the recent fate of Hüsrev Paşa. The final act of the great soldier’s career played out not far from Harput – his dismissal in Diyarbakır in November 1631 and the beginning of his retreat across Anatolia, his handing over of the grand vizier’s seal in Malatya, and his death from natural causes in Tokat, shortly before Murad’s secret order to execute him could be enacted (on the grounds that Hüsrev had fomented the uprising in Istanbul). News of Hüsrev’s demise no doubt reached Harput before it did the capital on March 11, 1632. In sum, multiple conflicting loyalties from the recent past, exacerbated by fresh news from Istanbul and Tokat, may have aroused fears for the future in Harput and intensified local partisanship. In other words, the politics of empire could inform tensions in a place

like Harput at a time when eastern Anatolia was already a field of conflict. Halil Beg may have been a casualty of this swirl of events.

Court-Room Drama or the Artifice of the Documentary Record

This reconstruction of the affair of Halil Beg rests primarily on three contiguous entries in the Harput court register whose genesis and interrelationships are opaque. How shall we imagine the court of Harput as its judge dealt with the affair of Sipahi Halil? Was there in fact a mass mobilization of protesters and respondents? How many janissaries and *sipahis* actually crowded into the court? Were there curious bystanders eager to observe this exceptional proceeding? In the first of the two complaint records, 54 persons are named: 14 complainants, 23 respondents, and 17 signatories to the case.³⁵ Add to that the unnamed village spokesmen and the several named groups – the “*reaya* in general”, the imperial officials, the *zaims*, the timariot *sipahis*, and more *sipahis* serving individual military officers. Even if the curious crowd was barred from court, an exceptional number of participants seems to have gathered in the judge’s presence.

But perhaps we should regard the record of this case as one of those illusionist moves by judge and scribe that one encounters in Ottoman *sicils*, a kind of *trompe l’oeil* summary of action that actually occurred as separate events over a period of time. It is possible that the judge took the depositions of the various complainants individually, on separate occasions, perhaps sending deputies out to their communities; likewise the respondents. The dates entered at the end of each case record pose another puzzle: the two complaint-response *sicils* are dated “the middle of the month of Ramazan 1041” (early April 1632), while the soldiers’ pledge, which immediately precedes these two entries in the register, appears to be dated to the middle of Şevval, the month following Ramazan.³⁶ The sultan’s reassurance of the new renegade governor Haydar Beg, or rather its transcription into the court register, is also dated “the middle of the month of Ramazan 1041”, but it appears on page 144 of the register, whereas the complaint cases bearing the same dating appear on pages 11 and 12. In other words, the court register does not always reflect the order of daily traffic before the judge, and we cannot assume that it offers a transparent representation of events as they happened. Because scholars can no longer examine the physical structure of a register, having now to work with scanned documents (and sometimes, as in this case, xeroxes of scans), it is difficult to know if this register was assembled with pages out of order (pagination is a modern artifact) or if it was an official copy of loose documents or if some other artifice dictated its composition and/or assembly. Another caution is the danger of assuming that the episodic nature of extant registers is the result

35 The *şühudî’l-hal*, who were observers required for every *sicil* to witness that the legal proceedings had been appropriately executed; the name and patronymic of each of these was recorded immediately after the date of the *sicil*.

36 The date of this *sicil* is obscured by blurred area in the lower right corner of the page, possibly a moisture stain, exacerbated by scanning and xeroxing; the date appears to be “*tarih-i mezbur*”, “the above-recorded date” of the preceding *sicil*, which is “the middle of the month of Şevval”.

of random survival. The existence of a gap between the first Harput court register, which covered the years 1624-1625, and the one under study, begun in 1631, may indicate that a specific order was issued to keep a careful record during this season of high political tension. Perhaps such an order came with a specific judge, appointed for his ability to resist partisanship and manage thorny legal action.³⁷ Halil Beg's attack on Kasab Hasan Ağa, who apparently intended to speak up at court, suggests the threat that an authoritative judge might present to a strong man used to manipulating local institutions.

Protocols evident in the *mühimme* responses to provincial petitions demonstrate that judges were pivotal in bringing action against law-breaking officials (and civilians); indeed, Istanbul often ordered judges to organize trials and even prosecution of such men. If the court action against Halil Beg was preliminary to petitioning an authority beyond Harput, it was most likely the judge who composed and dispatched a letter, perhaps in concert with the city's leading figures. But the judge is a hidden figure in the affair of Halil Beg, and it is difficult to say with certainty how instrumental he was in brokering the censure, an action that required the orchestration of numerous personalities and voices. The *sicils* paint the complainants as the stimulus for action, but there is a small hint that a military official, the janissary steward Kethüda Piyale Beg, played a co-ordinating role, or was at least apprised of the pending accusations. It is also possible that a broader coalition of figures, including village spokesmen as well as urban leaders, was responsible for organizing the court action. Evidence from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suggests that the *reaya* were becoming more integrated into the mechanics of provincial administration; thus, for the seventeenth, caution should be exercised in assuming that villagers, for example, required notables to make their grievances audible.³⁸ We might therefore speculate about another artifice of the court's representation of the affair of Halil Beg: did the record construct an artificial tension between complainants and respondents, a stylized mode of bringing censure through grievance (evidentiary claims by *reaya*) and its validation (witness by notables)? In other words, might consensus have been reached *before* the court action?

This essay concludes by pondering a final artifice, the rendering of Halil Beg as a criminal. To read official sources of the times – imperial orders, court records, and the like – is to observe 'the criminal' as sharply differentiated from an assumed normative order. The censure of Halil Beg does just that, by representing him as the enemy of tranquility, secure peasants and honest tax collectors, families safe in their homes. But such a normative order was hard to come by, as everyone well knew. On top of unpredictable factors (a little ice age in Anatolia, the rise of a Shah Abbas), the sultanate itself created conditions of instability. By 1632, five decades of near constant warfare not only strained the Treasury but also caused governors to be absent from their posts, leaving a free hand to opportunists. The erratic politics of the throne from 1617 to 1623 – four accessions (compulsory bonuses to soldiers at each enthronement another fiscal drain), one regicide,

37 This suggestion is based in part on a similar circumstance in Aintab in 1541; see Peirce, *Morality Tales*, Chapter 3.

38 Tuğ, 'Politics of Honor', Chapter Two.

two forced depositions, the first accession that of a 14-year-old and the last of a 12-year-old – kept attention focused on the capital at the expense of distant provinces; the lack of *mühimme* registers between 1618 and 1626 is eloquent testimony to these imperial misfortunes. Moreover, the shifting status of provincial governorships had a direct effect on local stability, the vagaries of the Harput governorship a case in point: turning it into a tax farm provided cash to a strapped Imperial Treasury but freed the entrepreneur-governor to cover his investment at *reaya* expense and furthermore induced the state to tolerate quasi-criminal provincial leadership. Finally, provincial regions could be destabilized by the whole culture of service to the sultanate – for example, the latter's practice of sacrificing distinguished and popular statesmen to save its own reputation, and its willingness to reward traitorous pashas so as to detain them within the system, thereby obscuring the threshold of criminal conduct. The rotation of pashas around the Empire localized political drama, adding to the natural sensitivities of provincial garrisons to larger rivalries within the military.

What saved this political culture from becoming one oblivious to the exercise of routine violence was the supreme value placed, necessarily, on the flow of tax revenue. The most vaunted ideological plank of the early modern sultanate was its protection of the *reaya*. Critical in turning this rhetoric into reality were mechanisms such as the dispatch of complaints and petitions that alerted Istanbul to moments when and places where the tipping-point had been reached and imperial force was required to rescue a province in distress. The role of the provincial court in mounting petitions was one such mechanism. To state that the Ottoman court system was a linchpin of the Empire's stability is by now an old cliché, but like any useful cliché it bears re-emphasis. Whether or not the Harput judge engineered the censure of Halil Beg, the venue of the court, with its rules for evidence and witness, and more important, its legitimacy in articulating and validating public opinion, was indispensable for the process of censure.

"Oppression and tyranny" was a slogan on everyone's tongue, but a critical mass of specific testimony could move routine abuse into the realm of the actionable. The people of Harput, experienced in resisting lawless officials, knew what it took to declare an emergency. Illegal taxation alone was not enough, it seems, but fiscal "oppression beyond the limit", coupled with murder, destruction of homes, and destruction of families constituted a case worthy of imperial attention. To be sure, complaints and petitions, however compelling, were no guarantee that the sultanate or its provincial delegates would respond with the requisite force; there is plenty of evidence in the *mühimme* registers that local communities had to lodge repeated complaints to gain some satisfaction. But one has to assume that the many who complained about Halil Beg believed it was worth the risk to oppose him.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON POLITICAL UNREST IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AYNTAB: POPULAR PROTEST AND FACTION

Hülya CANBAKAL*

... And then, the whole city simmered like a cooking pot over the fire of the people's cries of malediction. They rushed to assemble and there emerged a large crowd; they [stormed the palace and] overpowered [Taltabanzade] Paşa before he could reach for his soldiers... They pelted the expensive palace with bullets. One bullet pierced the pasha through and hit the ground. He collapsed with a big howl and died. They severed and took his head and arm, and stripped him naked. They also cut off [his man] Kör Bilal's head and smeared his beard with shit...

Dogs in his likeness ate the pasha's flesh that night and then he was buried so that he would answer the enquiring angels... They stripped all his surviving men leaving all of them stark naked... They brought Kör Bilal's head and wrapped it in a crappy piece of cloth. Then, they filled the shit pot with dog shit and smoked his filthy body... and brought his carcass to the dung yard to throw in a hole. When they reached the grave, they stripped that blind pimp completely and turned him into a buffoon to amuse themselves. They lifted his two legs and impaled the dead man with a long stick from behind.

Crows landed on Taltaban's carcass. Thank God his body disappeared.¹

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1 From Kilisli Ruhi's *İbretname*, in M. Bayrak, *Eşkîyalık ve Eşkîya Türküleri* (Ankara 1985), 27-35.

*Derâkâp te'sir-i nâr-ı inkişâr-ı halk ile / Kaynadı her cânibi şehrin misâl-i tencere
Gayret ile cem'olup cem'iyet eyledi zühur / Basdılar Pâşâ'yı ulaştırmadılar askere...
Her taraftan attılar binlik Saraya kurşunu / Degdi kurşunun biri Pâşâ'ya geçti yerlere
Âh ü feryâdile der sâat zemine diz çökiüp / Cânı hulkuna gelüp gûya ederken gargara
Kestiler baş ile bir kolun Paşa'nın aldılar / Soyduklar cismîn leşi seyroldu ehl-i mahzara
Kör Bilâl'in kellesin hem çeşmede kat'eyleyüp / Sürdüler sakalını necs-i galiyz-i asgara...
Lâhm-ı Pâşâ'yı fakat ol şeb yedi vâfik kilâp / Sonra defnoldu cevâp için Nekîr u Mürker'e...
Sağ kalan etbâ'ü huddâmın kamusun soydular / Anadan doğmuş gibi döndü cem'an andere...
Kör Bilâl'in getirüp sonra ser-i mürdârını / Sardılar bazı yerin bir pâre boklu astara
Sonra bir bok saksısını it bokuyla doldurup / Tütsü verdiler müneccis cismine mâmuçmere....*

THIS REBELLION AGAINST TALTABANZADE MEHMED ALI PAŞA, his brutal death at the hands of Ayntabîs and the plunder of his property in 1788, as depicted vividly by Ruhi of Kilis, was part of a six-year-long episode of violence that lasted from 1788 until 1793. During these six years, the city was put under siege three times, residences of the urban elite were sacked, storehouses were pillaged, a vast amount of property was laid waste, and hundreds of Ayntabîs perished. This was unlike rebellions in the earlier part of the century in that the janissaries and *sadat*² of the town played a leading part in all these events.

Such a crisis was not unique in Ayntab's history, nor was it specific to the city of Ayntab. From the early 1770s onward, until about the time of the abolition of the janissary corps in 1826, Ayntab was continually shaken by episodes of political unrest that involved the janissaries and *sadat* of the city and closely resembled the janissary-*ashraf* strife in contemporary Aleppo. Events in the two cities were by and large simultaneous. More or less every time political tensions between or among *sadat* and janissaries in Ayntab built up and took a violent turn, the *ashraf* and janissaries of Aleppo were also out on the streets fighting one another or representatives of the central government (Table I). Moreover, Maraş, to the north of Ayntab, was also experiencing turmoil involving the two parties. In brief, janissary-*sadat/ashraf* politics was a regional phenomenon.

Ayntab	1772	1775	1777	1779-80	1784	1786-93		1796-98
Aleppo	1770-71	1775	1778		1784	1787-88	1790-91	1798
Ayntab	1799-1800	1802-05	1810	1813	1819	1824	1826-27	1830?
Aleppo		1804-05		1813	1819	1822		

Table I: Political turmoil in Ayntab and Aleppo³

Of the neighbouring three cities, only the case of Aleppo has been studied in some detail so far. Starting with Bodman on Aleppo and Rafeq on Damascus, several scholars have commented on *ashraf*-janissary politics and the rebellions of the eighteenth century. For a group of scholars, mostly the early commentators on the matter, the focus of anal-

Boklu bostanda leşin bir hufreye ilka için / Hayuhuy ile getirdiler anı bahçelere

Kabre varınca o kör puştı tamamen soydular / Hande kılsunlar deyu döndürdüler anı kışmere
İki ayak kaldırıp katlıldu bu tarihte / Bir tavıl sap soktular kân-i Bilâl-i a'vere....

Şükür kim oldu vücdü nâ-yâp / Daldaban cîfesine konu gurâp.

- Sadat* (pl.), *seyyid* (sing.): Noun and honorific title used to refer to descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. The singular and plural forms will be used interchangeably in the text. The terms *ashraf* (pl.), *sharif* (sing.) were more commonly used than *sadat* and *seyyid* in the Ottoman Arab lands.
- Based on A. Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York 1989), 87-92; A. Raymond, 'Réseaux urbains et mouvements populaires à Alep (fin du 18ème-début du 19ème siècle)', *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies*, 3-4 (1991), 93-104; C. C. Güzelbey, *Gaziantep'ten Kesitler* (Gaziantep 1992); Idem and H. Yetkin (eds), *Gaziantep Şer'i Mahkeme Sicillerinden Örnekler*, Vol. 4 (Gaziantep 1970); H. Yetkin, *Gaziantep Tarihi ve Davaları* (Gaziantep 1968), 30.

ysis was centre-periphery opposition. For example, Bodman, Rafeq and Winter's works found in this conflict resistance to janissary/Turkish oppression. We see the same emphasis on opposition to Ottoman rule later in Raymond's work, but with a different twist.⁴ Raymond at the same time emphasised popular agency and socio-economic factors, characterising the rebellions of 1770-1820 as popular outbursts against political oppression under circumstances of economic hardship. He pointed out that, in fact, the two groups did not always fight one another, but also co-operated on several occasions against governors sent from Istanbul.⁵ Another group of studies has taken another direction, moving away from the ethnic/national overtones found in earlier scholarship. For example, Barbir characterises the janissaries and the *ashraf* as factions that competed for state patronage, while he recognises the economic difficulties of the late eighteenth century as a factor in the rebellions. Along the same lines, Marcus portrays them as opportunists who took advantage of the shifts in the power configuration within the provinces, on the one hand, and between the centre and the provinces, on the other. Their strife had nothing to do with popular politics, he argues.⁶

Despite their differences, studies dealing with janissary-*ashraf* politics in Aleppo and other Arab cities have one important characteristic in common: namely, they remain focused on the local (Arab) scene, which gives a false impression of uniqueness that can lend itself to parochial readings of the phenomenon. Local focus also keeps the economic and political tribulations of the imperial world and the contemporaneous administrative moves of the centre away from view. Notwithstanding these limitations, however, earlier debates about the nature of janissary-*ashraf* politics provide a convenient starting-point in the context of this volume's theme. Further, recent scholarship on neighbour-

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- 4 H. L. Bodman, *Political Factions in Aleppo, 1760-1826* (Chapel Hill 1963); A.-K. Rafeq, 'Changes in the Relationship between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Syrian Provinces from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries', in T. Naff and R. Owen (eds), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale and Edwardsville – London and Amsterdam 1977), 65-66; Idem, 'Maẓāhir sukkāniyya min Dimashq fī al-‘ahd al-‘uthmānī' [Vignettes of population from Damascus during the Ottoman period], *Dirāsāt ta'rīkhiyya*, 15-16 (1984), 228, quoted in C. Establet and J.-P. Pascual, *Familles et fortunes à Damas. 450 foyers damascains en 1700* (Damascus 1994), 128; M. Winter, 'The Ashrāf and Niqābat al-Ashrāf in Egypt in Ottoman and Modern Times', *Asian and African Studies*, 19 (1985), 17-41; Idem, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517-1798* (London and New York 1992), 191-192.
 - 5 A. Raymond, 'Urban Networks and Popular Movements in Cairo and Aleppo (End of the 18th – Beginning of the 19th Century)', in *The Proceedings of the International Conference on Urbanism in Islam (ICUIT). October 22-28, 1989, The Middle Eastern Culture Center, Tokyo, Japan*, Vol. 2 (Tokyo 1989), 219-271.
 - 6 K. Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758* (Princeton 1980), 96-97; Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 92-94. Also L. Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart 1985); J. Reilly, *A Small Town in Syria: Ottoman Hama in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford 2002); B. Masters, 'Power and Society in Aleppo in the 18th and 19th Centuries', *RMMM*, 62 (1991), 151-158; Idem, *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East: Mercantilism and the Islamic Economy in Aleppo, 1600-1750* (New York 1988), 47.

ing provinces with similar socio-political dynamics due to administrative, demographic, and economic reasons, and findings on the spread of spurious claims of descent from the Prophet's family, just like affiliation with the janissary corps, also in non-Arab parts of the Empire, now allow us to look at janissary-*ashraf* politics from a broader perspective.⁷

Thus, setting out from two of the readings of the phenomenon, this study tries to answer the question of whether the crisis of 1788-1793 in Ayntab can be considered an instance of factional strife, i.e., elite politics, or popular rebellion, i.e., bottom-up politics. One can approach this question in a number of ways, the two most obvious ones being: a) the study of the objectives or political vision of those involved, and b) the study of their identity. The sources used in this article do not allow us to explore the former, with the partial exception of the agenda of Seyyid Nuri Mehmed, the main protagonist of the 1788-1793 episode. This leaves us with the question of identity. Thus, in what follows, I first examine the emergence of the two groups as collective and contending agents, i.e., I look at the history of the groups' acquired identity in relation to one another. This inquiry points in every way to the presence of factional strife. Then, I turn to the socio-economic identity of the parties to see whether we can identify among them the 'people' of 'popular' movements. This inquiry leads us to the 'people' indeed, as well as to signs of economic change, which was for the worse for some. I conclude with an attempt to integrate the two findings by differentiating between 'popular rebellion' and 'bottom-up politics'. I argue that popular rebellion is not the only form that 'bottom-up politics' can take. The latter refers to a broader range of political action which includes all acts by those who are not a part of the legitimate political community. In this sense, I further argue, the events of 1788-1793 in Ayntab should be considered instances of 'bottom-up politics', because they embody the intrusion of both the 'people' and the elite into political spheres which were not normally accessible to them. But first, a summary of the key developments in the crisis of 1788-1793 is in order.

The Story Line

While the rebellion against Taltabanzade was a watershed in the crisis of 1788-1793, the key figure in the events was someone else, Seyyid Nuri Mehmed Paşa, the *voyvoda* of Ayntab and champion of the *sadat* party. He was from the Battalzades, a local notable family, and had been governor since 1784. Either because of his "tyrannical ways", or because of unexplained rivalry, the 'people' of Ayntab or the janissaries, according to different accounts, invited Taltabanzade, the *voyvoda* of Kilis at that time, to the town

7 On the spread of false claims of *seyyid*hood in other parts of the Empire, see H. Canbakal, 'The Ottoman State and Descendants of the Prophet in Anatolia and the Balkans (c. 1500-1700)', *JESHO*, 52 (2009), 542-578; Eadem, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: 'Ayntab in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden 2006), Chapter 3; and Eadem, 'On the 'Nobility' of Provincial Notables', in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V. A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003* (Rethymno 2005), 39-50.

to get rid of Nuri Mehmed, and, presumably, to end *seyyid* dominance in town politics.⁸ As Taltabanzade entered and gained control of the city in 1788, Nuri Mehmed Paşa fled. Yet, Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi, contemporary chronicler of the centre, tells us that Taltabanzade turned out to be “more oppressive than Nuri Paşa” and bullied some of the notable families, such as the Basmacızades, the Kadızades, as well as the Battalzades. He attacked their estates, pillaged storehouses, harassed all kinds of people in the town, young and old, men and women alike, in “unheard-of ways”. Nuri Mehmed’s uncle, Battalzade Sadık Ağa, also got killed in the turmoil. Then, according to Mehmed Emin, “decent people and riffraff of the town came to an agreement” (*ehl-i ırz ve yaramazı ittifak edüp*), evidently to make Taltabanzade pay for all this dearly, and Ayntab began “to steam like a cooking pot”. A number of *fermans* from the aftermath of the rebellion indicate that in addition to executing Taltaban and his men, the Ayntabîs also seized his wealth, a mighty sum of 40,000 *guruş*, which “had been appropriated from the people” in the first place, according to poet Ruhi.⁹

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa tells us that Nuri Mehmed returned to Ayntab after a while, and put the city under siege. He also intercepted the Aleppo road and started killing and looting. Thus, orders were issued for his arrest and execution, whereupon Nuri Mehmed approached Keki Abdi Paşa, the governor of Aleppo, for mediation, and he obtained imperial pardon on condition that he should join the campaign under Abdi Paşa’s command. As the latter died at just about that time, Nuri Mehmed came to Ayntab again, and began to attack the janissaries in the city in alliance with the ‘estate of the *sadat*’ (*zümreyi sadat*). His party burned houses that belonged to janissaries and pillaged their goods. This time Köse Mustafa Paşa, the new governor of Aleppo, was ordered to capture Nuri Mehmed. Mustafa Paşa laid siege to Ayntab for several months during which the city was hit day and night by cannonballs. Finally, Nuri Mehmed’s resistance collapsed, and Mustafa Paşa’s men broke into the city. They did not spare the least valuable item they laid their hands on, according to lexicographer and historian Mütercim Asım, who was Nuri Mehmed’s personal secretary at the time – Asım lamented most that a library load of books were thus lost. Nuri Mehmed’s severed head, together with those of 36 others, arrived in Istanbul in December 1791 (or early 1792). He was 28 or 32 years old.¹⁰

8 A. O. Çınar (ed.), ‘Mehmed Emin Edib Efendinin Hayatı ve Tarihi’, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Marmara University, 1999, 256; Ş. S. Yener, ‘Kilisli Meşhur Şair Ruhi’nin Vakiyle Antep’te Bir Çok Mezalim Yapan Daldaban oğlu Hakkında Bir Şiri’, *Başpınar Aylık Edebiyat ve Kültür Mecmuası*, 35 (1942), 11-13 and 36 (1942), 8-10. Kasaboğlu İbrahim, the leading figure behind the initiative that brought Taltabanzade to the city, was intermittently the janissary commander of the city between 1786/87 and 1792/93; Ayntab Court Register (henceforth ACR) 135/124.

9 Ruhi, in Bayrak, *Eşkîyalık*, 32. When ordered to pay this amount back, the Ayntabîs argued that they had been ruined under Taltabanzade’s oppression, and were destitute. On negotiations regarding this matter, see ACR 134/49, 62, 177, 186-187, dated 1791-1794.

10 According to Mütercim Asım’s pro-*sadat* account, Nuri Mehmed was not condemned by the centre because of the way he dealt with the janissaries, but for an altogether different reason. He failed to send the forces that he was supposed to send to the Russian campaign and, conse-

Nuri Mehmed's execution was followed by another round of violence about which we have two distinct accounts, representing the janissary and *seyyid* perspectives respectively. According to that of the janissaries, Mustafa Paşa appointed a deputy governor in Ayntab after he successfully eliminated Nuri Mehmed. Things had barely been brought under control when Nuri Mehmed's followers went to İbrahim Paşa, the governor of Maraş and Adana, to seek aid. İbrahim Paşa, who had himself been "provoking the fugitives and planning to attack Ayntab for no reason", gathered mercenaries (*kapusuz delis, levends*) and bandits from tribes, and laid siege to Ayntab with 5,000 men for 30 days. They then raided the city and killed more than 200 men of the corps. "Such treatment of *ocaklus* was unheard-of".¹¹ According to the other account, not surprisingly, the *sadat* were justified in seeking İbrahim Paşa's help, because Köse Mustafa Paşa had co-operated with the janissaries, attacked the *sadat*, and caused them to flee the town. Osman Paşa, the deputy governor installed by Mustafa Paşa, too, co-operated with the janissaries. Thus, *sadat* who had been expelled from the city turned to İbrahim Paşa, who was a Dulkadirli, i.e., a member of the Maraşî *seyyid* party, as will be seen below. He entered Ayntab together with those who sought his help, removed the deputy governor installed by Köse Mustafa Paşa, and killed dozens of janissaries. We understand from a later record that Mennan Efendi, the judge of Ayntab, also belonged to the *seyyid* party, or, at least, he supported İbrahim Paşa's intervention, as did the mufti of the town.¹² The six-year-long crisis was brought to an end a year later with a 'peace agreement' (*akd-i musalaha*) between *sadat* and 'members of the corps' (*ocaklıyan*). As was typical of the period, the parties also vowed (*nezir*) to pay 25,000 *guruş* to the imperial mint should the janissary side continue to "protect ordinary people as [their] comrades" or the *sadat* accept those with spurious descent into their ranks.¹³ The two parties also appointed a new deputy governor by mutual consent.¹⁴

Origins of the Janissary-Sadat Divide

The two most common words used with reference to the two groups in the sources are *taife* and *fırka*.¹⁵ While *taife* was a very versatile term and rather neutral as a collective

quently, the Sultan considered him a rebel and ordered his execution. Nuri Mehmed was innocent in the matter of the campaign, too, for he had been betrayed by one of his men; Mütercim Asım Efendi, *Asım Tarihi*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 1235/1819), 227. Also Çınar (ed.), 'Mehmed Emin Edib Efendinin Hayatı', 257-258; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet (Osmanlı Tarihi)*, Vol. II (Istanbul 1994), 850-851, and Vol. 3:1369; ACR 135/138, Rebiyülâhır 1206/December 1791. See also ACR 135/78, 26 Receb 1206/20 March 1792; ACR 135/119, 9 Zilkade 1206/29 June 1792; BOA, Cevdet Maliye 1002, 7 Receb 1206/1 March 1792, on Nuri Mehmed's execution and probate.

11 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye 137, 17 Cemaziyelâhır 1206/11 February 1792.

12 BOA, Cevdet Askeriye 22636, 1206/1792; ACR 135/119, 9 Zilkade 1206/29 June 1792.

13 ACR 134/39-40, 12 Zilhicce 1207/21 July 1793.

14 ACR 134/181, 1207/1793.

15 ACR 134/39-40, 197; BOA, HAT 41208, 7 Receb 1225/8 August 1810.

identity marker, *fırka*, later used to mean political party, suggests self-awareness of difference and perhaps some organisation. Self-awareness there was and it expressed itself in various ways. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, an authoritative voice from the Ottoman centre, tells us that followers of the janissary party (*yeniçeri tarafluları*) wore janissary badges (*nişan*) to mark themselves off from others (*alametlendirmek*), and followers of the *sadat* wore green on their heads to differentiate themselves (*tefrik*). They even had separate coffee-houses.¹⁶

There was, of course, nothing new about the corporate character of the janissary and *seyyid* identities or about their insignia. The novelty here was the presence of two city-wide parties based on these identities, which, as far as we know, emerged only in Aleppo, Aynab, and Maraş. That this looked like a typical case of factionalism along the lines of the Qasimi-Faqari divide in Egypt¹⁷ is suggested by Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's retrospective account. Regarding Maraş, Cevdet Paşa notes that all the sub-districts (*nahiyes*) in the province were divided into Bayezidli/Bayezidlu and Dulkadirli/Dulkadirli, as the two groups were called there. Even the Armenians of Zeytun were part of this division, and, in fact, Cevdet Paşa attributed the early riots in Zeytun to this factionalism rather than anti-Ottoman sentiments.¹⁸ But this is another story.

Imperial sources provide conflicting information about the history of the divide, but they concur in treating Aynab, Maraş, and Aleppo together. Thus, according to Ahmed Cevdet Paşa again, the divide between the janissaries and the *sadat* went back to the time of the Ottoman conquest.¹⁹ Selim I had rewarded İskender Bey, the leader of the Bayezidlu tribe, who fought together with him in his eastern campaign, by granting him land in Maraş as a benefice (*arpalık*).²⁰ Thus, in these three cities janissaries and Bayezidlus were those who came after the Ottoman conquest, or were installed by the Ottomans, while *sadat/ashraf* and Dulkadirli were the pre-Ottoman elite.

This characterisation, which posits two competing identities in the region, a pre-Ottoman elite and those who came with the Ottoman state, basically agrees with some

16 Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir* (21-39), ed. C. Baysun (Ankara 1991), 122; Idem, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, III:1584, and VI:170. See also BOA, HAT 41208, 7 Receb 1225/8 August 1810.

17 J. Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions: Myth, Memory, and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen* (Albany 2003).

18 Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, 22. In 1780 and 1782, Armenians of Zeytun in Maraş rose up, refusing to pay taxes to the governor, Ömer Paşa, who had either imposed an additional burden contrary to the waqf status of the district, or demanded what was due to the waqfs, including a waqf for Armenian churches. This incident was the first in a series of rebellions in Zeytun, which remained tax-related until the middle of the nineteenth century; E. İltar, 'Ermeni Mes'alesi'nin Perspektifi ve Zeytûn İsyânları (1780-1880) (Ankara 1988); F. Adanır, 'Insurrectionary Tradition, Rustic Obduracy, or Revolutionary Fervor? Zeytunis in the History of the Ottoman-Armenian Relations', unpublished paper given at the Third Armenian-Turkish Workshop titled *Vectors of Violence: War, Revolution, and Genocide*, Minneapolis, 28-30 March 2003.

19 Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, 122; Idem, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, III:1584. See also BOA, HAT 41208, 7 Receb 1225/8 August 1810.

20 B. Atalay, *Maraş Tarihi ve Coğrafyası* (Istanbul 1973), 57; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, 122.

of the earlier work on Arab *ashraf*, and there is no reason to reject it right away. Yet, can we assume that the region experienced no socio-political change in its three-and-a-half-century-long Ottoman history, or that the perception of the Ottoman centre and its regional representatives by the local elites remained unchanged?

The earliest evidence that presents the divide in Maraş as ‘ancient’ (*kadim*) dates from 1810.²¹ Most documents from the time of the events suggest that the divide in Ayntab was a recent phenomenon. Namely, they refer to the events in Ayntab as a matter of the past few years or, in one case, a matter of 15 years, which takes us to the 1770s and 1780s.²² Needless to say, there are plenty of records in Ayntab’s court registers from the seventeenth and eighteenth century regarding janissary disorders. These include attacks on property and people as well as symbolic sites, such as the court and colleges. However, *sadat* do not appear as an explicit and corporate target in these attacks before the eighteenth century.²³ In my opinion, the *sadat* became a target as Ayntab’s ruling elite became *sadat*, i.e., appropriated the title, in the course of the seventeenth and, especially, the eighteenth century.²⁴ By the time of the events discussed in this paper, not only the *nakibüleşraf* had been elevated in the hierarchy of urban authority, but also most military and civil functionaries (the commander of the cavalry, of the fortress, not to mention scholars, the mufti, the judge, waqf administrators, guild sheikhs) were *seyyids*.²⁵ Thus, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s view of the matter was possibly based on a myth of origins that would be contemporaneous with the late eighteenth-century crisis when the two groups emerged as ‘parties’ in local politics.

21 BOA, HAT 41208, 7 Receb 1225/8 August 1810.

22 According to a report by Yusuf Ziya Paşa, the governor of Erzurum and Çıldır, the people of Ayntab were divided for 15 years. Some claimed to be *sadat* and some claimed to be janissaries. “Sometimes they [fought] and the winning side expell[ed] the losers from the city. The latter [took] refuge in the provinces of Maraş, Rakka, Aleppo, and complain[ed] to the *Bab-ı Âli*. Then, they gather[ed] supporters and [went] back to Ayntab, together with the governor appointed to retain order. Then, they [took] revenge...”; BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye 12645, 24 Receb 1211/23 January 1797. Also ACR 134/180, 185, Rebiyülâhır 1207/November 1792 and 4 Ramazan 1207/15 April 1793.

23 For example, ACR 87/290, Zilkade 1147/April 1735, ACR 102/207, Zilhicce 1158/January 1746, ACR 124/224, Muharrem 1183/May 1769, ACR 83/200, 84/31, 1145/1732, ACR 106/238, Receb 1162/July 1749.

24 For the prominence of *seyyidhood* among the elite and a comparison of status with janissaries in late seventeenth-century Ayntab see H. Canbakal, ‘Ayntab at the End of the Seventeenth Century: A Study of Notables and Urban Politics’, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1999, Chapter 2, and Eadem, ‘The Ottoman State and Descendants of the Prophet’, 550-551. For a general comparison of the wealth and status of the two groups in Aleppo see Bodman, *Political Factions*, 63-65; Raymond, ‘Réseaux urbains’, 98-99; J.-P. Thieck, ‘Décentralisation ottomane et affirmation urbaine à Alep à la fin du XVIII^e siècle’, in Idem, *Passion d’Orient* (Paris 1992), 152, 158; Masters, *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East*, 46-47. All these studies concur that janissaries were in general engaged in non-prestigious trades, while *sadat* were socially and economically better placed.

25 For example, ACR 134/39, 74-77, 85, 1201-1208/1786-1793.

Sentiments without Group Identity?

Nevertheless, mutually hostile feelings can be dated to the seventeenth century. Evidently in 1621, after Osman II's murder, janissaries of Ayntab were attacked on orders of the judge Abdülbaki Efendi and their coffee-houses were destroyed.²⁶ Abdülbaki Efendi's orders either paralleled or preceded Abaza Mehmed Paşa's initiative against janissaries in eastern Anatolia. It is possible that Osman's grand design of restructuring the Empire relying on provincial powers played a role in preparing the ground for this reaction. Judging by the registers of the imperial *nakibiülegraf*, not only claims of *seyyidhood* but also the issuing of *seyyidhood* diplomas peaked during Osman's reign.²⁷ Thus, if this was no mere coincidence, the promotion of *seyyidhood* as the bulwark of a new/old aristocracy along with provincial officers and governors as opposed to *kuls* is likely to have contributed to the budding of a new consciousness of *seyyidhood*, further strengthened later by the actual rise of the provincial governors and local elites in imperial politics. Osman II did not survive, but the pseudo-*sadat* did. Only during the grand vizierate of the Köprülü family in the second half of the seventeenth century did the centre make a serious but short-lived effort to control the increase in the number of *sadat*.

Another incident, dated 1689, suggests that, by the end of the seventeenth century, at least some janissaries saw the *sadat* as a party and an ally of the centre. These were a group of self-proclaimed rank-and-file janissaries who attacked mufti Mevlâna Mehmed's classroom, tore his law books into pieces, broke into his residence, and intimidated the judge and others into flight. They also raided the market, and broke into the shops of two *sadat*. They took the noble sign, the green turban, off their heads, and after some most grave insults, they reportedly proclaimed: "From now on we are enemies of the *sadat*; if they are to rely on the pasha of Maraş, [we are also enemies] of the one who conferred on him that rank and governorship".²⁸ It is difficult to think of these janissaries who swore enmity to the governor of Maraş, and through him, to the Sultan, as the 'Ottoman party', which is how Ahmed Cevdet later characterised the janissaries. If anything, their strong diatribe, as captured or phrased by the court scribes, places the *sadat* and the governor on the same side, signals resentment at exclusion, and sounds closer to a subaltern voice that matches their socio-economic profile, as will be seen below.

26 Mustafa Naima, *Naima Tarihi*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 1968), 498; Güzelbey, *Gaziantep'ten Kesitler*, 87-88; Yetkin, *Gaziantep Tarihi*, 25. Naima reports incidents of reaction against janissaries in other provinces as well. For a critical reading of Naima's representation of Abaza Mehmed's 'rebellion' see G. Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley 2003), 165-184.

27 Canbakal, 'The Ottoman State and Descendants of the Prophet'.

28 ACR 39/106/2 and 159/4, Safer 1101/November 1689 and Receb 1101/April 1690: "... bizim âhar ile husumetimiz yokdur ihanetimiz sadatadur eger Maraş Paşasına istinad iderlerse ana dahi tug ve sancak virene diyu...".

‘Osmanlı Takımı’?

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa characterised the janissaries as “the Ottoman party” (*Osmanlı takımı*) in his account of the origins of the divide in Maraş, Aleppo, and Ayntab. He argued that the janissaries took a pro-state position, while the *sadat* “pursued old ideas” (*efkâr-ı atika gayretini güderlerdi*).²⁹

Whatever it meant to pursue ‘old ideas’ in Ahmed Cevdet’s time, it is curious, to say the least, that Cevdet Paşa regarded the janissaries as pro-state and, by implication, Nuri Mehmed and his *sadat* as a party against the Ottomans, and as rebels. Nuri Mehmed came from a local family, the Battalzades, which emerged sometime in the first quarter of the century. This was a typical second-rank *ayan* family of much local and some regional importance.³⁰ Members held several important offices and tax-farms, including the deputy governorship of Ayntab and Kilis (*voyvoda* and *mütesellim*), the commandership of the fortress, not to mention the office of *nakibüleşraf*. Like all militarised notables, some of them did not hesitate to appropriate what was not rightfully theirs, and, as *noblesse d’oblige*, they were also generous about giving to the city what they owned through several charitable undertakings.³¹ Nuri Mehmed, the key figure in the whole episode discussed here, held the Ayntab tax-farm as a lifetime holding, and was a man with many hats.

According to Mütercim Asım, Nuri Mehmed followed policies in complete agreement with the current and future policies of the imperial centre: namely, he tried to bring the local tribes, janissaries, and Bektashis under control.³² In the same account, Nuri Mehmed appears as an ardently loyal statesman. In an almost hagiographical anecdote, Mütercim Asım depicts Nuri Mehmed chastising a dervish for having closed his ears in order not to hear praise for the Ottoman Sultan at a Friday sermon. Nuri Mehmed quoted, according to Asım, the famous Qur’anic verse “obey ... those of you who are in authority” (4:59). Ironically, as Nuri Mehmed spoke to the *molla* in the courtyard of the Ömeriye Mosque, Köse Paşa’s forces were on the outskirts of Ayntab, closing in on him.³³ The reference in this anecdote to a Qur’anic verse may not be incidental either, since Nuri Mehmed was a well-educated man who had made a name for himself for his intelligence. He was a poet with a *divan* and a musician who had composed many songs. He was referred to as ‘efendi’ in a *ferman* that authorised him to build a mosque five years before his execution. It was to be called ‘The Mosque of Light’ (*Cami’ün-nur*) and was accompanied by a college.³⁴

29 Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, V:203, 253-254.

30 H. Çınar, ‘18. Yüzyılda Ayntab’da Bir Yerel Gücün Yükselişi ve Düşüşü: Battalzâdeler (Battaloğulları)’, in *XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi*, Vol. 3 (Ankara 2002), 431-452.

31 Nuri Mehmed’s grandfather, Koca Battal, built a small mosque and four fountains, financed the repair of the Bostancı Mosque, and rebuilt the Karagöz Mosque; C. C. Güzelbey, *Gaziantep Camileri Tarihi* (Gaziantep 1984), 57, 106, 133; ACR 134/22, 90; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, III:1368.

32 Mütercim Asım Efendi, *Asım Tarihi*, 2:227.

33 Ibid., 2:232.

34 ACR 134/10, 1201/1786-1787; Şemseddin Sami, *Kamusü’l-A’lam*, Vol. 6 (İstanbul 1898), 4618; Güzelbey, *Gaziantep Camileri*, 133-135.

One cannot tell to what extent Mütercim's loyalty to his former patron shaped his memory of him. Further research is needed to find out whether Nuri Mehmed indeed tried to bring Turkoman and Kurdish tribes, janissaries, and the "debauched Bektashis" under control, almost predicting Istanbul's moves, or if he was one *ayan* among others who simply sought to weaken his rivals and get a larger share of the pie for himself and his followers. It should be noted that Mütercim himself also came from a *seyyid* family. So he was not exactly a detached outsider – although he was not alone in thinking that Nuri Mehmed was innocent and killed upon false accusations.³⁵ Be that as it may, his portrayal of Nuri Mehmed exemplifies, at least, the self-perception of the *sadat* party in the early nineteenth century as supporters of the central reform cause. It would be interesting in this context to examine the possible ties between Battalzades and *sadat*, on the one hand, and the more important *ayan*-turned-governors of the region, on the other. It may not be a mere coincidence that Nuri Mehmed's brother was married to a Çapanoğlu, the pro-reform *ayan*/governor family of eastern-central and eastern Anatolia. The family gained control of the region from the 1760s onwards.³⁶ Selim III and later Mahmud II may or may not have shared the *sadat*'s self-perception, but it is notable that both of them gave Mütercim their precious patronage after he ended up in Istanbul following his flight from Ayntab when Nuri Mehmed was hopelessly cornered in the citadel. It was in Istanbul that Mütercim wrote his defence of Nuri Mehmed.

Tribal Identity?

A petition by Şerif Mehmed Paşa, the governor of Aleppo, a few years after Nuri Mehmed's execution, provides yet another perspective on the political divide in Ayntab. It presents the situation in Ayntab as a Kurdish-Turkoman divide. In response to an order commanding Hüseyin Ağa, the *voyvoda* of Ayntab, to join İbrahim Paşa's campaign against the tribes in Birecik, Şerif Mehmed wants Hüseyin Ağa to remain in Ayntab because, he notes, "one side of Ayntab is Kurdish and one side is Turkoman, [therefore] his absence would cause disorder".³⁷

This remark can be understood to refer to immigrant tribesmen who found patronage in the ranks of either party, as was the case in contemporary Aleppo.³⁸ Indeed, an imperial order from 1780, accusing the janissary commanders of Ayntab of accepting bribes and letting Kurds and Arabs into the janissary corps, confirms the connection between immigrant tribesmen and the janissaries during this period.³⁹ Two factors are likely to have

35 Şemseddin Sami, *Kamusü'l-A'lam*, 6:4618.

36 The Çapanoğlu's sphere of influence stretched all the way to Raqqa, and included Maraş, Ayntab, and Aleppo; Ö. Mert, *XVIII. ve XIX. Yüzyıllarda Çapanoğulları* (Ankara 1980); Güzelbey, *Gaziantep Camileri*, 103; S. J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807* (Cambridge, Mass. 1971), 215.

37 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye 265, 20 Rebiyülâhır 1213/1 October 1798.

38 Thieck, 'Décentralisation ottomane', 151-152. Also Bodman, *Political Factions*, 63-65; Masters, *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East*, 46-47.

39 This was not a recent phenomenon. As early as the middle of the seventeenth century,

accelerated the penetration of the tribesmen into the corps. First, a harsh winter decimated the herds of the tribe of Rışvan in 1785. Bad weather may have continued during the decade and other tribes, too, may have been affected.⁴⁰ This was coupled with another wave of forced settlement in the 1770s and 1780s, which triggered tribal unrest and insecurity around the city.⁴¹

However, while a mix of Kurdish, Turkoman and Bedouin tribes are known to have been associated with janissaries in Aleppo, Şerif Mehmed's characterisation of the divide in Ayntab as Kurdish versus Turkoman appears surprisingly and doubtfully neat. While one cannot rule out the possibility that certain tribes allied with the janissaries and others with the *sadat*, the distant memory of the Ottoman conquest of the region may also have played a role here. In view of the fact that Selim had relied extensively on Kurdish tribes in his eastern campaign in 1514-1516, and rewarded several of them with benefices, it seems likely that the Bayezidlus, who were installed in the region by Selim as a loyal force in order to counteract the unwilling elite of the state of Zulkadriye/Dulkadir-lu, were indeed Kurdish.⁴² Let us recall that Zulkadriye/Dulkadir-lu was also a Turkoman confederation. According to Türkay's study of tribes in the Ottoman Empire, too, the tribe (*aşiret*) of Bayezidlu in this region was possibly Kurdish.⁴³ As far as the crisis of 1788-1793 is concerned, Taltabanzade's affiliation with Kurdish tribes probably did not help either.⁴⁴ If these pieces of evidence add up to something, then, on the one hand, we may be one step closer to understanding why Kürdtepe in Ayntab, now called Türktepe, was called Kürdtepe in the first place. At the same time, it is plausible that as tribal im-

Turkomans of Aleppo and Yeni-il successfully claimed the janissary title; Canbakal, *Society and Politics*, 86-87.

40 ACR 132/2, Rebiyülevvel 1199/February 1785. Güzelbey, *Gaziantep'ten Kesitler*, 83, reports a very harsh winter in 1794 as well.

41 Settlement of tribes in the Raqqa region and tribal disorders in the countryside: Kılıçlı-Reyhanlı tribe, ACR 120/30, Rebiyülevvel 1189/May 1775, and ACR 120/31-35, Zilkade 1190/December 1776; Rışvan tribe, ACR 120/38-42, Cemaziyelâhır 1191/July 1777; Reyhanlı tribe, ACR 120/55/2, Rebiyülevvel 1191/April 1777. Settlement in the Antakya region from 1779 onwards, in Y. Halaçoğlu, *XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun İskân Siyaseti ve Aşiretlerin Yerleştirilmesi* (Ankara 1997), 56, 136-141. Settlement of İlbeyli clan, ACR 134/338, 13 Cemaziyevvel 1202/20 February 1788.

42 Hoca Sadettin Efendi, *Tacü't-Tevarih*, Vol. 4, ed. İ. Parmaksızoğlu (Ankara 1999), esp. 231-292. Also see Atalay, *Maraş Tarihi*, 59.

43 Türkay also mentions a certain clan (*cemaat*) of Bayezidlu among Turkoman Yörüks of Kilis, Maraş, Sivas, and Kırşehir. The territory he cites as the abode of the Kurdish tribe (*aşiret*) of Bayezidlu is identical, with the exception of Diyarbakir, which is not mentioned in the case of Turkoman Yörüks. This is more likely to reflect the flexible sense of ethno-tribal identity as well as the Ottomans' intervention in tribal confederations. See C. Türkay, *Başbakanlık Arşivi Belgeleri'ne Göre Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Oymak, Aşiret, ve Cemaâtlar* (İstanbul 2001), 58, 198.

44 According to Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, Taltabanzade was related to Rışvanlı Küçük Alioğlu Halil Bey who had rebelled in Adana in 1201/1786-1787; *Tarih-i Cevdet*, II:853. Also see ACR 134/12-14, Zilkade 1200/August 1786, where Taltabanzade is reported to have responded to Battalzade's call for support in an earlier crisis by coming to Ayntab with a large retinue of Kurds recruited from various tribes.

migration accelerated against the backdrop of increasing economic hardship during this period, *ayan* politics found a ready constituency and ally in this mobile population.⁴⁵ The distant memory of the encounter between locals (Turkomans of Dulkadir) and those brought by the Ottomans may have made it easier to invent a tradition of ‘two opposing parties’ in the eighteenth century, and assign it a role it had ceased to play for centuries, or never had. Whether with ethno-tribal overtones or not, the factional framework of the janissary-*sadat* divide, hence, of the consecutive rebellions and incessant unrest, appears indisputable. Yet, what drove the events was more than elite competition for a larger share of the pie; there were also social reasons for political activism.

*The Socio-Economic Dimension of the Unrest*⁴⁶

The latter part of the eighteenth century was not an easy time for Ayntab’s economy. After major economic distress during the war with the Habsburgs a century earlier (1683-1699), Ayntab’s economy had expanded at a remarkable rate in the first half of the eighteenth century, as building activity, urban expansion, and growth of the export sectors attest.⁴⁷ Probate records of the Ayntabīs provide parallel evidence. Average male wealth rose in all sectors of society, most notably among the *sadat* and the officers (Table III, Appendix).⁴⁸ Likewise, from 1660-1694 to 1740-1760, the lower wealth group shrank, and the ‘middling sort’ and the upper wealth group expanded substantially (Tables IVa-d, Appendix). But the trend towards improvement in general welfare was reversed by the end of the century. Average wealth declined – even though it remained above the late seventeenth-century level for the *sadat* and rank-and-file janissaries. At the same time, the lower wealth group expanded, surpassing its seventeenth-century level among the officers, while the middle and upper wealth groups contracted, falling below their seventeenth-century level among the officers. Considering the fact that the period after 1768 was a time of war and troubles for the imperial centre and, in fact, for the whole Empire, one would expect Ayntab’s economy to have suffered as well.⁴⁹ This was probably the case, but the burden was not shared equally.

It is notable that wealth inequality peaked in the middle of the century and then improved significantly during the crisis period (Table V, Appendix).⁵⁰ Secondly, the janis-

45 R. Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants and Refugees* (Seattle and London 2009), 93-98.

46 This section is based primarily on probate inventories taken from the project ‘Distribution of Wealth in the Ottoman Empire, 1500-1840’, funded by TÜBİTAK (Turkish Institute of Science and Technology). See the Appendix for details.

47 H. Çınar, ‘18. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Ayıntab Şehri’nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Durumu’, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Istanbul University, 2000, 22-55, 192-251, 319-338; Canbakal, *Society and Politics*, 27-33, 38-48.

48 Figures are deflated according to the House Price Index. See Tables IIa-b, Appendix.

49 M. Genç, ‘XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Ekonomisi ve Savaş’, *Yapıt*, 49 (1984), 52-61.

50 While the mean wealth in the top percentile was about 20 times as much as the mean wealth in the bottom 95%, this ratio rose to 86 to one in 1780-1800.

saries and *sadat* suffered more than the rest of the Ayntabîs. In fact, the ordinary Ayntabîs' average wealth remained steady, while average janissary and *seyyid* wealth shrank sharply in the last decades of the eighteenth century.⁵¹ More important, for example, while 13% of the ordinary Ayntabîs experienced downward mobility from the beginning of the century until 1780-1800, the respective figures for the janissaries and the *sadat* are 42% and 19%.⁵² Consequently, both the janissary and *sadat* populace had a relatively larger body of poor among them than the rest of the Ayntabîs in that period (73%, 72%, 62%, respectively). Among the rank-and-file janissaries, the poor made up an even larger group (83%) (Tables III and IVa-d, Appendix).

It is quite possible that some of the established *sadat* and janissary families were indeed impoverished more than the rest of the population because of occupational specialisation in sectors that were particularly hard hit during this period. For example, the *sadat* had a noticeable presence in the textile sector. Several modest *sadat* owned looms, better-off ones owned dye-houses or were textile dealers. It is possible that the decline of some *sadat* was related to the reversal in foreign demand for Ayntabî textiles after 1777. We do not at present know whether this reversal was compensated by an expansion of the domestic market.⁵³ If there were similar economic factors that affected the livelihood of the janissaries more than that of other Ayntabîs, they elude us for the time being.

Alternatively, poverty among janissaries and *sadat* reached a level higher than among the rest of the population because new recruits from among the poor, immigrants or otherwise, were added to their body. Indeed, probate inventories of the rank-and-file janissaries from the late eighteenth century suggest that they were probably immigrant peasants – with or without tribal connections stretching back in time. They had a dismal amount of urban commercial property per person, and the bulk of their wealth was invested in residential buildings (Tables VIa-d, Appendix). Some of them owned very modest amounts of rural property, particularly vineyards, like most Ayntabîs, but none owned livestock. The *sadat*, by contrast, had a much larger stock of urban property per person and a slightly larger stock of land during the same period. It was the janissary officers who held the largest amount of both urban and rural property per person although the total value of urban property held by *sadat* as a whole was higher. The officers were the biggest investors in land (per person and as a group), and land was the

51 Mean wealth of 'other Ayntabîs' increased steadily in the eighteenth century. It declined only slightly if we take into account 1740-1760 data. For the data used, see Appendix, Item 1.

52 If we compare the period of crisis with the period that immediately preceded it (1740-1760), then the decline appears even more pronounced: about 70% for the *sadat* and 50% for the janissaries. However, the data set for this period is rather small. See Appendix, Item 1.

53 Ayntab experienced a textile boom in the eighteenth century, part of which was related to foreign demand. This business accelerated from the 1730s through the 1760s, continued for another decade with diminishing momentum, then, after 1777, experienced a sharp decline due to falling French demand; K. Fukasawa, *Toilerie et commerce du Levant: d'Alep à Marseille* (Paris 1987), 46, 51-53. Also see R. Pococke, *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries*, Vol. 2/1 (London 1745), 155.

largest item of investment in their portfolio. The second largest item of investment was the credit sector.⁵⁴

Things were different in the early eighteenth century. The *sadat* were the economically dominant group. They controlled the credit market, and they controlled several times the amount of property controlled by janissaries of all ranks. During this period, too, land constituted the largest item in the officers' portfolio, a sizeable part of which was arable land (*tarla*), suggesting usurpation from cultivators. Yet, the total value of land held by *sadat*, both collectively and per person, was higher. Similarly, the *sadat* had a distinctly large amount of wealth invested in shops.

In brief then, between the beginning and the latter part of the eighteenth century, the *sadat* apparently withdrew from the countryside and were replaced by officer landowners as the dominant social group. They also withdrew from the urban commercial real estate market and here, too, they were replaced by janissary officers. Instead, the *sadat* came to own a relatively larger stock of fixed capital goods and commercial goods, in which area the janissaries had very limited presence. In other words, by the end of the century, the *sadat* were less of a rentier group and more involved in productive activity. These findings confirm our general observations about the changes in the three-layered wealth scheme introduced above. But in addition, they point to a reshuffling of wealth and a qualitative change in economic power relations unfavourable to 'upper-class' *sadat*.⁵⁵ Another indicator signalling the direction of change for the *sadat* was the expansion of the middle wealth group during the crisis, and this trend may have continued in the early nineteenth century, making the *sadat* a solid part of Ayntab's 'middle class' (Table IVc, Appendix).⁵⁶ One could imagine that elite *sadat* would have been more easily drawn into faction-building under those circumstances, encouraging recruitment from among the poor, who were available and willing.

In brief, the period of 1780-1800 was a time of troubles for some Ayntabîs. In this period, rising expectations of the earlier part of the century were frustrated because of economic factors that still need to be studied in detail. Particularly noteworthy is the impressive expansion of the 'middle class' among the janissaries and of the 'upper class' among the *sadat* in the first half of the century and, then, their shrinkage in 1780-1800. Thus, part of the late eighteenth-century unrest must have been due to frustration and the sense

54 Although the *sadat* appear to surpass them in that area by far, it is because of a single super rich *seyyid*. That person excluded, the *sadat* had minimal presence in the credit market. See Table VIb, Appendix.

55 A more accurate picture of this change can be obtained by examining the *sadat* in two groups that more or less parallel the difference between rank-and-file janissaries and officers, i.e., *beşes* and *ağas*. While this is essentially a status difference, it also reflects wealth differentiation. Among the *sadat*, one observes a parallel distinction between *sadat* who have no other honorific titles and those who have additional titles. See Canbakal, 'Ayntab at the End of the Seventeenth Century', Chapter 3; Eadem, 'Comparative Reflections on the Distribution of Wealth in Ayntab (17th-18th Centuries)', *Oriens*, 37 (2009), 237-252.

56 This was due to the improvement of the lot of the poor *sadat* as much as the contraction of the upper wealth group.

of relative decline rather than sheer poverty. Contraction of the upper wealth group also suggests increased competitiveness among the elite and a reshuffling of wealth among different social groups – which a qualitative study of the town's resources and their distribution can further reveal. At the same time, however, the remarkable number of the poor among both the janissaries and the *sadat* also suggests that sheer poverty, too, was a factor that created fertile ground for political activism, if in a frame of factionalism. No matter how far back the origins of the two factions went, it was in this changing and fragile economic context that they generated intensely confrontational politics.

Conclusion

While Ayntab experienced violent political turmoil and many Ayntabîs experienced economic difficulties in the second half of the eighteenth century, the centre too suffered a severe and probably unprecedented fiscal crisis due to wars with Russia (1768-1774, 1787-1792) and Austria (1787-1791). After the war, the New Order (*Nizam-ı Cedid*) that the imperial centre set out to build continued to exert pressure on the budget. These decades were also the most inflationary period in the whole of Ottoman history. Drastic debasement of the *guruş* in 1789 added to whatever other inflationary factors were at work.⁵⁷ It came when Nuri Mehmed was back in power in Ayntab after Taltabanzade and his men were killed, and must have enhanced the political tension since fixed-salary groups, such as the janissaries, with no additional resources, would have been particularly hard hit.

Fiscal pressure coincided with Empire-wide harvest failures, food shortages, and famine (Crete, Macedonia, Aleppo, Baghdad, Cairo, Tripoli), pestilence (Belgrade, Bosnia, Albania, Crete, Salonica, Istanbul, Izmir, eastern Anatolia, Aleppo, Syrian coastline, Egypt) and, naturally, rebellions (Cairo, Istanbul, Damascus, Macedonia, western Bulgaria, northern Greece).⁵⁸ Thus, janissary-*sadat* activism was one among many local

57 Ş. Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge 2000), 159-171; Idem, *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi, 1500-1914* (Istanbul 2005), 180.

58 Raymond, 'Urban Networks and Popular Movements in Cairo and Aleppo', 221-223, 233-234; B. McGowan, 'The Age of the Ayans, 1699-1812', in H. İnalcık with D. Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge 1997), 651-654, 687; M. Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York 2006), Chapter IV; A. J. McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Ramadan War* (Westport, CT 2006), 46; H.-U. Lammel, 'Western European Perception and Representation of Plagues in Eastern Europe, the Ottoman Empire and the Near East, 1650-1800', in S. Cavaciocchi (ed.), *Le interazioni fra economia e ambiente biologico nell'Europa preindustriale, secc. XIII-XVIII / Economic and Biological Interactions in Pre-Industrial Europe from the 13th to the 18th Centuries* (Florence 2010), 405; B. J. Hayden, H. M. C. Dierckx et alii, *Reports on the Vrokastro Area, Eastern Crete, Volume 2: The Settlement History of the Vrokastro Area and Related Studies* (Philadelphia 2004), 305; F. M. Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (Oxford 1996), 50; Winter, *Egyptian Society*, 137-138; A. L. Al-Sayyid Marsot, *Women and Men in Late Eighteenth-Century Egypt* (Austin 1995), 29; J. Alexander, *Bubonic Plague in Early Modern*

stories of socio-political turmoil. Further, the Ottoman Empire was not alone in facing such a multiplex challenge among the *anciens régimes* of Eurasia. Whether ultimately related to state-making and interstate competition, i.e., political factors, or the taxing effects of a common secular cycle, or climate change, or all of these factors, China, Russia, France, like the Ottoman Empire, suffered major fiscal and political crises. They all saw widespread popular activism and experienced what Goldstone calls “state breakdown”.⁵⁹ While it is now more common to think of the Celalis and the early seventeenth-century rebellions in the Ottoman Empire in a Eurasian context (marked by population increase, inflation, then decline and the Little Ice Age),⁶⁰ scattered evidence regarding the late eighteenth-century rebellions as well as the impasse of the state at that time still await a similarly informed consideration from a global perspective. A global perspective can also help us capitalise on the literature on the relationship between economic change and waves of rebellion as experienced during this period. For example, a number of studies indicate that political activism peaks in A or T phases of economic cycles, i.e., during periods of economic expansion or when growth reaches a high point and comes to a halt.⁶¹ The latter may well have been the case for the region, and can help explain faction formation too, since the advance of market relations, and the challenge they posed to communal ties of solidarity, overlapping with limited state authority, provided fertile ground for the emergence of factions.⁶² Extensive demographic mobility due to pastoralism and tribalism in the Syrian-East Anatolian corridor could only have enhanced it.

As for our initial question of how to characterise this period of unrest in Ayntab in connection with the common theme of this volume, the sources used in this study provide only a preliminary approach to the matter. Most important, they leave us in the dark regarding the agenda of the participants. The study of the economic position of the *sadat* and janissaries strongly suggests the involvement of lower-class or downwardly mobile

Russia: Public Health and Urban Disaster (Oxford 2002), 101; T. Stoianovich, *Balkan Worlds: The First and Last Europe* (Armonk, NY 1994), 35; F. F. Anscombe, ‘Albanians and “Mountain Bandits”’, in Idem (ed.), *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830* (Princeton 2006), 87-93; D. Panzac, *La peste dans l’Empire ottoman* (Louvain 1985), 66-74, 156-161, 608-609, 626.

59 J. A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley 1991); also D. Armitage and S. Subrahmanyam (eds), *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760-1840* (New York 2010).

60 See S. White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge 2011).

61 A. Soto Carmona, ‘Long Cycle of Social Conflict in Spain (1868-1986)’, *Review*, 16/2 (1993), 173-197; M. Neumann, *The Rise and Fall of the Wealth of Nations: Long Waves in Economics and International Politics* (Cheltenham 1997), 16-18. On cycles, also see L. A. Craig and D. Fisher, *The European Macroeconomy: Growth, Integration and Cycles, 1500-1913* (Cheltenham 2000), 118-143, 170-173; P. Turchin and S. A. Nefedov, *Secular Cycles* (Princeton 2009), 1-34.

62 P. Schneider, J. Schneider, and E. Hansen, ‘Modernization and Development: The Role of Regional Elites and Non-Corporate Groups in the European Mediterranean’, in S. W. Schmidt and L. Guasti (eds), *Friends, Followers, Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1977), 467-479.

people in the events, possibly venting their frustration at a time of economic strain on a well-defined scapegoat. One can plausibly argue that the poet Ruhi's depiction of the rebellion against Taltabanzade is strongly reminiscent of an act of retribution, characteristic of early modern popular rebellions according to Beik,⁶³ and the uprising against him may well have brought together janissaries, *sadat*, as well as other Ayntabîs if Taltaban committed half of the atrocities in Ayntab that Ruhi alleges he did. Furthermore, even if janissary-*sadat* rivalry was at the centre stage in 1788-1793, there may be other episodes in those difficult decades in which the two parties or groups within them, say, the poor, who made up the overwhelming majority, took the initiative despite their respective elites and co-operated with other 'people'.⁶⁴ Alternatively, elites of the two parties, too, may have co-operated. For example, although the initiative to eliminate Nuri Mehmed by inviting Taltaban to Ayntab had probably come from the janissary leadership, there was reason for the *sadat* grandees to support or, at least, condone the act because Nuri Mehmed pursued policies that could alienate them as well, such as 'borrowing' money from the rich "to be paid in the next world", in order to build his military muscle against tribes and janissaries.⁶⁵ In brief, the presence of factions does not preclude action that cuts across that axis. Following Gilsenan, one could argue that putting too much emphasis on patron-client ties and factionalism obscures the co-operation between elite factions, especially during periods when new patterns of domination come into being in tandem with political centralisation.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, all of the foregoing are merely conjectures until further research brings to light new sources and evidence regarding the 'class component' in the events and in

63 W. Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge and New York 1997).

64 Instances of co-operation are cited also in Winter, *Egyptian Society*, 190; Bodman, *Political Factions*, 112-116, 122-123, 138; and H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I/2 (London and New York 1957), 102. J. Grehan, 'Street Violence and Social Imagination in Late-Mamluk and Ottoman Damascus (ca. 1500-1800)', *IJMES*, 35 (2003), 221, points out that "genuine popular protest" can involve gangs, more organised groups, and cliques as well.

65 Mütercim Asım Efendi, *Asım Tarihi*, 2:228. Kilisli Ruhi notes that the commander of the janissaries conferred with some notables before inviting Taltaban; Yener, 'Kilisli Meşhur Şair Ruhi', 11-13. Nuri Mehmed also raised the dues on sheep that passed through Ayntab. The rise was more than twofold and perceived as an oppressive measure against merchants, and thus repealed immediately after his execution. If the janissaries of Ayntab were affiliated with the meat trade, like the janissaries of Aleppo, then their opposition to Nuri Mehmed comes as no surprise. The commander of the janissaries active in the Nuri Mehmed affair was a certain Kasabzade; ACR 135/179, 11 Cemaziyelevvel 1206/6 January 1792. On the meat trade and the janissaries in Aleppo, see C. Wilkins, *Forging Urban Solidarities: Ottoman Aleppo, 1640-1700* (Leiden and Boston 2010); Raymond, 'Réseaux urbains', 98-99.

66 M. Gilsenan, 'Against Patron-Client Relations', in E. Gellner and J. Waterbury (eds), *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies* (London 1977), 167-183. Also see P. S. Khoury, 'The Urban Notables Paradigm Revisited', *RMMM*, 55-56 (1990), 222, where the author argues that instances of factionalism may have been expressions of class consolidation.

the political vision of the participants. Until then, therefore, one cannot confidently characterise these events as instances of 'popular' rebellion, i.e., as acts directed against social superiors or authorities. Still, they represented 'bottom-up initiatives' as political acts by those who are not part of the legitimate political community, i.e., the community of decision-makers or those whose opinion counted. Who were included therein varied with the level or scope of the political space in question. Particularly in an early modern context where the public space (of decision-making in matters of public relevance) was much more fragmented spatially than it is today, the 'top' and the 'bottom' were relative to the hierarchic configuration of the political spaces from imperial to local. Thus, even if the *sadat* and the janissaries were two factions with elite leadership and identical popular following in each, the participation of ordinary people (middling sort? lower classes?) in a competition among the elite, lending their support to one or the other side, thereby empowering themselves, was a bottom-up act of political will, because ordinary people had no constitutionally defined political role. Furthermore, factional behaviour and political acts out of conviction (as in popular protest) were not necessarily mutually exclusive.⁶⁷

As for the local elites, they were not only well-endowed and socially highly-placed, but also actors in the local political community; and as is well known, they received increasing recognition in this capacity from the seventeenth century onwards. Yet, they had no defined role in the political community in the imperial centre, and it was here that decisions that affected the whole Empire were taken. Thus, if Seyyid Nuri Mehmed, as a local notable, entertained the idea of controlling the janissaries, tribes, and the Bektashis in Ayntab, as suggested by Mütercim Asım's account, this, too, was a 'bottom-up initiative' that dictated a course of action that soon proved to converge with the centre's own. Perhaps he was one of those *ayan*-turned-Ottoman-officials/governors who had their own ideas about the Ottoman state, supported the reform cause, and contributed to the eventual mending of the "disjuncture between political realities and political discourse" that characterised, according to Christine Philliou, the period of 1770-1860.⁶⁸ Why some of the local/regional power-holders supported the reform cause and why some managed to penetrate the imperial political community, while others did not in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century are important questions with a bearing also on the historiography of the Tanzimat era and its aftermath. To address them, one needs to start with an examination of the ties among the lesser and major *ayan* of the region, and among the latter and the Istanbul elite, be it financial bonds established through tax-farming and commerce, or intellectual ties leading to parallel political visions.

Alternatively, and equally plausibly, Nuri Mehmed had no profound vision of the Ottoman constitution. Still, his *sadat* party was incidentally on the 'right side' in view of

67 S. Ketting, 'Patronage and Politics during the Fronde', *French Historical Studies*, 14/3 (1986), 409-441.

68 C. M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley 2011), xix. Philliou's Phanariots constituted a periphery in the centre or 'resident outsiders', as the author calls them, who were half-way successful in penetrating the imperial political community.

the centre's timidly improving vision of reform. Let us note that Battalzades continued to occupy important positions in Ayntab from the demise of Nuri Mehmed into the twentieth century. We see among them *ayan*, tax-farmers, and other local functionaries. During the reign of Abdülhamid II, the seventh mayor of the city was a Battalzade, and another member of the family was decorated during the same period.⁶⁹ Other major *sadat* families, too, survived into the republican era. Janissaries did not. Only two years after Nuri Mehmed's execution, in 1793, the New Order established a new army which was conceived as an alternative to the janissary corps. The latter must have sharpened the janissaries' reflex of self-protection,⁷⁰ and fed into later episodes of janissary-*sadat* activism. The latter was further heightened by the paradoxical increase in the number of janissaries.⁷¹ In 1797, six years after Nuri Mehmed's execution, one of the suggestions to deal with the *seyyid*-janissary conflict was "to kill those who [were] self-proclaimed janissaries and to burn their houses".⁷² Mass killing of the janissaries, true and self-proclaimed, had to wait another 30 years. Janissaries have remained, to this day, the villains of the *seyyid*-janissary clash in the consciousness of Ayntab's elite, as reflected in the works of pioneering local historians, which parallels modernist and centralist Turkish historiography. Accordingly, Nuri Mehmed has remained in the city's memory as a martyr whose grave has turned into a place of pilgrimage for mothers with ailing children.⁷³

APPENDIX

1. *Sources*. The data used in this section are taken from the project 'Distribution of Wealth in the Ottoman Empire, 1500-1840'. The project data are based on probate inventories and organised in nine cross-sections, starting with 1500-1520. I have included cross-sections 1660-1680 through 1820-1840 in this essay. I have also added another register from 1682-1694 (ACR 172) to the 1660-1680 pool, because there is not enough information on *sadat* and janissaries in the original database. The court registers used for each cross-section are as follows:

69 ACR 134/50, 17 Safer 1207/4 October 1792; C. C. Güzelbey (ed.), *Gaziantep Şer'i Mahkeme Sicillerinden Örnekler*, Vol. 2/2 (Gaziantep 1970), 27; Gaziantep Büyükşehir Belediyesi 2007-11 Stratejik Planı, <http://www.sp.gov.tr/documents/planlar/GaziantepBuyuksehirSP0711.pdf>.

70 Orders were sent out to the provincial governors to set up smaller versions of the New Army under their command though not every one of them did; Shaw, *Between Old and New*, 43, 98-109, 127-133. There is evidence that there was resistance to military reforms already under Abdülhamid I; ACR 134/79, 27 Şevval 1201/12 August 1787, appointment of a new commander for the cavalry units in Ayntab on the grounds that the former commander resisted the 'New Regime'. It should be noted that both of these commanders were *sadat*.

71 The number of men in the corps was around 43,000 in 1776. It reached 54,000 in the immediate aftermath of proclaiming the New Order, 98,000 in 1806, and 110,000 in 1809; Shaw, *Between Old and New*, 120.

72 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye 12645, 24 Receb 1211/23 January 1797.

73 Ş. Sabri, *Gaziantep Büyükləri. Beşyüz Elli Yıllık Alim ve Şairleri* (Gaziantep 1934), 22-24.

Period	Ayntab court register Nos
1660-1680 (+ 1682-1694)	26-34 + 172
1700-1720	50-71, 72A-B
1740-1760	93-111, 5, 112-119
1780-1800	131-132
1820-1840	140-143

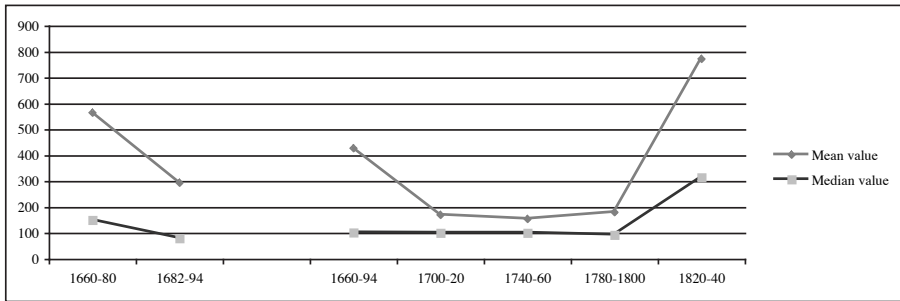
Table Ia: Sources

Probate type	1660-1694	1700-1720	1740-1760	1780-1800	1820-1840
All	141	377	351	171	71
Males	121	295	247	113	58
<i>Seyyid</i>	5	17	31	18	7
<i>Beşe</i>	6	16	14	5	0
<i>Ağa</i>	10	13	16	5	12

Table Ib: Size of the data set

2. *Price index.* In the absence of a local consumer index, I have tentatively built a price index on the basis of house prices in order to trace changes in real wealth over time. Calculations in items 3-4 below are deflated according to this index, taking 1660-1694 as the base period.

	1660-1680	1682-1694	1660-1694	1700-1720	1740-1760	1780-1800	1820-1840
Mean value	565	294	427	169	154	181	773
Median value	150	80	103	100	100	93	315

Table IIa: House prices in Ayntab (in *guruş*)

	1660-1694	1700-1720	1740-1760	1780-1800	1820-1840
Mean prices	1.00	0.40	0.36	0.42	1.81
Median prices	1.00	0.98	0.98	0.91	3.07

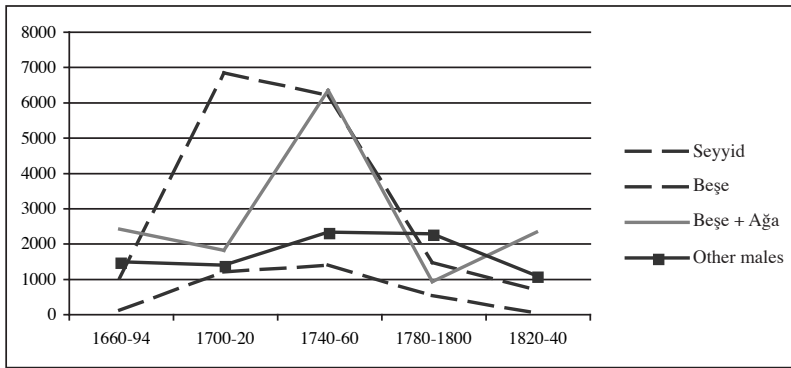
Table IIb: House Price Index in Ayntab

3. Mean wealth.

	1660-1694	1700-1720	1740-1760	1780-1800	1820-1840
<i>Seyyid</i>	993	6,795	6,161	1,428	647
<i>Beşe</i>	85	1,166	1,353	492	0
<i>Beşe + Ağa</i>	2,378	1,770	6,310	885	2,287
Other males	1,451	1,356	2,286	2,241	1,052

Table III: Mean wealth in Ayntab deflated according to House Price Index, taking 1660-1694 as base period (in *guruş*)

When we consider 1660-1680 and 1682-1694 data separately, the decline in mean wealth during the war years (1683-1699) becomes apparent. At the same time, the trend of growth in the early eighteenth century appears sharper.



4. *Three-tiered wealth scheme: 'lower', 'middle', 'upper'.* One way to consider the socio-economic make-up of the janissaries and the *sadat*, or any defined group for that matter, is to build categories of wealth based on the living standards and examine the distribution of the group's population among these categories. Since the study of living standards is a major undertaking in and of itself, I attempt a tentative analysis here using a definition proposed earlier by Establet and Pascual for Damascus around the turn of the eighteenth century.⁷⁴ I take their wealth bracket of 300-1,000 *guruş* indicating people with modest means and place it at the centre of a three-tiered wealth scheme: 'lower class', 'middling sort', and the 'upper class'. Then I adjust these wealth brackets to other periods using the House Price Index as deflator.

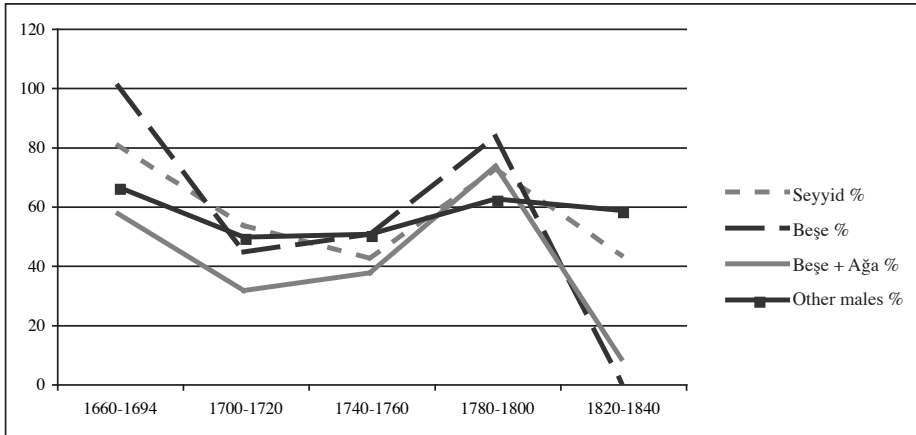
⁷⁴ Establet and Pascual, *Familles et fortunes*, and Eidem, 'Damascene Probate Inventories of the 17th and 18th Centuries: Some Preliminary Approaches and Results', *IJMES*, 24 (1992), 373-393. It is plausible that the general price level in Ayntab was lower than in Damascus, in which case the threshold for each wealth bracket here would have to be lowered.

	Lower group	Middle group	Upper group
1660-1694	0-758	759-2,520	2,521-
1700-1720	0-300	301-1,000	1,001-
1740-1760	0-274	275-911	912-
1780-1800	0-321	322-1,068	1,069-
1820-1840	0-1,372	1,373-4,562	4,563-

Table IVa: Wealth groups in *guruş*
(adjusted according to the House Price Index; 1700-1720 taken as base period)

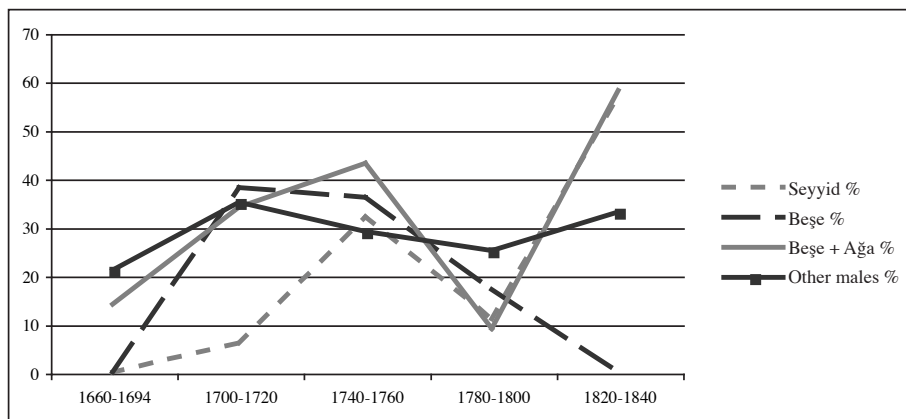
	1660-1694	1700-1720	1740-1760	1780-1800	1820-1840
<i>Seyyid</i> (%)	80	53	42	72	43
<i>Beşe</i> (%)	100	44	50	83	0
<i>Beşe</i> + <i>Ağa</i> (%)	57	31	37	73	8
Other males (%)	66	49	50	62	58

Table IVb: Percentage of population in the lower wealth group



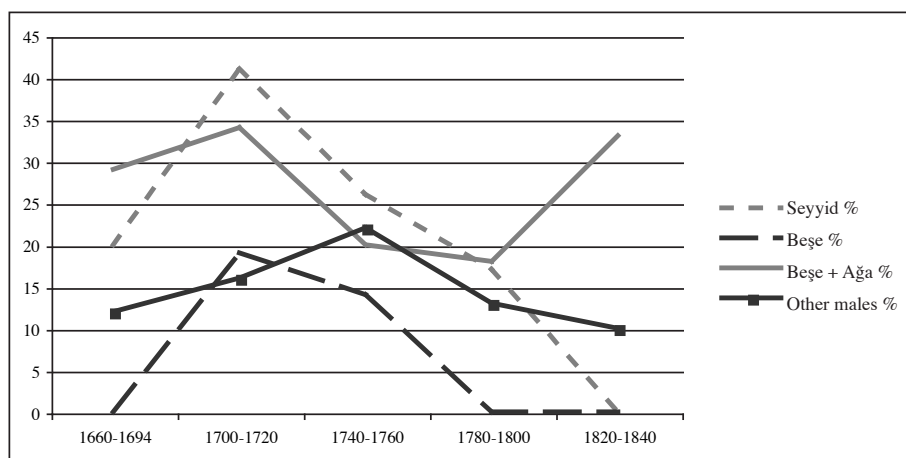
	1660-1694	1700-1720	1740-1760	1780-1800	1820-1840
<i>Seyyid (%)</i>	0	6	32	11	57
<i>Beşe (%)</i>	0	38	36	17	0
<i>Beşe + Ağa (%)</i>	14	34	43	9	58
Other males (%)	21	35	29	25	33

Table IVc: Percentage of population in the middle wealth group



	1660-1694	1700-1720	1740-1760	1780-1800	1820-1840
<i>Seyyid (%)</i>	20	41	26	17	0
<i>Beşe (%)</i>	0	19	14	0	0
<i>Beşe + Ağa (%)</i>	29	34	20	18	33
Other males (%)	12	16	22	13	10

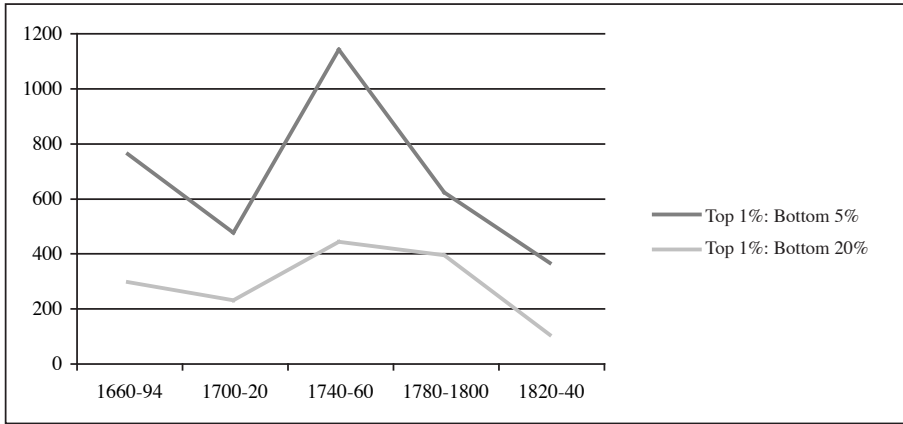
Table IVd: Percentage of population in the upper wealth group



5. *Distribution of wealth. Values not deflated.*

	Top 1%: Bottom 5%	Top 1%: Bottom 20%
1660-1694	756	291
1700-1720	471	224
1740-1760	1,136	506
1780-1800	616	389
1820-1840	360	100

Table V: Mean wealth in top 1% compared to mean wealth in bottom 5% and bottom quintile



6. *Changes in the property and investment profiles.*

	Houses	Shops	Fixed capital	Commercial goods	Credit	Land	Animals
<i>Seyyid</i>	7	10	1	1	40	29	1
<i>Beşe</i>	19	5	1	2	43	11	2
<i>Ağa</i>	25	2	0	3	7	48	2
<i>Beşe + Ağa</i>	23	3	1	2	20	35	2

Table VIa: Percentage of wealth in different categories of property, 1700-1720

	Houses	Shops	Fixed capital	Commercial goods	Credit	Land	Animals
<i>Seyyid</i> (all <i>sadat</i>)	21	2	4	6	54	5	0
<i>Seyyid</i> (without the richest <i>seyyid</i>)	43	2	9	2	5	8	0
<i>Beşe</i>	60	3	0	0	19	6	0
<i>Ağa</i>	14	15	0	3	20	24	4
<i>Beşe + Ağa</i>	27	12	0	2	20	19	3

Table VIb: Percentage of wealth in different categories of property, 1780-1800

	Urban commercial		Land	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Per capita</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Per capita</i>
<i>Seyyid</i>	7,706	453	17,135	1,008
<i>Beşe</i>	703	44	1,003	63
<i>Ağa</i>	811	62	7,999	615
<i>Beşe + Ağa</i>	1,513	52	9,002	310

Table VIc: Value of investments in different categories of property, 1700-1720
(*guruş* not deflated)

	Urban commercial		Land	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Per capita</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Per capita</i>
<i>Seyyid</i>	1,657	92	476	26
<i>Beşe</i>	50	10	87	17
<i>Ağa</i>	708	142	918	184
<i>Beşe + Ağa</i>	758	76	1,005	101

Table VIId: Value of investments in different categories of property, 1780-1800
(*guruş* not deflated)

RIOT IN THE VILLAGE: SOME CASES OF PEASANT PROTEST AROUND OTTOMAN SALONICA

Elias KOLOVOS*

*Lord, have mercy upon us! No more harac, no more nüzül!*¹

ONE DAY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1702, the village of Ayvatlı (mod. Lete), a few kilometres outside Salonica, in the Langada basin (mod. Lagadas), became the stage for a gathering of a crowd (*cumhur*) of around a hundred non-Muslim villagers, who were led by six of their notables. According to an imperial decree issued on 17 Şevval 1113/17 March 1702, following a report by the *naib* of Langada about this incident, their target was Hasan, the delegate of Ahmed, *kapıcıbaşı* of the Sublime Porte and collector of the poll-tax in Salonica. The villagers broke into Hasan's mansion and plundered his property (*konağın basub malını nehb ü itlâf*). Last but not least, they burnt 52 poll-tax receipts that Hasan was about to distribute to them (*elli iki çizye evrakı hark ve ara yerde zayı edüb*).²

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1 “Kyrieleson! Charatzi, charatzopoulon, nouzouli, nouzouloupoulon”: slogan expressing the opposition to the taxes of the rebel Christian peasants of Yanya in 1611; see below, n. 14.

2 This case, like most of those that I use in this paper, was selected out of the Salonica *kadı* court registers (*sicil*) and translated into Greek in I. K. Vasdravellis (ed.), *Historika archeia Makedonias. A'. Archeion Thessalonikes, 1695-1912* [Historical archives of Macedonia. I. Archive of Salonica, 1695-1912] (Salonica 1952), 41-42 (Sicil No. 8, pp. 120-121 [new pagination: 121-122]); see Appendix. A systematic examination of the Salonica *sicils*, which was beyond the scope of this modest paper, might or might not bring out other relevant cases. Despite its Turkish name (originally Koruçı Ayvaz), the village of Ayvatlı was recorded as an almost totally Christian Orthodox village in the Ottoman registers of the end of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century; N. Todorov and B. Nedkov (eds), *Fontes turcici historiae bulgaricae: series XV-XVI*, Vol. XIII/II (Sofia 1966), 412, 413; BOA, TT 7, p. 568; TT 70, p. 6; TT 403, p. 688; TT 723, p. 95. In 1926 the name of the village was changed to Lete; E. Krüger, *Die Siedlungsnamen Griechisch-Makedoniens nach amtlichen Verzeichnissen und Kartenwerken* (Berlin 1984), 287; P. Bellier *et alii*, *Paysages de Macédoine, leurs caractères, leur évolution à travers les documents et les récits des voyageurs*, ed. J. Lefort (Paris 1986), 122.

This paper focuses on this case of a riot in an Ottoman village. Historians of the rest of early modern Europe have exploited abundant evidence on peasant protest and contention.³ Peasant protest must have occurred regularly in the Ottoman provinces as well.⁴

Research by anthropologists like James Scott has shown that peasant resistance would most likely occur in 'everyday forms', or 'hidden transcripts'⁵ that we would not expect to locate in our sources, which, in the Ottoman case, are mostly official imperial orders and local judicial registers. On the other hand, 'open forms' of peasant protest both in the Ottoman Empire and the rest of Europe were, as it seems, mostly non-violent: the protesters would lodge a petition in the local or the imperial court and the authorities would typically try to negotiate an end to the discord, in some cases through the punishment of certain oppressive officials.⁶

Rural revolts of some standing and with broader goals were a relatively rare phenomenon in Europe.⁷ In the Ottoman Empire, it looks as though there is an absence of peasant revolts at all, at least before the nineteenth century. It could be argued that this image might change a little if modern historiography tried to re-interpret the Celali rebellions around 1600, or the Kızılbaş insurrections earlier, as broader social movements engaging the mobilisation of large peasant groups.⁸ In any case, in between these two 'extremes', namely, hidden resistance and revolt, the most typical pattern of political dis-

3 See, for instance, W. Rösener, *Hoi agrotēs sten Eurōpē* [Peasants in Europe], trans. I. Dimitroukas (Athens 1999), 159-194 [= *Die Bauern in der europäischen Geschichte* (Munich 1993)]; T. Scott (ed.), *The Peasantries of Europe from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries* (London and New York 1998); C. Tilly, *The Contentious French: Four Centuries of Popular Struggle* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1986).

4 See the remarks of F. Adanır, 'The Ottoman Peasantries, c.1360-c.1860', in Scott (ed.), *The Peasantries of Europe*, 303-304.

5 See J. C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London 1985).

6 For early modern Europe see H. Kamen, *Early Modern European Society* (London 2000), 134. See also Rösener, *Hoi agrotēs sten Eurōpē*, 164, for the typology of Porschnev. For the Ottoman Empire see S. Faroqi, 'Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanate Legitimation (1570-1650)', *JESHO*, 34 (1992), 1-39; Eadem, 'Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Some Evidence for their Existence', in H. G. Majer (ed.), *Osmanistische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vančo Boškov* (Wiesbaden 1986), 24-33; H. İnalçık, 'Şikâyet Hakkı: 'Arz-i Hâl ve 'Arz-i Mahzar'lar', *OA*, 7-8 (1988), 33-54; L. T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1996), 281-306.

7 Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, 134; Rösener, *Hoi agrotēs sten Eurōpē*, 159-194. See also C. Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992* (Cambridge, Mass. 1992), 100-101.

8 For an effort with a similar *problématique* in the context of the Celali rebellions see M. Deme-
triadou, 'Hoi exegerseis ton Tzelaledon kai to zetema tes hegemonias tes dynasteias tou Os-
man: mia epanaprosēgē' [The Celali rebellions and the question of the hegemony of the
House of Osman: a re-appraisal], unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Crete, 2009.

order in early modern Europe was riot, particularly food riot in an urban context.⁹ Disorder, involving low-level political violence, was not at all absent from rural society either. A study, for example, of the rural communities of Provence has located a total of 374 disturbances, both large and small, in the years between 1596 and 1715,¹⁰ while around 500 revolts have been counted in Aquitaine between the time of Henri le Grand and the death of Louis XV (1589-1774).¹¹ For the Ottoman Empire, however, we have an almost complete lack of historical knowledge about low-level peasant resistance.¹² This lack should be attributed to the still rather poor state of research about this issue in the Ottoman sources. On the other hand, so deeply rooted was – and perhaps still is – the state-centred approach to the study of Ottoman history that when Suraiya Faroqhi published her seminal paper on ‘Political Initiatives ‘From the Bottom-Up’ in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire’ in 1986, she felt the need to add ‘Some Evidence for their Existence’ as a subtitle. The aim of this paper is to draw attention to some evidence for the existence of low-level peasant resistance, against the background of the apparent tranquillity of Ottoman rural society.

Let us then go back and discuss the riot in Ayvatlı in 1702. The official *sicil* entry, which is our only source, provides some interesting information. According to this entry, the mobilisation of the peasants had a clear goal: to prevent the payment of the poll-tax (*mal-ı cizyenün tahsili ihlâlî*). More precisely, the protestors targeted the personal certificates for the payment of the poll-tax, which they set on fire. The property of the tax-collector was also a target of the peasant crowd.

Poll-tax collection had undergone a major reform in 1691, in the context of the Ottoman defence efforts in the aftermath of the Vienna debacle, and the need of the Ottoman state for increased revenues in the midst of the war effort. Each poll-tax payer was then made responsible for his own personal *cizye*, levied according to a tripartite division in accordance with the Islamic tradition and in proportion to the taxpayer’s wealth (the so-called system of the three classes: *esnaf-ı selâse*). A special receipt was delivered to the taxpayers to certify the payment of the poll-tax. Payment per household (*hane*), and/or at a flat rate (*maktu*) levied collectively from the community was, at least in theory, abolished.¹³ Thus, an obvious cause for the riot of 1702 in Ayvatlı could be that the

9 Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, 134.

10 R. Pillorget, *Les mouvements insurrectionnels de Provence entre 1596 et 1715* (Paris 1975) (cited by Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, 134).

11 P. Goubert, *The French Peasantry in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. I. Patterson (Cambridge 1986), 205.

12 An exception should verify this unpleasant rule, and this is Amy Singer’s findings for the villages around Jerusalem in the sixteenth century; A. Singer, *Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials: Rural Administration around Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem* (Cambridge 1994), 89-118 (chapter entitled ‘Between Rebellion and Oppression’).

13 See *EP*, s.v. ‘Diziza’ (H. İnalcık); M. Kiel, ‘Remarks on the Administration of the Poll Tax (*Cizye*) in the Ottoman Balkans and Value of Poll Tax Registers (*Cizye Defterleri*) for Demographic Research’, *EB*, 1990/4, 71, 84-85; M. Sariyannis, ‘Notes on the Ottoman Poll-Tax Reforms of the Late Seventeenth Century: The Case of Crete’, *JESHO*, 54 (2011), 39-61, espe-

tax burden for the non-Muslim peasants proved to be particularly heavy because of the reform.¹⁴ After all, the peasants especially targeted the poll-tax receipts for the personal payment of the tax.

In certain instances, this new method for the payment of the poll-tax paved the way for tax-collectors to force even those who were not subject to *cizye* to pay this tax, in an effort to use up all the payment certificates which had been delivered to them by the treasury. Another ploy of the tax-collectors was to impose certificates of higher payment rates on those who were subject to lower rates.¹⁵ We may assume that abuses of this sort could have been the specific causes which sparked dissent in Ayvatlı. This could also explain the attack on the property of the tax-collector.

On the other hand, it is a fact that we cannot establish with certainty the causes for the riot in Ayvatlı on the basis of a single source. The ‘institutionalised translation’ of the events in our source had as its ideological aim to justify and legitimise the punishment of the leaders of the riot. Thus, it is only reasonable that it does not focus, for example, on the illegal methods of the tax-collector.

cially the testimony of the anonymous chronicle of 1688-1704. For earlier experimentation in the same direction see E. Kolovos, ‘Beyond ‘Classical’ Ottoman *Defterology*: A Preliminary Assessment of the *Tahrir* Registers of 1670/71 Concerning Crete and the Aegean Islands’, in Idem, P. Kotzageorgis, S. Laiou, and M. Sariyannis (eds), *The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, the Greek Lands: Toward a Social and Economic History. Studies in Honor of John C. Alexander* (Istanbul 2007), 201-235. On the other hand, in the Aegean Sea, the *kapudan paşas* continued to collect the poll-tax in lump-sum payments (*maktu*) from the islands, postponing successfully the implementation of the 1691 reform; E. Kolovos, ‘Insularity and Island Society in the Ottoman Context: The Case of the Aegean Island of Andros (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)’, *Turcica*, 39 (2007), 67.

14 The collection of the poll-tax was connected with uprisings of the non-Muslims in earlier contexts as well, as in the years just before the Battle of Lepanto in the Mani (Peloponnese) and Chimara (Albania). In these cases the uprisings had significant political repercussions, since the rebels supported the Venetians during the Ottoman-Venetian war; see P. Kotzageorgis, ‘Exegerseis sten hellenike chersoneso ton 16^o aiona kai othomanikes peges: mia prote proseggise’ [Rebellions in the Greek peninsula in the sixteenth century and Ottoman sources: a first approach], in P. I. Toloudi (ed.), *KTh’ Panhellenio Historiko Synedrio, 16-18 Maiou 2008 & KH’ Panhellenio Historiko Synedrio, 25-27 Maiou 2007 (meros B’): praktika* [XXIXth Panhellenic Historical Conference, 16-18 May 2008, and XXVIIIth Panhellenic Historical Conference, 25-27 May 2007 (part II): proceedings] (Salonica 2009), 25-26, based on *mühimme defter* entries. In another peasant uprising, in 1611, around 1,000 peasants from 70 villages, armed with arquebuses, yataghans, spears, and farming implements, advanced towards Yanya, chanting the ‘kyrie eleison’ (Lord, have mercy upon us) and repeating the slogan “Charatzi, charatzopoulon, nouzouli, nouzouloupoulon” (No more *harac* nor *nüzül*), and set fire to the residence of the governor, Osman Paşa. The rebellion is thought to have been instigated by Dionysios Philosophos, former Metropolitan of Larisa, with the support of the Spanish Regent of Naples; L. Vranousis and B. Sphyroeras, ‘Revolutionary Movements and Uprisings’, in M. B. Sakellariou (ed.), *Epirus: 4,000 Years of Greek History and Civilization* (Athens 1997), 246-247 (the slogan appears only in the Greek edition of the volume, p. 246).

15 See *EP*², s.v. ‘*Dzizya*’. Cf. Sariyannis, ‘Notes on the Ottoman Poll-Tax Reforms’, 54.

It seems very probable that the riot in Ayvatlı in 1702 was directed especially against the reform of the poll-tax payment system, which may have damaged the peasant community's economic balance and capacity. All over early modern Europe, peasant violence broke out when an innovative measure, a new tax in particular, was perceived and experienced as a challenge against a 'fair' and tested tradition. The introduction around 1630-1640 of the French royal poll-tax (*chevage*), for example, was clearly connected with the most violent peasant revolts (*jacqueries*) of that time and in the following decades.¹⁶ Historians relate this opposition to the development of the, increasingly powerful and intrusive, early modern states.¹⁷

What is very interesting in the case of the riot in 1702 is that it included a certain performance on the part of the rioters, the peasants of Ayvatlı. There is a ritual element in the act of throwing into the fire the certificates for the payment of the tax. In early modern Europe, a direct analogy may be established with the crowds who burnt bundles of official paper, which was especially taxed by Colbert, during the so-called 'Révolte du papier timbré' in Brittany in 1675.¹⁸

What should be emphasised in this context is that the symbolic dimension of social protest was very important. Apart from the obvious fact that setting the certificates on fire would in practical terms significantly complicate tax collection for that year at least, this ritual act could be interpreted as a more general threat against the policies of the imperial government.¹⁹

Another entry of the same Salonica *sicil* volume, an imperial edict of the very same date, 17 Şevval 1113/17 March 1702,²⁰ reveals that the possibility of a broader revolt was maybe at issue. According to a report by the same Ahmed, *kapıcıbaşı* of the Sublime Porte and collector of the poll-tax in Salonica, addressed to the imperial council in Istanbul, a certain Hacı Kalbur, apparently a Muslim, resident in Vodina (mod. Edessa), was held responsible for blocking poll-tax collection (*mal-ı cizyenün tahsili tatiline bais olmağla*) in that district. More specifically, he was accused of having incited the non-Muslim peasants to riot if they were overloaded with poll-tax certificates (*reayayı tahrik ve elbette mukayeseden izdiyad evrak almak ve teklif olunur ise cemiyet ediün deyü iğva verüb*). Was he a former tax-collector who was at odds with Ahmed? We do not know.

Nor do we know what followed the riot in Ayvatlı or the riots – if any – in the district of Vodina. The *fermans* which arrived at the court of Salonica ordered the *kadı* to have the six notables of Ayvatlı and Hacı Kalbur of Vodina arrested and imprisoned in the fortress of Salonica, the famous White Tower. Were they actually arrested? Or, did

16 Rösener, *Hoi agrotos sten Europe*, 172-173.

17 J. Dewald and L. Vardi, 'The Peasantries of France, 1400-1789', in Scott (ed.), *The Peasantries of Europe*, 40.

18 W. Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge 1997), 158.

19 Cf. Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, 275.

20 Salonica Sicil No. 8, p. 120 (new pagination: 121).

they manage to flee before the authorities moved against them (if they did)? Once again, we simply do not know.

It should, however, be taken into account that punishment was not directed against all the rioters, a hundred in Ayvatlı. Violence on the part of the state was directed specifically against the representatives of the local community of Ayvatlı, i.e., against those who apparently were held responsible for the riot. It is important to stress this, since this could also be in the minds of the rioters in Ayvatlı. Most of them could escape punishment if things went wrong... And some could flee to other districts if need be...

Thirteen years after the riot in Ayvatlı, a *ferman* issued on 21 Zilkade 1127/18 November 1715²¹ ordered the imprisonment of ten Christian Orthodox notables from nine villages around Salonica (Ayvatlı not included), namely, Galatica, Aya Nikola, Vasilika, Mesimer, Hortac, Vardar-ı Sagir, Vardar-ı Kebir, and Köleke, who allegedly had incited the *reaya* to stop the collection of the poll-tax by the tax-farmer Mustafa (*mal-ı cizyenün tahsiline tatiline bais olmalarıyla/mal-ı cizyenün ihlâline bais oldukları*). In this case, it looks as though the resistance against the payment of the poll-tax took the form of an inter-village mobilisation.²² It could be assumed that the leaders of these communities had planned such a move at a local meeting, possibly on the occasion of a fair, or a religious festival, or maybe one organised expressly for this purpose. It is important to note that in this case, unlike that of Ayvatlı, our official source does not specify the repertoire of the peasants' contention (the same holds true for the Vodina case above). Did they, as at Ayvatlı some years earlier, attack the tax-collector, or burn the certificates of the poll-tax? Unfortunately, our knowledge of the repertoire of peasant resistance depends on the information, and especially the details, given by our sources. Anyway, one may assume that peasant action did have a repertoire, even when this was not recorded in the source material.²³ Eventually, here again, as in the case of Ayvatlı, we do not know the outcome of this small-scale peasant mobilisation (should we call it a revolt?) against the collection of the poll-tax. Did the violence escalate? Or were the peasants, after the imprisonment of their notables (if this actually took place), forced to pay?

From another document, again a *ferman*, dated evası-ı Safer 1116/15-24 June 1704,²⁴ we can assume that the issue of the reformed poll-tax created dissent not only among villagers but in the city of Salonica as well. The *ferman* was issued after a report of the notables (*ayan ü eşraf*) of Salonica to the governor, concerning the rebellious activity of three non-Muslim town-dwellers, namely *macuncı* Nikola, Kiro of Doyran, and Petso,

21 Vasdravellis (ed.), *Archeion Thessalonikes, 1695-1912*, 123-124 (Sicil No. 26, pp. 43-44).

22 Mobilisation could be even wider in some cases. In Crete, villagers from three *nahiyes* gathered on the initiative of a Muslim named Ebu Bekir and even prepared for battle in 1782, protesting against the improper collection of the tithe by the holders of the tax revenues and the burden of its transportation; A. Anastasopoulos, 'Political Participation, Public Order, and Monetary Pledges (*Nezir*) in Ottoman Crete', in E. Gara, M. E. Kabadayı, and C. K. Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faruqi* (Istanbul 2011), 127-142.

23 On the repertoire of contention, see Tilly, *The Contentious French*, 4, 390-395.

24 Vasdravellis (ed.), *Archeion Thessalonikes, 1695-1912*, 46 (Sicil No. 10, p. 49).

who were accused of interfering in matters related to the poll-tax and the affairs of the poll-tax collector (*cizye umurına ve cizyedarların hususına karışub*), and collaborating against the authorities of Salonica, both in the past and at that time as well (*mirmiran ve cizyedar üzerine cemiyet etmek âdet-i müstemirreleri olduğundan gayri fesad ü şekavet kasdıyle yine cemiyet edüb*).

Another imperial edict, dated 3 Şaban 1117/20 November 1705,²⁵ that is, three and a half years after the events in Ayvatlı, shows that, apart from rebelling, the peasants and their notables had also the option of protesting peacefully against the illegal methods of the tax-collectors before the imperial administration.²⁶ The document was issued after anonymous reports to the imperial council (*sem-i hümayunuma ilka olunmağla*), and records clearly the problems that both the town and village communities faced during these years: the poll-tax collectors were accused of asking, out of greed (*tama-ı hamları sebebi ile*), for a lump sum from the non-Muslim communities of Salonica, Orthodox, Armenian, and Jewish, contrary to the terms of the poll-tax reform edict (*cizye evrakı veril-meyüb berat-ı âlişanum şürudına mugayir maktu misillü evrak verilüb ziyade akçelerin alub*); at the same time, they were overcharging the non-Muslim villagers with the excess poll-tax certificates that they had in their hands (*kalan evrakı nahiyesi kuralarından olan kefere taifesine tahmil tarikiyle tevzi eyledüklerinde*). As a result, so the reports claimed, the desperate villagers could not afford to pay the poll-tax and many fled to other districts (*ahvalleri perişan ve bir vechle edaya kadir halleri olmaduklarından nicesi perakende ve âhar kazalara firar eyledükleri*). Clearly, these must have been underlying factors behind the riot in Ayvatlı, as well.²⁷

The imperial edict names a series of measures that were to be implemented by its addressees, namely, the governor and the *kadı* of Salonica, the *kadı* of Karaferiye (mod. Veroia), as well as el-Hac Ahmed, the poll-tax collector in the district of Salonica for that

25 Ibid., 48 (Sicil No. 14, pp. 85-86).

26 Cf. Anastasopoulos, 'Political Participation', where he also discusses the 'active' and 'passive' forms of political participation by the peasants of Crete in 1782 in the case mentioned above, n. 22. In this Cretan case, the peasant riot was eventually suppressed and the representatives of the villagers came before the *kadı* court of Kandiye (mod. Heraklion) and agreed to sign a monetary pledge that they would transport the tithe to Kandiye at their own expense; the other party, the local janissary officers and the holders of the tax-farms, pledged to abstain from oppressive practices during tax collection.

27 Cf. N. S. Stavrinidis, *Metaphraseis tourkikon historikon eggraphon aphoronton eis ten historian tes Kretes* [Translations of Turkish historical documents relating to the history of Crete], Vol. III (Heraklion 1978), 384-387 (*ferman* of 1714), and Sariyannis, 'Notes on the Ottoman Poll-Tax Reforms', 55, for the case of certain – most probably Orthodox Christian – notables who obtained the poll-tax certificates from the tax-collectors and distributed them to their communities at a flat rate. See also S. Ivanova, 'Ottoman Documents about Crete Preserved in the Oriental Department of the Sts Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia', in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *The Eastern Mediterranean under Ottoman Rule: Crete, 1645-1840. Halcyon Days in Crete VI: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 13-15 January 2006* (Rethymno 2008), 309, for a Cretan case of delay in the payment of the poll-tax in 1694, incited by a Christian, a former *kapı yazıcısı* of the governor of Kandiye.

year: in general, the poll-tax reform edict should be respected in order to quieten the *reaya*; all transgressions should be punished; the poll-tax burden of the *reaya* in the district of Salonica should be reduced by 2,000 certificates, in order to encourage their return to their hearths; 500 certificates should be distributed to those in the town of Salonica who did not have such papers; another 500 should be distributed to those in the district of Karaferiye who lacked certificates. However, the edict warned, special attention should be paid to preventing the *reaya* from concealing people in order to reduce their poll-tax burden; lump-sum (*maktu*) payments of the tax should not be accepted; the collection of the poll-tax was considered one of the most important affairs of the state (*ve'l-hasıl cizye umurı ehem umurdan olub*); every *reaya* should carry a certificate with him, in case of an inspection.

The cases discussed above show that the reform in the collection of the poll-tax in 1691, the common underlying factor behind all these cases, provoked a variety of political actions by peasants and community leaders and elites. It is a matter for further research to investigate how general the reactions concerning the collection of the poll-tax in the Balkans were after 1691;²⁸ according to an anonymous author of a contemporaneous chronicle, “the *reaya* (i.e., the non-Muslims in this case) were not happy about the reform”.²⁹ The political actions ‘from below’ resulted in an ‘institutionalised’ reaction on the part of the state, described in the measures referred to in the imperial edict of 1705, also to be found in other edicts on the same matter. The role of the local elites in this process also needs further research: the Christian elites certainly had to play an important role in the distribution of the poll-tax among the members of the peasant communities;³⁰ one could risk the hypothesis that the mobilisation of the peasants also helped these elites to gain more power in the Ottoman provinces.³¹

Putting forward a tentative conclusion, I would like to address the following question: if the imperial administration, as is clear in the edict of 1705, was eager to hear protests against the poll-tax collectors, why did the peasants of Ayvatlı riot in 1702? An answer could be that, in all probability, the peasants of Ayvatlı knew that their chances in the lo-

28 Halil İnalçık mentions a rebellion in 1695 of 17 villages in Kurveleş, Albania, which eventually agreed to submit on condition that they paid their poll-tax at a flat rate (*ber vech-i maktu*) of 3,301 *esedi guruş*; *EP*, s.v. ‘*Dzizya*’, 563.

29 Sariyannis, ‘Notes on the Ottoman Poll-Tax Reforms’, 51.

30 For a general analysis of the management of the tax burden by communities in the Greek lands see S. Asdrachas, ‘Phorologikes kai perioristikes leitourgies ton koinoteton sten Tourkokratia’ [Fiscal and restrictive functions of the communities under Turkish rule], *Ta Historika*, 3/5 (1986), 45–62; Idem, ‘Nesiotikes koinotetes: hoi phorologikes leitourgies’ [Island communities: the fiscal functions], *Ta Historika*, 5/8 (1988), 3–36, and 5/9 (1988), 229–258.

31 For the role of the provincial elites as communal leaders and mediators between state and subjects in the Ottoman Empire see the *problématique* in A. Anastasopoulos, ‘Introduction’, in Idem (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10–12 January 2003* (Rethymno 2005), xi–xxxviii. İnalçık concludes that “the reform measures ... and the abolition of the exemptions, especially of the clerics under the new system, ended by turning some influential groups among the non-Muslims against Ottoman rule”; *EP*, s.v. ‘*Dzizya*’, 565.

cal or the imperial court at that time were not so good. Boğaç Ergene has argued that the *reaya* stood a better chance against powerful opponents when they brought a case before the court of law en masse, but also suspects a bias of the court in favour of townspeople and against villagers.³² On the other hand, we could also ask: what did the peasants of Ayvatlı expect to happen as a result of their riot? A possible answer is that some gains could be obtained through ‘bargaining by riot’, or, in the words of Charles Tilly, “aggressive supplication”:³³ in the context of early modern state formation in Europe, peasant protest, however unsuccessful, demonstrated that there were limits to the growing power of the state officials.³⁴ In the Ottoman context, official documents, *fermans* and *adaletnames*, especially from the 1600s onwards, emphasised a discourse which revolved around the concept of a peasant-centred justice of the Ottoman ruler.³⁵ It is a matter of systematic research in our sources to see how the peasants, through the threat that their collective action posed for the Ottoman state, had shaped this discourse ‘from the bottom up’.

APPENDIX

Ottoman *kadı* court registers (*sicils*) of Salonica, register No. 8, pp. 120-121 (new pagination: 121-122)³⁶

Akza-ı kuzatı'l-müslimin evla-ı vulat[i'l-muvahhidin] madenü'l-fazl ve'l-yakin rafi-i ilâmi'ş-şeriat ve'd-din varis-i ulûmi'l-enbiya ve'l-mürselin el-muhtas bi-mezid-i inayeti'l-meliki'l-muin mevlâna Selânîk kadısı zidet fezailihi tevki-i refi-i hümayun vasıl olıcak ma'lûm ola ki Selânîk nevahisinden Langada nahiyesi naibi mevlâna Mehmed zide ilmihü divan-ı hümayunuma arz gönderüb dergâh-ı muallâm kapucibaşılarından olan bin yüz on dört senesi Selânîk cizyedarı olan Ahmed dame mecdühünün tarafından Hasan zide kadrihü meclis-i şer'e gelüb Ayvatlı nam karye ehalisine mukayese ve ikrarlarına göre evraka (*sic*) tevzi eder iken ehalisinden İstamad ve Kanbur Sotir ve Fılınçe Sotir ve Kara Çiko ve Lenbuli ve Karandatoğlu Karaca ve Andon Cumi nam kocabaşları ve anlara tabi ehl-i fesad keferesi meramına tabi yüz nefer mikdarı cumhur ile cizyedar-ı mezburün konağın basub malını nehb ü itlâfdan gayri elli iki cizye evrakı hark

32 B. A. Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society and Justice in the Ottoman Empire: Legal Practice and Dispute Resolution in Çankırı and Kastamonu (1652-1744)* (Leiden and Boston 2003), 73-74.

33 Tilly, *The Contentious French*, 90. Cf. *ibid.*, 14-15, 86-91, 147-153, 180-182 on anti-tax actions.

34 Rösener, *Hoi agrotos sten Europe*, 193-194.

35 H. İnalçık, ‘Adâletnâmeler’, *Belgeler*, 2/3-4 (1965), 49-145. For the concept of an agrarian-orientated justice of the Ottoman Sultan see Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 281-299. On the conflicting interpretations of Ottoman justice, see B. A. Ergene, ‘On Ottoman Justice: Interpretations in Conflict (1600-1800)’, *Islamic Law and Society*, 8 (2001), 52-87.

36 Cf. Vasdravellis (ed.), *Archeion Thessalonikes, 1695-1912*, 41-42 (No. 33).

ve ara yerde zayi edüb mal-ı miriye küllî gadr eylemelerine taraf-ı şer’de vaki-i hal tecessüsi için naib gönderilüb taarruz etdürleriyle (?) husus-ı mezbur vaki-i hal olduğın cümle ma’lûm olanlar şehadet eyledüklerin naib-i mezbur ilâm ve zikr olınan altı nefer dahi eşirradan oldukları bu gûne fesad vaki olduğı arz olunmağla ıslah-ı nefis edince mezburlar Selânik kal’asına kalebend olınmak babında ferman-ı âlişanum sadır olmışdur buyurdum ki hükm-i şerifüm vardukda bu babda sadır olan emrüm üzere amel edüb dahi zikr olınan altı nefer kefare cumhur ile cizyedarun konağın basub eşyalara (*sic*) garet ve evrakını hark ve zayi edüb mal-ı cizyenün tahsili ihlâlâline bais ve badi olub miriye gadr eyledükleri için ıslah-ı nefis edince Selânik kal’asına kalebend edüb izaat-ı mal-ı miri etdürilmeyüb böyle bilesin alâmet-i şerife itimad kılasın tahriren fi’l-yevmi’s-sabi aşer min şehr-i Şevvali’l-mükerrem li-sene selas aşere ve mie ve elf bi-makam-ı Edirneti’l-mahruse [= 17.3.1702] (vasl 23 şehr-i Şevval [1]113 [= 23.3.1702]).

COPING WITH DECLINE:
THE POLITICAL RESPONSES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY
TO THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CRISIS IN SALONICA

Eyal GINIO*

ON 26 OCTOBER 1694, YA'AKOV SAKIL (?), who previously served as one of the legal agents (*vekil*) representing the community of the Jews living in Salonica, appeared before the Sharia court of Salonica, and submitted a claim against the two incumbent agents, Küçük Yazıcı Isak Mitran and Isak Levy. In his claim, he argued that the three of them had acted jointly as the community's agents. During their tenure, there were several crises in Salonica, Edirne, and Belgrade (which he did not specify) for which the Ottoman authorities required the Jewish community of Salonica to give its share towards covering certain state expenses. The two defendants were entrusted with the delivery of the payments demanded to the above-mentioned locations. Consequently, the claimant provided the two other agents with the substantial sum of 476,300 *akçes* in the form of money and textile merchandise, which was registered in a detailed list that he had at his disposal.

According to the claimant, the two agents took the items and distributed them as had been demanded. However, they disbursed only 80,000 *akçes*, while the residual 396,300 remained in their hands. When the claimant asked them to return the considerable remaining sum, they refused to do so. In their reply, the defendants confirmed that the claimant indeed provided them with the sum of money and items stated. However, they argued that, when he was removed from his post as an agent, they had already returned most of the sum – the remaining debt was assessed as only 57,230 *akçes*. Since then he had received part of this amount in instalments, and at the time of the trial the remaining debt stood at only 41,733 *akçes*. As they were able to prove their counter-claim by presenting a document in support of it, the court inhibited the claimant from proceeding with his action. The significance of the case in the eyes of the local authorities and communities is reflected in the identity of those Muslims who were present in court in order to testify to the validity of the legal procedure (*şühudü'l-hal*); among the names we find, for example, the mufti Mehmed Efendi; others were senior officers from the local military garrison.¹

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1 Salonica *sicils*, Vol. 1, p. 48 (7 Rebiyülevvel 1106/26 October 1694); henceforth, 'Salonica si-

This short entry from the *sicil* registers (that is, the registers which served as the archive of the local *kadı*) of Salonica raises a few points: first of all, this is one of the very rare cases in which prominent people from the local Jewish community resorted to the Muslim court in order to resolve an internal dispute; generally speaking, the Jewish community of Salonica refrained from initiating such steps and preferred to use its own judicial mechanism to solve internal differences. Second, it illustrates the significance of the Jewish community of Salonica as a corporate group which was recognised by the authorities as such for the purposes of taxation and other communal duties. Third, as this entry is taken from the earliest surviving register of the Salonican *sicils*, it is the earliest surviving evidence of the creation of the office of appointed agents who served the whole community of Salonica – a post which was apparently created only during the second half of the seventeenth century in order to better cope with external and internal pressures.

In this paper I explore the *sicil* registers of Salonica, spanning the period 1694–1768, in order to discuss the institution of the post of the community's agent or agents, representing all the local congregations, as part of the community's effort to negotiate its status in eighteenth-century Salonica. My main argument is that the community created this post to safeguard its interests by presenting a unified stand vis-à-vis competing groups. The state tacitly recognised the post, as is evident from the appearance of the community's agent in the *sicil* records. However, it did not take part in his appointment nor did it bestow official recognition upon him. In this sense, the creation of the post of the community's agent can be regarded as a political initiative 'from the bottom up'.

The major contribution of the *sicil* registers to the study of the Jewish presence in Salonica lies in their capacity to reflect the relations between the large local Jewish community and general non-Jewish society in all its diversity and complexity. Unlike other Ottoman communities, the Salonican Jews generally refrained from attending the Muslim court to solve internal conflicts. Yet, it is quite clear that individual members of the Jewish community perceived the Sharia court as a major legal arena where they could defend their interests and negotiate their position against external pressures and adversaries. The significance of the Sharia court for settling inter-communal debates is reflected in a petition submitted by several Greeks together with a certain Süleyman known as the "head of the market" (*bazarbaşı*) against a group of several Jews. It is noteworthy that the Greeks' and the Jews' names were omitted from the sultanic response to the petition, a device probably meant to create a legal precedent. The petition related to an alleged attempt of the Jews to shy away from a compromise which had been approved by the court. The petitioners claimed that following a litigation which took place in the Sharia court, both parties had opted for a mediation which resulted in a compromise (*sulh*). Subsequently, the compromise had been presented in court and, consequently, was acknowledged by it as binding. To confirm its decision, the court handed over a court deed (*hüccet*) to both parties which sanctioned the compromise. The petitioners claimed that, following the court's approval of the compromise, neither party to the agreement had the

cils' will be shortened to 'Sicil', followed by the numbers of volume and page(s). The *sicil* registers of Salonica are kept in the Historical Archive of Macedonia, Salonica, Greece.

right to back off, and, therefore, they asked the Sultan to rebuke the Jews for their attempt to do so.²

This short episode demonstrates one of the main motives of non-Muslims for taking a case to the Muslim court: it was the main judicial arena where inter-communal debates could be presented and debated. The subsequent verdict would benefit from the state's approval and legitimacy, and, in case of need, it could be enforced by the authorities. The *sicil* entries, therefore, enable us to gain various insights into the strategies adopted by the local Jewish community, or by individuals who represented the community, when confronting local administrators, the state's agents, and the surrounding non-Jewish communities. The agents' role in representing the community was crucial as Islamic law does not recognise the legal status of corporate bodies. On the other hand, even though the community was not regarded as a legal entity, it was perceived as such by the authorities with regard to taxation and other communal obligations. Therefore, the post of agent enabled the community to present its claims in court. In addition, it should be also stated that only rarely was the Sharia court the exclusive arena to which conflicts were brought and solved following adjudication. In most cases, the Muslim court was only one stop in the process of solving problems; often it was the last stop which brought a solution, achieved elsewhere, into its final shaping.³

My principal focus in this paper will be on the appearance of a new post in the Jewish community – the community's agent who was chosen by all the Jewish congregations to represent them vis-à-vis the local authorities and opposing parties from among the other communities who lived in Salonica. The appearance of this post, I will argue, should be understood against the economic and social crisis to which the Jewish community was exposed from the second half of the seventeenth century. This initiative dovetailed with the authorities' attempt to better control the different groups of taxpayers by summoning their legal agents to court to confirm decisions and deeds of the provincial authorities. Such gatherings were held occasionally when it was necessary to collect taxes and carry out other obligations at the provincial (*vilâyet*) level. Particular attention will be given here to the role attributed to individual Jewish agents of using their own networks in order to serve as mediators and representatives of the community.

A Community in Decline: The Jewish Community of Salonica during the Eighteenth Century

The Jewish community of Salonica represents a unique case study with regard to its relatively large size and its demographic and economic significance in the urban setting. Demographic information of the kind that we take for granted today is not available for

2 *Sicil* 44.29-30 (evail-i Şevval 1143/9-18 April 1731).

3 See, for example, R. Jennings, 'Zimmis (Non-Muslims) in Early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records: The Sharia Court of Anatolian Kayseri', *JESHO*, 21 (1978), 225-293; A. Cohen, 'Ottoman Sources for the History of Ottoman Jews: How Important?', in A. Levy (ed.), *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton 1994), 687-704.

the early modern era. Culling our information from European sources, we can claim that the Jews represented about a third of the total population of around 50,000 inhabitants dwelling in eighteenth-century Salonica.⁴ According to the *cizye* registration of 1718, the Christian population in Salonica proper was assessed at 2,500 taxpayers, while the Jewish population was estimated at 1,500.⁵ These figures should not be taken at face value; as we will see below, tax collectors claimed that the Jews were able to evade some of their taxes by falsely claiming lower population figures.⁶

During the second half of the seventeenth and in the eighteenth century, the Jewish community of Salonica was considered to be one of the leading Jewish communities of the Ottoman state. Nevertheless, during this period, it had to deal with a series of lingering economic and internal crises which destabilised its social, economic, and political status in the city. Among the major crises, we can allude to the ‘Sabbatean explosion’, that is, the messianic movement led by Sabbetai Zvi (1616-1676) and his eventual conversion to Islam (1666). His messianic aspirations, which fed on an economic crisis then gripping the Ottoman Jewish communities, shook the Jewish communities all over the Ottoman realm and beyond, and caused internal strife amidst many families and congregations. In 1665 the messianic fever reached its peak. The ramifications were evident everywhere in the Jewish communities: “Increasingly embellished stories about his powers and miracles were disseminated throughout the Jewish world, with rabbis and laymen alike becoming his followers, stopping all normal business activity, and preparing for the restoration of the Jewish people in the Holy Land.”⁷

As high as the hopes that some Jews had harboured in the messianic message of Sabbetai Zvi were, so deep was the disappointment of many of his adherents following his conversion to Islam in Edirne in 1666 subsequent to his confinement by the Ottoman authorities. However, some of his followers chose to follow him in his conversion. Among them were hundreds of families from Salonica. While being outwardly Muslims, they adhered to various Jewish and messianic practices and beliefs. This esoteric sect, labelling themselves as *ma'minim* (believers; to Muslims they were known by the derogative term *dönme*, ‘those who turned’), were later split to several sub-groups. Salonica remained their major centre until the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey in 1923, according to which all Muslims, including the *ma'minim*, had to leave for Turkey. While the scope of this paper does not allow me to delve into the various ramifications of the Sabbatean movement for the Jewish world in general, and for the Jewish community of Salonica in particular, it suffices to remark that both the messianic zeal and the subsequent overwhelming disappointment were enormous. The crisis clearly had social and intellectual effects on the Jewish community.⁸ One of them was that it nar-

4 N. K. Moutsopoulos, *Thessaloniki, 1900-1917* (Salonica 1980), 22.

5 *Sicil* 29.105-106 (17 Ramazan 1130/14 August 1718).

6 *Sicil* 8.72 (23 Rebiyülâhır 1113/27 September 1701).

7 E. Benbassa and A. Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry: A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community, 14th-20th Centuries* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1993), 58.

8 J. Barnai, *Sabbateanism – Social Perspectives* (Jerusalem 2000), 114-115 [in Hebrew].

rowed the horizons of intellectual endeavour: "The new became increasingly suspect. The favorite mode of rabbinical intellectual activity remained the *halakhic* work which, however, shied away from the innovation and vision that had been its hallmark in the sixteenth century."⁹

The second half of the seventeenth century was also a time of economic crisis which decreased the affluence of the Jewish community of Salonica. While some of the crises were related to general economic developments, like the increasing marginalisation of Ottoman economy as part of its growing affiliation to world economy, heavy tax exactions, and frequent monetary debasement, which affected various groups in Ottoman society, others were felt by the Jewish community in particular. Major among them was the decline of the Salonican textile industry, a major occupation that the Jews developed in Salonica following their arrival from the Iberian Peninsula. Rising prices for raw materials, Ottoman fiscal crises, and competition from aggressive European suppliers thoroughly depressed the Ottoman textile industry, the long-established economic mainstay of the community.¹⁰ Yet, the Jews still benefited during the eighteenth century from the first right of purchase of raw wool (*yapağı*) to be used for the manufacture of woollen broadcloth (*çuka*) needed for the production of the janissaries' cloaks.¹¹ On the other hand, the development of trading networks in the Balkans during the eighteenth century was mostly conducted by Christian merchants. These new commercial networks eclipsed the significance of the commerce which was directed by local Jews, especially with Italian ports.¹² But if the once powerful community of Salonica may have weakened by the second half of the seventeenth century, it also witnessed the economic rise of the *Francos*, Sephardi merchants from the port city of Livorno who conducted their commerce

9 Benbassa and Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry*, 60.

10 D. Goffman, 'Izmir: From Village to Colonial Port City', in E. Eldem, D. Goffman, and B. Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge 1999), 99.

11 On the local industry of woollen broadcloth, see I. S. Emmanuel, *Histoire de l'industrie des tissus des israélites de Salonique* (Paris 1935); H. Sahillioğlu, 'Yeniçeri Çuhası ve II. Beyazid'in Son Yıllarında Yeniçeri Çuha Muhasebesi', *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2-3 (1973/1974), 415-466; S. Avitsur, 'The Woollen Textile Industry in Saloniki', *Sefunot*, 12 (1971-1978), 145-168 [in Hebrew]; A. Shohat, "'The King's Clothing" in Saloniki', *Sefunot*, 12 (1971-1978), 169-188 [in Hebrew]; B. Braude, 'International Competition and Domestic Cloth in the Ottoman Empire, 1500-1650: A Study in Undevelopment', *Review*, 2 (1979), 437-451; Idem, 'The Rise and Fall of Salonica Woollens, 1500-1650: Technology Transfer and Western Competition', in A. Meyuhas Ginio (ed.), *Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492* (London 1992), 216-236; S. Faruqi, 'Textile Production in Rumeli and the Arab Provinces: Geographical Distribution and Internal Trade (1560-1650)', *OA*, 1 (1980), 61-83; G. Veinstein, 'Sur la draperie juive de Salonique (XVI^e-XVII^e siècles)', *RMMM*, 66 (1992/1994), 55-62; E. Gara, 'Çuha for the Janissaries – Velençe for the Poor: Competition for Raw Material and Workforce between Salonica and Veria, 1600-1650', in S. Faruqi and R. Deguilhem (eds), *Crafts and Craftsmen of the Middle East: Fashioning the Individual in the Muslim Mediterranean* (London 2005), 121-152.

12 S. Faruqi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London 2004), 152-153.

under French protection. Thanks to their family networks and their contacts in Europe and the Orient, they were in a position to play a significant role in commerce and in assuming communal obligations. Their arrival in Salonica towards the end of the seventeenth century provided the community with powerful mediators and negotiators.¹³ Their significance as agents of the local Jews will be discussed later in this paper.

These economic, social, and cultural crises took their toll on the community. While some of their major ramifications remain totally unnoticed among the *sicil* registers, the creation of new communal structures serving the whole community is evident. From a loose group of congregations, settling their own interests independently of one another, the second half of the seventeenth century witnessed the appointment of a permanent agent who represented all the congregations vis-à-vis the local authorities.

A word of clarification is needed in order to comprehend the significance of the congregation in regulating Jewish lives in the Ottoman state in general and in Salonica in particular. Since the arrival of the Sephardim in Salonica towards the end of the fifteenth century, the Jews organised themselves into congregations (*kehalim* in Hebrew, or *ce-maat* in Ottoman Turkish), based on common origin in the Iberian Peninsula or Italy. Later on, some congregations were split, and additional ones were founded bearing the name of their founder or of the synagogue which served as the hub of their association. The congregations provided religious and social services to their members. They also represented them occasionally vis-à-vis the authorities.¹⁴ As noted by Haim Gerber, although the congregation was a purely Jewish invention, it was accepted by the Ottoman authorities to the extent that it had become the “formal building block of Ottoman-Jewish society”.¹⁵

It should be noted that there were two types of communal organisation among the Ladino-speaking communities of the Ottoman Empire. Since the fifteenth century, Jewish communities in Istanbul, as well as smaller Jewish communities dwelling in Anatolia and the Arab provinces, had a communal leadership which exercised the authority to control the individual congregations. In these cases, the congregations enjoyed only limited

13 On the *Francos* in Salonica, see M. Rozen, ‘Contest and Rivalry in Mediterranean Maritime Commerce in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century: The Jews of Salonika and the European Presence’, *Revue des Études Juives*, 147 (1988), 309-352.

14 See, for example, a declaration given by David veled-i Avraham, Yehuda veled-i Hanan and Shemuel veled-i Mordechai, all from the congregation of Sicily, that the injury of the butcher Yako veled-i Avraham was caused by an agitated ox while being slaughtered. The three Jews asked that a representative of the court visit the bedridden (*sahib-i firaş*) butcher, and ask him to give a testimony clarifying the cause of his injury. Following the hearing, they asked the court to provide them with a deed confirming the innocence of the congregation’s members regarding the butcher’s eventual death. The butcher gave this testimony so that the congregation could present it following his death to defend itself if the heirs submitted a claim for blood money; *Sicil* 29.71-72 (13 Ramazan 1129/21 August 1717).

15 H. Gerber, *Crossing Borders: Jews and Muslims in Ottoman Law, Economy and Society* (Istanbul 2008), 52.

autonomy.¹⁶ However, according to Jewish sources, Salonica and other localities in the Ottoman Balkans presented a different type of organisation in which each congregation was an independent political and social entity. With the exception of *ad hoc* communal leadership, regular communal organisation was practically non-existent at the level of the city, or, in the phrasing of Jewish sources, “each *kahal* was considered a “city” unto itself.”¹⁷ Joseph Hacker claims that the convocation of representatives of all Salonican congregations took place only sporadically, and that no permanent overall body existed in this city prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹⁸ Indeed, we possess evidence of such *ad hoc* delegations pleading on behalf of the community, mostly with regard to taxation. Mosheh Almosnino (1518-1580?), for example, was part of such a delegation which was dispatched to Istanbul in 1566 in an attempt to abolish a new burden inflicted on the Jewish community of Salonica, namely, that of annually providing Istanbul with 7,800 sheep as *celepekeşan*. His various books, written in Hebrew, Ladino, and Castilian, relate his experiences as a delegate of the community. They also reflect his wish to form a permanent general leadership which would unite the different Jewish congregations of the city.¹⁹

Indeed, during the eighteenth century, the congregations still functioned in Salonica; among the roughly 20 congregations mentioned in the *sicils* we can find the names of Sicily, Aragon, Lisbon, Catalonia Old and New, Alman, etc. The different numbers of congregations (between 16 and 22) that are sporadically recorded in the court registers indicate their fluidity and changeability.²⁰ The congregation still dealt with neighbourhood issues, such as maintaining communal synagogues, which stood at the core of the congregation, and keeping order. An illustrative case is a petition, submitted by the members of the Puglia congregation, to the Sultan, while he was camping in the region of Edirne, asking for permission to restore their old synagogue (*havra*).²¹ However, while the continuing significance of the congregation in accommodating the Jews’ daily and communal life is clear in the *sicil* entries, the congregation played only a minor role in the eyes of the local authorities, which perceived the Jews as a single group for the purposes of taxation destined to the *vilâyet* – the main point of encounter between the authorities and the non-Muslim communities.²²

16 Y. Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans: Ottoman Jewish Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Tübingen 2008), 166.

17 Ibid.

18 J. Hacker, ‘Spanish Exiles in the Ottoman Empire during the Sixteenth Century: Community and Society’, in H. Beinart (ed.), *Moreshet Sepharad: The Sephardi Legacy* (Jerusalem 1992), 467.

19 M. Z. Bnaya, *Mosheh Almosnino of Salonica: His Life and Work* (Tel Aviv 1996), 58-82 [in Hebrew].

20 For a list of congregations see M. Molho, *Les juifs de Salonique à la fin du XVI^e: synagogues et patronymes*, trans. A. Woog (Clermont-Ferrand 1991). See also M. Epstein, *The Ottoman Jewish Communities and their Role in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Freiburg 1980).

21 *Sicil* 2.277 (evasıt-ı Zilkade 1108/1-10 June 1697).

22 See also M. Rozen, ‘Individual and Community in the Jewish Society of the Ottoman Empire:

The relationship between the community and the congregations of Salonica changed during the late seventeenth century and at the beginning of the eighteenth. While Jewish sources are vague about this transformation, the *sicils* provide us with indirect testimonies to this change and its implications. I would like to claim that it was the growing challenges faced by the community in its relations with the authorities and other Salonican communities that triggered this change, which is reflected in the community's appointment of a permanent agent, or agents, who represented the whole community vis-à-vis the provincial administration. We can assume that the new post enabled the community to present a unified stand, and, as a consequence, to better negotiate its position and interests in Salonica.

The Creation of a New Post: The Appointment of the Community's Agent

The post of the community's agent (or agents) became indispensable for the operation of the Jewish community in the second half of the seventeenth century. We can assume that in the diversified encounters with local authorities and opposing parties, the agents enabled the community to present a unified stance and to gain a better chance in its attempts to safeguard its interests. The Salonican historian Joseph Nehama was the first to highlight the connection between the external and internal crises which characterised late seventeenth-century Salonica and the appearance of the post of an agent who represented the Jewish community. In his multi-volume study of Jewish Salonica, he mentions that one reason for creating a centralised administration for the whole Jewish community of Salonica during the second half of the seventeenth century was the growing urge to defend and better control the textile industry, and discusses the appearance of a triumvirate of rabbis who administered the community's interests.²³ Yaron Ben-Naeh likewise attributes the establishment of a joint leadership (*kolel*) to the need to handle the community affairs in the midst of the economic crisis which engulfed the community from the last decade of the sixteenth century.²⁴ Indeed, a significant role in representing the community's interests was bestowed upon the community's agent, the *vekil*, a post often held by more than one person. The role of the *vekil* was defined by the Sharia court's scribes as representing all of the local Jewish congregations in court vis-à-vis the provincial authorities. Thus, for example, the representatives of all the Salonican congregations appeared in court to declare their full satisfaction with the performance of Yoso veled-i Yako, who served as their legal agent for the previous years, and their decision to re-elect him to this

Salonica in the Sixteenth Century', in A. Levy (ed.), *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton 1994), 215-273. Rossitsa Gradeva found a similar phenomenon regarding the Jewish community of seventeenth-century Sofia; see her 'Jews and Ottoman Authority in the Balkans: The Cases of Sofia, Vidin and Rusçuk, 15th-17th Centuries', in Eadem, *Rumeli under the Ottomans, 15th-18th Centuries: Institutions and Communities* (Istanbul 2004), 229-230.

23 J. Nehama, *Histoire des israélites de Salonique*, Vol. 4 (Salonica 1978), 93-98.

24 Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans*, 213-214.

post.²⁵ While praising his honesty and aptitude, they defined his role in general terms: “taking care of our affairs” (*umur ve hususlarımızı rüyet*). In a similar fashion, agents who each represented one of the 22 Salonican congregations declared on 21 August 1715 before the Sharia court that Yehoshua veled-i Yako had served them for some years as an agent who faithfully took care of all their affairs and businesses in accordance with the community’s instructions and knowledge. These agents likewise declared that they had no claim against the said agent. It is worth noting that one of the witnesses present in court was a certain Haseki Yusuf Ağa, defined by the court as one of the local *ayan*.²⁶ His presence in court reflects the connections between the Jewish agents and the local notables. It may also allude to the provincial elite’s interest in the appointment of the Jewish agents. In 1718, we find four persons – Musa Saporta, Musa Abravanel, David Paloro, and Avram Karasu – who all served as the agents of the Jewish community of Salonica. The registration of their family names enables us to identify one of them: Musa Abravanel must be the Don Moïse Abravanel who is mentioned in Jewish sources. Nehama defined him as “président de la communauté”, who stood surety for a certain Eliezer who used to provide broadcloth to Istanbul.²⁷ The collective tenure of the post was not rare; in 1737, for example, we find two persons holding the office of agent of the community: Musa veled-i Isak and Musa veled-i Santo.²⁸ The collective leadership probably reflected inner power struggles, balances, and different considerations inside the community.

This seemingly formal post represented a major attempt of the Jewish community to present a united stand in the face of possible encroachments on its interests – especially regarding provincial taxation in which some room for negotiation apparently existed. The post’s main role in representing the community vis-à-vis external forces is evident by the community’s decision to register the appointment in the Sharia court, and thus to bestow some formal recognition upon it. The appointment of the agents was registered in court as an agreement between the representatives of the different congregations; therefore, all parties to this agreement were Jews. Yet, by registering the agreement in the Sharia court, the authority of the legal agent was tacitly acknowledged and validated by the Muslim authorities before whom the appointee would appear in the future. According to Islamic law, the legal appointment of an agent had to be designated in court by the person appointing him or by the public testimony of two acceptable witnesses. Islamic law perceives the appointment of a *vekil* as a kind of contract, and, therefore, the formal acceptance of the contract agreement by the appointed agent was likewise required.²⁹ The local authorities demonstrated their implied acceptance by referring to this post in their records. More significant, however, is the authorities’ explicit acknowledgment of the agent’s role. Such an acknowledgment is reflected in an edict in which the local *kadı* and

25 *Sicil* 14.160-161 (5 Ramazan 1117/21 December 1705).

26 For the full list of congregations see *Sicil* 25.43-44 (20 Şaban 1127/21 August 1715).

27 Nehama, *Histoire des israélites*, 4:215.

28 *Sicil* 52A.55 (2 Şaban 1150/25 November 1737).

29 R. C. Jennings, ‘The Office of Vekil (Wakil) in 17th Century Ottoman Sharia Courts’, *SI*, 42 (1975), 147.

the officer of the janissaries were ordered to verify that those Jews who refrained from paying their shares in the community's expenses would be enforced to do so. The community's agents were mentioned in this edict as post-holders whose task was to verify that all Jews duly paid their shares.³⁰ Nevertheless, the Ottoman authorities never issued an act of appointment that would transform the post-holder into a quasi state official.

The defence of the communal interests was needed mostly in issues relating to taxation, loans, and communal property, like the Jewish cemetery.³¹ It is worth noting that during the eighteenth century other groups of taxpayers in Salonica appointed similar legal agents to represent them before the provincial authorities. Thus, as a major example, the Salonican Greek (*rum*) community had a similar post. As an illustrative case, its four agents (*mahruse-i Selânik'te sakin rum taifesinin vekilleri*) concluded a compromise in 1715 with four merchants from the island of Chios who conducted their commerce in the local covered market (*bedesten*); the compromise pertained to the merchants' share in the local taxes (*tekâlif, ordu bedeli, kaftan bahası*). In this particular case, the agents of the Greek community demanded that the Chiot merchants should pay their share following the local custom that "Muslims pay with the Muslims, Christians pay with the Christians, and Jews pay with the Jews".³²

Furthermore, when Yani veled-i İstefani received an appointment to represent the Greek community as its agent in all cases related to the payment of provincial taxes, the Greek representative who confirmed the appointment in court stated that his post was sanctioned according to "the old custom" (*mu'tad-ı kadim olmağla*).³³ For the Greek community, apparently, this role was not a novelty. Moreover, unlike the local Jewish community, the Greek community could also rely on an ecclesiastical leadership headed by the local metropolitan and officially recognised by the state, which demonstrated its consent by issuing a letter of appointment (*berat*) that detailed the metropolitan's privileges, role, and competences.³⁴ The Greeks' need to elect a legal agent in addition to the formally acknowledged ecclesiastical establishment indicates the particular character of the post: dealing with local taxes in the local arena – i.e., the province of Salonica. The *sicil* entry about Yani clearly listed the Greek agent's characteristics, obligations, and tasks: he had to be a reliable person acceptable to the whole community; he should be

30 *Sicil* 82.43-45 (evail-i Rebiyülevvel 1166/6-15 January 1753).

31 On a debate about the boundaries of the cemetery, in which the community's agents represented the community in court, see E. Ginio, 'Musulmans et non musulmans dans la Salonique ottomane (XVIII^e siècle). L'affrontement sur les espaces et les lignes de démarcation', *RMMM*, 107-110 (2005), 409-410.

32 *Kadimü'l-eyyamdan beri üç hisse olub müslimîn müslimîn ile nasâra nasâra ile yahud yahud taifesiyle veregelüb*; *Sicil* 29.46 (evasıt-ı Rebiyülevvel 1127/17-26 March 1715). For another example see *Sicil* 4.36 (5 Rebiyülâhır 1108/1 November 1696).

33 *Sicil* 81.31 (25 Muharrem 1165/14 December 1751).

34 See, for example, *Sicil* 51.223-224 (5 Zilhicce 1148/17 April 1736) for the registration of a nomination deed given to Lavrendios (?), the new Bishop of Kassandra. For petitions submitted by the ecclesiastical authorities on behalf of the Christian population see, for example, *Sicil* 51.147-148 (13 Muharrem 1148/5 June 1735).

able to take charge of all matters related to the Greek community; he likewise had to cope with the taxes exacted for the *vilâyet* – dividing them among the community's members according to their economic situation and possessions, collecting them, and handing them over to the authorities. In case of need, he had to borrow money to pay the taxes and to disburse them as required.³⁵

The agent's – Jewish or Greek – main test was his ability to gain favourable rulings from local authorities and his capacity to conduct the community's financial affairs. Therefore, the most important requirement from the agents must have been good relations with local officials and other men of power. Accordingly, many of those holding the post came from the ranks of moneylenders and merchants who could boast of good connections with local Ottoman officials representing the local bureaucracy and the military apparatus.

The *sicil* records inform us of some recurring activities of the community's agents: thus, in order to deal with the community's tax obligations, the agents sometimes took loans on its behalf. For example, in December 1696, the three agents representing the Jewish community borrowed the sum of 250 *guruş* from the administrator of the cash endowment (*vakıf*) established by Tahtulkaleli Hacı Yusuf in order to pay the community's taxes.³⁶ In another case, the court issued a verdict in favour of Hacı Mehmed Efendi, preacher in the Ayasofya Mosque in Salonica, against Michael veled-i Refael, Musa veled-i Avram and Avram veled-i Davi, the legal agents of the Jewish community. The subject of his claim was the Jews' debts stemming from a loan, the related interest (in the form of *devr-i şer'î*, a fictitious transfer of several items by sale in order to avoid open violation of the law against usury), and the transfer of their debts to third parties to him (*havale*). The Jewish agents raised the interesting counter-claim that, as the loan was needed to pay the community's taxes due to the *vilâyet* authorities, and the Jewish community later dismissed them from their post of *vekil*, they should no longer be held responsible for the community's debts which stemmed from the above-mentioned loan.³⁷ The three defendants' clear attempt to differentiate between themselves and the community brought no positive results for them.

Another reference to a loan taken by the community's agents on behalf of the Jewish community appears in a claim submitted by two foreign (*müstemin*) Jewish merchants from Livorno residing in Salonica, Refael veled-i Yasif and his partner Manuel Kalu (?). The two men claimed that the agents borrowed from them the sum of 1,753 *guruş* for "the affairs of the province" (*umur-ı vilâyet için*) and that the agents stood guarantors of the return of the loan – a commitment that they failed to fulfil. The agents confirmed the loan and its aim. However, they argued that, as the whole Jewish community took the loan and later

35 *Sicil* 81.31 (25 Muharrem 1165/14 December 1751). As noted above, this entry referred to the post as "existing from old times" (*kadimden*).

36 *Sicil* 4.51 (15 Cemaziyelevvel 1108/10 December 1696). For another example of compromise concluded by the community's agents with Muslim creditors see *Sicil* 4.166 (18 Cemaziyelevvel 1109/2 December 1697).

37 *Sicil* 58.84 (21 Zilhicce 1153/9 March 1741).

spent it, they obtained a *ferman* which sanctioned the payment of the debt in instalments. They also claimed that all the community were responsible as individuals for the payment, and denied their personal guarantee (*kefalet*).³⁸ This abrogated claim discloses the limits of responsibility claimed by the community's agents. It also indicates the growing role of Livornian Jews in the affairs of the local Jewish community. In this case, their role was limited to providing the community with credit, but later on we will find them in the role of their adversaries in the above-mentioned claim, namely, as the community's agents.

While the new post of the community's agent probably came as an initiative of the Jewish community and stemmed from its needs, it nevertheless had some significance for the local authorities as well. In his study of eighteenth-century Aleppo, Abraham Marcus refers to local involvement in government that was institutionalised in formal arrangements. Marcus finds that the heads of the city's neighbourhoods, trade guilds, and religious minorities assisted the authorities with various administrative tasks: "While not in a strict sense government officials, they were responsible to the authorities for the collection of taxes from their respective groups, for enforcing and for reporting on problems, and were involved in many of the routine interactions between the people and the government."³⁹ We find a similar phenomenon in Salonica, where the legal agent of the Jewish community represented the community vis-à-vis the local officials, and particularly vis-à-vis the city's local agent (*şehir vekili*), in matters related to the *vilâyet*.⁴⁰

The post of *şehir vekili* needs some explanation. As with many other tasks and positions which were related to the local governor and the political organisation of the province, we know very little about the *şehir vekili* and his tasks in Ottoman Salonica. Furthermore, as the *şehir vekili*'s obligations were mostly construed vis-à-vis the province's authorities, I found only scarce references in the *sicil* entries to the substance of this position.⁴¹ Nevertheless, we can claim that, during the eighteenth century, there was a formal position, the *şehir vekili*, whose holder represented all the local taxpaying communities before the local authorities and vice versa. This post may indicate the authorities' resolution to consolidate their control in order to ensure the orderly collection of taxes in times of political crisis. We can also argue that this post also necessitated some initiatives 'from below' as the election of this agent by the heads and representatives of the different formal communities (marginal elements, such as nomads, immigrants and gypsies, were excluded) might have created some sort of co-operation at the city level.

From the few references to this post that we find in the *sicils*, we can fathom that taxation exacted by the local administration and its collection were among the *şehir vekili*'s

38 *Sicil* 78.20 (10 Muharrem 1164/9 December 1750).

39 A. Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York 1989), 81-82.

40 One *sicil* entry refers to a similar agency held by Mustafa Bey ibn Hacı Yusuf on behalf of the inhabitants of the district of Vodina (Gk. Edessa); *Sicil* 71.12 (25 Şevval 1160/30 October 1747).

41 For eighteenth-century Sofia see R. Gradeva, 'The Activities of a Kadi Court in Eighteenth-Century Rumeli: The Case of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık', in Eadem, *Rumeli*, 60-61.

major duties as mediator between the local populations and the local authorities. Thus, for example, in 1755 the two Jewish agents, Asher and Isak, joined other agents who represented different groups of taxpayers in confirming all the expenditure in favour of the province made by Mehmed bin Yunus Efendi, the city's *şehir vekili*, and allocating the required funds to cover these expenses. A ceremonial gathering took place under the auspices of the Sharia court which convened in the private home of Abdurrahman Ağa, the administrator of Salonica's customs house, certainly one of the highest administrative posts in Salonica.⁴² The numerous agents (the Muslim population of Salonica was represented by two agents who held the religious title of *ahi baba*, always connected in eighteenth-century Salonica with the guild system⁴³) officially asked the court to go over the expenses disbursed by the *şehir vekili* in favour of the province (*vilâyet*). Following their request, the city's agent detailed all his expenses. Subsequent to the court's approval, the various agents confirmed the funds needed to pay for all these expenses.⁴⁴ In such ceremonies in the Sharia court, the Jews were relegated to the end of the list, which probably reflected their inferior position in the eyes of the authorities.

In another case, the representatives of all the different communities of Salonica and its region were summoned to the Sharia court to attend the official declaration regarding the value of the currency circulating in the local markets. The persons summoned included the province's notables (*ayan-ı memleket*), the heads of the 24 guilds active in the city markets, together with their assistants (*yiğitbaşı*), the agents of the Muslim and Christian villagers from the surrounding areas and the "appointed and officially registered" (*muayyen ve müseccel*) agents of the Christian and Jewish communities living in the city.⁴⁵

Delegations representing all the communities living in the city and its district – among them the agents of the Jewish community – were likewise present in the court to declare their full satisfaction with the deeds of Ali Bey, the incumbent governor of the port (*bender muhafızı*) who served as the deputy governor of Salonica. They all declared that he had acted according to the regulations enacted in the sultan's deed of appointment, and that they were all secure and tranquil (*asudehal*) under his governorship.⁴⁶

The existence of such inter-communal organisation in Salonica which grouped together all the taxpayers is pertinent to our discussion. It seems from the information that

42 On the significance of this post, see N. G. Svoronos, *Le commerce de Salonique au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris 1956), 17.

43 We know from other Ottoman cities that the *ahi baba* used to assist the *kadı* in resolving inter-guild conflicts and in supervising the guild system; A. Cohen, *The Guilds of Ottoman Jerusalem* (Leiden and Boston 2001), 192–196. On the title 'ahi baba', and their role in the Ottoman guilds, see also E. Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: Fluidity and Leverage* (Leiden 2004), 6–8.

44 *Sicil* 86.46 (23 Cemaziyelevvel 1168/7 March 1755).

45 *Sicil* 36.124 (10 Şaban 1138/13 April 1726). See another example in *Sicil* 71.88–89 (3 Zilkade 1160/6 November 1747). The names of the Jewish agents mentioned in the entry are Musa Buton veled-i Avram and Isak veled-i Levi.

46 *Sicil* 82.111–113 (18 Şaban 1166/20 June 1753).

we can cull from the *sicils* that its main aim was to facilitate the authorities' supervision of tax collection and local officials rather than to represent the different communities' interests. As the earliest surviving *sicil* of Salonica dates only from 1694, we cannot establish whether the appointment of one agent representing the entire *reaya* population reflects a major change in the relations between the local communities and the provincial authorities. Yet, even if the local authorities attempted to create some sort of centralist order in Salonica, and, arguably, elsewhere, this nevertheless shaped new political options and arenas open to the different local communities for negotiating their positions and defending their interests. The Jewish community responded to this challenge or, rather, opportunity by creating its own post of the community's agent.

How did the Jewish community choose its agents and what social and political capital did they bring with them to their post? It seems that wealth and economic and social connections were key factors in the election of the community's agents. The *sicil* entries provide us with several cases in which individual Jews were able to form business ties with powerful local officials and later use these ties to gain some political and social benefits – some of them in contrast with the state's regulations or interests – at least according to the official discourse appearing in the registers. While the *sicils* do not differentiate between acts performed for personal gain and those carried out in favour of the whole community and for the collective interests of its members, I would like to present these activities as political strategies. Consider the following case: Ahmed, who was the poll-tax collector (*cizyedar*) of Salonica for the year 1701-1702 (H. 1113), submitted a petition to the Sublime Porte claiming that while the current number of Jewish taxpayers must have exceeded 2,000, the Jews received merely 900 *cizye*-payment forms. Even as the *cizyedar* attempted to put right the numbers, he had to cope with a certain Jew named Abuham (?) who stood forth as “protector” (*sahib çıkub*), and led the other Jews astray. Consequently, the said Abuham was detained in prison. However, even from his cell he was able to benefit from the patronage of some powerful locals and to enable his fellow Jews to evade their tax obligations. Thus, it was stated, the said Abuham harmed the state by preventing it from collecting its due taxes. Following the *cizyedar*'s request, the imperial council (*divan-ı hümayun*) ordered the Jew to be sent to Istanbul.⁴⁷

While there is no mention of any formal position held by the said Abuham, we can discern that many agents came from the ranks of those who could boast of good connections with powerful officials. Many of them were major moneylenders. Unlike those of Medieval Europe, Ottoman Jews did not hold a monopoly on moneylending; on the contrary, it was rather the Muslim cash endowments that took the lion's share in the loans market.⁴⁸ However, it is clear from the Salonican *sicil* entries that some influential Jews served as the main moneylenders of prominent members of the local military units and the bureaucracy. Holding such a position enabled those Jews to form networks based on shared vested interests. The litigation between a certain Jew named Bechor veled-i Isak

47 *Sicil* 8.72 (23 Rebiyülâhır 1113/27 September 1701).

48 H. Gerber, 'Jews and Money-Lending in the Ottoman Empire', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 72 (1981), 100-118.

and his adversary, a man named Abdüllâtif Ağa, concerning a debt of the considerable sum of 500 *guruş* can serve as an example. What is interesting in this case is the affirmation of the Muslim debtor that he had transferred his debt (*havale*) to Isak veled-i Yako, known as 'Fransızoğlu', who served as one of the agents representing the Jewish community. Furthermore, he explained this transfer of debt by indicating that the said agent, together with other agents of the Jewish community, owed him the significant sum of 5,000 *guruş*, thus disclosing long-held economic relations. Another significant indication that this case provides us with is the title of the agent (Fransızoğlu), which probably reflects his affiliation to the local French *nation*.⁴⁹ As this entry is dated January 1741, it bears witness to another recent social asset which could enhance the capacities of the agent to use his social background and connections in favour of his community – the protection of a European consul. In the second half of the eighteenth century some eminent members of the Jewish community were able to associate themselves, as employees, with the foreign consulates which were present in Salonica. Such employment enabled these Jews to benefit from the consuls' patronage and assistance when in need. As we will see below, Fransızoğlu did indeed attempt to use his good connections with the local consul of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to evade punishment imposed upon him by the authorities on the grounds of embezzlement.

The part of this paper which follows will present in detail one sphere of activities performed by the agents, namely, their decisive role in defending the Jews' claim against the Greeks regarding the division of provincial taxes. I will discuss their contribution to safeguarding the community's interests and their use of various networks and patronage relations to bolster their co-religionists' stand.

Taxation and Inter-Communal Debates

One significant feature of Ottoman Salonica, as of many other Ottoman cities, was its religious diversity. While this phenomenon must have created diversified encounters, the *sicils* provide ample evidence that this diversity did not create a shared communal consciousness; on the contrary, each community endeavoured to present itself to the best advantage in the eyes of the authorities, often at the expense of other communities. This was especially true with regard to the Jews and the Greeks, the two largest non-Muslim groups inhabiting Salonica. Examples of co-operation between the Jewish and Greek communities vis-à-vis the local authorities are few and far-between. One example is a joint petition of the Christian and Jewish communities of Salonica (*Selânik'te sakin ehl-i zimmet ve kefare ve yahud*) to the Sultan against local officials who falsely accused them of fleeing the city. Using this false accusation, the officials inflicted fines (*tağrim ve tecrim*), acted oppressively, and ill-treated them (*cevr ve eziyet*). In this case, the two communities obtained a favourable response from the Sultan, who cautioned local officials against such abuses.⁵⁰

49 *Sicil* 58.73 (29 Şevval 1153/17 January 1741).

50 *Sicil* 41.51 (evasıt-ı Şevval 1140/21-30 May 1728).

Nevertheless, this teamwork was the exception in otherwise tense relations between the two groups. At the centre of the recurring disputes was the allotment of taxation owed to the *vilâyet*'s authorities. Both parties raised similar arguments, using, maybe unsurprisingly, the same recriminations to refute their adversaries' claims. Each group attempted to claim smaller numbers, impoverishment, political feebleness, and provision of services to the state to obtain a better tax assessment and a smaller share in the tax division. Often, when they were assessed in a manner which seemed unjust to them, they petitioned the Sublime Porte to get a different assessment. The Sultan's replies, in the manner of edicts (*ferman*), provide us with some information about the opposing parties' arguments, strategies, and requests. In these cases the community's agents played a major role.

If we try to reconstruct the main debate from scratch we find that the central conflict revolved, as noted, around the division of the province's taxes between the local Muslims, Christians, and Jews. According to both the Christian and the Jewish sides, since the old days, such taxes were equally divided among the three communities, each being expected to pay one third. However, at some stage, the Muslims argued that the tax burden was beyond their means, and therefore a new division was implemented with the authorities dividing the taxes into four shares: one share was exacted from the Muslims, while one and a half shares were allocated each to the Greeks and to the Jews. This changed again in 1687-1688 (H. 1099), when the Jews claimed that the number of the Greeks had increased following the arrival of new immigrants, known as *uşkur* or *uškurt*.⁵¹ Following their request, a new division was established, according to which a half share was transferred from the Jews to the Christians. Consequently, a new separate tax unit was formed for the Greek immigrants who arrived in Salonica as merchants, while the Jews' share was reduced accordingly.⁵² This decision, we can postulate, aggravated the already tense relations between Jews and Greek Orthodox. Indeed, the Greeks were able to reverse this decision in 1717 only to be faced with another claim submitted by the Jews arguing again for a more favourable division.⁵³ To support their claim and to obtain a favourable verdict, each group presented official documents, such as *cizye* registers, formal edicts, and court deeds. In order to bolster their position, they also had recourse to different judicial arenas: filing claims in court, while also submitting petitions to the *divan-ı hümayun*. In addition, they endeavoured to exploit patronage relations with powerful Muslim officials and others who could sustain their claim behind the scenes. The character of the community's agent and his connections were decisive in this legal struggle. Although it was the communities as wholes, i.e., 'the Greeks of Salonica', or 'the Jews of Salonica', who submitted the petitions to the Sultan, it is clear from the petitions that each side relied heavily on connections with different power networks and patronage relations to gain the upper hand in the debate regarding the division of the taxes. In this context, we can assume that the agents of the Jewish community played a major

51 For the term 'uşkur' see below, n. 54.

52 *Sicil* 29.105-106 (17 Ramazan 1130/14 August 1718).

53 *Sicil* 25.24-25 (17 Cemaziyelâhir 1129/29 May 1717).

role in representing the community's interests. Exploring such an inter-communal debate allows us to gauge the role given to tax issues in local politics, but also to present the various strategies that the local communities used to get the upper hand in the conflict.

Let us first summarise the Greeks' claim as it appears in their petition: the Greeks of Salonica contended that according to local fixed regulations and edicts (*beynimize nizam ve yedimize ferman verilmekle*) the taxes were divided between the local Muslims, Christians, and Jews according to the following apportionment: one share for the Muslims, one share for the Christians, and one share for the Jews. However, at some stage, the Muslims claimed that they were not able fully to pay their share, and therefore a new division was fixed, this time in four shares: one share for the Muslims and one share and a half for both the Greeks and the Jews. But as, in the Greeks' phrasing, the Jews were extremely deceitful (*gayet-i hilekâr*) and powerful (*zükudret*), they were able to insert a favourable modification in the distribution of taxes by claiming that a group of foreign Greeks coming from Agrafta, known as *uşkur*,⁵⁴ were part of the Greek community (*sizlere haric reaya geldi diye*). By using their financial power (*kuvve-yi maliye*) and the patronage of local officials (at least according to the Greek petitioners), they were able to transfer a half share to the Greeks (*zîkr olunan tekâlifden yarım hisseleri bizim üzerimize zam*), so that the Jews would have to pay one share and the Greeks two. Now, the Greeks further claimed, the above-mentioned *uşkur* had returned to their places of origin, and only a fraction of them remained in the city. On the other hand, the Jewish community gradually increased and its members held many assets (*yahud taifesi ise gitdikçe ziyade olub tasarruflarında emlâkları kesîr iken*). Yet, the Jews insisted on paying merely one share, using the argument that they were exempt from paying taxes in exchange for having to manufacture the cloaks for the janissaries.

The Greeks further argued that they, too, were exempt from taxes as they had provided services to the state since the city's conquest by the Ottomans – they paid a regular sum of money to meet the expenses of artillerymen positioned in the citadel. Finally, they summed their claim as follows: “we are not in a position to offer any resistance. All of these poor persons [the Greeks] are in debt” (*mukavemet kadir halimiz olmayub bu fukaralar bilcümle medyun kaldık diye*). In response to the Greeks' claim, the Sultan ordered that the division of taxes be fixed in accordance with the old registration – that is to say, in four shares, with one and half upon each of the two communities.⁵⁵

However, the Jewish community was quick to respond by submitting a petition presenting their counter-claim. They began by referring to their annual service in providing the janissaries with woollen cloaks, and pointed out that in return they were exempt from all local taxes. They also invoked the conflict with the Greek community, but portrayed

54 The *uşkur* (Skurta in Greek) were Greeks who originated mainly from [the region of] Agrafta and were non-permanent residents working in Salonica; I. K. Vasdravellis (ed.), *Historika archeia Makedonias. A'. Archeion Thessalonikes, 1695-1912* [Historical archives of Macedonia. I. Archive of Salonica, 1695-1912] (Salonica 1952), 4 n. 2. I would like to thank Dr Eleni Gara for this information.

55 *Sicil* 44.79-81 (29 Şevval 1143/7 May 1731).

it in totally different colours: they, too, accused their adversaries of damaging the local order by attempting to impair the established system by using deceit (*yine hile ve hadda-ya sülûk edüb*), financial force and patronage networks to obtain a different division favouring the Greeks at the expense of the Jews. As they claimed, the Jews could not cope with more taxes as they worked day and night to manufacture the cloaks (*lejl ve nehar çuka hizmette olub*). If the Greeks' claim were accepted, their situation would change for the worse (*halleri digergûn olmakla*). This time, the Sublime Port decided to conduct its own investigation, which was carried out by Mehmed Paşa, the officer of the janissaries of the palace. According to his report (*ilâm*), most of the Salonican Jews were indeed poor and exempt from local taxes: "They had only their neighbours to assist them" (*ancak konşu yardımı edüb*) – a vague phrasing which may allude to the Jews' financial inability to assist the poorer members of the community by offering them charity. The Greeks, on the other hand, were wealthy and loaded with money (*rum taifesi ise maldar ve mütemevviller olub*). The Sublime Porte decided this time to accept the Jews' claim, to caution and deter the Greeks from trying to alter the division against the established order, and to rescind the previous order that the Greeks had been able to obtain in their favour.⁵⁶

At that stage the Jews were able to gain the upper hand in the debate. This inter-communal conflict which accompanied much of the first half of the eighteenth century indicates the significance of the post of the community's legal agent, as well as the community's ability to use a variety of connections and to raise effective arguments. The agent's political connections and negotiation skills were crucial to the promotion of the community's interests. It was the legal agent who had to shape the community's arguments and strategy and who had to improvise an effective response to counter its adversaries' claims. As such, he was a major figure in cases in which the community attempted to make its voice heard with the authorities.

The Manufacture of Woollen Broadcloth (Çuka)

The Jewish community of Salonica had another post representing it as a whole: the 'superintendent of the cloth' (*çuka emini*), or 'cloth agent' (*umur-ı çuka vekili, miri çuka vekili*). This post was related to the community's annual obligation to produce the *çuka*, woollen broadcloth from which the janissaries' coats were made. Like the community's agent, the post of the cloth agent required wealth, influence, and connections from their holders. French consular sources, quoted by Nicolas Svoronos, mention that Azer (Asher) Abravanel, the chief rabbi of Salonica, was also in charge of the manufacture of the woollen broadcloth earmarked for the janissaries in 1743 – which clearly indicates the high position held by the cloth agent.⁵⁷ One *ferman*, registered in the Salonican *sicils*, defined the qualities needed in the *çuka vekili* as having to be a well-known and trusted (*ma'ruf ve mu'temed*) Jew. This *ferman* further mentioned that this trusted man was elected to his post among the Jews with the approval of the janissaries' officer residing in Sa-

⁵⁶ *Sicil* 44.115-117 (10 Muharrem 1144/15 July 1731).

⁵⁷ Svoronos, *Le commerce*, 11.

lonica.⁵⁸ The comparison between these two communal posts and their relations with the state can further emphasise the peculiarities of the role of the community's agent.

It seems that at the end of the seventeenth century the distinction between the community's agent and the *çuka vekili* was still blurred, and the elected agents were responsible also for the manufacture of *çuka*. One *sicil* entry, dated 1694, exemplifies the role assigned to the *çuka vekili*, and indicates that at that time no distinction was made between him and the community's agents: the latter, Yazıcı Isak veled-i Avram, Isak veled-i Rubin, and Isak Mısırlı, were the agents for all purposes on behalf of the Jewish community of Salonica which was charged with the manufacture of the janissaries' cloaks, according to the phrasing of the *sicil* entry. They came to court and gave a declaration in the presence of Ahmed Çavuş Ağa from the 32nd janissary company (*bölük*). They declared that the Jewish community received the sum of 25 *yük akçes* (the equal of 5,085 *guruş*, according to the entry) from the revenues of the local customs house and salt works (*memlâha*) for the year 1693-1694 (H. 1105). It was Ahmed Çavuş who was in charge of transferring these revenues to the community. The Jewish agents received these sums of money to cover their expenses related to the making of *çuka*.⁵⁹

From the perspective of the Ottoman authorities, the main duty enforced upon the Jewish community living in Salonica was the manufacture of *çuka*. The *çuka* (also known in Ottoman sources as *çuha*) was, as already noted, a woollen broadcloth which was known for its strength and produced by a particular mechanical technology – the application of water-powered mills to the fulling process – that the Jews brought with them following their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula.⁶⁰ This industry relied on the steady supply of raw wool from the city's mountainous hinterland. The Ottoman authorities, by far the largest customer for Salonican *çuka*, used for the manufacture of the winter cloaks earmarked for the palace janissaries, created a system of purchase in which the Jews received priority in purchasing the wool and also benefited from government loans which enabled them to buy the commodity. Those who were accused of impeding the traffic of wool or of embezzlement of revenues earmarked for purchasing *çuka* were severely prosecuted and imprisoned in the citadel.⁶¹ Smuggling raw wool to neighbouring small ports and selling it out to foreign merchants was a constant threat which required the authorities' firm hand.⁶² Another illegal activity related to raw wool commerce was a false claim that some Jewish merchants made with a view to evading customs, that the wool was imported to manufacture janissary coats, while, in fact, it was earmarked for commerce.⁶³

To counter these and other potential threats the state created a particular official post to deal with the manufacture of coats. Its holder, the *çuka mübaşiri* or *çuka çavuşu*, su-

58 *Sicil* 66.18-19 (15 Şevval 1155/13 December 1742).

59 *Sicil* 1.60 (18 Rebiyülâhır 1106/6 December 1694).

60 Braude, 'The Rise and Fall of Salonica Woollens', 223.

61 See, for example, *Sicil* 35.43 (Zilkade 1136/22 July-20 August 1724); 104.42 (evasıt-ı Cemaziyelâhır 1177/17-26 December 1763); 104.65 (evahir-i Şaban 1177/24 February-3 March 1764).

62 *Sicil* 8.14-15 (evahir-i Şevval 1112/31 March-8 April 1701).

63 *Sicil* 20.32 (14 Rebiyülevvel 1122/13 May 1710).

pervised the various processes related to the cloaks industry, its expenditure, and the safe shipping to Istanbul. The *çuka mübaşiri* was the main official who worked with the Jewish *çuka vekili* as his counterpart, providing him with the raw material needed for the manufacture of the coats and settling with him the financial accounts.⁶⁴ To further increase its control over the manufacture of *çuka*, the state initiated the construction of a workshop (*kârthane*) where all *çuka* was assembled and manufactured. Thus, in 1762 the state ordered a certain Osman, the incumbent *çuka çavuşu*, to take care of moving and lodging four Jewish dyers, their assistants (*kalfa*) and apprentices (*çıraklar*) in a newly constructed dye-house (*boyahane*) which was built as an annex to the main workshop. Their families were to receive maintenance allowance, while those newly-recruited dyers were to be exempt (*serbest*) from various taxes as were other Jews employed in the industry.⁶⁵

All these details clearly indicate the state's deep involvement in the organisation of the *çuka* industry. The community's obligation to provide the state with the winter cloaks was imposed on all Salonican Jews. Therefore, it is not surprising to find in both Ottoman and Jewish sources recurring references to an agent who was responsible to secure the fulfilment of this obligation vis-à-vis the authorities. A *sicil* entry dated 1765 (H. 1178) clearly indicates the process of selecting a Jewish candidate to serve as a *çuka emini*, and the involvement of the state and local Muslims in the appointment.⁶⁶

The entry deals with Oyuncuoğlu Kemal [Shmuel], a Jew from Salonica who had previously demonstrated his intention and wish (*talib ve ragıb*) to hold the post of *çuka vekili*. However, when it was disclosed that he had become destitute, it was not clear whether he would be able to cope with all the requirements related to the *çuka* industry, and, therefore, his nomination was not confirmed. As another appointee was needed, the *ferman* detailed the process of his selection: the officer of the janissaries, the *çuka çavuşu*, as well as representatives of the population of Salonica, namely, Muslims, Jews who could be considered wealthy and trusted, Jews who worked in the manufacture of *çuka*, chief rabbis (*hahambaşılar*), and the heads of the congregations, should be summoned to court. They would all have to verify the capability of a Jewish candidate to duly perform the task of *çuka vekili* (and the imperial edict went on at length enumerating all the various textiles that he should bring to Istanbul). If his aptitude was confirmed, the edict continued, all the Jewish representatives present in court had to stand bail in money and person (*malen ve bedenlen*) for the agent's conduct. To add another measure of security, the names and description of all the guarantors were registered by the court and dispatched to Istanbul.

As becomes clear from this case, Muslim officials and dignitaries, together with representatives of the Jewish community, took part in the appointment of the Jewish *çuka vekili*. The state defined his duties and supervised their satisfactory fulfilment. It likewise appointed an official whose role was to work with the Jewish agent to secure the manufacture of the janissaries' cloaks. At stake were not provincial taxes, but rather the ability

64 For a description of the tasks of the *çuka mübaşiri*, and his relations with the Jewish *çuka vekili* see *Sicil* 66.18-19 (evahir-i Ramazan 1155/19-28 November 1742).

65 *Sicil* 104.68 (29 Muharrem 1176/20 August 1762).

66 *Sicil* 107.41 (evahir-i Zilhicce 1178/11-19 June 1765).

of the Sultan to provide his loyal soldiers and administrators with their annual gift. This need explains the state's involvement in and supervision of the election of the *çuka vekili* and the satisfactory fulfilment of his obligations. No such involvement can be discerned in the state's marginal interest in the performance of the community's agent. However, it is not surprising to find community's agents who were involved in the manufacturing of cloaks and sometimes served as *çuka vekili*. After all, the same skills and abilities were needed for both posts.

Indeed, if we follow the names of the various post-holders, we find that often the two posts were held by the same person. An illustrative case is that of Fransızoğlu Isak whom we have already met in his capacity as an agent representing the Jewish community. This case, which could come under the title of 'the rise and fall of a powerful Jewish agent', exemplifies the agent's connections and leading position within the community; it also illustrates his swift fall.

A sultanic edict informed the *kadı* of Salonica, the officer of the janissaries stationed in the city, and the deputy governor (*mütesellim*) about a case of embezzlement related to the manufacture of the janissaries' cloaks. Some years earlier, the Jews elected Fransızoğlu Isak veled-i Yako to serve as a chief agent (*başvekil*) from among the elected agents. Consequently, it was discovered that he had hidden considerable sums of money, earmarked for *çuka*, and used them for his ends. At stake, the edict cautioned, was the state's ability to provide the cloaks on time. The local officials who were ordered to assess the damage, discovered that Fransızoğlu owed the considerable sum of 15,000 *guruş*. When his treachery was discovered, he was dismissed from his post of *çuka vekili* and was enjoined to pay back his debt in full. The officer of the janissaries and the *çavuş* went to arrest him and to collect his debt. However, at this stage, Fransızoğlu opted for another strategy, and took advantage of the establishment of a new consulate in Salonica, namely, that representing the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies:⁶⁷ he quickly dispatched a man to Istanbul to secure there an appointment deed stating that he served as the interpreter of the consul who represented the Kingdom in Salonica. By securing the consul's protection, he continued to avoid the payment of his debt. But the authorities were determined to put an end to this state of affairs. The above-mentioned officials were enjoined to get the debt paid. With the knowledge of the consul, "as he, [Fransızoğlu], claims to be a dragoman", it was decided that his assets would be put on sale in recompense for the sum of money that he had embezzled.⁶⁸ Indeed, a few weeks later, Mahmud Çavuş ibn İbrahim declared in court in the presence of Fransızoğlu that he had received all the debt.⁶⁹

The Fransızoğlu incident exemplifies well the involvement of the state in the conduct of the *çuka vekili*. The state, through its agents, checked his qualifications before

67 According to Svoronos, the first consulate of Naples (The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies) opened its doors in Salonica in 1742. Its main clientele in Salonica consisted of Livornian Jewish merchants who exchanged the French protection with that provided by the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies; Svoronos, *Le commerce*, 175-176. See also Rozen, 'Contest and Rivalry', 339.

68 *Sicil* 66.18-19 (15 Şevval 1155/13 December 1742).

69 *Sicil* 65.19 (14 Zilkade 1155/10 January 1743).

confirming his appointment, controlled his actions, dismissed him when it felt that such a measure was necessary, and even punished him when his conduct was perceived as harmful to the state. No other permanent post held by a Jewish subject was scrutinised as closely by the Ottoman state during this period. When juxtaposed with this post, the scope and limited dimension of the office of the community's agent are better understood. In the end, his duties, from the state's perspective, were limited to local taxes. While the state acknowledged this official's position, too, this one remained very much outside the state's interest and concern. Therefore, we can assume that the shaping of the post of the community's agent was initiated and secured by the local community of Salonica to better defend its interests, since, for the community, the representation of its interests vis-à-vis the local authorities and other communities was a major concern.



To summarise, Jews in Ottoman Salonica could negotiate their positions and cope with various challenges by implementing several formal and informal means. Having recourse to the Sharia court was probably not the most beneficial or prominent one. However, it is mostly thanks to the role of the *kadı* as administrator – and not in his capacity as a judge – that we learn about various strategies used by individual Jews and the community as a whole to serve their needs. I would like to suggest that the main change implemented by Jews in Salonica in order to defend their interests during the first half of the eighteenth century was their attempt to present a unified position at the city level through representation by one or several formal agents. The creation of a new post by the Jewish community can be seen as a political initiative ‘from the bottom up’ as the state and its local representatives did not play any role in the election of the agent nor did they supervise his actions. This indifference is even more evident when compared to the authorities’ involvement in the functioning of the *çuka vekili*, another prominent post held by Jews in Ottoman Salonica. It was probably the growing external challenges that triggered this change tacitly recognised by the local authorities in Salonica. This wish to form a unified representation suited well the contemporaneous Ottoman efforts to increase their control over the provincial administration. From the central authorities’ point of view, the elected agent/s of the Jewish community formed part of a larger delegation which included other agents representing local groups of taxpayers. Occasionally they were all summoned to court to confirm the provincial officials’ actions and expenditures.

The new post of the community's agent created a new power position inside the Jewish community. The main assets needed to hold this post were wealth and social and economic connections. Indeed, such positions enabled new elites to claim their share in the community's affairs. While the *sicil* entries provide just slender information on this social process, they nevertheless indicate the rise, for example, of the *Franco*s as a new social and economic elite. The post of the community's agent, as well as the post of the *çuka vekili*, served the *Franco*s well in their social ascent to prominence in the Jewish community.

POLITICAL PROCESSES ON THE ISLAND OF SAMOS PRIOR TO THE GREEK WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE REACTION OF THE SUBLIME PORTE: THE KARMANIOLOI-KALLIKANTZAROI CONFLICT

Sophia LAIOU*

IN A REPORT OF 1816 BY THE THEN *ŞEYHÜLİSLAM* es-Seyyid Mehmed, Christodoulos Barbounis and his “associates” (*riüfeka*) were accused of oppressing their countrymen, inhabitants of the island of Samos in the south-eastern Aegean, by engaging in profiteering (*kesb-i tagallüb ederek*) and imposing fines on them, while they were *kocabaşıs* before 1813. For their misdeeds they had been sentenced to serve in the imperial navy as oarsmen, but somehow they had managed to escape. As a result, the central government, in the light of the opinion of the *şeyhülislam*, ordered their deportation from the *kazas* of Kuşadası and Sığla, opposite Samos, where they had taken refuge.¹

The story begins in 1804, when the conflict between the so-called Kallikantzaroi (Goblins), or the ‘Old Notables’ (in the sense of an established hereditary elite), and Karmanioloı broke out, resulting in disturbance of the peace on Samos, and nine years of frequent alternation of representatives of the two factions in the administration of the Christian Orthodox community.

To date, the conflict between the Old Notables and the Karmanioloı is known by references of local historians of the late nineteenth century, who enriched their narratives with Greek and translated Ottoman documents.² In addition, there is a folk poem, composed by an eye-witness of the events, which can be considered as valuable testimony as to how some of the inhabitants of the island perceived the conflict.³ In 1996, new evidence came to light based on the registers of the Christian Orthodox community of Samos of 1808-

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1 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye, dosya 4, gömlek 179 (1816), and Archive of the Metropolitan See of Samos, T.9/21 (undated).

2 N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka* [Samian studies], Vol. I (Samos 1899), 15-23; E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka* [Samian studies], Vol. II (Samos 1993 [3rd ed.]), 77-87; E. Kritikidis, *Pragmateia peri tes eremoseos kai tou synoikismou tes Samou* [Essay on the abandonment and settlement of Samos] (Syros 1870), 56-59; I. Vakirtzis, *Historia tes Samou* [History of Samos] (Samos 1912), 136-143.

3 The poem was published in the second volume of N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*. The poet, Anagnostis Salamalekis, from the village of Lekka, had identified with the Karmanioloı, but also criti-

1811.⁴ Also, in 2010, new evidence deriving from the personal archive of the protagonist of the conflict Georgios Logothetis was published by Michael Sakellariou.⁵

The conflict was the result of the confrontation between two social strata: on the one hand, there were those whose power was derived from the office of the four ‘Great Notables’ (*megaloi proestoi/epitropoi*),⁶ which in the eighteenth century became hereditary,⁷ and offered opportunities for accumulation of capital through various legal or illegal means, and through which its holders cultivated a bond of common interests with the few Ottoman officials based on the island. Unfortunately, there is no information regarding the economic activities of these *kocabaşıs*. However, one can assume that, apart from the possession of extensive land property by *tapu*, and trade, usury, sub-leasing of the tax revenues of the island, or other business co-operation with the holders of the *mukataa* and their *voyvodas* can be considered certain. Moreover, at least by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the ‘Great Notables’ had significantly increased their influence on the island’s local power structure, a development which can be attributed to the primarily fiscal character that the Ottoman administration had gradually acquired in Samos, as well as to the absence of a Muslim population, except for the officials and their retainers.⁸

On the other hand, there were the representatives of the rising local bourgeoisie, consisting mostly of merchants, captains, and shipowners, who reacted against the monopoly of power by the few established local families, and demanded a share in local administra-

cised them for some of their actions, such as the attack against the vice-consulates in 1808; N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, II:490-491.

- 4 A. Sevastakis, *To kinema ton “Karmaniolon” ste Samo* [The movement of the ‘Karmanioloï’ on Samos] (Athens 1996).
- 5 M. Sakellariou, *Samiaka* [Samian studies] (Athens 2010).
- 6 The ‘Great Notables’ were elected for a period of one year by the notables of the ‘towns’ of the four regions into which the island was divided (regions of Vathi, Karlovassi, Marathokambos, and Chora). In the same way, the inhabitants of each village on the island elected their notables for one year; E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, IV:122-123; Kritikidis, *Pragmateia*, 42-44. We lack information regarding the criteria according to which one could be elected as a notable. However, the Ottoman *reaya* identity, the possession of property and constant habitation in the area must have constituted at least some of the criteria. See, for instance, the accusations of the representatives of the Old Notables to the Sublime Porte that the leading figure of the Karmanioloï (Logothetis) was bankrupt (*müflis*), had fled Samos for a long time, and did not possess any property on the island. Also, of those Karmanioloï who wanted to become *kocabaşıs*, one was under Russian protection and the other had the protection of the Septinsular Republic; see BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.12, p. 5 (1805), and Cevdet Evkaf, dosya 311, gömlek 15834.
- 7 M. Vourliotis, ‘Hoi topikoi proestoi tes Samou. He periptose ton progonon tou Kapetan Stamate’ [The local notables of Samos: the case of the ancestors of Kapetan Stamatis], in *Antipelargese. Timetikos tomos gia ton Nikolao Demetriou* [Antipelargisi: volume in honour of Nikolaos Dimitriou] (Athens 1992), 319.
- 8 G. Dimitriadis, *Historia tes Samou* [History of Samos] (Chalkis 1865), 9-10; E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, IV:123; W. Turner, *Journal of a Tour in the Levant*, Vol. III (London 1820), 109 (he visited Samos in 1816 and described the notables of the island as “scoundrels”, who had “the real power”). For the absence of a permanent Muslim population on Samos see S. Laiou, *He Samos kata ten othomanike periodo* [Samos during the Ottoman period] (Salonica 2002), 37.

tion on the grounds of their emerging economic power. In Greek historiography, the Old Notables are depicted as the most conservative element in local society, whose power depended on the Ottoman political system, and the Karmanioloï as defenders of the liberal and democratic principles of the French Revolution.⁹ In any event, the name of the latter group derives from the Greek version of the revolutionary song ‘La Carmagnole’.¹⁰ Thus, in Greek historiography the emphasis is on the political-ideological dimension of the confrontation. Correspondingly, the Kallikantzaroi, that is, the Old Notables, owe their name to their alleged habit of meeting during the night, since they supposedly could not realise their ‘dark’ plans in the daylight.¹¹ Thus, the names of both parties can be attributed to the supporters of the Karmanioloï.

On the basis of Ottoman and Greek documents, I argue that the conflict which shook the island for nine years (late 1804-1813) was a product of the internal strife over political power and control of trade, the most profitable activity on the island. The strife was influenced by the great financial demands of the state and the misdeeds of certain Ottoman officials. Also, both factions took advantage of the weak political fabric during the last years of the reign of Selim III and the fierce political and economic rivalry of the Great Powers in the same period, which demanded flexible handling by the Ottoman government. Moreover, the new policy of the Ottoman state regarding commerce, which is discussed below, played a significant role in the development of the crisis. Finally, it is important to note that this strife demonstrates certain political characteristics concerning not only the fight for control of the local power structure, but also the involvement

9 See especially A. Sevastakis, ‘Epidraseis sta samiaka pragmata tes Gallikes Epanastases, tes Philikes Hetaireias kai tou Syntagmatos tou Rega’ [Influences of the French Revolution, the Friendly Society and the Constitution of Rhigas on Samian affairs], *Sygychna themata* (1965), offprint (no pagination), and Idem, *To kinema*, 77, where the anti-Ottoman character of the ‘movement’ of the Karmanioloï is emphasised. The designations ‘democrats’ and ‘aristocrats’ for the Karmanioloï and the Old Notables, respectively, can be found in Kritikidis, *Pragmateia*, 56. It is interesting that John Galt, who visited the island in 1810, also refers to “aristocrats” and “democrats”; J. Galt, *Letters from the Levant* (London 1813), 306.

10 According to Vranousis, the Greek version of ‘La Carmagnole’ was the ‘Patriotic Hymn’ of Rhigas Pheraïos composed to the melody of the French revolutionary song. Vranousis also rejects the connection of the term ‘Karmanioloï’ with the guillotine (that is, that the Karmanioloï deserved to die on the guillotine), since the latter was unknown in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the nineteenth century; L. Vranousis, ‘Ho patriotikos hymnos tou Rega kai he hellenike “karmaniola”’ [The Patriotic Hymn of Rhigas and the Greek ‘Karmaniola’], in *Eis mnenen K. Amantou, 1874-1960* [In memory of K. Amantos, 1874-1960] (Athens 1960), 304-305 n. 1, 307-308. Vourliotis claims that it is possible that natives of the Ionian Islands who resided in Samos introduced the word ‘Karmaniola’; M. Vourliotis, *Karmanioloï kai vivlio (1800-1839)* [Karmanioloï and the book (1800-1839)] (Athens 1990), 10. Indeed, there was a consulate of the Septinsular Republic on the island (General State Archives of Corfu, Greece, folder 56, No. 35). According to Alexandros Lycourgos (son of Lycourgos Logothetis), the name ‘Karmanioloï’ was used for the first time in 1805; Sakellariou, *Samiaka*, 290. For the designation ‘Karmanioloï’ for those who believed in the “ideas of the French democratic government, detested by God and men” in the Ionian Islands see Vranousis, ‘Ho patriotikos hymnos’, 312 n. 1.

11 Kritikidis, *Pragmateia*, 56-57.

of the Ottoman central government as a result of the complaints against certain Ottoman officials, the constant appeals to Istanbul on the part of the two factions, and the ways in which the latter tried to influence the state's decisions. The Karmanioloï's endeavour to question the established local social hierarchy and certain aspects of the Ottoman structure of government, with the support of a considerable part of the local population, represents a clear case of a political initiative by an up-and-coming social group a few years before the Greek War of Independence.

In brief, the chronicle of the conflict is the following: its protagonist was the Samian Georgios (Paplomatas) Logothetis, who served as a high-ranking official (secretary, consultant, and treasurer) at the courts of the Phanariot Princes of Wallachia and Moldavia until 1802, when he moved to Istanbul.¹² His arrival there coincided with the exacerbation of the confrontation in Samos. In him the Karmanioloï saw the most suitable person who not only supported their demands, but could also promote them through his valuable political networks at the Sublime Porte. Thus, Logothetis became the leading figure of the Karmanioloï. The accusations against the Old Notables for embezzlement, as well as against some of the Ottoman local officials for oppressing the 'poor' *reaya* and for tolerating, or even co-operating with, the 'corrupt' *kocabaşı*, along with the request to convert the sum of the tax revenues of the island into a lump-sum payment (*maktu*), became the principal political message of the Karmanioloï during 1804-1813. According to the Ottoman sources, their first appeal to imperial justice was in the end of 1804, while at the beginning of February 1805 they managed to obtain a positive answer to their requests, that is, the appointment of Logothetis as *kocabaşı* in place of Yannakis Andreadakis, the main culprit of the embezzlement, according to the Karmanioloï, the substantiation of the amount collected by the Old Notables in addition to that which was regularly due, and the inspection of the community registers of past years by the central offices in the capital.¹³ This action against the Old Notables was accompanied in December 1804 by the denunciation of the *zâbit* to the Sublime Porte by the inhabitants of the port of Vathi for extracting extra money and supplies from them.¹⁴

12 N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, I:14-15. He was named Lycourgos after his entry into the Philike Hetaireia in 1819; *ibid.*, 30.

13 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.12, p. 155 (1805). The *arzuhal* was submitted at the end of 1804, since the response of the Old Notables to the accusations, together with other relevant documents, was registered with the secretariat of the imperial council at the beginning of January 1805; BOA, Cevdet Evkaf, dosya 311, gömlek 15834. The Samians paid 72,000 *guruş*, and Logothetis another 15,300 to members of the imperial council in order to obtain the *ferman*; Sakellariou, *Samiaka*, 293, 583-584; N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, I:17. Interestingly enough, in 1805-1806 (H. 1220), Logothetis and another three inhabitants of his native town Karlovassi received from a Christian inhabitant of the capital a loan of 7,200 *guruş*, which they failed to fully repay; BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.17, p. 80 (1817). Did they intend to use it for the bribery of some members of the imperial council (7,200 *guruş* instead of 72,000?), or did they use it for other purposes such as the assumption of the *maktu*? For the initial predominance of Logothetis and the faction of the Karmanioloï with the help of the Ottoman government see Dimitriadis, *Historia*, 12-13, and the 'Report of the Samians', written in 1822, in Sakellariou, *Samiaka*, 609.

14 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.12, p. 146 (December 1804). See also BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.

The faction of the Old Notables was very quick in reacting and managing to replace the foregoing sultanic decree with a new one, which restored the old order. During the period 1805-1808 there was a constant rotation of the two factions in the community administration. It seems that in 1805-1806 the Karmanioloï prevailed, but in late 1806 the Old Notables controlled the communal authority,¹⁵ a situation which most probably lasted for the most part of 1807 and beginning of 1808.¹⁶ In the summer of 1808, when there was extensive use of violence as a result of the arrival of a new *voyvoda*, a friend of the faction of the Old Notables, the Karmanioloï prevailed and radicalised their political message even more: they requested that the island's tax burden, which was due to the *vakıf* of Kılıç Ali Paşa in İstanbul, be paid as *maktu*, while they threatened the central administration with abandonment of the island in the event of a negative response.¹⁷ The request for *maktu* payment of the taxes sought to relieve the island of the meddling of the various tax-farmers, and to reduce the scope of the *kocabaşı*s for illegally increasing the amount due. In the end, this request was not granted because of the intervention of the *şeyhülislam*, who was the *naẓır* of the *vakıf* of Samos, and controlled the largest part of the island's revenues.¹⁸ However, it seems that in 1808 certain members of the Karmanioloï faction claimed that they had obtained the *maktu* payment of the taxes on alcohol and tobacco, the expenses for the transfer of officials, and the cash equivalent of the obligation of

CZRK.d.13, p. 7 (1805), and BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.14, p. 35 (1808), where, individually or collectively, the inhabitants of Samos accused the Ottoman officials of oppression.

- 15 At the end of October 1806, the Sublime Porte annulled the decree according to which the person mainly responsible for the spread of disorder on the island, *kocabaşı* Yannakis Andreadakis, had to stay in the capital. Thus, Yannakis was allowed to return to Samos on condition that he behaved decently and did not interfere in affairs which did not concern him (*fımaba'd kendü halinde olmak ve vazifesinden haric üzere karışmamak şart ile*); BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.13, p. 107 (1806).
- 16 It seems that in 1810 the faction of the Old Notables tried unsuccessfully to regain the communal authority; BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.16, pp. 54-55 (1812), where it is stated that in 1810-1811 (H. 1225) the two *kocabaşı*s of the island Yannakis (Andreadakis) and Hadji Todoris overtaxed the inhabitants. Nevertheless, the communal register of 1810 does not include their names among the main notables of Samos; Sevastakis, *To kinema*, 129-130, 185. Possibly, they represented minor regions.
- 17 E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, II:81-82. For the threat of abandonment on the part of the *reaya* see S. Faroghi, 'Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)', in Eadem, *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1720* (İstanbul 1995), 31-33.
- 18 Samos was granted by the Sultan as *mülk* property to the *kapudan paşa*, Kılıç Ali Paşa, in 1584. The latter devoted the island to his religious foundation in the capital. Thus, the *vakıf* of Kılıç Ali Paşa received the total of the tax revenues of the island except for the capitation tax and, later, other taxes imposed by the state such as the *avarız*; Laiou, *Samos*, 105-128. The earliest reference regarding the role of the *şeyhülislam* as *naẓır* of the *vakıf* is at the end of the seventeenth century. However, the *vakıf* must have been placed under the supervision of the office of *şeyhülislam* after the death of Kılıç Ali Paşa, which indicates that it came under the control of the state quite early; *ibid.*, 106.

the community to provide the imperial navy with sailors every year.¹⁹ These were taxes which were imposed by the state and had significantly increased during the reign of Selim III in order to finance the *Nizam-ı Cedid* army and because of the Ottoman-Russian war, which had begun in 1806 and demanded the dispatch of sailors to the imperial navy.²⁰

It is to be noted that the *maktu* payment of the tax on alcohol and the capitation tax had been assumed by the community of Samos at the end of the eighteenth century.²¹ Nevertheless, in 1800 the lump sum for the alcohol tax was increased to 30,000 *guruş* because the state officials discovered that the *kocabası*s of Samos were collecting from the taxpayers more money than was actually due.²² Thus, although we admittedly lack more concrete evidence, it seems that the request for the *maktu* payment of certain taxes as well as the indebtedness of the taxpayers because of the *kocabası*s' policy of charging more than they should appear to be crucial issues in the micro-history of Samos quite early.

Finally, as far as the Samians' obligations towards the imperial navy are concerned, the request for their *maktu* payment aimed to end the intervention of the *kapudan paşa* and his officials, which violated the *serbest* status (that is, freedom from outside fiscal intervention) that the *vakıf* of the island had enjoyed since its foundation at the end of the sixteenth century.²³ Although at the end of 1807 the *serbest* status of the *vakıf* of Samos was once more acknowledged by the state, it was limited to the fiscal demands of minor officials of the imperial navy and other state officials (*kalyon kapudanları ve firkata beğleri ve sair ehl-i örf*).²⁴ It seems that the state demands for sailors and provisions were not regarded as a violation of the *serbest* status, since the fulfilment of the needs of the Ottoman state was considered more important than the provisions that the founder of the *vakıf* had laid down centuries ago, given that the *vakıf* was already under state supervision. On the other hand, it seems that the Karmanioloï faction did not seriously question the obligation to provide the imperial navy with manpower and supplies, but rather the way in which the islanders should do it.

The mutual recriminations over embezzlement and the oppression of the *reaya* of Samos, along with accusations of property seizures and violent extractions of money under the pretext of non-payment of debts testify to the violent character of the period.²⁵

19 N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, I:20. In a *ferman* issued on the same date as the one cited by N. Stamatiadis, certain members of the Karmanioloï are accused of collecting sums of money from the *reaya* for the capitation tax, the taxes on alcohol and tobacco, and the supplies that the island owed to the imperial shipyard, but not delivering the taxes to the state; BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.13, p. 240 (1808). Although in the first *ferman*, published by Stamatiadis, the *cizye* is not mentioned, it is possible that the Karmanioloï did not deliver the full sum of money, because they claimed that its payment was a *maktu*.

20 K. Koumas, *Historiai ton anthropon praxeon apo ton archaiotaton chronon eos ton hemeron mas* [Histories of human acts from ancient times until our days], Vol. XII (Vienna 1833), 484.

21 E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, II:27-29.

22 Ibid., III:513-515.

23 On the *serbest* status, see Laiou, *Samos*, 45.

24 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.13, p. 195 (1807).

25 See BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.14, pp. 40, 41, 45, 65 (1809).

In 1813, Logothetis was forced to leave the island, and applied to the Russian vice-consulate on Tinos for protection, which he received.²⁶ He finally settled with his family in Smyrna in 1815, having also acquired a British passport.²⁷ Thus, the faction of the Old Notables prevailed in Samos until 1821. For those of the Karmanioloι who remained on the island, the Old Notables acquired as late as 1815 a sultanic decree which prohibited them from engaging again in acquiring control of the communal authority, on the pretext that they were instigating rebellion and the delay in the fulfilment of state issues, that is, tax collection.²⁸ It seems that the situation on the island was still fluid, given the fact that at the same period the Karmanioloι sent letters to their countrymen from the Anatolian shore opposite referring to the issue of the communal authority.²⁹

Up to this point the policy of the Sublime Porte can be divided into two phases: at first, it clearly supported the requests of the Karmanioloι regarding the examination of the communal registers of the previous years and the official recognition of the election of Logothetis as *kocabası* (February 1805), although the faction of the Old Notables tried to influence the decision of the imperial council by presenting a different version of the events.³⁰ Later, however, the government shifted position in favour of the Old Notables by facilitating their restoration of the old political order. Also, two sultanic decrees were issued in 1807 and 1808 ordering the banishment of the most important representatives of the Karmanioloι to Mount Athos on charges of instigating a rebellion, harming and intimidating the people.³¹ However, the government did not wish to render the Old Notables the absolute masters of the local game, and in the first decree for the banishment of Logothetis and his associates in 1807, Yannakis Andreadakis once again was ordered to move to Istanbul, since local unrest began because of his *kocabasılık*, and his return to power would cause “prattle” (*kıl ve kal*).³² Nevertheless, the ensuing annulment of the order kept Yannakis Andreadakis on Samos.

This change of position was soon overtaken by the events on the island. Even after the bloodshed in the summer of 1808 and the arrival of a new *voyvoda*, the power of the Karmanioloι was not seriously challenged for another four years either by the Old No-

26 Sakellariou, *Samiaka*, 309.

27 N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, I:23-24.

28 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.16, p. 230 (1815).

29 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye, dosya 4, gömlek 179. It was Christodoulos Barbounis, Anastas, “and others” who were accused of daring to disrupt the state order by sending letters to Samians (*ada-ı mezkûre reayasına mekâtib neşr ile inhilâl-i nizam-ı memleketi mucib-i harekete ictisar eyledikleri*).

30 BOA, Cevdet Evkaf, dosya 311, gömlek 15834.

31 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.13, p. 153 (spring 1807). One of the supporters of Logothetis, papa-Ioakeim, was “severely” punished (*eşed ukubetle te’dib olunduğu*), that is, he was executed. Besides Logothetis, Manolis Kolokythas, Yannakis son of Kalaidji, and papa-Christos Kuru were banished to Mount Athos. However, this *ferman* was annulled and a second one was issued in December 1808, ordering again the banishment of Logothetis to Mount Athos and his two associates to serve in the galleys; N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, I:19-20, and n. 35 below.

32 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.13, p. 153 (1807).

tables or directly by the Sublime Porte. On the contrary, the new *voyvoda* is reported to have had relations of indifference with the Karmanioloï.³³

Moreover, after the eventual domination of the Old Notables in 1813, a sultanic decree was issued upon the request of the “poor *reaya*” which ordered the inspection of the communal registers in the presence of all the *reaya* and the Ottoman officials and their subsequent dispatch to the capital for further examination, in order to avoid the overtaxation of the inhabitants of Samos on the part of some of the *kocabaşıs*.³⁴ Thus, the Sublime Porte accepted once again (after 1805) a basic request of the Karmanioloï. Besides, the maintenance of social peace ensured, in any case, the regular payment of taxes.

A significant role in the formation of the policy of the Sublime Porte was played by the *şeyhülislam*. The sultanic decrees relevant to the conflict mention the orders (*işaret*) issued by the *şeyhülislam* and the need to follow them. Although these orders are first mentioned in 1812, which can be explained by the political rivalries in the Palace during the last years of the reign of Selim III and the role that the *şeyhülislam* played at that time,³⁵ in local historiography there are accounts of the meetings of the representatives of the Old Notables with the *şeyhülislam*, by whose intervention the second order for the banishment of Logothetis was issued.³⁶ These accounts must have an element of truth, if we take into consideration that the Old Notables most probably co-operated with the Ottoman tax-farmers – at least some of whom were members of the *ulema* – not only in tax collection but also in sub-leasing the tax revenues of the island.³⁷ Thus, the *şeyhülislam*, who ex officio controlled most of the revenues of the *vakıf* of Samos, did not favour the conversion of the *mukataa* into *maktu*, since he must have had strong economic interests in continuing the leasing of the island’s revenues, and the Old Notables supported his position because of common economic interests with the appointed tax-farmers.

By the same token, the *kapudan paşa*, whose demands in taxes and supplies had exacerbated the social discontent, interfered in this conflict because of the requests which

33 According to Galt, the Ottoman governor did not take the part of either faction; Galt, *Letters*, 306. See also Vakirtzis, *Historia*, 143.

34 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.16, pp. 131-132 (1813).

35 The controversy between Sultan Selim III and the *ulema*, especially the *şeyhülislam* Şerifzade Mehmed Ataullah Efendi (in office from November 1806 to July 1808), who was the head of the movement which led to Selim III’s dethronement, is well known; see, for instance, S. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807* (Cambridge, Mass. 1971), 375, 412. The first order of banishment of Logothetis was issued a little before the deposition of Selim III (end of May 1807).

36 N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, I:18-19. Stamatiadis refers to the second *ferman* which ordered Logothetis’s banishment, issued in December 1808 (end of Şevval 1223). In this *ferman* (available only in Greek translation), the consent of the *şeyhülislam* Dürriyade Abdullah Efendi (in office from November 1808 until September 1810 and later between 1812 and 1815) is mentioned.

37 In 1801, Kanakis Manolakis submitted a petition to the Sublime Porte regarding a debt of 2,000 *guruş* “iltizam akçesinden” (from the money of tax farming) owed to him since 1795-1796 by a certain “Stafi” (for Stathis); BOA, A.DVNS.CZRK.AHK.d.11, p. 121 (1801). The latter can be identified with Stathis, a member of the Old Notables.

the factions submitted to him and the delegates whom he sent to the island.³⁸ The networks of political support that each faction tried to set up in the capital through its representatives and the various *peşkeşes*,³⁹ along with the co-operation of Ottoman agents and the local Ottoman officials with both factions on the island, significantly determined the content of the sultanic decrees. For example, the same *şeyhülislam* (Dürrizade Abdullah Efendi) who consented to the second exile of Logothetis, a year later issued *fetvas* in favour of both factions.⁴⁰

However, despite the initial setbacks of the central government and the role that certain high-ranking officials played, the policy of the Sublime Porte in the years 1805-1808 was determined by the two principal criteria according to which the *reaya* were treated by the Ottoman state: the regular tax flow and the maintenance of order, both of which were disrupted by the dynamic interference of the Karmanioloi in the established local political order. It was not only the violent change in the communal authority that caused disruptions, such as the non-fulfilment of the obligation of the community to send sailors to the imperial navy during the war with Russia.⁴¹ The accusations of the Karmanioloi in 1808 against the previous holder of the *mukataa*, Çelebi Mustafa, the *rużnamçeci* of the Bayezid II *vakıf*, to whom the community of Samos owed 78,036 *guruş*, that he was “the resort of our oppressors and destroyers”, were a disturbing sign of their policy.⁴² Also, since 1807-1808 the community of Samos owed 10,200 *guruş* to es-Seyyid Mehmed Said, another lessee of the *mukataa*.⁴³

Interestingly enough, the gradual smoothing of the relations between the Karmanioloi and the Sublime Porte after 1808 coincided with the partial acquittal of the debt of the community to Çelebi Mustafa and the absence from the island of the major protagonists of the conflict.⁴⁴ In addition, the stabilisation of the political situation in the capital also played a significant role.



38 E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, II:78-80.

39 For the *peşkeşes* see Sevastakis, *To kinema*, 111-112.

40 A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.14, pp. 41, 45, 65 (1809).

41 In 1807-1808 Samos did not send the sailors for the imperial navy because of the local upheaval; V. Sfyroeras, *Ta hellenika pleromata tou tourkikou stolou* [The Greek crews of the Turkish fleet] (Athens 1968), 71 n. 6. See also BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.16, p. 230 (1815), where the Karmanioloi are accused, *inter alia*, of “postponing important affairs” (*umur-ı mühimme ve mevadd-ı saire te’hirini müstevcib hareket etmekde*).

42 E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, II:81-82. Until 1812 the community of Samos had paid 27,000 *guruş* to the heirs of the main tax-farmer Çelebi Mustafa. In 1812, a sultanic decree was issued ordering the payment of the remaining 51,036 *guruş*; Archeio Historikes kai Ethnologikes Hetaireias tes Hellados [Archive of the Hellenic Historical and Ethnological Society], Athens, Greece, No. 1484. In the folk poem mentioned above, p. 91, it is stated that the debt to Çelebi Mustafa was paid by the inhabitants of Samos, but the Old Notables had embezzled the money; N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, II:470. See also Sevastakis, *To kinema*, 45-46.

43 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.14, p. 141 (1809).

44 As a result of the second order for his banishment to Mount Athos, Logothetis was able to

The social conflict between the Old Notables and the Karmanioloï emerged during a very crucial period for the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, the factional rivalries between the officials who supported the reforms of Selim III and those who did not, and, on the other, the fierce diplomatic rivalry between France, Britain, and Russia to gain the support of the Ottoman state for their own political and economic interests, created a rather unstable political scene. As the diplomatic war developed, the two factions of pro and anti-reformers were soon characterised as pro-French and pro-Russian, respectively, because of the interference of the foreign diplomats in internal Ottoman rivalries.⁴⁵

In this respect, how justified is the statement to be found in local Samian historiography that the Old Notables were politically affiliated with Russia in the same way as the Karmanioloï were affiliated with France?⁴⁶ How did these international rivalries affect the socio-economic differences on the island? Are these clear-cut distinctions valid? My hypothesis is that the intense political and social turmoil in Samos was *also* influenced by the following: i) the economic antagonism of the Great Powers of the time to control trade in the eastern Mediterranean; ii) the policy of Selim III to check the number of protégés of foreign states and to expand the use of the Ottoman flag on the ships which belonged to Ottoman subjects by granting them certain privileges, a policy which began in the same period when the confrontation on Samos developed;⁴⁷ iii) the suffocating pressures that the Ottoman merchants were faced with if they were not protégés.

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, Samos had developed significant external trade with the West and Russia, especially in grapes, raisins, and olive oil, which brought profit to an emerging bourgeoisie.⁴⁸ The rivalry for control of local production and its exportation became even more intense because of the activities of the vice-consuls and other protégés of *reaya* origin, who enjoyed significant trade privileges at the expense of the rest of the local merchants.⁴⁹ In this respect, a decree of 1815 addressed to the Ottoman officials of Samos is illuminating. The decree refers to the illegal appointment of *reaya* of Samos as representatives (*vekil*) of consuls and vice-consuls, contrary to the stipulations of the Capitulations, and the equally illegal

return to Samos only in 1811. Note also that after establishing that the debt, owed by the two major representatives of the Old Notables, Yannakis Andreadakis and Hadji Todoris, amounted to 52,190 *guruş*, both men fled to Kuşadası, where Hadji Todoris died; A.DVNS.AHK. CZRK.d.16, pp. 54-55 (1812).

45 Shaw, *Between Old and New*, 335, 375; Koumas, *Historiai*, XII:486.

46 N. Stamatiadis, *Viographia tou samiou oplarchegou Konstantinou Lachana* [Biography of the Samian leader Konstantinos Lachanas] (Samos 1906), 6; E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, II:83-84, 87.

47 G. Harlaftis and S. Laiou, 'Ottoman State Policy in Mediterranean Trade and Shipping, c.1780-c.1820: The Rise of the Greek-Owned Ottoman Merchant Fleet', in M. Mazower (ed.), *Networks of Power in Modern Greece: Essays in Honor of John Campbell* (London 2008), 17-30.

48 E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, IV:447-452; Laiou, *Samos*, 129-130; A. Sevastakis, *Historika Neou Karlovasou Samou, 1768-1840* [A history of Neo Karlovassi, Samos, 1768-1840] (Athens 1995), 90-94.

49 For the fierce antagonism between the vice-consuls of Greek origin and the local merchants regarding the control of local production and how the vice-consuls used every method to deprive the local traders of this business for their own benefit see Dimitriadis, *Historia*, 10-11.

acquisition of patents and *fermans* which granted them foreign protection. It goes on to say that the *kocabaşıs* and the inhabitants of Samos had asked for the issuance of a sultanic decree ordering the abrogation of these documents and the subsequent collection of the capitation tax and other taxes from their owners.⁵⁰ The decree demanded that the addressees of the order, that is, the *naib* of Samos, the *voyvoda*, the customs officer and the *zâbits*, should enforce the law regarding those who illegally acquired foreign protection, because, despite the orders issued in H. 1201 (1786-1787), 1206 (1791-1792) and 1221 (1806-1807), some of the *reaya* of Samos still declared that they were British or Russian subjects, and thus refused to pay the capitation tax and other taxes.⁵¹

Although the *ferman* is not very illuminating in relation to the local unrest, it is possible that in 1806-1807, in the middle of the crisis, some local protégés had to cope with not only the Ottoman state but also the community as a whole because of the non-payment of some of the taxes due from the *reaya*.⁵² It is also probable that at least some of the protégés mentioned in the *ferman* were Old Notables or had business relations with them.⁵³ In this case, the fact that the Old Notables intervened in the allotment of the taxes in a way which secured their own economic interests at the expense of the other *reaya*,

50 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye, dosya 4, gömlek 179 (1815): “ve ada-ı mezkûrun ihlâl-i nizamına badi bir keyfiyet olduğu beyan ile nizamı havi mukaddemlerde sadır olan evamir-i şerifem mucible-rince amel ve harekete ve zimmi-i mesfûrların yedlerinde bulunan ol makule senedat kat’a itibar olunmayub yedlerinden ahz olunarak cizye-i şeriye ve rûsumat-ı sairenin tahsiline mübaderet olunmak babında ada-ı mezkûr kocabaşıları ve ehalisi bir kıt’a emr-i şerifim sudurunu istidasında oldukları”.

51 Ibid.: “Sisam adası ehalesinin devlet-i âliyemin cizyegûzar raiyet ve raiyet oğullarından ba’zı zimmiler bizler Rusya ve İngiltere reayası olduk ve yedlerimizde patenta ve tezkere aldık ve fermanımız dahi vardır deyü üzerlerine edası lâzımgelen cizye-i şeriye ve rûsumat-ı saireyi edaya muhalefet ve tavr-ı raiyete münafi harekete cesaret...”. The *ferman* partly answers the request of the *reaya* of Samos regarding Captain Todoris, son of Andon Çakmak, who was a supporter of the Karmanioloï and associate of Christodoulos Barbounis, who after 1813 settled in Smyrna and obtained French protection. There he accused the Samians who arrived in Smyrna or Chios for trade of plundering the merchandise of the ship in which he was captain, and extracted from them sums of money as a reimbursement. The government ordered the banishment of the Karmanioloï from the *kaza* of Sığla, and issued a reminder of the prohibition of the appointment of *reaya* (such as Todoris) as consuls or representatives of consuls and vice-consuls. For the efforts of the Sublime Porte to restrict the numbers of protégés and similar orders issued in this respect see A. İ. Başı, *Osmanlı Ticaretinde Gayrî Müslimler* (Ankara 1988), 38-75.

52 Notably, according to Leake, in 1806 the *reaya* of Spetses and Hydra complained to the Sublime Porte that because of the privileges that the protégés enjoyed the conditions of trade were inequitable; W. M. Leake, *Travels in the Morea*, Vol. II (Amsterdam 1968), 344-345.

53 The assumption of the *beratlı* status by the local notables was not uncommon. See, for example, the case of Panayotis Benakis who became a Venetian protégé in the middle of the eighteenth century; D. Papastamatiou, ‘Oikonomikokoinonikoi mechanismoi kai to prouchontiko phainomeno sten othomanike Peloponneso tou dekatou ogdoou aiona: he periptose tou Panayote Benake’ [Socio-economic mechanisms and the phenomenon of the notables in the Ottoman Peloponnese in the eighteenth century: the case of Panayotis Benakis], unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2009, 178-179.

especially if they also enjoyed trade privileges and tax exemptions as protégés, or had common business interests with the latter, nurtured the conditions for general discontent.⁵⁴ In this respect, the attack of the mob in the summer of 1808 on the vice-consulates of Russia and Britain in Vathi, the main port of the island, reveals the impact that the foreign protection system had on the local economy. The consuls were regarded as allies of the Old Notables, with whom they co-operated in their effort to acquire large amounts of local production at low prices.⁵⁵ Moreover, there was general discontent over the British subjects of Greek origin from the Ionian Islands who settled in Vathi and controlled local trade.⁵⁶ In this respect, it is possible that this particular attack was aided by the French consul and French protégés, who wished to expand their role in the local economy at the expense of the rival states, Britain and Russia, and also to take revenge for the persecution of a local merchant, a representative of the French government on the island in 1804, who later co-operated with the Karmanioloï.⁵⁷ Thus, the attack on the consulates of Russia and Britain demonstrated a general unease over the role of specific local protégés and subsequently satisfaction with the efforts of the Sublime Porte in this period to limit foreign protection, especially that offered by the above-mentioned states.⁵⁸ Also, it could be interpreted as a declaration of the allegiance of the Karmanioloï faction to the Ottoman Empire in the midst of the war with those states.⁵⁹ Similarly, in 1811, when the communal authority was controlled by the Karmanioloï, the notables urged the seizure of an Ot-

54 “The primates and the rich men had long managed, with great success, to exempt themselves from all manner of taxation. The common people grew, at last, discontented and insisted that the primates, according to their means, should also pay the taxes. The people rebelled, and a revolution ensued”; Galt, *Letters*, 305-306.

55 E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, II:84; Sevastakis, *To kinema*, 55.

56 See M. Vlasopoulou, ‘Hotan to Ionio synanta to Aigaio: Ionioi hypekooi ste Samo (19^{os} ai.)’ [When the Ionian Sea meets the Aegean Sea: Ionian subjects on Samos (nineteenth century)], in *H’ Diethnes Panionio Syndrio*. Kythera, 21-25/5/2006 [8th International Panionian Conference. Cythera, 21-25/5/2006], Vol. II/A (Cythera 2009), 68-72.

57 N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, I:15. His name was Panayotis papa-Zachariou and he was one of those who, together with Logothetis, borrowed the 7,200 *gurus*; see n. 13 above. See also BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d.16, p. 56 (1812), where Panayotis papa-Zachariou together with two other natives of Karlovassi claimed a debt acquittal. Is it accidental that Panayotis papa-Zachariou was forced to leave Samos during the period (1804-1805) when French-Ottoman relations were bad because of the refusal of Selim III to acknowledge Bonaparte as Emperor? See Shaw, *Between Old and New*, 332-333. For the importance of economic dominance as a means for political domination see *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol. 4 (Istanbul 1993), 2012-2013.

58 During the period 1806-1812, eight Samian shipowners (one in 1806, four in 1809, two in 1810, one in 1812) joined the new system of shipping which required the use of the Ottoman flag in return for certain privileges; A.DVNS.İZN.d.3, pp. 67, 85, 87, 96, 109, 113, 114; A.DVNS. İZN.d.5, p. 17. See also n. 47 above.

59 Sevastakis, *To kinema*, 55. In 1806 Russia invaded the Principalities, and Britain supported Russia against the Ottoman Empire. Although after the French-Russian Treaty of Tilsit (July 1807) Britain hastened to end the war with the Ottomans, peace was signed in 1809 (Treaty of Kala-i Sultaniye). In this peace agreement Britain promised to evacuate all the Ottoman territories in return for peace, while the Ottoman government renewed the Capitulations with Britain; S. J.

toman Greek-owned ship flying the British flag because of the state prohibition of corn exportation. The traveller William Turner, who provides this information, notes that the notables wished to sell the corn at low prices on the island, implying that there was shortage of corn because of its exportation.⁶⁰

I suggest that the international rivalries and the Ottoman policy of restricting the foreign protection system created the necessary conditions for the outbreak of social discontent, which had been latent at least for the preceding ten years. The Karmanioloï demanded control of the communal authority and the end of overtaxation by the Ottoman state and its Muslim and Christian officials, along with the creation of better conditions for trade, under which the monopolies of the protégés, at least of certain states, and the Old Notables would not exist.⁶¹

In addition, during the crucial years of 1805-1808, both factions exploited to the utmost the internal political rivalries at the Sublime Porte in order to promote their interests as far as the communal authority was concerned. By the same token, they also exploited the economic rivalry between Britain, Russia and France to control local trade. Declaring allegiance to one of the Great Powers which influenced the political rivalries in the palace was a means to strengthen their position in the internal strife. In this regard, the affiliation with France in the years 1805-1807 coincided with Selim III's alliance with that country.⁶²

As far as France is concerned, and the ideological dimension that is attributed to the conflict on Samos, a question remains as to the extent of the influence of the ideology of the French Revolution, at least on the majority of the Karmanioloï. The argument that some Samians, who later became Karmanioloï, fought as mercenaries with the French army in Egypt in 1798⁶³ needs further substantiation, if we take into account that in those times service in this or that army was basically economically motivated. On the other hand, the fact that, because of the lack of concrete evidence, it is difficult to plunge into the hearts and minds of the leading figures of the Karmanioloï does not preclude the possibility that the latter may have tried to 'translate' some of the political messages of the French Revolution into the local political reality. In any case, the extent of the influence of the French Revolution on the local population, and if or how the common people per-

Shaw and E. Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Volume II: *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge 1977), 13.

60 Turner, *Journal*, III:121. As noted above, Turner visited Samos in 1816. Thus he narrates an event that he heard of from a local.

61 According to Dimitriadis, *Historia*, 13-14, when in 1818 the Ottoman government prohibited the exportation of oil from Samos, the aim was to bring that trade under the control of the *kocabaşıs*. It is to be stressed that the writer must have witnessed this event, and, thus, his testimony is considered to be credible.

62 For Selim III's political preference for France see *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 4:2013. Even Selim's successor, Mustafa, and the men around him decided in the summer of 1807 to maintain the alliance with France because of the Russian occupation of the Principalities and the British occupation of Egypt; Shaw, *Between Old and New*, 389.

63 E. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, II:83-84.

ceived it, remains an open question. Accordingly, the affiliation of the Old Notables with Russia needs further documentation, since so far the evidence is sparse and contradictory.⁶⁴ However, I believe that the Karmanioloï in particular were not a homogeneous political group with a specific ideology; their supporters had diversified political and economic motivation, which meant that they were able to offer or withdraw their support according to the circumstances. In this respect, at least for some of the protagonists (merchants and shipowners) in this confrontation, political affiliation with this or that state was mostly opportunistic, dictated by the political and economic circumstances. Furthermore, one should bear in mind that their principal political target at this point of time was control of the communal authority. Thus, one should be cautious about generalisations regarding the political affiliation of the participants in this conflict with this or that state.⁶⁵

In the final analysis, the conflict between the Old Notables and the Karmanioloï demonstrated the disaffection of the latter over the inability of the state to check the phenomenon of illegal extraction of money by both state and Christian officials and to ensure better conditions of trade, especially with regard to the role that foreign economic protection played, despite the belated efforts of the Ottoman state in this direction at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Thus, the Karmanioloï appeared at that time as the new 'social elite' which confronted the 'traditional' one, and condemned the latter's co-operation with the Ottoman authorities.⁶⁶ As is mentioned above, however, the Karmanioloï at this point did not challenge the Ottoman political authority per se, but were rather seeking solutions for their own problems within the Ottoman framework: as examples, we may mention the *maktu* system, or support for Selim III's policy on commerce and navigation.⁶⁷

64 For example, one of the prominent members of the faction of the Old Notables, Hadji Todoris, smuggled merchandise from Tenedos, which in 1807 was under Russian occupation, and as a result his shop was sealed; *ibid.*, II:80. In 1809, the new *voyvoda* of the island, who was a friend of the faction of the Old Notables, re-opened the shop; *Archeio Historikes kai Ethnologikes Hetaireias* No. 1390 ("en etei 1809 Fevrouariou 27. Tefterion tou parontos chronou..."). On the other hand, see n. 6 above for the accusation against one of the associates of Logothetis that he was under Russian protection. Note, however, the information provided by William Turner that (in 1816) the Greek "primates" of Samos "have no respect for any European power except Russia, from which they are still blind enough to expect their national emancipation"; Turner, *Journal*, 119-120.

65 Logothetis, for instance, was supported in his career as a high official in the Principalities by two Phanariots, who belonged to two different factions: Konstantinos Ypsilantis, a friend of Russia, and Alexandros Soutsos, a friend of France; N. Stamatiadis, *Samiaka*, I:14-15; Koumas, *Historiai*, XII:486, 537. Also, after his flight from Samos, he acquired both Russian and English protection.

66 On the question of whether the major merchants can be considered members of the elite in the Ottoman period, see A. Anastasopoulos, 'Introduction', in *Idem* (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003* (Rethymno 2005), xix-xxi.

67 See also N. Vafeas, 'He Samos kai to '21. Kapoies hypotheseis ergasias' [Samos and the Revolution of 1821: some working hypotheses], in M. Vourliotis and A. Sfoini (eds), *He Sa-*

In a broader perspective, this conflict fits well into the pattern of social turmoil which is observable in certain Christian Orthodox communities in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, just before the eruption of the Greek War of Independence.⁶⁸ This turmoil was the result of the intense social differentiation among the Christian Ottoman subjects, deriving from trade activity, and related to the effect of the economic crisis which hit commerce and shipping in the Christian areas, especially after the end of the Napoleonic Wars,⁶⁹ and also to the effect that the Enlightenment had on the emerging bourgeoisie. It reflected a general demand for broader participation in communal power in the Christian communities, and a general discontent with the Ottoman economic and political fabric which could not sufficiently protect the interests of the *reaya*. This discontent gradually acquired a nationalistic content, and, thus, the Karmanioloι from the very beginning supported the war against the Ottoman Empire in the spring of 1821, thus declaring their resentment against the traditional political and social order, in which the *kocabaşılık*, as an office which served the interests of specific individuals who were identified with the Ottoman political system and ideology, played a significant role.

mos sta neotera chronia (17^{os}-20^{os} aionas). Praktika symposiou [Samos in the modern period (seventeenth-twentieth centuries): symposium proceedings] (Athens 2002), 225.

- 68 I am referring especially to the conflicts within the Christian Orthodox community of Smyrna, which began in the second half of the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, outbursts of social confrontation occurred in 1809-1810 and 1819. Until 1819 the conflict revolved around the administration of the economic affairs of the community, especially the distribution of the taxes and public expenses, but did not question the structure of the communal authority. This happened only in 1819. Unlike Smyrna, the conflict in Samos resulted in a complete overturning of the communal structure with the dominance of the Karmanioloι for at least four years. It should be noted that in Smyrna the confrontation took place between the wealthy merchants and the notables who controlled the communal institutions, on the one hand, and the members of the guilds and the small or middle merchants along with the Church, on the other; P. Iliou, *Koinonikoi agones kai Diaphotismos. He periptose tes Smyrnes (1819)* [Social struggles and the Enlightenment: the case of Smyrna (1819)] (Athens 1981). Also, in the Morea, a few years before 1821, there was intense strife among the Christian notables with the object of the domination of certain factions; J. C. Alexander, 'Some Aspects of the Strife Among the Moreot Christian Notables, 1789-1816', *Epeteris Hetaireias Stereoelladikon Meleton*, 5 (1974-1975), 473-504, and M. Pylia, 'Conflits politiques et comportements des primats chrétiens en Morée, avant la guerre de l'indépendance', in A. Anastasopoulos and E. Kolovos (eds), *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation. Proceedings of an International Conference Held in Rethymno, Greece, 13-14 December, 2003* (Rethymno 2007), 137-147.
- 69 V. Kremmydas, 'He oikonomike krise ston helladiko choro stis arches tou 19^{ou} aiona kai hoi epiptoseis tes sten Epanastase tou 1821' [The economic crisis in the geographical area of present-day Greece in the early nineteenth century and its effect on the Revolution of 1821], *Mnemon*, 6 (1976-1977), 16-33, esp. 22-23.

‘ÇELEBİS’ AND GUILDSMEN
IN PRE-TANZIMAT PLOVDIV:
BREAKING THROUGH THE ORTHODOX
ANCIEN RÉGIME

Andreas LYBERATOS*

ON A SPRING MORNING OF 1818, the Archbishop of Silivri, Paissios, entering the Ecumenical Patriarchate to find out the reason for his being called unexpectedly to Istanbul, was welcomed by the entire Holy Synod and the Ecumenical Patriarch in the following manner: “Archbishop of Plovdiv, welcome!” In his autobiography he recalls the flow of sentiments that he experienced: “This astonishing address and the news of my transfer brought me immediately trembling and sorrow; my eyes began to shed tears and I started sighing, crying, and complaining about the long journey I would have to make, in my old age, to reach Plovdiv, as well as about the many concerns this bishopric would bring me, concerns caused by the discord and disputes among the city’s Christians who had moved against my predecessor Ioannikios.”¹ As is recorded in the registers of the Patriarchate, Ioannikios had been given a synodical order to resign, “[...] although he had not committed any crime or made any canonical mistake that would justify his being deprived of his God-given archiepiscopal see”.² With obvious reluctance, the Patriarchate sanctioned the *de facto* dethronement of its prelate, forcibly imposed by the guilds of the city, and

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1 Autobiography of Archbishop Paissios of Silivri, in K. M. Apostolidis, ‘He hiera tes Philippoupoleos metropolis kai hoi kodikes autes’ [The Holy Archbishopric of Philippoupolis and its registers], *Archeion thrakikou laographikou kai glossikou thesaurou*, 5 (1938-1939), 63-65. It is noteworthy that Paissios was in fact complaining about a promotion to a rich and normally much-desired archbishopric. In the nineteenth century, Plovdiv occupied the 26th position in the hierarchy of the Orthodox archbishoprics, while Silivri occupied only the 49th; G. A. Rallis and M. Potlis, *Syntagma ton theion kai hieron kanonon* [Collection of the godly and holy canons], Vol. 5 (Athens 1855), 516-518.

2 Germanos, Mitropolit of Sardeon [Metropolitan of Sardeis], ‘Episkopikoi katalogoi Voreiou Thrakes’ [Lists of northern Thrace’s Archbishops], *Thrakika*, 8 (1937), 188. Ioannikios resigned on 15 March 1818. According to Apostolidis, ‘He hiera tes Philippoupoleos metropolis’, 72, the city’s Christian guilds had already replaced him *de facto*, and without the consent of the Patriarchate, with Eugenios, teacher at the High School, who had formerly served for a while as Archbishop.

sought to pacify the troubled diocese and reaffirm its authority through the election of an experienced clergyman.³

The dramatic events of the period 1815-1818 represent a rather neglected, or at least, underplayed episode in the historiography of Plovdiv. Figuratively speaking, they were 'buried' under the heavy load of the subsequent, mid nineteenth-century, nationalist conflict between the Greek and Bulgarian parties of the city; the hints of a well-known nineteenth-century local observer, inclined to see the old conflict of the 1810s as the matrix of the subsequent nationalist struggles, were equally ignored.⁴ Finally, the scarcity of easily accessible source material on the events themselves has also channelled the attention of historians away: the relevant first-hand information available to date is confined to a handful of Greek documents to be found in the registers of the Archbishopric of Plovdiv, which have been published by the prolific local historian Kosmas Myrtilos Apostolidis, complemented by his commentary on the struggle between what he defines as the two "classes" of local Orthodox society, the nobles and the professionals, i.e., the artisans.⁵ From the point of view of the discovery and utilisation of fresh sources, Ottoman or Greek, the present paper cannot claim any significant progress either. Nonetheless, a fresh comparative examination of other published, Greek and Bulgarian, local sources will allow us, by way of compensation, to inquire into the genesis and prehistory of this significant episode.

Apostolidis points out rightly the essentially bipolar structure of Plovdiv's Orthodox *millet*. The "classes" that he refers to are *mutatis mutandis* much closer to pre-modern estates than to modern classes under capitalism. Both in what concerns access to political power and the existence of symbolically sanctioned boundaries, the political make-up of pre-Tanzimat Plovdiv, modelled upon the Istanbul *Rum millet*i, was characterised by institutionalised inequality. The government of community affairs during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was monopolised by a hereditary quasi-aristocracy of a handful of families, known as 'the *çelebis*'. In its original use, the title accompanied the names of members of the Ottoman elite, and was usually applied to men of letters, heads of dervish orders, and members of the Sultan's family.⁶ In the Orthodox socio-linguistic environment of Plovdiv, the title *çelebi* had a clear political meaning: in the communal registers, it accompanies the title *archon* and is applied exclusively to the lay members of the governing elite of the community. This hereditary lay elite, along with the higher

3 For Archbishop Paissios see K. M. Apostolidis, 'Ho apo Selyvrias Philippoupoleos metropolitēs Paisios' [The Archbishop of Philippoupolis Paissios, formerly Archbishop of Sili-vri], *Thrakika*, 3 (1932), 17-35; A. A. Glavinas, 'Ho kleinovites metropolitēs Philippoupoleos Paisios Eustathiou (1818-1821)' [The Archbishop of Philippoupolis Paissios Efstathiou from Klinovos], in *Thessalonike kai Philippoupole se parallelous dromous: historia, techne, koinonia (18^{os}-20^{os} ai.)* (Salonica 2000), 71-86.

4 K. Moravenov, *Pametnik na plovdivskoto hristjansko naselenie* [Memorial of the Christian population of Plovdiv] (Plovdiv 1984 [written in 1865-1869]), 15.

5 Apostolidis, 'Ho apo Selyvrias Philippoupoleos', 19.

6 For the title, which first appeared in the thirteenth century, and its etymology see *Et*², s.v. 'Čelebî' (W. Barthold – [B. Spuler]), 19.

clerics, formed a mixed council, which governed ‘aristocratically’ the Orthodox community under the leadership of the local Archbishop. Both clerical and lay members of the council bore the titles of the old Byzantine nomenclature of the *ophikialioi* (*sakellarios*, *sakellion*, *logothetis*, *rhetor*, *ostiarios*, etc.). Apart from the crucial role of the Church in organising and sanctioning their power, our sources do not make clear on what other grounds the *çelebi* families claimed ‘noble’ descent. Nevertheless, as Konstantin Moravenov records, local society acknowledged their ‘nobility’: the marriage of Gančo Hindistanli from the village of Kleisoura with the *çelebi* daughter Theopi Kyrou ended up in a scandal as “[...] it was revealed that he was not a *çelebi*”.⁷ Moreover, their nobility was expressed and reproduced in several symbolic ways: the *çelebis* wore special hats (*kalpak*) to distinguish themselves from other categories of the population, used the Greek language, and brought up their male and female children with Greek culture and refined manners.⁸

The study of the registers of Plovdiv’s Archbishopric and Moravenov’s work on nineteenth-century residents of Plovdiv provide us with more information on the socio-economic footings and social characteristics of these ‘provincial Phanariots’. The first crucial trait is their involvement in the networks of long-distance trade and their concomitant geographical mobility. The Kyrou-Sahtianzhi families were involved in the eighteenth century in the leather trade with Central Europe;⁹ those of Georgios Mandradjoglou and Yannakakis Hadji Nikoglou were active in the interregional trade in the *aba* woollen cloth in Anatolia, the Middle East, and India (Calcutta);¹⁰ Yannakis Doulgeroglou, who, according to Moravenov, came from Karaferye, was also involved in the Anatolian trade.¹¹ Second, these provincial ‘aristocrats’ had developed close relations with the Ottoman ruling circles: in 1768, Dimitrios Kyrou admitted that he had to use high-ranking ‘friendships’ in order to crush the resistance of the Pazarcık tanners’ guild, while, at the end of the eighteenth century, the *çelebis* Kyrou and Doulgeroglou were entrusted with the direction of the state-funded dye-house in Plovdiv.¹² Last but not least, contrary to what a proper ‘aristocratic’ attitude would prescribe, the marital ties of the major *çe-*

7 Moravenov, *Pametnik*, 24.

8 Ibid., 42.

9 K. Papakonstantinou, ‘Hellenikes emporikes epicheireseis sten Kentrike Europe to deutero miso tou 18^{ou} ai.: he okogeneia Pondika’ [Greek commercial enterprises in central Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century: the Pondikas family], unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Athens, 2002, 65-74; A. Lyberatos, *Oikonomia, politike kai ethnike ideologia: he diamorphose ton ethnikon kommaton ste Philippoupole tou 19^{ou} aiona* [Economy, politics, and national ideology: the formation of national parties in nineteenth-century Plovdiv] (Heraklion 2009), 84-85, 96.

10 K. M. Apostolidis and A. Peev (eds), *Archives des abadji à Plovdiv*, Vol. II (Plovdiv 1931), 36, 49, 58; I. Snegarov, *Grăcki kodeks na plovdivskata mitropolija* [Greek register of the Archbishopric of Plovdiv] (Sofia 1949), 39; Lyberatos, *Oikonomia*, 86-89, 97.

11 Moravenov, *Pametnik*, 51.

12 Papakonstantinou, ‘Hellenikes emporikes epicheireseis’, 70; Snegarov, *Grăcki kodeks*, 52; Moravenov, *Pametnik*, 37-38.

lebi families reveal that they were quite open to wealthy incomers of 'humble' origin. The most prominent *çelebi* families were giving their daughters, the famous *kokkones*, to successful entrepreneurs of artisanal background, people who, probably after a couple of generations' gradual social ascent, could eventually break through into the Orthodox big commerce circles of the Empire.

With all its former glory, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this prominent stratum of Plovdiv's *Rum millet*i appears significantly weakened. Some of the *çelebis*, like the *Rhetor* and *Logothetis*, moved to Istanbul, while those who remained in Plovdiv began to decline. Moravenov informs us that during the first decade of the century "the *çelebis* began to disperse, one in Constantinople, others in Vienna, Odessa or Calcutta".¹³ The anomaly and insecurity of the decentralisation period must have been crucial in leading many of the, anyway 'mobile', *çelebis* to transfer their residence and activity to places more secure for themselves and their properties. As *kokkona* Sofia Mandradjoglou explains in 1815 to her sister-in-law *kokkona* Vitoritza, the reasons for the economic decline of the family were "the heavy [extraordinary] taxation and the recurrent mobilisations and requisitions of our houses" (*ta sychna eis ta ospitia mas konakia kai neframia*).¹⁴ Their decline, however, was also parallel with the impressive enhancement of the city's Orthodox guilds, which, headed by the *abacis*, the woollen cloth makers' guild, would eventually challenge, in the years 1815-1818, the rule of the *çelebis*.

The course of the events is roughly the following: the conflict broke out in 1815, when, according to Apostolidis, the guilds demanded that the ecclesiastical court, until then composed of *çelebis* and ecclesiastical officials, be made up exclusively of elected members of the guilds.¹⁵ The rejection of the guilds' demand by Archbishop Ioannikios triggered conflicts which led to the discharge of the ecclesiastical official *papa*-Manolis Sakellarios, who had taken sides with the guilds.¹⁶ Later that same year the Patriarchate restored the 'popular' *papa*-Manolis to his post, urging and warning Plovdiv's Orthodox citizens to abstain from further disputes.¹⁷ However, the Patriarchate's admonitions proved incapable of pacifying the troubled city for long. The following year, the conflicts and intrigues resumed. It is likely that the conflict was related this time to the fate of a considerable amount of community money, probably an illegal levy, which was claimed and taken back in the Ottoman courts by the *abaci* guild.¹⁸ The following year, and as the conflict escalated, Ioannikios secured the collaboration of the Ottoman governor in having certain guild leaders exiled to the Monastery of St George in the Rhodope mountains.

¹³ Ibid., 194.

¹⁴ Snegarov, *Grăcki kodeks*, 81.

¹⁵ Apostolidis, 'Ho apo Selyvrias Philippopouleos', 20.

¹⁶ For the relations of *papa*-Manolis with the guild of the *abacis* see Apostolidis and Peev (eds), *Archives*, I:105, 117, 123, 132.

¹⁷ The full text of the patriarchal letter in Apostolidis, 'He hiera tes Philippopouleos metropolis', 68.

¹⁸ Ibid., 78-79. Cf. M. Tsikaloudaki, 'Pouvoirs et professions des communautés chrétiennes urbaines dans l'Empire ottoman (XVII^e-XIX^e siècles): Serrès, Philippopoli, Kozani, Larissa', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Université Paris I, 2000, 88.

"The bishop's move unified all the guilds, which complained to the governor, and the following Sunday approximately 500 master artisans went to the monastery with horses and carriages to visit the exiled and in a demonstrative manner they brought them back to the city."¹⁹ The triumphal return of the exiles to Plovdiv was followed by the organisation of the *Megalo Testiri* festival of the *abacı* guild in 1817. The festival, which in principle accompanies the inauguration of new master artisans (*destur*), was turned at this juncture into a demonstration of the political power of the guilds: not only the *abacı*s, but also the other guilds of the city and the *abacı*s of the entire *kaza*, took part in the financing and organisation of the festival.²⁰ The dethronement of the defeated Ioannikios was a matter of time. Similarly, the abolition of the 'aristocratic' hereditary system of governance followed soon. With the consent of the new panic-stricken Archbishop Paissios, elected members of the guilds took over not only the ecclesiastical court but also the management of all the other institutions of the Orthodox community (churches, monasteries, the school, and the hospital). The change in terminology used in the official documents of the Archbishopric reflects in the best way the radical shift in the perceptions of the political and social order within the community. The "most honourable clerics and the noblest gentlemen of the city of Plovdiv" of 1817 gave way to "the most honourable clerics and the rest of the notables" in 1819.²¹

We certainly need further information in order to reconstruct adequately the events associated with this major political break from 'below'. We can, nevertheless, try to tackle two important interrelated questions: how and through what kind of processes did the guilds manage to amass such social strength and political influence as to achieve this '*coup d'état*'? How did the relations between the *çelebis* and the guilds evolve until they reached the final confrontation? The registers of Plovdiv's *abacı* guild, the strongest and leading guild of the city, provide valuable information on these questions. They have been studied by many historians with differing agendas; among these, the most original and well-known analysis is that of the late Nikolay Todorov.²² Here, I will sketch briefly the results of a fresh approach to the source, related to the questions above.

The most important structural characteristic of Plovdiv's *abacı* guild was the co-existence in its bosom of both craftsmen and merchants supplying both the local as well as the more distant markets of the Empire. As early as 1723 our registers refer to the two major distinct groups within the guild, the *tsarsilides* or *argastiratoi*, i.e., those who had workshops at the city's market place, and the *hanotides* or *anatolites*, i.e., those who were based at the city's *hans* and traded with Anatolia and the Arab provinces. This co-existence, itself a particularity of the Ottoman guild phenomenon, facilitated the proto-capitalist osmosis and accounted for the dynamic evolution of the guild. The quantitative analysis of the data concerning the number of newly inaugurated master artisans, as well as other information of a qualitative character, point to the existence of two periods in

19 Apostolidis, 'He hiera tes Philippoupoleos metropolis', 22.

20 Idem and Peev (eds), *Archives*, II.

21 Apostolidis, 'He hiera tes Philippoupoleos metropolis', 63-65, 75, 86.

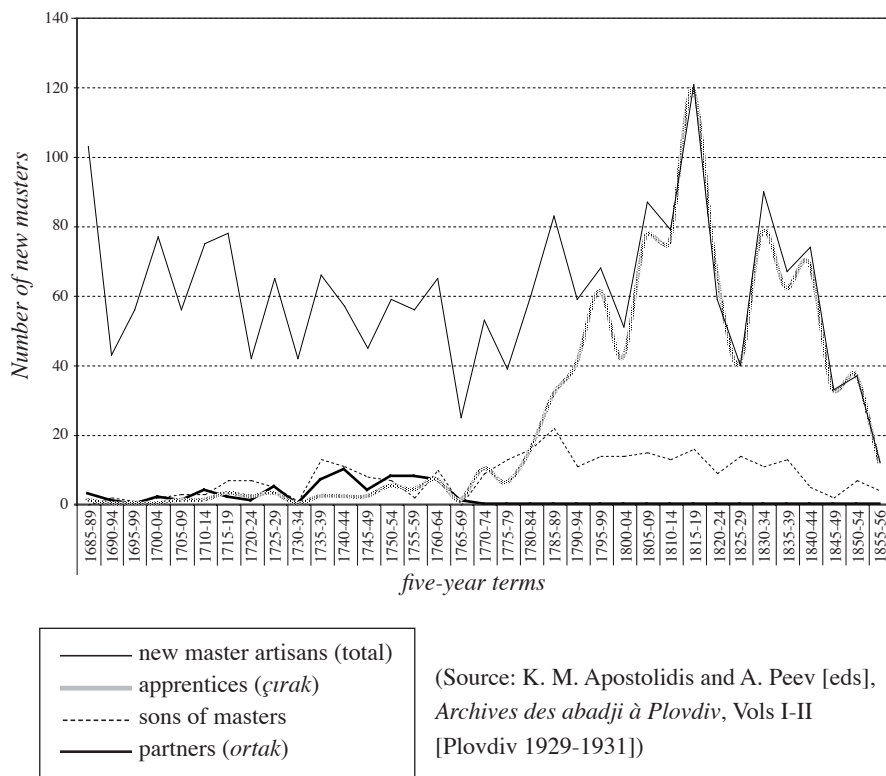
22 N. Todorov, *The Balkan City, 1400-1900* (Seattle 1983); Tsikaloudaki, 'Pouvoirs'.

the evolution of the guild, divided by a decade of crisis and reconstruction (1766-1775), a point in time when the Russo-Ottoman war put an end to the short-term flourishing of Ottoman industry and trade.²³ During the first period which I will schematically call the period of 'opening', the role of long-distance merchant capital appears decisive for the growth of the craft. During this period we encounter 25 new masters who bear names denoting their trade relations with Anatolia and the Arab provinces (e.g., Amasyalı, Aydınlı, Halepli). During the second period (1775-1855), on the other hand, their number diminished to 11, and after 1796 we encounter only their sons bearing these names. A similar dwindling tendency can be observed in the number of names of masters denoting their origins in Plovdiv's surrounding countryside (down from 42 to 20). Both observations suggest the formation and reproduction, after the crisis of the late 1760s, of a relatively stable body of master artisans, both *tsarsilides* and *hanotides*, who managed to control the guild. The 'opening' of the guild was also closely related to the practice of partnership (*ortaklık*), as during the first period there are plenty of cases of people who were proclaimed master artisans through their *ortaklık* with another master artisan, thus circumventing the apprenticeship stages.²⁴

The crisis of the late 1760s was overcome only with the activation of the restrictive mechanisms of the guild, leading to the second period, schematically speaking the 'closing' one. In 1766 no new master artisans were nominated, while in the next five years (1767-1771) there were only seven such nominations. The structure of borrowing from the guilds' treasury was reformed in favour of the *çarşılı* guildsmen. In 1772 a new provision was adopted, according to which those who were not sons of master artisans had to pay double the sum for their nomination. During this second period the practice of the *ortaklık*, as a means of becoming a master artisan, was totally suppressed. The 'closing' of the guild was also characteristically reflected in the terminology used in the registers. The name of the entry fee to the guild for every new master artisan, which was denoted by the term *philia* (literally meaning friendship and having the broader meaning of an allegiance/alliance with the guild), was replaced by the term *mastoria*, which places emphasis on the 'artisanal' element and the formal acquisition of mastership. Of a similar character is the persistence in this second period of the use of the expression "*çırak* of such and such" for all those who were promoted to master artisans, including the journeymen or sons of artisans. As illustrated in Graph I, towards the end of the period the line denoting *çıraks* becoming masters converges with the line of new master artisans in general.

23 M. Genç, 'Ottoman Industry in the Eighteenth Century: General Framework, Characteristics, and Main Trends', in D. Quataert (ed.), *Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500-1950* (Albany 1994), 63.

24 This practice most probably meant that the apprenticeship stages were circumvented to the mutual advantage of both incoming artisans and journeymen, on the one hand, and long-distance traders, on the other, and to the detriment of local master craftsmen.



Graph I: Description of the status of those who became master artisans in the *abaci* guild of Plovdiv (1685-1856)

The crisis and restructuring of the 1760s and 1770s inaugurated the most glorious phase in the history of the guild. During the half century until the events of 1815-1818, the guild of the *abacıs* impressively enhanced its power, position, and prestige within the Orthodox *millet* and the city of Plovdiv. In 1769 the *abacıs* undertook the building of the hospital of the city.²⁵ From 1772 onwards the guild received money from the community but also lent it money, and soon became the most reliable institution within the *millet*: it administered wills, assumed the tutelage of orphan children, and made regular charitable benefactions.²⁶ From 1784 onwards it undertook the guardianship of monasteries of the diocese and contributed to the building of churches.²⁷ Last but not least, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the guild also started to contribute to the school and hospital finances, thus little by little taking control of the community institutions.²⁸ The tour

25 Apostolidis and Peev (eds), *Archives*, I:58, 75, 79.

26 Ibid., 60, 88, 90, 93, 98, 102.

27 Ibid., 65, 69.

28 Ibid., 123ff.

de force of the guild was to a certain extent the outcome of the successful management of its internal conflicts and tensions, and the success of the leading members of the guild in affirming its normative power and harnessing the boom of the *aba* industry and trade of the region. This dynamic proto-capitalist socio-economic process is certainly at the roots of the enhancement of the guild. At the same time, all these impressive developments are intelligible only within the general framework of the struggle of the Ottoman guilds in the second half of the eighteenth century to gain state support in affirming their control over their crafts. The development of the *gedik* institution and the state's regulatory interventions and *fermans*, such as the well-known one issued by Mustafa III in 1773 (by which the Sultan sanctioned the power of the guilds and prohibited the intervention of 'outsiders' in guild matters), indicate that this struggle of the guilds was, in the first place, successful, and the guilds gained political power and were increasingly seen by the Ottoman state as mechanisms of economic and political control in the cities, and as privileged interlocutors.²⁹ Parallel processes of political enhancement of the guilds are observable during the same period in the Orthodox *millet* in Istanbul, where the guilds dynamically enter the management of the finances of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1752 and acquire influence over the election of the Patriarch.³⁰ To return to our provincial case, the *abacı* registers reveal that from the 1780s onwards the guild develops closer relations with the Ottoman state and local power-holders, contributing special taxes to the city's janissaries, and later on to *ayan* as well as to *kırcalı* outlaws, organising the collection of extraordinary military taxes from the *kaza*, etc.

Placing the *çelebis* within this general scheme of the guild evolution can be, finally, quite suggestive of the deeper antagonisms expressed in the conflict of 1815-1818. During the first, 'opening', period of the guild, the presence of both the *çelebis* and the ecclesiastical nomenclature in the leading circles of the guild is significant. Several of them even became *ustabaşıs* of the guild (the cleric *sakellion* papa-Ioannis in 1716-1717, the *archon logothetis çelebi* Konstantinos in 1730-1733, Christodoulos, son of the *oikonomos*, in 1747), while others, like *çelebi* Yannakakis Diyarbekirli, appear as permanent creditors of the guild until 1769. During the second, 'closing', period of the guild, the *çelebis* and clerics find no place whatsoever in the registers of the guild, even though this does not mean that they and their big merchant capital were automatically excluded from the textile economy of the region. For instance, Moravenov writes that *çelebi* [Kostaki] Sahtianzhi built during the first years of the nineteenth century a large spinning-

29 E. D. Akarlı, 'Gedik: Implements, Mastership, Shop Usufruct, and Monopoly among Istanbul Artisans, 1750-1850', *Wissenschaftskolleg-Jahrbuch*, 19 (1985-1986), 225-231; D. Ginis, *Perigramma historias tou metavyzantinou dikaïou* [Outline of the history of post-Byzantine law] (Athens 1966), 206.

30 M. A. Kalinderis, *Hai syntekniai kai he ekklesia epi tourkokratias* [The guilds and the Church during the period of Turkish rule] (Athens 1973), 53ff.; D. Stamatopoulos, *Metarrythmise kai ekkosmikeuse: pros mia anasynthese tes historias tou patriarcheïou ton 19^o ai.* [Reform and secularisation: towards a reconstruction of the history of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the nineteenth century] (Athens 2003), 81-83.

workshop in the suburb of Karşıyaka.³¹ During the same period, Mihalakis Kyrou and Yannakis Doulgeroglou were directors of the state-owned dyeing-workshop for woollen cloths.³² Aided by their privileged connections to the Church and Ottoman establishments, the *çelebis* still played, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a significant role in some stages of woollen goods production, and were most probably involved also in the provisioning of the state and the capital. During this same period, the efforts to circumvent the provisions for the supply of raw material became more intense: this becomes evident both by the emphasis placed on this issue in the new guild statute of 1805, as well as by the recurrent fines in the register.³³ The master artisan Athanassios Giumushgerdan, the son-in-law of *çelebi* Mihalakis Kyrou, the man who built the impressive putting-out network in the Rhodope mountains, which would later in the century supply the 'victorious army' (*Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*) of Mahmud II, did not take part in the *Megalo Testiri* of 1817 and his name was subsequently totally absent from the registers of the guild.³⁴ Finally, according to Moravenov, the major conflict of 1815-1818 was preceded by a minor one in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The *abacıs*, led by Hadzhi Dragan from Kalofer, engaged in a struggle against the *çelebis* (the reason is not touched upon) but were eventually defeated, as a part of the master artisans under Hadji Yannakis Hadji Stoiou was won over by the *çelebis*.³⁵ I believe that this fragmentary evidence suggests that the conflict of 1815-1818, which led to the overthrow of *çelebi* rule by mass mobilisation, not only had roots which go back in time, but it also had wider dimensions than the apparent ones, related to the control of community funds and the accountability of those who handled them.³⁶ As the guild demand for control of the ecclesiastical court also suggests, what was probably equally at stake here was the control of the flourishing wool economy of the region. Yet, this is just a hypothesis, for the confirmation of which more primary evidence is certainly needed.

31 Moravenov, *Pametnik*, 194.

32 Snegarov, *Grăcki kodeks*, 52; Moravenov, *Pametnik*, 37-38.

33 Apostolidis and Peev (eds), *Archives*, I:127, 130, 134.

34 Ibid., II:22.

35 Moravenov, *Pametnik*, 20, 23, 128, 192.

36 The case of Plovdiv should definitely also be placed in the wider framework of intra-communal conflicts which precede the Greek Revolution of 1821; cf. P. Iliou, *Koinonikoi agones kai diaphotismos: he periptose tes Smyrnes (1819)* [Social struggles and the Enlightenment: the case of Smyrna (1819)] (Athens 1986); N. Svoronos, *Le commerce de Salonique au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris 1956).

PART TWO

THE RIGHT
TO PETITIONING

COMMENT DISPARUT LE CIMETIÈRE DE KASIMPAŞA (1582-1592) : UN DIFFICILE ARBITRAGE DU SULTAN ENTRE SES SUJETS JUIFS ET MUSULMANS

Nicolas VATIN*

LES CIRCONSTANCES DU REMPLACEMENT DU CIMETIÈRE juif de Kasımpaşa par celui de Hasköy sous le règne de Murad III ne sont pas inconnues. Ahmed Refik a publié sur cette question quatre ordres tirés des *Mühimme defterleri*, qui furent traduits par Avram Galanté et, plus récemment, par Haïm Gerber¹. C'est ce petit corpus qu'a utilisé Minna Rozen dans un article paru il y a quelques années sur les cimetières juifs de Turquie occidentale². Mes propres recherches sur les cimetières d'Istanbul me firent trouver, dans ces mêmes *Mühimme defterleri*, quatre autres ordres sur le même sujet, apparemment ignorés par Ahmed Refik, que j'ai publiés à mon tour avec Stéphane Yerasimos³.

Or ces derniers documents éclairent l'affaire sous un jour un peu différent. Surtout intéressés par les questions propres aux cimetières, Stéphane Yerasimos et moi-même n'avons que partiellement repris la question dans notre livre. Aussi m'a-t-il paru utile de revenir sur la disparition du cimetière juif de Kasımpaşa en fonction du thème de ce volume : les rapports et interactions entre la base et le pouvoir ottoman.

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1 Il s'agit des documents (conservés au BOA) MD XLVIII-415, p. 100 ; XLIX-60, p. 16 ; LV-66, p. 34 ; LXII-358, p. 162. Cf. Ahmed Refik, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî'de İstanbul Hayatı (1495-1591)* (Istanbul 1988 [2^e éd.]), pp. 53-57 ; A. Galanté, *Histoire des juifs de Turquie*, t. 5 (Istanbul s.d.), pp. 52-56. Je n'ai pas eu accès au livre de H. Gerber, *Yehude ha-Imperiyah ha-Otomanit ba-Me'ot ha 16-17 : Kalkalah we-Hevreh* [La vie économique et sociale des juifs dans l'Empire ottoman aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles] (Jérusalem 1982).

2 M. Rozen, « A Survey of Jewish Cemeteries in Western Turkey », *Jewish Quarterly Review*, LXXXIII/1-2 (1992), pp. 71-125.

3 MD XLVIII-305, p. 114 ; XLIX-61, p. 16 ; XLIX-461, p. 139 ; LVIII-303, p. 111. Cf. N. Vatin et S. Yerasimos, *Les cimetières dans la ville. Statut, choix et organisation des lieux d'inhumation dans Istanbul intra muros* (Paris et Istanbul 2001), pp. 200-209. Mon amie Amy Singer, que je suis heureux de remercier ici, a bien voulu vérifier pour moi que Haïm Gerber n'avait pas eu connaissance de ces documents. Dans les citations *infra*, j'ai renoncé, sur la demande de l'éditeur des actes, aux signes diacritiques.

Je m'attacherai d'abord à suivre les rebondissements d'un différend local qui sollicita plusieurs années durant l'attention du plus haut niveau de l'État. Il sera alors possible de s'interroger sur la nature du débat et sur l'évolution de la position du sultan, puis de tenter de voir dans quelles circonstances les parties jugeaient utile – ou non – de s'adresser au souverain plutôt qu'aux autorités locales.



C'est dans un firman du printemps 1585 (*MD LVIII-303*) qu'on trouve la trace de ce qui fut apparemment le point de départ de l'affaire du cimetière juif de Kasımpaşa. On y voit les représentants des musulmans rappeler une réunion tenue en présence du *şeyhülislam*, du *kazasker* de Roumélie Mevlâna İvaz et de son collègue d'Anatolie Zekeriyya, en 1582, sans doute dans le cours de l'été⁴. Les musulmans avaient alors pu faire valoir leur point de vue : « les tombes de la communauté juive qui sont en cet endroit sont à côté des maisons des musulmans et des mosquées des fidèles. Or sous couleur d'enterrer ses morts, cette communauté se rassemble autour de ces tombes, commet en application de ses rites absurdes des gestes infâmes et inconvenants, et émet en chœur des sons interdits, ce qui nous gêne et nous met mal-à-l'aise, nous et les autres musulmans⁵. » Les conclusions de l'enquête ayant été communiquées à la Porte, « il fut interdit à la communauté juive d'enterrer ses morts [en cet endroit] et de se rassembler sur ses tombes et d'y accomplir des cérémonies d'infidèles, et un autre lieu fut désigné pour qu'ils y inhument leurs morts »⁶.

De fait, le firman *MD XLVIII-305*, expédié le 26 septembre 1582, rappelle qu'un ordre (non retrouvé) ayant été émis « pour qu'on se préoccupe d'un lieu convenable pour enterrer les morts de la communauté des juifs » le sultan a été informé qu'on avait trouvé l'emplacement idoine, à savoir « les pentes formant le terrain vague qui domine le jardin connu sous le nom de “Jardin de Mustafa Ağa” dans le quartier de Kağıthane »⁷. L'ordre

4 Zekeriyya fut nommé *kazasker* d'Anatolie, en remplacement d'İvaz promu au poste rouméliote, en *zilhicce* 989 / 27 décembre 1581-25 janvier 1582 (et non 990 comme l'écrit par erreur Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, t. 5 (Istanbul 1996 [2^e éd.]), p. 1707) et quitta ses fonctions en *rebiyülâhır* 991 / 24 avril-22 mai 1583 : cf. Nev'îzâde Atâî, *Hadaiku'l-Hakaik fî Tekmileti's-Şakaik*, dans A. Özcan (éd.), *Şakaik-ı Nu'maniye ve Zeyilleri*, t. 2 (Istanbul 1989), p. 323. İvaz, quant à lui, fut démis en *zilhicce* 991 / 15 décembre 1583-12 janvier 1584. Mais on peut affiner la datation, puisque le premier ordre de notre corpus (*MD XLVIII-305*), évidemment postérieur à cette réunion, fut expédié le 26 septembre 1582. Ajoutons qu'on verra qu'il faisait suite à un ordre intermédiaire. La réunion dont il est question ici dut donc avoir lieu au printemps et même dans l'été 1582.

5 *Taife-i yahudun mevzi-i mezburda olan makbereleri büyük-ı müslimîn ve mesacid-i mü'minîn kurbında olub ve taife-i mezbure mürdelerin defn etmek takribi ile mekabir-i mezburede cem olub ayin-i batılları üzre evza-ı kabihe edüb ve cemiyet ile ref-i asvat-ı münkere eyledükleri sebeb ile biz ve sair müslimîn müteazzi ve mutazaccır olduğumuz.*

6 *Taife-i yahud mürdelerin defn etmekden ve makbereleri üzerinde cemiyet edüb merasim-i küfr izhar eylemekden men olunub ve mürdelerin defn için mahall-i âhar ta'yin olunmuş.*

7 *Bundan akdem yahudi taifesinin mürd olanları defn etmeğe münasib yer görilmek emrüm*

est donc donné aux cadis de Galata et des Hass (autrement dit, d'Eyüp) de passer à la phase concrète : accompagnés de cinq *çavuş* désignés à cet effet, d'un représentant de chaque *cemaat* juive et du *mütevelli* du *vakıf* de Bayezid II (auquel appartient le terrain concerné), ils fixeront les limites du futur cimetière et le montant de la *mukataa* que la communauté juive versera désormais au *vakıf*.

Enregistré le 3 novembre 1582, l'ordre suivant (MD XLVIII-415) est adressé au cadi d'Eyüp, qui a rendu compte de l'exécution des instructions précédentes : on a délimité à Hasköy un espace spécifiquement destiné à l'inhumation des juifs, « tiré des terrains *vakıf* de feu Sultan Bayezid et situé à Hasköy et allant du côté inférieur de la voie publique venant du jardin de feu Piri Paşa, de la vallée Karlık, jusqu'à la vigne de Yorgi, de là à la voie publique située dans la vallée d'où l'on voit le jardin de Mustafa Ağa... ». La mention du jardin de Mustafa Ağa confirme que ce terrain est bien celui dont il était question en septembre. Il s'agit de l'acte de création du cimetière juif de Hasköy ⁸, qui existe encore en grande partie aujourd'hui, dans une zone alors rurale. Notons que si le sultan se préoccupe de procurer un cimetière à ses fidèles sujets juifs, il le fait de façon assez contraignante, puisque le cadi d'Eyüp reçoit l'ordre de faire enterrer les juifs sur ce terrain en précisant qu'il ne doit pas les laisser inhumer ailleurs ⁹.

En tout cas, le nouveau cimetière ne tarda pas en effet à être utilisé, puisqu'un firman expédié le 26 avril 1583 ¹⁰ au cadi des Hass (compétent pour Hasköy) nous apprend que « la communauté des juifs résidant dans la ville bien gardée [d'Istanbul] ¹¹ » était allée porter plainte devant lui contre des individus qui les importunaient lors du transfert de leurs morts.

Tout n'est pas réglé pour autant : vers le même moment en effet, la communauté juive (*yahudi taifesi*) se plaint de ce que des individus mettent la main sur des pierres tombales et des parcelles dans les terrains « où il a été interdit de placer les corps des juifs décédés ¹² ». Aussi le firman MD XLIX-60, enregistré le 15 avril 1583, ordonne-t-il au *kapudan paşa* (dont dépend l'Arsenal précisément implanté à Kasımpaşa) de faire cesser ces désordres et restituer les pierres tombales à leurs propriétaires.

olmağla Kâğıthane semtinde Mustafa Ağa bağçesi demekle ma'ruf bağçeniün üsti yanında olan hâli bayır münasib olduğu paye-i serir-i âlâma arz olundukda.

8 Le quartier de Kağıthane dont parle le document précédent n'est donc pas le faubourg du fond de la Corne d'Or, qui du reste, selon la tradition, n'aurait reçu ce nom que sous le règne d'Ahmed III (1703-1730).

9 *Vaki olan mürdelerin vaki olan mahalde defn etdürüb hilâf-ı emr-i şerif âhar yere defn etdürmeyüb.*

10 MD XLIX-61.

11 *Mahruse-i mezburede mütemekkin olan yahudi taifesi.*

12 *Yahud taifesiniün mürdeleri konulmakdan men olınan makbereliklerinde vaki olan mezar taşlarına ve yerlerine* (MD XLIX-60). La traduction de Galanté (« où l'on empêche d'enterrer les morts de la *taıyifé* juive ») est ambiguë : on pourrait croire qu'il s'agit d'un abus des populations locales, alors qu'en fait les juifs se bornent à désigner leur ancien cimetière désaffecté sur ordre du souverain.

Le scandale continue pourtant, puisqu'un ordre enregistré quelques mois plus tard, le 5 juillet 1583 (*MD XLIX-461*), fait à nouveau suite à une plainte déposée devant le *cadi* de Galata par « certains membres de la communauté ayant des tombes à Kasımpaşa ¹³ » – et non pas la communauté juive collectivement – et aux conclusions de l'enquête faite sur place. Celle-ci confirme qu'il y a eu vols de pierres et empiètements dans les cimetières, où certains s'attribuent du terrain. Les coupables nommés sont un *hacçı*, un *reis* et un *ulufeci*, donc des personnages jouissant d'un statut honorable parmi les musulmans. Le sultan n'en prend pas moins la défense des *zimmi*, enjoignant au *cadi* de Galata de ne pas permettre ces abus et d'arrêter les récalcitrants, qui sont passibles d'une peine de galère.

Un peu plus d'un an plus tard, la situation ne semble pas avoir réellement changé. Un ordre expédié au *cadi* de Galata le 22 novembre 1584 (*MD LV-66*) nous apprend que la communauté juive d'Istanbul ¹⁴ s'est plainte directement auprès de la Porte des mêmes faits. L'affaire a été confiée au *beylerbey* d'Anatolie Mehmed Paşa, au *cadi* d'Istanbul Abdülbaki ¹⁵ et à l'ancien *kazasker* d'Anatolie Molla Mehmed, qui ont confirmé les faits dans leur rapport. Dans leur plainte, les juifs faisaient valoir que depuis la conquête d'Istanbul ils jouissaient (*tasarruf*) du terrain de Kasımpaşa comme lieu d'inhumation en vertu d'une attestation (*temessük*) que la communauté tenait de Mehmed II ; que l'endroit était à eux en vertu d'un « antique accord » (*ahd-ı kadim*) et que c'étaient les musulmans qui étaient des intrus dans ces parages autrefois inhabités ¹⁶. Ils portaient donc l'affaire en justice. Lors de l'enquête, les musulmans répliquèrent en faisant valoir que l'affaire ayant déjà été traitée en justice (ce dont témoignait une *hüccet*), il n'y avait pas lieu de revenir dessus. Puis ils contre-attaquèrent : les grosses pierres funéraires juives offraient la nuit un abri aux brigands ; il convenait donc de les supprimer, ou pour le moins de les enterrer en ne laissant dépasser qu'une partie de la pierre pour servir de témoin (*nişan*). Mais les juifs avaient refusé, repoussant toute solution qui ne serait pas strictement conforme à la charî'a ¹⁷. De fait, les juristes dépêchés sur place avaient conclu que rien ne justifiait qu'on touchât à ces tombes et qu'il convenait de respecter les droits des *zimmi*. À la suite de ce rapport, le sultan donne gain de cause aux juifs et enjoint au *cadi* de Galata d'empêcher les abus.

13 *Kasımpaşada mekabiri olan yahudi taifesinden ba'zı*.

14 *Mahruse-i İstanbulda sakin olan taife-i yahudi*.

15 Il s'agit du célèbre poète Baki, qui fut *cadi* d'Istanbul du 2 octobre 1584 à janvier 1585 (cf. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, t. 1, p. 105 ; Atâî, *Hadaiku'l-Hakaik*, p. 436) : la mission d'enquête s'est donc déroulée quelques semaines ou quelques jours avant l'expédition de cet ordre.

16 *Kasımpaşa nahiyyesinde merhûm ve mağfurunleh ceddüm Sultan Muhammed Han tabe serahîi kibelinden temessüklerimiz mucibince hudud-ı muayyenesi ile mekabir-i yahud için ta'yin ve tahsis olan yerlerimiz feth-i hakaniden berü mekabir olmak üzere tasarrufumuzda olup etraf ü nevahisinde büyük ve mesakin-i müsliminden bir nesne yok iken ahd-ı kadimden berü yerlerimiz iken*.

17 *Taife-i yahud kail olmayub mukteza-yı şer'-i şerifden gayre rıza göstermedüklerinde*.

Cependant, le litige persiste entre les deux communautés. L'affaire connaît un rebondissement dont témoigne un ordre enregistré au printemps 1585 (*MD LVIII-303*), adressé au cadi de Galata, à Sunullah Efendi (*müderriş* à Fatih) et au *mütevelli* des *vakıf* de Bayezid II. Le sultan a dû à nouveau ordonner « que cette affaire fût traitée en présence du mufti *şeyhülislam* et de mes vizirs et qu'une décision fût prise en bonne justice »¹⁸. C'est à cette occasion que les musulmans avaient rappelé les origines du procès et l'interdiction faite désormais aux juifs d'enterrer leurs morts ailleurs qu'à Hasköy. Or ils les accusaient de ne pas obéir et renouvelaient leurs plaintes à propos du caractère dangereux des grosses pierres qui servaient d'abri aux brigands. Ils demandaient donc que « désormais, conformément à l'ordre ancien du sultan, la communauté juive soit empêchée d'enterrer ses morts en cet endroit et d'y accomplir des cérémonies d'infidèles, et qu'il soit mis un terme aux dommages causés par le susdit Mayır et les autres juifs »¹⁹. » Certains juifs – on aura noté que des noms sont cette fois donnés – avaient-ils continué, ou recommencé, à inhumer les leurs à Kasımpaşa ? Ce n'est pas impossible, car ils ne semblent pas avoir nié, mais au contraire s'être justifiés en se réclamant d'un don en pleine propriété (*temlik*) consenti par les « sultans précédents ». Mais cette attestation (*temessük*) ayant brûlé, ils n'avaient pu produire qu'un acte de bornage (*hududname*) dont les juristes présents avaient estimé qu'il ne prouvait pas leurs droits sur le sol. La commission avait donc conclu qu'ils ne devaient plus être autorisés à inhumer leurs coreligionnaires à Kasımpaşa, ni y faire de cérémonies religieuses. Elle ajoutait que « les grosses pierres qu'ils déposaient sur leurs tombes contrairement à la Loi sacrée et les murets qu'ils y construisaient entraînaient des dommages comme il avait été exposé »²⁰.

Le firman du sultan réitère donc l'interdiction d'enterrer désormais à Kasımpaşa ; ordonne de ne pas laisser au dessus des tombes des pierres « dépassant la hauteur d'une [simple] couverture » ; enfin exige « la vente aux enchères aux musulmans qui s'en porteront acquéreurs des terrains vacants se trouvant parmi les tombes et des bâtiments implantés dessus »²¹.

Le dernier document de notre corpus est un firman enregistré en *muharrem* 996 / 2-31 décembre 1587 (*MD LXII-358*), adressé à l'agha des janissaires Halil et à Sunullah Efendi (maintenant *hoca* du futur Mehmed III). Nous y apprenons que les ordres donnés au printemps précédent ont été exécutés, comme en informait le *kapudan paşa* İbrahim Paşa qui en avait été chargé avec Sunullah. Les pierres avaient été enterrées et les terrains dispo-

18 *Kaza-ı Galata tevabiinden kasaba-ı Kasımpaşada Kulaksuz mahallesı kurbında taife-i müslimîn ile taife-i yahudun nızaları olub husus-ı mezburun şeyhü'l-islâm müfti ve vüzeram huzurlarında görölüb hakk üzere kazb olınmak içün fermanum olmağın.*

19 *Taife-i yahud minba'd emr-i sabığum üzere mevzi-i mezburda mürdelerin defn etmekden merasim-i küfr izhar eylemekden men olınub ve mezbur Mayırın ve sair yahudilerin zararları def olınmak taleb ederüz.*

20 *Ve makbereleri üzerlerine hilâf-ı şer'-i şerif vaz eyledükleri ahcar-ı azîmenün ve bina eyledükleri seddlerin vech-i meşruh üzere zararı olduğı.*

21 *Bir setrden yukarı taş komayub zarar edeni def eyleyüb ve mekabir etrafında vaki olan arazi-i hâliyye ve üzerlerinde olan ebniyye'i rağbet eden müslümanlara beyi min-yezid eyleyüb.*

nibles distribués aux musulmans. Seules les parcelles occupées par des tombes devaient être respectées. Mais il apparaît que des musulmans continuent à s'emparer des pierres et même à s'approprier des terrains contenant des tombes. L'ordre est donc de faire cesser ces abus.

Sur ce point, donc, la position de la Porte ne changeait pas, du moins à cette date. Mais quelques années plus tard, peut-être en l'an 1000 de l'Hégire (donc en 1591-1592), Abdülkerim Efendi (imam de Murad III) détruisit le cimetière et fit en une nuit construire une mosquée, la Yeldeğirmeni Camii ²². Quelques décennies plus tard, les informateurs d'Evliya Çelebi semblent avoir oublié l'ancienne présence des tombes juives ²³. Ainsi que le constate Minna Rozen, « The plain fact is that there is not a trace of a Jewish cemetery left in Kasımpaşa ²⁴. »



Minna Rozen a bien senti, en effet, que le corpus partiel publié par Ahmed Refik et traduit par Avram Galanté donnait une vision exagérément irénique de l'affaire. À partir de la documentation incomplète dont elle disposait, elle la résume ainsi ²⁵ : les juifs d'Istanbul ont présenté une pétition où ils faisaient valoir que Mehmed II leur avait accordé un lieu d'inhumation à Kasımpaşa, zone alors inhabitée. Mais au cours du temps le cimetière avait été entouré de maisons et certaines avaient même été bâties dans le cimetière. Incapables de réfuter ces accusations, les musulmans avaient en vain protesté contre les hautes stèles juives servant d'abri aux bandits : le sultan avait conclu qu'il n'y

22 Dans sa notice sur Abdülkerim, Atâî, *Hadaiku'l-Hakaik*, p. 329, raconte l'anecdote sans fournir de date : « Ve Kasımpaşada mahallât-ı müslimîn karib yahud mekabirin ref etdürüb bir gece içinde bir mescid bina etmişdür ». La date de l'an Mil de l'Hégire est fournie par Ayvansarayî qui rapporte la même anecdote dans sa notice sur la mosquée Yeldeğirmeni : cf. Ayvansarayî, *The Garden of the Mosques : Hafız Hüseyin al-Ayvansarayî's Guide to the Muslim Monuments of Ottoman Istanbul*, H. Crane trad. (Leyde-Boston-Cologne 2000), p. 343. Elle est possible, puisque Abdülkerim décéda dans la dernière décennie de *rebiyülevvel* 1002 / 15-24 décembre 1593 : cf. Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih*, M. İpşirli éd., t. 1 (Istanbul 1989), pp. 347-348. La mosquée en question se trouve entre la Arka Sokağı et le Babadağı Yokuşu, derrière le Merkez Bahriye Hastanesi (cf. Ayvansarayî, *The Garden of the Mosques*, p. 343, n. 2599).

23 *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi. Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304 Yazmasının Transkripsiyonu-Dizini. 1. Kitap : İstanbul*, O. Ş. Gökyay éd. (Istanbul 1996), p. 180, cite le quartier de Yeldeğirmeni sans en mentionner la mosquée ni sous ce nom, ni sous celui d'Abdülkerim. À propos de Kasımpaşa, il ne dit rien d'un ancien cimetière juif. En revanche il indique (p. 177) qu'après la conquête l'endroit avait été affecté par firman à l'inhumation des musulmans : « Evvelâ bu Kâsımpaşa tâ zamân-ı kadîmde ma'mûr manastırlık imiş keferi mabeyninde şehri Ayalonka nâmiyla meşhûr imiş. Ammâ ba'de'l-feth mezâristân-ı ümmet-i Muhammed olması fermân olunur ». On peut se demander s'il ne s'agit pas là d'une réappropriation, par les musulmans du quartier, de l'argumentation autrefois développée par les juifs.

24 Rozen, « A Survey », p. 89.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89.

avait pas de raison d'empêcher les juifs d'ériger des tombes selon leurs coutumes. Ainsi la pression musulmane avait entraîné la création du cimetière de Hasköy. Enfin un dernier ordre montrait que, malgré la reconnaissance du droit de propriété des juifs sur le cimetière, la pression musulmane avait continué, entraînant un retranchement « volontaire » des juifs d'une partie du cimetière ; mais que, néanmoins, les autorités devaient à nouveau menacer de sévir contre des musulmans qui violaient les tombes et le cimetière juifs. L'idée générale est donc que la croissance urbaine ²⁶ et la conduite des musulmans avaient amené l'abandon, puis la disparition du cimetière juif de Kasımpaşa, malgré la bonne volonté sans faille – quoique inefficace – des pouvoirs publics à l'égard de leurs fidèles *zimmi* juifs.

Telle était peut-être l'image que souhaitaient donner à leurs lecteurs Ahmed Refik et Avram Galanté ²⁷. Mais la documentation dans son état actuel, quoique encore incomplète, présente un tableau pour le moins plus nuancé. Assurément, la croissance urbaine et le développement de l'Arsenal sont la cause première de la disparition du cimetière. Il est vrai aussi qu'on discerne à Istanbul une sorte de concurrence entre les domaines des morts et des vivants ²⁸. Néanmoins il ne semble pas (à lire les documents cités ci dessus) que les empiètements dans le cimetière soient anciens en 1582. Plus que d'une question de disponibilité de l'espace, c'est à un différend entre communautés religieuses que nous assistons. En tenant compte des documents ignorés par Ahmed Refik et les historiens qui se sont fondés sur lui, on peut résumer l'affaire à grands traits de la façon suivante.

En 1582, les musulmans de Kasımpaşa demandent aux autorités la fermeture du cimetière non parce qu'ils ont besoin de place, mais parce qu'il leur est insupportable, dans un quartier devenu musulman, que l'on continue à pratiquer des inhumations et des cérémonies religieuses juives. Leur motivation est donc socio-religieuse et l'argument admis sans discussion par les autorités. Ainsi, ce n'est pas parce que le cimetière de Kasımpaşa se détériore que le sultan dans sa bonté fournit à la communauté juive un terrain à Hasköy (ni gratuitement, du reste, ni à titre de propriété) : au contraire, c'est parce que les musulmans veulent épurer leur quartier qu'il est désormais interdit aux juifs d'enterrer leurs morts dans leur ancien cimetière de Kasımpaşa, dont la propriété de plein droit ne leur est d'ailleurs jamais reconnue. Pour autant les lieux d'inhumation eux-mêmes, sanctifiés par la présence des tombes, doivent être respectés. Or les musulmans de Kasımpaşa, une fois le cimetière juif désaffecté (et non avant, puisqu'il n'en a pas été question précédemment dans la documentation), commencent à s'emparer des pierres funéraires et à s'installer au dessus des tombes. Leurs actes sont évidemment dictés par la cupidité. Mais il s'agit aussi, en violant leurs cimetières, de dénier aux juifs le droit de préserver sur place la trace de leurs défunts. Ceci n'est pas jugé conforme à la charî'a et, sur ce point, les juristes

26 L'attribution du cimetière de Hasköy, écrit-elle (*ibid.*, p. 88), est la conséquence de la détérioration du cimetière de Kasımpaşa, épisode instructif de la compétition entre zones résidentielles et zones d'inhumation.

27 Bien entendu, il est possible que des documents leur aient échappé.

28 Cf. Vatin et Yerasimos, *Les cimetières dans la ville*, pp. 9-19.

et après eux le sultan donnent raison aux juifs ²⁹, sans prendre en compte – dans un premier temps – l’argumentation sécuritaire des musulmans qui accusent les grosses pierres juives de servir la nuit d’abri aux brigands. Dans un second temps, cependant, l’attitude de la Porte change. Certes, elle interdit toujours les vols de pierres et les empiètements sur les emplacements abritant des corps. Mais elle admet que les monuments funéraires trop importants doivent être rasés ou ensevelis, et que les parcelles du cimetière qui n’ont pas encore été utilisées pour inhumation peuvent être occupées : en conséquence, elles sont vendues au profit du *beytülmal* (de l’État, donc) mais exclusivement à des musulmans, de même que les bâtiments appartenant à des juifs. Il s’agit donc bien d’expulser ceux-ci d’un quartier désormais musulman et qu’il est par conséquent légitime de purifier des mécréants. De fait, il y aura encore par la suite des juifs pour travailler à Kasımpaşa, mais ils n’y résideront pas ³⁰ et, bien entendu, n’y enterreront plus leurs morts. Quant au cimetière, la bonne volonté du gouvernement ne pouvait que lui procurer un sursis. On est frappé du reste par le fait que les personnes convaincues de l’avoir violé en 1583 n’étaient pas des misérables ou des voyous, mais des personnages d’un certain statut social : c’est bien une communauté, conduite par son élite, non quelques individus condamnables, qui était à l’œuvre. Le geste d’Abdülkerim, personnage religieux de premier plan, confirme cette analyse. Il n’est donc pas surprenant que le cimetière juif, d’abord enterré pour ne pas choquer la vue de pieux musulmans, ait rapidement disparu.

On est frappé par l’évolution, dans le petit nombre d’années couvertes par notre affaire, de l’attitude du sultan à l’égard de la communauté juive. La décision d’implanter le cimetière des juifs de la capitale dans un lieu à l’écart de la ville tentaculaire n’est pas en soi surprenante. Elle répondait à des considérations d’urbanisme attestées d’autre part ; quant au choix d’un terrain appartenant au *vakıf* de Bayezid II, il est cohérent, puisque ce *vakıf* avait précisément été fondé dans ce but ³¹. C’est l’ensemble de la communauté

29 Sur l’inviolabilité des lieux d’inhumation, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 9-19. Les décisions qui sont prises dans notre corpus semblent en effet toujours appliquer le principe de base qu’un terrain déjà affecté aux tombes ne saurait servir à des usages profanes. Les juristes consultés font du reste référence à la *charʿa*. Peut-être au demeurant avaient-ils en l’occurrence une vision large et généreuse de la loi. En effet, la *fetva* d’Ebussuud sur la question est plus restrictive : « Si Zeyd aménage un jardin, au su du propriétaire du terrain où un mort a été enterré mais après la décomposition du corps, est-ce que ‘Amr, qui perçoit l’impôt foncier dans la zone qui entoure le jardin, a le pouvoir de le prélever aussi sur le jardin de Zeyd ? Réponse : – Si le mort était musulman, le jardin doit être détruit et réservé aux tombes. » Cf. M. E. Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16. Asır Türk Hayatı* (Istanbul 1983), n° 170, p. 174 : « mevta ehl-i islâm ise bahçe tahrib olunur, makbere üzre ibkâ olunur ». L’imam Abdülkerim aurait donc pu facilement arguer de cette *fetva* pour justifier le viol du cimetière de Kasımpaşa.

30 Kasımpaşa n’apparaît pas parmi les lieux d’habitat de la communauté juive en 1595-1597 recensés par S. Yerasimos, « La communauté juive d’Istanbul à la fin du xvi^e siècle », *Turcica*, 27 (1995), pp. 118 sqq. Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, p. 177, signale que les juifs, qui ne résident pas à Kasımpaşa (alors qu’il y dénombre dix quartiers grecs et un quartier arménien), y ont néanmoins des boutiques : « ammā Yahūdī yokdur dükkānlarda sâkin olup giderler ».

31 Sur ces questions, cf. N. Vatin et S. Yerasimos, « Documents sur les cimetières ottomans II. Statut, police et pratiques quotidiennes (1565-1585) », *Turcica*, 26 (1994), pp. 169-210.

stambouliote qui était concerné, et le sultan prit soin de faire délimiter les lieux et déterminer les conditions financières en concertation avec les représentants de toutes les *ce-maat*. Le désir de montrer de la considération à ses fidèles *zimmi* était donc manifeste et les droits de ceux-ci étaient encore rappelés dans les conclusions du rapport remis en 1584 par le cadi d'Istanbul Abdülbaki et l'ancien *kazasker* d'Anatolie Molla Mehmed. Or l'année suivante, le durcissement est net : les juifs sont déboutés et leurs pierres doivent être largement ensevelies. Cette sévérité est peut-être due au fait que certains juifs, encouragés par leurs précédents succès ou trop confiants dans leur influence, ont apparemment recommencé à pratiquer des inhumations à Kasimpaşa. Mais il semble que ce soit le fait d'individus, non de la communauté. En effet, le reproche n'est pas fait à celle-ci en tant que telle et rien dans la documentation ne laisse entendre que, avant le rebondissement de 1585, elle avait contesté l'interdiction d'enterrer à Kasimpaşa. Au contraire, le nouveau cimetière de Hasköy avait aussitôt été utilisé. Pourtant, les mesures sévères qui sont alors prises concernent toute la communauté, déclarée collectivement indésirable dans le quartier.

Indépendamment du désir bien attesté de conserver purs de toute manifestation de mécréance les abords des lieux de culte musulmans, on peut se demander si le sort du cimetière de Kasimpaşa n'est pas une marque parmi d'autres d'une forme d'hostilité aux juifs qui se développa dans la société ottomane du dernier tiers du XVI^e siècle, où certains d'entre eux jouaient un rôle important qui pouvait susciter jalousie ou animosité³². Pál Fodor a fait sur ce point une petite synthèse nuancée, dans laquelle il rassemble plus d'une anecdote allant dans ce sens³³. Je me bornerai ici à rappeler un ordre impérial

32 L'hypothèse a déjà été formulée par Minna Rozen, qui fait un rapport avec les règlements émis pour interdire aux *zimmi* des vêtements trop ostentatoires : « The Muslim residents of Kasım Paşa had a similar motivation when they plundered the expensive and pretentious Jewish tombstones in the cemetery. Although the ostensible excuse for taking the stones was that their large size allowed thieves to hide behind them, what actually attracted the attention of the Muslims was that the tombstones were too grand for the lower-class *zimmi*s (not to mention that the stones also made fine-quality building material for those who appropriated them) » ; M. Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul : The Formative Years, 1453-1566* (Leyde-Boston-Cologne 2002), p. 22. Si l'hypothèse d'une exaspération croissante à l'égard des juifs accusés d'arrogance me paraît en effet intéressante, je pense que dans le cas particulier de Kasimpaşa les musulmans auraient pu faire valoir expressément l'indépendance de ces trop hautes stèles. Or ils ne le firent apparemment pas. Quant à l'argument des bandits, c'était sans doute un prétexte, mais qui n'était peut-être pas totalement dépourvu de fondement. De toute manière, il me paraît clair que le but était bien moins de rabaisser le caquet des juifs que de les expulser. Au demeurant, il n'est pas impossible que le débat des années 1580 ait eu des conséquences sur la typologie des monuments funéraires juifs, comme le suggère une séduisante hypothèse de Rozen, « A Survey », pp. 91-92 : « One question raised by a typological study is whether the simple tombstones devoid of any ornamentation, which are found from the end of the sixteenth century, are in some way linked to the extravagance of the Jewish tombstones in Kasım Paşa, which aroused the wrath of the local non-Jewish residents. »

33 P. Fodor, « An Anti-Semite Grand Vizier ? The Crisis in Ottoman-Jewish Relations in 1589-

bien connu depuis longtemps, puisque publié lui aussi par Ahmed Refik, que j'ai choisi parce qu'il concerne en partie le quartier de Kasımpaşa et parce qu'il est contemporain du début de notre affaire. Dans ce document daté du 23 octobre 1582, on voit les marins et marchands se plaindre de ce que les affermataires des douanes des échelles d'Istanbul sont juifs pour la plupart. Non seulement ils leurs reprochent des abus, mais ils commencent par souligner que leurs agents eux-mêmes sont juifs : or tant que les gens qui se rendent à l'échelle ne multiplient pas les prières auprès de ces individus en les appelant « Efendi » ou « Çelebi », ceux-ci ne les laissent pas faire leurs affaires, ce qui est fort dommageable à la religion musulmane³⁴. Le ton de cette protestation en dit long, me semble-t-il, sur l'état d'esprit qui régnait à l'époque. Rappelons que Koca Sinan Paşa, grand vizir du 14 avril 1588 au 2 août 1591, est connu pour son hostilité aux juifs³⁵. Quant à la construction en une nuit de la mosquée Yeldeğirmeni par Abdülkerim, Atâî la replace dans un contexte d'hostilité aux juifs de l'imam de Murad III³⁶. Or le cadi d'Istanbul Abdülbaki – qui n'est autre que le célèbre poète – dut semble-t-il se défendre d'avoir pris le parti des juifs en 1584³⁷. Il ne paraît donc pas impossible que les décisions conciliantes qui avaient alors été prises aient été mal admises par certains milieux musulmans, ce qui pourrait expliquer le changement d'attitude du sultan entre 1584 et 1585.



Quoi qu'il en soit de l'évolution de la position des autorités, il faut souligner que l'affaire du cimetière de Kasımpaşa fut traitée au plus haut niveau. Dans la mesure où notre corpus est tiré des *Mühimme defterleri*, donc d'ordres discutés au divan, il pourrait s'agir là d'une impression faussée par la nature de la documentation. Tel n'est pas le cas cepen-

1591 and its Consequences », dans Idem, *In Quest of the Golden Apple : Imperial Ideology, Politics, and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul 2000), pp. 191-206.

34 *Efendi ve çelebi demeyince muradlarınca maslahatların gördürmeyüb iman-ı islâmumuza zarar vaki olub* : cf. Ahmed Refik, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrî'de*, p. 124.

35 Cf. Fodor, « An Anti-Semite Grand-Vizier ? », pp. 195 sqq.

36 Au demeurant, il semble y avoir une confusion, chez Atâî (*Hadaiku'l-Hakaik*, p. 329) et Evliya Çelebi (*Seyahatnâme*, p. 157), entre l'imam Abdülkerim, fondateur de la mosquée Yeldeğirmeni décédé en décembre 1593 et le vaiz Abdülkerim qui joua un rôle lors de l'assassinat de la Kira en 1600 (cf. Selânikî, *Tarih*, p. 855). K. Kreiser, *Istanbul. Ein historisch-literarischer Stadtführer* (Munich 2001), p. 170, émet l'hypothèse que l'avènement de l'an Mil de l'Hégire (19 octobre 1591-7 octobre 1592) put constituer une incitation supplémentaire pour le dévot Abdülkerim.

37 Cf. Galanté, *Histoire des juifs*, t. 5, p. 54, n. 64 : « Baki était le plus renommé poète de son temps. Chargé d'examiner l'affaire du cimetière de Hasköy, il donna raison aux juifs. Ses adversaires pour le faire éloigner de son poste, l'accusèrent d'avoir pris parti pour la communauté juive. Le poète répondit à cette accusation par des vers dont voici la traduction : "Nous ne nous appuyons pas sur le canapé brodé d'or de notre poste / Notre appui, c'est l'immense bonté de Dieu." » L'anecdote est également rapportée par M. F. Köprülü : *ÂA*, s.v. « Bâkî » (M. F. Köprülü), p. 247. Je n'en ai pas retrouvé la source.

dant : en effet, cinq entrées du registre (sur sept) portent la mention *ba hatt-ı hümayun*, signe que le sultan Murad III en personne s'intéressa à la question. De plus, loin de renvoyer systématiquement le cas au cadî local, comme c'est souvent le cas, il chargea les plus hautes autorités politiques et juridiques d'étudier le dossier : en dehors des cadis de Galata et des Hass (dont les circonscriptions étaient concernées) les documents citent, outre le *kapudan paşa* (lui aussi personnellement intéressé en raison de la proximité de l'Arsenal), un *şeyhülislam*, des *kazasker*, un cadî d'Istanbul, un savant professeur à Fa-tih et gouverneur (*hoca*) du prince Mehmed, des vizirs, l'agha des janissaires, enfin cinq *çavuş* envoyés à l'occasion de la délimitation du futur cimetière de Hasköy.

Un pareil intérêt montre qu'on ne considérait pas cette affaire comme un vulgaire différend de quartier. Certes, le gouvernement ottoman s'intéressait, d'un point de vue d'urbanisme, à la gestion des cimetières. Mais le plus important, me semble-t-il, est que les parties prenantes n'étaient pas des individus ou des groupes d'individus, mais deux communautés. De fait, les textes précisent fréquemment qu'on a affaire à la *taife* des juifs d'Istanbul³⁸ et (quoique moins souvent) à celle des musulmans³⁹. C'est donc l'équilibre même de la société ottomane de la capitale qui est en cause, justifiant l'attention des plus hautes autorités.

Au demeurant, l'initiative ne vient pas d'en haut, mais d'en bas : si le sultan intervient, c'est qu'il a été alerté soit par un rapport des autorités locales, soit directement par une plainte écrite, une *ruk'a*⁴⁰. Le recours direct à la justice rendue au nom du souverain au Divan impérial était un droit reconnu à tout sujet ottoman, mais d'usage difficile quand on résidait dans une lointaine province. Or tel n'était pas le cas pour des habitants de la Corne d'Or, qui vivaient à proximité des services centraux de l'Empire. Pourtant, les communautés en conflit à Kasımpaşa ne semblent pas être allées systématiquement devant le Divan. Il n'est donc pas sans intérêt, dans le cadre du sujet de notre volume, de se demander quand et donc pourquoi elles l'ont fait.

Le premier acte, en 1582, ne nous est malheureusement connu qu'indirectement. On sait du moins que ce sont les représentants de la *taife* des musulmans qui firent valoir leurs doléances en premier, en présence des deux *kazasker* : nous en déduisons que c'est eux qui avaient porté plainte, vraisemblablement devant le Divan puisqu'il est question des *kazasker* et pas d'une précédente instruction judiciaire par les soins du cadî de Galata. Ce dernier n'aurait en effet probablement pas pris sur lui d'interdire les inhumations juives, et n'aurait en tous cas pas eu le pouvoir de faire chercher un nouveau cimetière sur les terrains du *vakıf* de Bayezid II (d'ailleurs en dehors de sa circonscription).

38 *Yahudi taifesi* (MD XLVIII-305, XLVIII-415, XLIX-60, LXII-358) ; *mahruse-i mezburede mütemekkin olan yahudi taifesi* (MD XLIX-61) ; *mahruse-i İstanbulda sakin olan taife-i yahudi ittifaqla* (MD LV-66) ; *taife-i yahud* (MD LVIII-303).

39 *Akd-ı meclis olındukda taife-i müslimîn ve taife-i yahuddan cemm-i gafır ve cem'-i kesîr hâzır olub* (MD LVIII-303).

40 « Yüksek makama sunulacak bir dilek veya şikâyet » selon la définition de M. S. Küttikoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)* (Istanbul 1994), p. 315.

Les deux ordres suivants ⁴¹, destinés aux cadis, ont mobilisé les plus hautes instances de l'État, mais ils ne concernent que l'application administrative des décisions prises : ordre est donné de fixer les limites du nouveau cimetière, puis d'y faire enterrer systématiquement les juifs. Ceux-ci sont intéressés par la question et ils ont du reste participé à la mise en place géographique et fiscale du nouveau cimetière. Mais c'est le cadi d'Eyüp qui a rendu compte au sultan : il ne s'agit que de routine.

Jusqu'ici, la communauté juive n'est pas intervenue activement, acceptant apparemment sans protester les mesures prises à son égard et ne se donnant pas la peine de livrer un combat perdu d'avance. En avril 1583, en revanche, elle présente une *ruk'a* à la Porte pour se plaindre de violations de l'ancien cimetière et demander restitution des pierres volées ⁴². Pourquoi se tourner directement vers le sultan, et non vers le cadi de Galata ? Une réponse pourrait être fournie par la personne du destinataire de l'ordre émis en conséquence : le *kapudan paşa*. Certes celui-ci peut être chargé de l'application des décisions impériales en tant que principal dignitaire militaro-administratif du quartier. Mais il n'est pas interdit non plus de se demander si certains de ses propres hommes ne se rendaient pas coupables des abus dénoncés. Or pour faire pression sur un aussi haut personnage, il valait sans doute mieux s'adresser directement au sultan qu'au cadi, lequel était peut-être peu sûr et risquait en tout cas de se montrer prudent ⁴³.

Quelques jours après au contraire, c'est au cadi des Hass (qui informe la Porte par un *arz*) que s'adresse « la communauté des juifs résidant dans la ville bien gardée » [d'Istanbul] pour se plaindre d'individus qui les importunent lors du transfert de leurs morts vers le cimetière ⁴⁴. Il ne s'agissait plus que d'une affaire de droit commun impliquant des voyous. La question était donc moins délicate. Certes, c'est apparemment un juif qui porta au sultan l'*arz* du cadi, puisque l'ordre fut remis au « demandeur » (*talib*). De plus l'affaire parut assez importante pour justifier une note manuscrite du sultan. Mais il aurait sans doute été maladroit de le déranger, pour une affaire de simple police, sans la caution du cadi.

Pourtant, c'est encore devant un cadi, celui de Galata cette fois, qu'une nouvelle plainte pour violation du cimetière est déposée dans l'été 1583 ⁴⁵. Peut-être le firman du mois d'avril précédent constituait-il un argument suffisant pour attirer l'attention et la bienveillance du cadi ? Ou bien le choix d'aller devant le cadi s'explique-t-il par le fait que la plainte n'émane plus de la communauté toute entière, mais seulement de « certains membres de celle-ci » ?

41 MD XLVIII-305 ; XLVIII-415.

42 MD XLIX-60.

43 La communauté fait en outre référence à un précédent firman (que nous n'avons pas) interdisant expressément de « porter dommage aux pierres tombales et aux emplacements de la communauté juive se trouvant à l'extérieur de Kasımpaşa, dans les cimetières où il est désormais interdit aux juifs de déposer leurs morts ». Ce rappel ne pouvait évidemment que pousser le sultan à se montrer constant dans sa position. Mais il aurait également été possible de faire valoir ce document auprès du cadi.

44 MD XLIX-61.

45 MD XLIX-461.

De fait, l'année suivante, toujours pour dénoncer les mêmes faits, « la communauté juive collectivement » (*taife-i yahudi ittifakla*) dépose à nouveau une *ruk'a* aux pieds du sultan ⁴⁶. Il semble bien en effet que le caractère communautaire et unanime de la requête explique le recours direct au souverain. Car les juifs ne se bornent plus à protester contre des abus déjà dénoncés comme tels par les autorités : ils prétendent maintenant faire valoir les droits de leur communauté à « la jouissance depuis la conquête impériale, à usage de cimetière, de terrains qui avaient été attribués et désignés comme cimetières des juifs, dans des limites bien précises, conformément à une attestation à nous remise par (...) Sultan Mehmed Han (...) dans la *nahiyye* de Kasimpaşa ». Le lieu, à les en croire, est « à eux depuis la conclusion d'un antique accord (*ahd*) » ⁴⁷. Produisirent-ils ce document ? Ce n'est pas certain, car les autorités, tout en leur donnant gain de cause, ne reprirent pas cet argument. On est d'autant plus tenté de douter que lors de l'étape suivante – où c'est la « communauté musulmane » (*taife-i müslimîn*) qui porta plainte ⁴⁸ en 1585 –, les juifs se targuèrent cette fois non plus d'un droit de jouissance (*tasarruf*) mais d'un don en pleine propriété (*temlik*) par « les sultans précédents » ⁴⁹. Cependant, ils se révèlent incapables de produire une attestation, celle-ci ayant à les en croire brûlé. Cet accident est d'autant plus suspect que son contenu semble évoluer (à l'avantage des intéressés). Il est donc hautement probable que l'*ahdname* de Mehmed II accordant à la communauté juive la pleine propriété du terrain du cimetière de Kasimpaşa n'a jamais existé. Bien plus, on peut penser que ni les représentants de la communauté juive, ni *a fortiori* les autorités ottomanes, n'ont cru une minute à la véracité d'une fable apparue du reste tardivement dans le développement de l'affaire.

Ce serait cependant une erreur de prendre les juifs d'Istanbul pour de naïfs escrocs. Leur tentative rappelle en effet le mythe de la neutralité des populations grecques et juives de Constantinople lors de la conquête de Mehmed II en 1453. Il a été montré comment ce mythe, parce qu'il justifiait en droit la situation faite aux *zimmi* de la capitale, arrangeait également ces communautés et le pouvoir ottoman, qui avaient forgé ensemble (apparemment sous la direction du *şeyhülislam* Ebussuud à la fin des années 1530) la légende et les documents la confortant, permettant notamment la reconstruction de synagogues ⁵⁰. L'emploi, dans le cas précis qui nous occupe, du terme *ahd* conforte le sentiment que c'est dans ce cadre juridique que se placent les juifs pour défendre l'intégrité de leur cimetière de Kasimpaşa. Sans doute la communauté – qui précisait du reste qu'elle attendait justice de la seule application de la charî'a ⁵¹ – comptait-elle donc sur la bien-

46 MD LV-66.

47 Texte ottoman cité *supra* n. 16.

48 MD LVIII-303.

49 *Arz-ı mezbure'i selâtin-i maziyye taife-i yahud mekabiri için temlik eylemişlerdir.*

50 Sur cette question qui a donné lieu à plusieurs recherches, cf. la mise au point récente de G. Veinstein, « La prise de Constantinople et le destin des *zimmi* ottomans », *ArchOtt*, 23 (2005-2006), pp. 335-346.

51 MD LV-66 : *taife-i yahud kail olmayub mukteza-yı şer'-i şerifden gayre rıza göstermedüklerinde*. Les juifs répondent ici à la demande musulmane de suppression ou ensevelissement de leurs pierres tombales. Sans doute refusent-ils par ces propos une violation des tombes elles-

veillance du sultan pour accepter de participer à la création d'une nouvelle fiction. Celle-ci, du reste tout à fait dans la logique des mythes que je viens d'évoquer, aurait permis de régler définitivement le lancinant problème du cimetière de Kasımpaşa. Il s'agissait donc de négocier au plus haut niveau, et c'était bien l'affaire de « la communauté juive collectivement ».

Il était donc tout naturel de s'adresser directement à la Porte ⁵².



C'est sur ce point que je souhaite revenir d'abord en conclusion. L'étude de cette suite de documents traitant tous à peu près de la même affaire sur une période de cinq ans permet en effet de mieux suivre la logique de l'action des parties. S'adresser directement au sultan (ce qui était matériellement facile pour des Stambouliotes), même pour une question à l'évidence considérée au Palais comme de première importance, était une procédure dont il convenait apparemment de ne pas abuser. Pour des questions banales ou de routine, mieux valait peut-être passer par le *cadi*, qui ferait si nécessaire remonter le dossier du bas vers le haut sans faire courir aux sujets le risque d'importuner leur souverain. Dans d'autres cas en revanche, il était préférable de passer par dessus le *cadi*, ne fût-ce que pour se prévaloir ensuite du soutien du sultan face à l'autorité locale. Enfin quand la communauté était en cause, quand il fallait négocier collectivement avec les pouvoirs publics, il paraissait naturel de s'adresser au plus haut niveau.

Une seconde remarque peut être faite, me semble-t-il. Je pense avoir montré que, contrairement à ce que pouvait donner à entendre le corpus restreint rassemblé par Ahmed Refik, l'affaire du cimetière de Kasımpaşa illustre moins la bienveillance du sultan envers ses sujets juifs qu'une certaine malveillance à leur égard de la population musulmane. Celle-ci finit par avoir gain de cause, au delà même des décisions impériales, puisque le cimetière désaffecté, qui aurait dû être préservé en l'état, finit bel et bien par disparaître.

Est-ce à dire que Murad III était hostile aux juifs de sa capitale ? Tel ne semble pas avoir été le cas. D'ailleurs rien, dans la documentation, ne vient suggérer que le gouvernement ottoman souhaite spontanément « purifier » le quartier désormais musulman de Kasımpaşa. Après tout, l'habitat mixte n'était pas une rareté, et la cohabitation des vivants et des morts dans la ville était une réalité quotidienne, qu'on tentait de contrôler, mais dont on s'accommodait.

En fait, c'est bel et bien la base musulmane qui prit l'initiative de son propre chef, contraignant le sultan à la suivre. Encore ne le fit-il qu'à petits pas, progressivement. Si les musulmans obtinrent apparemment facilement l'interdiction d'inhumer à Kasımpaşa,

mêmes. Mais on notera que c'est précisément ce jour-là qu'ils avaient, quelques minutes auparavant, fait valoir pour la première fois un *temessük* émanant de Mehmed II.

52 La seconde tentative faite pour employer l'argument, lancée en désespoir de cause à un moment où le vent avait tourné, fut faite en réponse à une plainte cette fois déposée par les musulmans.

le pouvoir (au nom de la charî'a dont ne manquaient pas de se réclamer les juifs aussi bien que les musulmans) s'opposa longtemps à l'appropriation du cimetière juif par les musulmans. La polémique contre Baki est de ce point de vue instructive, dans la mesure où elle semble montrer comment le poids de l'opinion contraignit le sultan à changer de pied, accordant pour finir aux musulmans tout ce qu'il pouvait concéder sans se déjuger totalement. Quant à ce qui allait au-delà de ce qu'il était prêt à autoriser officiellement, il semble bien qu'il ait choisi par la suite de fermer les yeux.

Ainsi le sultan subissait-il la pression de ses sujets, musulmans comme juifs. Tout il est vrai fut réglé par le haut, dans cette affaire, mais elle avait été suscitée d'en bas : c'est l'opinion publique, au niveau inférieur (mais avec des relais dans la classe dirigeante), qui dicta la conduite suivie au niveau supérieur.

FROM THE BOTTOM UP AND BACK AGAIN
UNTIL WHO KNOWS WHEN:
CHURCH RESTORATION PROCEDURES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE,
SEVENTEENTH-EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES
(PRELIMINARY NOTES)

Rossitsa GRADEVA*

RESEARCH IN THE LAST DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY on relations between the Ottoman ruling elite and the *reaya* has revealed that the latter were far from being just a passive object of the policy of the central government and its local representatives, and that on many occasions they reacted individually or collectively to injustices and oppression. These reactions have been explored mainly with regard to Anatolia and peasants, in an attempt to situate their interpretation within the context of the development of historical sociology, and Charles Tilly's school in particular,¹ but also from the perspective of dispensation of and seeking justice,² or – in relation mainly to the Balkans – within the national liberation discourse. The issue of collective action fits in also with the debate related to civil society and the public sphere in a Muslim setting.³ Finally, it is closely

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The paper reflects only a first stage in my work with the accumulated mass of documentation, of which I have only processed a part in detail; hence, 'preliminary notes' in the sub-title. The remaining documents have been taken into account with respect to establishing the main steps in obtaining permission from the state authorities and possible deviations from the standard procedure.

I wish to thank the Andrew Mellon Foundation and ARIT-Istanbul, and RCAC, Koç University, whose grants in 2006/2007 and 2008/2009, respectively, allowed me to work at the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi in Istanbul on projects related to Ottoman policy with respect to the non-Muslim places of worship.

- 1 See, in particular, S. Faroqhi, 'Introduction', 'Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Some Evidence for Their Existence', 'Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanate Legitimation (1570-1650)', in Eadem, *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1720* (Istanbul 1995), 7-23, 25-35, 37-65, respectively; K. Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca and London 1994), 85-140.
- 2 B. A. Ergene, 'On Ottoman Justice: Interpretations in Conflict (1600-1800)', *Islamic Law and Society*, 8 (2001), 52-87.
- 3 M. Hoexter, S. N. Eisenstadt, and N. Levtzion (eds), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*

connected with the study of grievance administration (*şikâyet*).⁴ In most cases, with the exception of the Balkans, the religious and ethnic affiliation of the participants in such action is not a focus of attention, as it is usually of no importance to the phenomena and processes under scrutiny. With few exceptions, these studies focus on conflict as the factor which provoked collective action.

This paper aims at adding another aspect of the relations between the Ottoman state and its subjects to the broader framework of the study of collective action and political activity 'from the bottom up'. This aspect concerns the activities of the non-Muslim communities which led to the issuance of permits for the restoration of their places of worship. At a time when religion and politics were closely intertwined, when religious divisions had clear political connotations and defined one's status, when belonging to a religious community formed a core component of one's identity, the maintenance of places of worship was of vital importance. Indeed, the Church, the parish network, the synagogue, and the 'lay' bodies of self-government of a given community, often working in close co-operation and overlapping with each other, had important functions for their group. More broadly, these included self-organisation with a view to defending the group's interests in all spheres of life, be they related to the internal distribution and collection of state taxes, the maintenance of the communal material structures, appointment of officers, or collection of funds for its various needs. Of equal importance were the representation of the community before the authorities at a central or local level, and successful navigation through the various pressures and limitations set by the general religious framework in the Empire and/or local politics. Even though most of these functions can be seen as primarily religious, social, or financial, ultimately they all have strong political implications, as they lead to the strengthening of the internal cohesion of the group, to the accumulation of important experience by the whole entity and its leadership in particular in dealing with the various levels of political authority, to getting acquainted with the political and legal system, and, more generally, to building up a political and legal culture. In fact, the procedures leading to the issuance of permits for the restoration of places of worship and sometimes even the construction of new ones probably were for the non-Muslim *reaya* one of the main channels of learning about the Ottoman political system, and, even more important, how to deal with it with a view to securing the basics of communal life.

Unlike the cases usually brought forward when collective action is discussed, the activities discussed below rarely involved or implied open confrontation. Yet they, too, required defining a common interest within the community concerned, organisation, mo-

(Albany 2002), and more specifically S. Eisenstadt's 'Concluding Remarks: Public Sphere, Civil Society, and Political Dynamics in Islamic Societies', 139-161.

4 H. G. Majer (ed.), *Das osmanische "Registerbuch der Beschwerden" (Şikâyet Defteri) vom Jahre 1675*. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. Mixt. 683 (Vienna 1984), 17-23; H. İnalcık, 'Şikâyet Hakkı: 'Arz-i Hâl ve 'Arz-i Mahzar'lar', *OA*, 7-8 (1988), 33-54; M. Ursinus, *Grievance Administration (Şikayet) in an Ottoman Province: The Kaymakam of Rumelia's 'Record Book of Complaints' of 1781-1783* (London and New York 2005), 1-38.

bilisation, collective action, and opportunity.⁵ This is why their outcome varied in time and space: the constellation of a range of factors of local, regional, or Empire-wide, temporary or long-standing, validity and impact led, at different times, to varying results even in the same place.⁶

The analysis of the available data about non-Muslim places of worship confirms the already well-established picture of a relative flexibility and pragmatism in the application of the theoretical legal framework; this flexibility led at times even to the construction of new places of worship, but, on the other hand, to the taking over or demolition of churches, both owing to political considerations and both contrary to the stipulations of the law. This issue has been approached in various contexts and continues to be the subject of local and more general studies. In this paper, I have chosen to investigate the complex interaction between the Ottoman authorities, in the centre and in the locality, and their non-Muslim subjects through the medium of the procedures which led to the issuance of permits for the reconstruction and repair of existing places of worship. Below I shall try to delineate the steps in the procedure, the variants that emerge from the documentation, and the role of the formal and informal parties involved in each of them. In brief, I shall identify the bodies and/or the individuals who initiated the procedure, and the institutions that they approached at each stage in the process. The factors at work in each case and their potential importance, however, are not always easy to measure. For example, on many occasions, the lack of financial means on the part of a given group or institution which could have allowed them to 'smooth' the official bureaucratic channels, to win for the cause the 'informal factors', such as the local Muslim community and its formal and informal leadership, or simply to complete the repair works, caused considerable delays in the accomplishment of the project, which was protracted over decades and involved more than one generation. On the other hand, a rich community or institution could achieve a positive result within a couple of months. Equally unpredictable seems to have been the local Muslims' reaction to the non-Muslims' efforts.

The importance of the rules and principles to which the maintenance of these structures was subject can hardly be overestimated. The various parameters involved in the process of obtaining permission provide a relatively objective insight into the situation of non-Muslims in general, how strong their voice and collective action could be. The church and the monastery, the synagogue, the educational institutions, and the other buildings which in those times were deemed religious were not just a major prerequisite for the normal functioning of each cult. Their treatment is also a landmark in judg-

5 C. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York 1978).

6 Thus, at roughly the same time, the first half of the seventeenth century, Christians in Serres and its district were able to decorate the interiors of their churches, and even build new churches and monasteries without significant difficulties, while in Sofia they only lost churches; P. Odorico et alii, *Conseils et mémoires de Synadinos, prêtre de Serrès en Macédoine (XVII^e siècle)* (n.p. 1996), 125, 295; R. Gradeva, 'The Churches in the Life of Sofia Citizens, 15th to 18th Century (Preliminary Notes)', in G. Valtchinova (ed.), *Religion and Boundaries: Studies from the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey* (Istanbul 2010), 62-66.

ing the scope for the religiously 'other' to exist in the Ottoman state before the Tanzimat reforms, the mechanisms of Ottoman authority in administering its 'own' non-Muslims, and the factors that influenced the rulers to adopt milder or more restrictive policies. The success or failure of the communities in securing the cherished permission may also be seen as an indication of their capacity for mobilisation for the achievement of a common goal. Aspects of this problem have been touched upon in historiography, mainly as regards the Balkans, Istanbul, and Jerusalem.⁷

My focus here is the practice before the Tanzimat, more specifically, in the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, although material from earlier and later periods is also referred to. My study is based on sources from various parts of the Empire, Rumelia, Anatolia, Istanbul, and Jerusalem. The choice of period and locations is heavily determined by the specifics of the sources, some of the features of which I shall dis-

7 Here I shall mention just a few of the relevant publications: O. Zirojević, *Crkve i manastiri na području Pečke Patriaršije do 1683* [Churches and monasteries on the territory of the Peć Patriarchate] (Belgrade 1984), 15-37; M. Kiel, *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period: A Sketch of Economic, Juridical and Artistic Preconditions of Bulgarian Post-Byzantine Art and Its Place in the Development of the Art of the Christian Balkans, 1360/70-1700: A New Interpretation* (Assen and Maastricht 1985), 143-205; R. Gradeva, 'Ottoman Policy towards Christian Church Buildings', *EB*, 1994/4, 14-36; Eadem, 'On Zimmis and Their Church Buildings: Four Cases from Rumeli', in E. Kermeli and O. Özel (eds), *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and 'Black Holes'. Contributions in Honour of Colin Imber* (Istanbul 2006), 203-237; O. Peri, *Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem: The Question of the Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Times* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne 2001); S. Ivanova, 'Hristijanska i mišislmanska blagotvoritelnost po bulgarskite zemi, XVI-XVIII v. (dokumenti, učashtnitsi i institutsii)' [Christian and Muslim charity in the Bulgarian lands, sixteenth-eighteenth centuries (documents, participants, institutions)], in P. Mitev (ed.), *Daritelstvo i vzaimopomosht v bulgarsko-to obshtestvo, 16-nachaloto na 20 vek* [Charity and mutual aid in Bulgarian society, sixteenth-early twentieth centuries] (Sofia 2003), 19-23; M. M. Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi: Mit ve Gerçek* (Istanbul 2004), 292-299. Among the studies dedicated to specific institutions which deal with issues of repair see J. C. Alexander, 'Ta othomanika tourkika egrapha tes Hieras Mones Dousikou: he Mone hos ta mesa tou 16^{ou} aiona' [The Ottoman Turkish documents of the Holy Monastery of Dousiko until the mid sixteenth century], *Trikalina*, 14 (1994), 101-120; Idem, 'Gilding the Lily? Thessaly, "Hellas", "Vlachia" and the Earthquake of 1544', in E. A. Zachariadou (ed.), *Natural Disasters in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete III: A Symposium Held in Rethymnon, 10-12 January 1997* (Rethymno 1999), 223-240; A. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom Tsarstvu, XV-XVII vek* [Mount Athos and Hilandar in the Ottoman realm, fifteenth-seventeenth centuries] (Belgrade 2000), 108-133. Studies of the status of Jews under the Ottomans rarely go into details about the status of synagogues as non-Muslim places of worship. Among the exceptions in languages that are accessible to me: A. Cohen, *Jewish Life under Islam: Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1984), 76-84; M. Baer, 'The Great Fire of 1660 and the Islamization of Christian and Jewish Space in Istanbul', *IJMES*, 36 (2004), 159-181. Special attention has been paid to the synagogues in Constantinople after the Ottoman conquest: M. Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul: The Formative Years, 1453-1566* (Leiden and Boston 2002), 10-11; G. Veinstein, 'La prise de Constantinople et le destin des zimmî ottomans', *ArchOtt*, 23 (2005/06), 335-346.

cuss below. It is my belief that these territories and settlements and particularly Rumelia with the capital city were the most dynamic in setting the framework and the pattern in the relations between Ottoman authority and its non-Muslim subjects, in particular the Orthodox Christians. This is especially the case from the time of the War with the Holy League (1683-1699) onwards.

Religious and political upheavals in the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century had a long-term impact on the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, between the Ottoman authority and the non-Muslim subjects. Indeed, the rise to power of the Kadızadelis clearly affected inter-communal relations in regions which were more directly exposed to the winds coming from the heart of the state.⁸ Occasional references to this movement also crop up later, indicating Anatolia as a continuing source of adherents to its ideas but that Muslims in other Ottoman provinces were prone to them too.⁹ We should also bear in mind that the Kadızadelis were just one of the ideological and political trends orientated towards purer Islam that gained momentum in the Ottoman Empire from the late sixteenth century onwards, and which had an impact on intellectual life within the Muslim community, and on relations with the non-Muslims.¹⁰ The war with the Holy League stands out as probably the first really critical test for these relations since the Ottoman conquest. Without extinguishing the movement, the war brought an end to the domination of the Kadızadelis in Istanbul, and reduced its importance in Ottoman political life. The war triggered significant shifts within the non-Muslim communities as well. It enhanced the role of the international factor in the relations between

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- 8 On the Kadızadelis, see M. Zilfi, 'The Kadızadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 45 (1986), 251-269; Eadem, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis 1988), 81-227. For a specific aspect and period of the Kadızadeli movement see M. Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York 2008), Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9, and Idem, 'The Conversion of Christian and Jewish Souls and Space during the 'Anti-Dervish' Movement of 1656-76', in D. Shankland (ed.), *Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: The Life and Times of F. W. Hasluck, 1878-1920*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 2004), 183-200, which provide glimpses into the effect of the Kadızadeli zeal on the Ottoman Balkans. A different perspective is to be found in D. Terzioğlu, 'Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyazi-i Misri (1618-94)', *SI*, 94 (2002), 139-165. See also the paper by M. Sariyannis in this volume.
- 9 For references to the 'Kadızadelis after the Kadızadelis' see J. Hathaway, 'The Grand Vizier and the False Messiah: The Sabbatai Sevi Controversy and the Ottoman Reform in Egypt', *JAOS*, 117 (1997), 665-671; K. Filan, 'Life in Sarajevo in the 18th Century (According to Mulla Mustafa's Mecmua)', in V. Costantini and M. Koller (eds), *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community: Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faruqi* (Leiden and Boston 2008), 335-337; and the overview article of T. Artan, 'Forms and Forums of Expression: Istanbul and Beyond, 1600-1800', in C. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (London 2011), 378-406, and the bibliography cited in it. I wish to thank the author for allowing me to read her manuscript.
- 10 D. Terzioğlu, 'Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers in Service of the Ottoman State: The *Naşihatnâme* of Hasan Addressed to Murad IV', *ArchOtt*, 27 (2010), 241-312; Eadem, 'Bir Tercüme ve Bir İhtihâl Vakası: Ya Da İbn Teymiyye'nin *Siyâsetü's-şer'iyye*'sini Osmanlıcaya Kim(ler), Nasıl Aktardı?', *JTS*, 31 (2007), 247-275.

the dominant and the subordinate creeds, and its importance was to grow even further over time. It also forced the Ottoman elite to re-consider its relations with non-Muslims, the Orthodox Christians in particular, affecting taxation and the functions of their institutions of self-government. The second half of the eighteenth century brought to the surface processes which had been brewing for a long while. All the Ottoman provinces saw the rise of local notables and magnates. Some of them tried to monopolise relations with 'their' non-Muslims, procuring specific policies within their domains, including those vis-à-vis the reconstruction and repair of places of worship, and even the construction of new ones.¹¹ These and other significant changes in the administration of the 'non-Muslim issues' give me grounds to limit my study to the period roughly up to the mid eighteenth century.

In the pages which follow, I shall refer to examples of places of worship which belonged to Orthodox Christians, Armenians, Catholics, and Jews.¹² Despite the nuances in the legal statuses of these communities in the first Ottoman centuries,¹³ they seem to have been treated identically where the repairs and reconstruction of their places of worship are concerned. Differences can be observed in the 'provisioning' of new settlers with places of worship, with Jews and Armenians being the major but not unique recipients of new buildings, since in the period in question Orthodox Christians¹⁴ and even Catholics¹⁵ were also allowed to build new churches. These circumstances give me grounds to discuss the procedures without differentiating between communities. The differences that surface seem to have been regional/local rather than communal.

My sources in this endeavour are of diverse provenance – Ottoman in the first place, but also originating from the communities in question, travel accounts of foreign visitors, documents, and narratives. The starting-point and the core material for this study are provided by several hundred *fermans* related to permissions for the restoration and repair of

11 This observation applies primarily to major dissidents of the rank of Osman Pazvantoğlu in Vidin, Mahmud Bushati in Shkodër, and Tepedelenli Ali Paşa in Ioannina. See, for instance, R. Gradeva, 'Secession and Revolution in the Ottoman Empire at the End of the Eighteenth Century: Osman Pazvantoğlu and Rhigas Velestinlis', in A. Anastasopoulos and E. Kolovos (eds), *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation. Proceedings of an International Conference Held in Rethymno, Greece, 13-14 December 2003* (Rethymno 2007), 73-94.

12 In the *mühimme* registers I have also come across documents about the structures of other churches. These, however, are of a negligible number.

13 These differences are mainly in taxation and in the self-organisation and representation of each community before the authorities.

14 See, for example, the situation in Ruse and Pazardzhik, discussed in Gradeva, 'On Zimmis and Their Church Buildings', 208-222. Specifically about *vakıf* settlements see Kiel, *Art and Society*, 111-117, 198-199 (Arbanassi, *vakıf* of Rüstem Paşa); Gradeva, 'On Zimmis and Their Church Buildings', 222-229 (Chervena Voda, *vakıf* of Mihrimah Sultan).

15 There are nuances in the Ottoman policy with regard to Catholics in the Middle East, in the islands, and especially in the commercial centres, as compared to the Balkans, probably because of the proximity of the hostile Habsburgs and Venice.

churches recorded in the *mühimme defters*,¹⁶ mainly for the territories of Rumelia¹⁷ and Anatolia, Istanbul, and Jerusalem.¹⁸ The records of these orders are usually made in a very cursory style and contain only the essence of the contents of the original decrees.¹⁹

16 I shall refer to their call marks at the BOA in the relevant place. So far, I have processed the extant *mühimme defters* for the period 1640-1730, and individual earlier and later volumes. The missing *mühimme* volumes, a significant number between the 1640s and the 1680s, cannot always explain the missing copies of orders of which we know from other sources – either single copies or *kadı sicils*. Sultanic documents (from the *mühimme defters* and single documents) related to permits for the restoration of churches, monasteries, and synagogues are published in: A. Refik, *Türk İdaresinde Bulgaristan (973-1255)* (Istanbul 1933); D. Shopova, *Makedonija vo XVI i XVII vek. Dokumenti od Tsarigradskite Arhivi (1557-1645)* [Macedonia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: documents from the archives in Istanbul (1557-1645)] (Skopje 1955), 89; A. Refik, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicri'de İstanbul Hayatı (1495-1591)* (Istanbul 1988); Idem, *Onikinci Asr-ı Hicri'de İstanbul Hayatı (1689-1785)* (Istanbul 1988); Idem, *Onüçüncü Asr-ı Hicri'de İstanbul Hayatı (1786-1882)* (Istanbul 1988); U. Heyd, *Ottoman Documents on Palestine, 1552-1615: A Study of the Firman according to the Mühimme Defteri* (Oxford 1960); G. I. Salakidis, *Ta sultanika eggrapha tes Demotikes Vivliothekes tes Kozanes (1721-1909)* [Sultanic documents in the Kozani Municipal Library (1721-1909)] (Kozani 2004). I have discussed some of the problems with the *mühimme defter* collection in R. Gradeva, 'Orthodox Christians and Ottoman Authority in Late-Seventeenth-Century Crete', in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *The Eastern Mediterranean under Ottoman Rule: Crete, 1645-1840. Halcyon Days in Crete VI: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 13-15 January 2006* (Rethymno 2008), 196-197.

17 Rumeli, or Rumelia as it is better known, has several meanings in Ottoman practice, ranging from all the European territories of the Ottoman Empire, including Hungary shortly after its conquest, to the administrative unit which bore this name, and whose boundaries were in constant fluctuation. Here I refer to its broadest meaning.

18 The eastern parts of the Balkans and western Anatolia along with Istanbul and Jerusalem seem to be much better represented than other regions, probably because of their proximity to the central authority. Interestingly, with the exception of Jerusalem, the registers contain few documents concerning lands added to the Ottoman Empire at the expense of the Mamluks. This absence may be attributed to different arrangements between the local churches and the Muslim authority established prior to the Ottoman conquest which the Ottomans adopted and preserved, and to their independent status with regard to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, an issue that I shall tackle elsewhere. It is also probably easier to explain the absence of Hungarian institutions because of the situation of the pre-1680s *defters* that are available than it is to understand the absence of Mount Athos from the registers. This fact calls for specific investigation.

19 See the analysis of the structure and contents of the *mühimme* registers in Heyd, *Ottoman Documents*, XV-XVII, 3-31. A typical case can be seen in the comparison of the versions of a *ferman* of 1701 related to permission for the repair and reconstruction of churches on the territory of the *kaza* of Vidin. It is entered in the *kadı sicil*, NBKM, Or. Dept (standing for 'Sts Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia, Oriental Department'), S 14, fol. 4b, entry I, with very few missing features (the *tuğra*), but it is summarised in only four lines in the corner of the page of the *mühimme* register, BOA, MD 111, p. 184, No. 661. Hereafter, I shall omit 'BOA' in the call mark of the *mühimme* registers cited, and likewise 'NBKM, Or. Dept' before the *sicil* call mark, and I will cite the former (MD) as volume, page, and entry numbers, and the latter (S for Sofia and Vidin, and R for Ruse and Dobrich *sicils*) as volume, folio/page, and entry num-

Also important for our purposes are the *şikâyet defters*, the registers of grievances, which from the mid seventeenth century onwards were kept in parallel with the *mühimmes*, and often dealt with complaints against officials at different levels and their oppressive acts.²⁰ We have yet to learn what procedures regulated record-keeping; which documents were recorded in each series of registers; whether there were documents which did not find their way into the series at all. Ideally, the *kadı* court registers (*sicil*) support and complement the data from the *mühimme* and the *şikâyet* registers, adding more details about the local situation. Our expectations, however, should not go too far. Apart from the numerous critical remarks regarding the context and the representation of the legal cases in them, including their manipulation, conscious or otherwise, and cursory rendering of many of the cases,²¹ there is yet another deficiency: they do not include all the documents that had the local *kadı* as an addressee or were issued by him. Their recording often depended on the wish of the parties concerned, also on paying a fee, and apparently copying a document in the *sicil* as a 'security tool' was not always sought. A particularly important drawback with respect to my goal here is the lack of outgoing correspondence in the Balkan *sicils*.²² With regard to the permissions for the repair and restoration of non-Muslim places of worship, it seems that most often the single documents, applications which bear traces of the several stages through which the applicants had to go and the *fermans* in response to them, had stayed with the initiators and direct recipients – monasteries, churches, village or neighbourhood elders, *varoş* leaders,²³ metropolitanates or bishoprics – and were not recorded in the *kadı* registers. While there are monasteries, metropolitanates and even churches which have preserved a considerable quantity of their archival treasures from the Ottoman period, this is not the case with the vast majority of these institutions throughout the Empire. Thus, I rely on individual documents²⁴ and *sicil*

bers. For nineteenth-century developments in the procedure see the *fermans* in A. Matkovski, *Kanuni i fermanni za Makedonija* [*Kanuns and fermans about Macedonia*] (Skopje 1990), 436-480; A. Galante, *Histoire des juifs de Turquie*, Vol. 5 (Istanbul n.d.), 259-269. I would also like to thank M. Minawi for providing me with copies of documents which reveal the evolution of the procedure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

- 20 For an analysis of these registers and of their provincial projections see the references in n. 4 above. I have only started processing this series, which is particularly important for the clarification of the last phase in the achievement of the goal, that is, the reconstruction of the place of worship.
- 21 D. Ze'evi, 'The Use of Ottoman Sharī'a Court Records as a Source for Middle Eastern Social History: A Reappraisal', *Islamic Law and Society*, 5 (1998), 35-56.
- 22 S. Ivanova, 'The *Sicills* of the Ottoman *Kadis*: Observations over the *Sicill* Collection at the National Library in Sofia, Bulgaria', in K. Çiçek (ed.), *Pax Ottomana: Studies in Memoriam Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç* (Haarlem and Ankara 2001), 51-76.
- 23 On *varoş*, as a term and a body of communal self-organisation of the Orthodox Christians, see S. Ivanova, 'Varoş: The Elites of the *Reaya* in the Towns of Rumeli, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries', in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003* (Rethymno 2005), 201-246.
- 24 E. Kolovos (ed.), *A Database of the Ottoman Documents in the Kaireios Library of the Island of Andros* (<http://androsdocs.ims.forth.gr>); unpublished documents from the archive of

records²⁵ originating from the *kadı* courts of different locations and collections preserved on the territory of the former Ottoman Empire.²⁶ Of no less importance for my goals are *fetvas* issued by *şeyhülislams* and other muftis on the status of non-Muslim places of worship. Their issuers both set out the current general legal framework and gave an opinion on concrete problems. *Fetvas* are particularly interesting also because of their importance as a weighty argument on the way to the acquisition of permission for the restoration of a church. At this stage, I have worked with published collections of Ebussuud Efendi (sixteenth century), Feyzullah Efendi (late seventeenth-beginning of the eighteenth century), Abdurrahim Efendi, and Ali Efendi (both eighteenth century).²⁷ The Ottoman documentation is complemented by material produced by the non-Muslims.²⁸ Var-

the Monastery of St John of Patmos which have been kindly provided to me by Prof. M. Ursinus; M. Sariyannis and Y. Spyropoulos, 'To othomaniko archeio tou sinaitikou metochiou tou Agiou Matthaiou sto Herakleio Kretes (1573-1849)' [The Ottoman archive of the Sinaite *metochion* of St Matthew in Heraklion, Crete (1573-1849)], in *Sinaitika metochia sten Krete kai Kypro* [Sinaite *metochia* in Crete and Cyprus] (Athens n.d. [2009]), 71-98; M. Sariyannis, 'Symvole sten historia tou sinaitikou metochiou tou Agiou Matthaiou sto Herakleio' [A contribution to the history of the Sinaite *metochion* of St Matthew in Heraklion], *Ariadne*, 16 (2010), 137-168; Idem 'Le fonds ottoman du *metochion* sinaïtique à Candie', *Documents de travail du CETOBAC*, 1 (2010) [N. Vatin and G. Veinstein (eds), *Les archives de l'insularité ottomane*], 28-32. I would like to thank Dr Sariyannis for having provided me also with copies of original Ottoman documents. One unpublished document from the archive of the Metropolitan of Ioannina has been kindly provided to me by Dr G. Manopoulos. See also D. Ichiev (trans. and ed.), *Turските документи на Рилската манастир* [The Turkish documents of the Rila Monastery] (Sofia 1910). Unfortunately, Ichiev's translations were not carried out in compliance with the rules of academic work, while the originals have so far remained inaccessible to me.

25 Apart from the holdings of the Oriental Department at the National Library in Sofia, I have processed two *kadı sicils* from Bitola, Nos 27 and 28 from the late 1680s-early 1690s, kept at the State Archive of FYROM, in Skopje. Documents concerning churches and their repair I owe to H. Canbakal and K. Şakul (*kadı* records from various Anatolian towns), and E. Yi (Istanbul *sicils*). See also T. Kuran (ed.), *Mahkeme Kayıtları Işığında 17. Yüzyıl İstanbul'unda Sosyo-Ekonomik Yaşam*, Vol. 1 (Istanbul 2010).

26 I am only beginning to process the mass of *kadı* registers from outside the Bulgarian archives. Here I shall record only my first impressions.

27 M. E. Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislâm Ebussu'ûd Efendi'nin Fetvalarına Göre Kanunî Devrinde Osmanlı Hayatı: Fetâvâ-yı Ebussu'ûd Efendi* (Istanbul 1998), 165-169, and *passim*; S. Kaya, *Fetâvâ-yı Feyziye: Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi* (Istanbul 2009), 124-125, 395 (2352); M. Kalitsin, A. Velkov, and E. Radushev (eds), *Osmanski izvori za islyamizatsionnite protsesi na Balkanite (XVI-XIX v.)* [Ottoman sources on the Islamisation processes in the Balkans, sixteenth-nineteenth centuries] (Sofia 1990), 294-296, 299-300.

28 At this stage, I shall use this material only with a view to clarifying the steps that I have identified on the basis of the Ottoman sources. See P. Odorico *et alii*, *Conseils*, for the reflections of a seventeenth-century priest, also on the reconstruction of churches; A. Hananel and E. Eshkenazi (ed. and trans.), *Evreyski izvori za obshtestveno-ikonomicheskoto razvitiye na balkanskite zemi* [Jewish sources on the socio-economic development of the Balkan lands], Vol. 1: *XVI vek* [sixteenth century]; Vol. 2: *XVII vek* [seventeenth century] (Sofia 1958-1960), which include *responso* on problems with the reconstruction of synagogues; V. Nachev and N. Fer-

ious texts – narratives, legal documentation, codices, marginal inscriptions, inscriptions in churches which date repair works – add to our understanding of the ways in which they organised themselves and interacted with the state authority in order to obtain the much desired permission. Travel accounts and descriptions left by foreigners also provide invaluable information regarding both concrete monuments and the general atmosphere in the Empire.²⁹ Although it is difficult to imagine a comprehensive use of the sources listed, they are resorted to mainly with respect to several case studies which allow an in-depth study of the local specificities. In any case, I believe that all these sources allow a balanced reconstruction of the procedure and of the role of the agents engaged in it.

Before proceeding to the labyrinth of Ottoman administrative practices, it is important to outline the broad limits of the status of the non-Muslim places of worship in the Ottoman state during the period in question.³⁰ It seems that the local specifics established during the Ottoman conquest, especially with regard to ‘privileges’ granted to settlements and large monasteries,³¹ withered in the course of time, abrogated because of radical changes in the relations between conquerors and conquered as the result of uprisings,³² siding with the ‘enemy’, or simply owing to the adjustment of Ottoman legislation to Islamic law.³³ The starting-points in my endeavour are the standard requirements that, for any repair works to be launched, permission had to be obtained from the Ottoman authorities; the structure had to date, at least in theory, from before the con-

mandzhiev (eds), *Pisahme da se znae. Pripiski i letopisi* [Let it be known: marginal inscriptions and annals] (Sofia 1984); S. Stanimirov (ed.), *Dokumenti za katolicheskata deynost v Bulgaria prez XVII vek* [Documents on Catholic activity in Bulgaria, seventeenth century] (Sofia 1993); K. Giakoumis and D. Egro, ‘Ottoman Pragmatism in Domestic Inter-Religious Affairs: The Legal Framework of Church Conversion and Construction in the Ottoman Empire and the 1741 Firman of Ardenicë Monastery’, *Epeirotika Chronika*, 44 (2010), 73-127 (I wish to thank K. Giakoumis for sharing with me his co-authored work before publication); Fra M. Bogdanović, *Ljetopis Kreševskog Samostana (1765-1817)* [Annals of the Kreshevo Monastery (1765-1817)] (Sarajevo 1984), which was brought to my attention by M. Hartmuth.

29 These will be referred to in the relevant places.

30 Here I shall not discuss the credibility of the so-called ‘Pact of Umar’, nor its evolution over time and territory.

31 See, for example, E. A. Zachariadou, ‘Early Ottoman Documents of the Prodomos Monastery (Serres)’, *SF*, 28 (1969), 1-12; Eadem, ‘Faith and Necessity: The Cretan War and the Turco-Cretan Community’, *ArchOtt*, 26 (2009), 225; N. Oikonomides, ‘Monastères et moines lors de la conquête ottomane’, *SF*, 35 (1976), 1-10; J. C. Alexander, ‘The Monasteries of Meteora during the First Two Centuries of Ottoman Rule’, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 32 (1982) [XVI. *Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress. Akten. II/2*], 95-103.

32 This is, for example, the case with Ioannina after the rising in 1611 led by Metropolitan Dionysios of Trikala, called Skylosophos. Its suppression was followed by removing the privileges that the city had received upon its surrender to the Ottomans in 1430: the Christians were expelled from the fortified part of the town, and the *devşirme* was levied on them.

33 A. Fotić, ‘The Official Explanations for the Confiscation and Sale of Monasteries (Churches) and Their Estates at the Time of Selim II’, *Turcica*, 26 (1994), 33-56; E. Kermeli, ‘The Confiscation and Repossession of Monastic Properties in Mount Athos and Patmos Monasteries, 1568-1570’, *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 2000/3-4, 39-53.

quest; no changes or improvements were allowed in terms of size, quality, materials, or other details. These official rules were often breached in both directions: imposing a more restrictive regime or allowing a more lenient application of the regulations. These extremes leading to the construction of new or seizure of 'legitimate' buildings, however, are not an object of study in this paper.

With all these circumstances in mind, let me now turn to my goal here, namely, the reconstruction of the standard procedure leading to official permission for the reconstruction of or repairs to an already existent non-Muslim place of worship.

The Initiating Body/Group

For any permission to be obtained, a person or a group/body of interested people needed to initiate it. Below I shall summarise the terms used in Ottoman documentation to define the applicants, their professional profiles, and the entities to which they belonged, to the extent that these can be discerned from the material that I have processed so far.

The *mühimme* registers rarely mention the names or the professions of those who started the procedure; they just define them on broad lines – place of residence, occasionally the neighbourhood, and religious affiliation. Single *kadı* documents, on the other hand, usually contain names and professional identities, which allow more in-depth conclusions about the local leadership. In terms of details about the initiating persons or entity, documents recorded in the *sicils* lie midway between the *mühimme* entries and the single *kadı* documents.

The most usual definitions of the Orthodox Christians who initiated these procedures are the *zimmis/ehl-i zimmet reayası/ehl-i zimmet reaya taifesi* living in a specific place: *Çernova nam karye zimmileri*,³⁴ *Lipnik nam karyede sakin ehl-i zimmet reaya taifesi*,³⁵ *Çalık Kavak nam derbend karyesinin zimmileri*,³⁶ *Çernova nam karyenin ehl-i zimmet reayası*,³⁷ *zimmiyan taifesi*.³⁸ The same applies to other non-Muslim communities which usually appear as *taife*: *medine-i Rodosçuk'da sakin Ermeni reaya taifesi*,³⁹ *Galata'da vaki Yahudi taifesi*.⁴⁰ In the available documents, Jews or Armenians would rarely be defined as *zimmi*, a term reserved almost exclusively for Orthodox Christians. There are only occasional exceptions: for example, *ehl-i zimmet Ermeni taifesi/Rum taifesi/Nasara taifesi*, where *zimmi* becomes the generic, while *Ermeni*, *Nasara*,⁴¹ and *Rum* indicate sub-groups of the main category. Sometimes the identifier *zimmi* is replaced or comple-

34 MD 111.53.178, the village of Chervena Voda, Ruse district, Bulgaria.

35 MD 110.348.1540, today part of the village of Nikolovo, Ruse district, Bulgaria.

36 MD 104.264.1212; MD 110.570.2629, the village of Rish, Shumen district, Bulgaria.

37 MD 115.663.2879.

38 MD 110.432.1909, a village in the *kaza* of Çemişgezek, today in Turkey.

39 MD 110.322.1435; MD 110.613.2831 (*Sis kasabasında sakin Ermeni taifesi*).

40 MD 110.381.1665.

41 The Orthodox were defined as Nazarenes (*Nasara taifesi*) only in very few cases; for instance, MD 115.497.2198.

mented by the derogatory *kefere* or *gebran* (that is, infidels),⁴² invariably with reference to (Orthodox) Christians. These derogatory definitions appear sporadically, and, at this stage, I am unable to draw categorical conclusions about their use. Orthodox Christians are defined as *kefere* in documents originating from *kadis* in Anatolia and Rumelia, from border and hinterland districts, with very mixed or relatively homogeneous (Muslim or Christian) populations, and, in principle, they could have been identified by the more neutral *zimmi* in any of these cases. In my view, the use of *kefere/gebran* or *zimmi* in this period may be attributed mainly to personal attitudes and preferences of the authors of the documents.

Occasionally the Christian initiators are defined as *fukara*, that is, ‘the poor’. It is not clear whether this term is used regarding only the clergy, or all of the local non-Muslims. In some of the rare cases when it appears in the documentation, it is ambiguous and could describe either: *kasaba-ı Meğri’de sakın zimmi reaya fukarası*.⁴³ There are, however, cases when it is definitely related to clerics, such as monks: for instance, *bu kulları ... Rum taifesi fukaraları olub*, concerning the monks at the St Matthew *metochion* in Kandiye (mod. Heraklion, in Crete).⁴⁴

Sometimes, all the inhabitants of a settlement appeared as applicants: *Kaza-ı mezbure* [Edirne] *muzafatından Ada nahiyesine tabi Karaağaç nam karye ahalisi*;⁴⁵ sometimes, it was the Orthodox Christian inhabitants of an even larger territory, such as a *kaza* or an island: *medine-i Galata muzafatından Mermere nahiyesine tabi Paşalimanı demekle mâruf nam cezire keferesi bi-ecmai him*.⁴⁶ But, on the whole, these are rather exceptional and specific cases. Even when the non-Muslim character of the place is made clear by the text, documents usually refer to the *zimmis* of the so-and-so settlement. On other occasions, we learn of the complex structure of the applicant community: *mahruse-i Brusa’da sakın Ermeni Acem*⁴⁷ *ve sair ehl-i zimmet Ermeni taifesi*.⁴⁸

42 As in the case of the Ankara Christians (*Ankara’da vaki kefere taifesi*; MD 110.449.2004). The term *gebran*, which had identical meaning, was more rarely used; for instance, Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 17: *Yoasif gumenos ve İoakim poraiğumenos nam gebran*.

43 MD 110.344.1527. I am unable to decide which Meğri/Makri appears here, the centre of a *nahiye* connected with Dedeağaç (Alexandroupolis, mod. Greece), or a *kaza* centre, mod. Fethiye, in the Aydın-Menteşe province, mod. Turkey; N. Akbayer, *Osmanlı Yer Adları Sözlüğü* (İstanbul 2001), 115. Indirect clues make me incline towards the former rather than the latter.

44 Sariyannis and Spyropoulos, ‘To othomaniko archeio’, doc. 36 (facsimile of an undated *arz-u-hal*); cf. Kolovos (ed.), *A Database* (various documents).

45 MD 110.406.1786. For a similar situation in different circumstances see B. A. Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society and Justice in the Ottoman Empire: Legal Practice and Dispute Resolution in Çankırı and Kastamonu (1652-1744)* (Leiden and Boston 2003), 152-153.

46 Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 224.

47 *Acem*, or *Acem tüccar*, applies to the Armenian merchants from the East, Persia in particular, who traded in the Ottoman Empire, in the first place engaged in the Silk Road commerce; S. Ivanova, ‘The Empire’s “Own” Foreigners: Armenians and *Acem Tüccar* in Rumeli in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries’, *Oriente Moderno*, 22 (83)/3 (2003) [M. H. van den Boogert and K. Fleet (eds), *The Ottoman Capitulations: Text and Context*], 681-703.

48 MD 112.38.69.

An interesting group which appears in a number of documents related to permits for the restoration of churches is the *Rum taifesi*. The literature agrees that this was the Ottoman identification of Greeks as an ethnic group but also of the flock of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which was an ethnically diverse entity.⁴⁹ For the time being, and taking into account material from Istanbul, Rumelia, and Anatolia, I am more inclined to see *Rum taifesi* as meaning the Greek community in a given settlement, sometimes a constituent element of the complex unit of all Orthodox Christians in the locality, usually defined as *zimmi*. It seems that the *Rum taifesi* could act as a (semi-)independent sub-group.⁵⁰ Such an interpretation is prompted in the first place by the fact that many of the places in the Balkans where the group appears as the initiator of the procedure had a mixed population, and Greeks were not the majority ethnic group within the Orthodox community: for example, Rusçuk (Ruse), Hezargrad (Razgrad), the village of Chervena Voda, Şumnu (Shumen), Sofia, and others on the territory of modern Bulgaria.⁵¹ This does not mean that the Greek communities would always be indicated in the documents as *Rum*. Indeed, sometimes we see *Rum taifesi* as the initiating group also in places with very mixed *zimmi* population, such as Istanbul and Edirne, as well as in settlements where Greeks formed the vast majority of the Christian population.⁵² In the context of my topic here, I am not sure whether such a distinction may be taken to mean that the community in question lived separately from the rest of the Orthodox Christians, had their own churches, and acted as an independent unit. References in various sources indicate the existence of divisions along ethnicity and/or language lines within the *zimmi* communities from as early as the eighteenth century.⁵³

49 On many occasions the difference between these two meanings is blurred, as with *Rum Patriği*, the Ecumenical Patriarch. See a summary on this issue in S. Ivanova, 'Predi da se rodi bulgarskiyat millet' [Before the Bulgarian *millet* was born], in G. Ganev, G. Bakalov, and I. Todev (eds), *Durzhava & Tsurkva, Tsurkva & Durzhava. Sbornik po sluchay 135 godishninata ot uchrediyaveto na Bulgarskata Ekzarhiya* [State and church, church and state: a collection of articles on the occasion of the 135th anniversary of the Bulgarian Exarchate] (Sofia 2006), 155-160.

50 I shall not discuss here the complex processes of nation-formation and expression of ethnic identity, neither am I interested in the ethnic origins of the members of the Greek community.

51 MD 104.110.513; 104.113.524. See MD 110.667.3086 for the *kaza* of Amasya (*kaza-ı mezburrede sakin ehl-i zimmet Rum reayası*).

52 Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 264: *Cezire-i Sakız muzafatından olub Andıra ceziresinde Ayo Nikola manastırı ehl-i zimmet Rum reayasına mahsus olub*.

53 In 1740, in Sofia, Johan Kempelen observed a small Orthodox church near the Mosque of St Sophia, a former church itself. In it, the service was held for all the Orthodox: if one of the choirs sang psalms in Greek, the other would repeat them in Bulgarian. Unfortunately, it is not clear which church he describes, probably the current metropolitan church of Sveti Kral/Sveta Nedelya; M. Yonov (ed.), *Nemski i avstriyski putepisi za Balkanite, XVII-sredata na XVIII v.* [German and Austrian travel accounts about the Balkans, seventeenth-mid eighteenth centuries] (Sofia 1986), 307. See also S 312/9.5r.I, of 1756, about a merchant from Melnik who traded at the *Urumlu suku* in Sofia, which obviously sets this group, the *Rums*, apart from the rest of the *zimmi*s in Sofia. See also Gradeva, 'On Zimmis and Their Church Buildings', 214 (R 10.148.II), for a church labelled as *Bulgar kilisesi* in Rusçuk.

The repair of a church might be started also by a neighbourhood: *nefs-i Kesriye varoş mahallâtından Aya* [illegible] *mahallesinde sakin ehl-i zimmet reayası*,⁵⁴ *mahruse-i Selânik mahallâtından Ayo Dimitri mahallesinde sakin ehl-i zimmet reayası*.⁵⁵ Sometimes the localisation is even more precise: *Brusa'da kal'a haricinde Timurkapı mahallesinde sakin Rum taifesi*,⁵⁶ *medine-i Kandiye derununda İbrahim Ağa Cami-i Şerifi mahallesinde ehl-i zimmet Nasara taifelerinin*.⁵⁷ The *mahalle*, however, emerges as an organisational unit mainly in large cities, such as Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir, Salonica, Amasya, and those with a strong parish network, as was the case with Serres, for example.⁵⁸ The non-Muslim inhabitants of smaller towns or where a denominational group was numerically weak, or of villages, would normally appear as one communal entity. The whole group probably undertook the endeavour for each of its constituent *mahalles* if it possessed more than one church in the settlement. This was usually the case with Armenians and Jews.⁵⁹

The *mühimme* registers provide, as noted above, only limited information about the individuals involved in the process: *kaza-ı mezbureye* [Bergos] *tabi Ayvalı nam karyede sakin Papa* [illegible] *veled-i Nikola ve gayrihum zimmiler*,⁶⁰ *kaza-ı mezbureye* [Edirne] *tabi Bağçe-i ... nam karye ehl-i zimmet reayasından Papa İstamo ve sairleri*.⁶¹ Even the single *fermans* may provide little information about the individuals involved in the process.⁶² More detailed data in this respect might be included in the *sicil* records and in the single documents issued by the *kadis*, but the names and professional identities of those who participated in the process often are not specified there either, concealed behind the standard expression 'and others'.⁶³ On the other hand, written sources produced by

54 MD 110.605.2803 (Kastoria, Greece).

55 MD 111.53.179; see also MD 110.344.1524: *Tatar Bazarı kasabasında vaki varoş mahallesinden zimmi reayası*.

56 MD 110.449.2000. See also MD 110.438.1942 for Kasab Hızır *mahalle* in Izmir, and MD 110.488.2200 for the probably Armenian population of Hacı *mahalle* in the town of Ruha/Urfa, mod. Turkey.

57 Sariyannis and Spyropoulos, 'To othomaniko archeio', doc. 12 (facsimile).

58 Odorico *et alii*, *Conseils*, 68-313, *passim*.

59 On the legal entities and their actions with reference to Jews in Jerusalem, see A. Cohen, 'Communal Legal Entities in a Muslim Setting: Theory and Practice: The Jewish Community in Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem', *Islamic Law and Society*, 3 (1996), 75-90; and to Orthodox Christians, E. Gara, 'In Search of Communities in Seventeenth Century Ottoman Sources: The Case of the Kara Ferye District', *Turcica*, 30 (1998), 135-162.

60 MD 110.676.3126.

61 MD 110.680.3142.

62 See, for example, a *ferman* issued to the monks of Patmos: *Batnos adasında vaki manastırın rahiblerinden* [blank] *ve* [blank] *ve* [blank] *ve sairleri*; Ottoman holdings of St John Monastery, Patmos (OAP), dossier 21, fol. 3r (1712).

63 Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 39: *Aya manastırı keşişlerinden Koca Dyonisi nam keşiş ve sairleri*; S 1 bis.108.II: *Sofya kazasına tabi İzlatuşa nam karye Papas Pop (sic) Velço ve ehl-i karyeden Mavre ve sairleri*; *ibid.*, S 1 bis.116.III: *Sofya kazasına tabi Tırnova nam karye derbend ahalisinden İstoyan veled-i Mihail ve Todor veled-i Gordin ve diğer İstoyan ve İstoyno veled-i Radul ve Rad veled-i* [illegible] *ve İstoyo veled-i Basari* (?).

the non-Muslim communities shed light on the process from their perspective, allowing speculation with regard to the process of self-organisation on the ground level.⁶⁴

Not surprisingly, monks and abbots were among the protagonists when monasteries are concerned: *Rakovice manastırı rahibleri*,⁶⁵ *kaza-ı mezbureye* [Filibe] *tabi Baçkova nam karye kurbünde vaki manastır rahibleri*.⁶⁶ Sometimes, their application was supported and endorsed by their flock: *Kuds-i Şerif'de vaki Rum Patriği ve Rum ruhban taifesiyle sair memalik-i mahrusemde olan ehl-i zimmet Rum reayası*,⁶⁷ *kaza-ı mezbureye* [Aydos] *tabi Birgos nam karyede sakin Patrik vekili olub ... nam rahib ile karye-i mezburun zimmi reayası*,⁶⁸ *kaza-ı mezburede vaki Ravanice manastırın rahibleri ve ehl-i zimmet reaya taifesi*.⁶⁹ Monks or high-ranking ecclesiastics rarely applied for the repair of a church without any involvement of the flock.⁷⁰

On the Way to the Cherished Goal

Once the decision had been taken within the non-Muslim community, its representatives appeared before the *kadı* court and declared the need for repairs. Available documents reveal a prolonged and complicated procedure in all the variants. At this stage of my project I cannot claim that all the steps described below were mandatory; neither can I tell when exactly this procedure was introduced,⁷¹ whether it was influenced by specific international or domestic factors, such as wars, or new political and ideological trends with respect to the non-Muslims. Indeed, some of the *mühimme defters* in the period 1640-1730 contain hundreds of related orders, others not a single one. Does this mean that no permits were issued then? Or were they recorded elsewhere? Or were there different par-

64 In the cases that papa-Synadinos mentions, it is either his or his father's decision; once he says that the expenses for the painting of a church were divided into two equal parts between him and the rest of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood; Odorico *et alii*, *Conseils*, 125, 295. According to the 'Codex of Dositheos' (Central State Archives, Tirana, F. 139, D 2, fol. 25v-26r), the decision on the restoration of two churches in Gjirokastrë, mod. Albania, was made by the collective of "the Christian inhabitants of the out-of-the-castle quarters [the *varoş*], both the more and the less influential" (1776). The agreement, quoted from Giakoumis and Egro, 'Ottoman Pragmatism', was signed by 39 men present at the meeting.

65 MD 110.489.2207 (Rakovica Monastery, near Vidin, Bulgaria).

66 MD 110.469.2105.

67 MD 110.317.1419.

68 MD 110.621.2889 (probably mod. Burgas, Bulgaria).

69 MD 114-1.546.2442 (Ravanica Monastery, central Serbia).

70 MD 114-1.725.3245, an order to the *kapudan paşa* and an unspecified *kadı*: *Hâlâ İstanbul'da Rum Patriği olan Gavril nam Patrik südde-i saadetime arzıhal edüb Patrikliğine tabi Santor [Santorini] ceziresinde Kondofor nam karye*. See also Ihchiev (ed.), *Turските документи*, 348, doc. 20.

71 The *mühimme* registers and single documents from earlier times (1590s) do not show significant deviations from the procedure described here. Cf. Alexander, 'Thessaly', based on documentation and inscriptions in the Dousiko Monastery, near Trikala, mod. Greece, which allow us also to discern some of the steps and protagonists identified below.

allel procedures? All the documents, however, agree that the local *kadı* court and various administrative bodies (the imperial council, sometimes the governor or another functionary, or both the imperial council and other military-administrative institutions) were closely involved in the process of issuing the permit. The procedure is identical also for schools, farm buildings, guesthouses, courtyard fences and other structures forming part of religious compounds.⁷²

An order in response to a letter of the *kadı* of Meğri states that it was initiated by the coming (*varub*) to the Sharia court of the *zimmi reaya* who declared the need to repair the local church. A similar procedure surfaces also in a case from Vidin: the *zimmi reaya* from the whole *kaza* appeared in the *kadı* court, and requested permission for the restoration of the churches on the territory of the whole district.⁷³ The *kadı* then forwarded the petition with an *arz*⁷⁴ or a *mektub*⁷⁵ to the Sultan. In other cases, which at a first glance seem to have been as many as the former, the applicants turned directly to the Sultan (*dergâh-ı muallâ, südde-i saadet*) by going in person (*gelüb*),⁷⁶ or sending an *arzuhal*⁷⁷ (*arzuhal edüb/gönderüb/sunub*)⁷⁸ or ‘a person and a petition’ (*adam ve arzuhal edüb*).⁷⁹ In times of war some of the petitions were submitted – again in person, through an *arzuhal*, or both – to the chancellery following the Grand Vizier to the battlefield.⁸⁰

72 Slightly less complicated was the procedure for repairs in mosques or other *vakıf* buildings which, too, were subject to control by the *kadı* court and even the central authority.

73 MD 110.344.1527: *kasaba-ı Meğri sakin zimmi reaya fukarası meclis-i şer’e varub*; S 14.4b.I: *kaza-ı mezburun ehl-i zimmet reayası meclis-i şer’e varub*, and then the *kadı* forwarded their application to the imperial council. See also Ivanova, ‘Hristiyanska i miusiulmanska blagotvoritelnost’, 21.

74 B. Nedkov, *Osmanoturska diplomatika i paleografiya* [Ottoman Turkish Diplomats and Palaeography], Vol. 1 (Sofia 1966), 161–163; A. Velkov, *Vidove osmanoturški dokumenti. Prinost kum osmanoturskata diplomatika* [Types of Ottoman Turkish documents: a contribution to Ottoman Turkish diplomatics] (Sofia 1986), 15; M. S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)* (Istanbul 1998), 217–220.

75 Kütükoğlu sees it exclusively as a document used in the correspondence with foreign states; *ibid.*, 221–227. This meaning has been noted also by Nedkov, *Osmanoturska diplomatika*, 1:157, who adds the meaning of a ‘chancellery letter’ issued by low-level administrative offices, as is the case here. Velkov, *Vidove*, 134–137, defines it as a letter, an order to lower-level officials which is difficult to distinguish from the *buyruldu*. The documents that I am working with are explicit regarding the use of *mektub* and *arz* as the diplomatic forms used by the *kadis* to inform the central authorities on local developments.

76 MD 104.159.680–681.

77 Velkov, *Vidove*, 19. Nedkov, *Osmanoturska diplomatika*, 1:164–165, defines it as a document addressed by private individuals to bodies of authority. Both he and Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili*, 303–321, note the similarities and differences between *arz/arzuhal* and *mahzar*. On the *arzuhal* and its use in the relations between subjects and rulers, see İnalçık, ‘Şikâyet Hakkı’, 33–45; Faroqi, ‘Political Initiatives’, 25–35; Eadem, ‘Political Activity’, 37–65.

78 MD 110.344.1524; 110.348.1540.

79 See, for example, MD 102.145.580 (applicants from the *kasaba* of Köprü, *eyalet* of Sivas), and 582 (for a village in the *kaza* of Yenice-i Vardar [Gianitsa, mod. Greece]).

80 See, for example, MD 110.433.1915: *İsmail Geçidi* [Izmail, mod. Ukraine] *kasabası*

In both cases, that is, via the *kadı* court or straight to the central authority, the applicants explained that the building in question had been in their hands from the time of the Ottoman conquest or, at least, that it had existed since ‘olden times’. The texts are highly standardised though with some variations in the formulas, and invariably state that it was an old building in use by the community from before the conquest.⁸¹ In many cases this claim was supported by adding the word ‘old’ (*kadimî*) in front of the word ‘church’ (*kilise*, *kenise*, *keşişhane*, *manastır*).⁸² So far, I have not come across references to the way in which the settlement concerned had fallen under Ottoman rule, by voluntary submission or force, as grounds for the request.⁸³ It seems safe to conclude that the most important condition legitimising the right to use a non-Muslim cult building, and hence to repair it, was its ‘oldness’, often backed by a claim that it dated from the time of the conquest. It is not clear whether this argument should be attributed to the intervention of the *kadı* or a special petition-writer (*arzuhalcı*), or the applicants were informed about the legal requirements, and knew how to use or manipulate them. The fact is that the vast majority of the relevant sultanic orders, whether referring to direct *arzuhal*s of the applicants or to *arzes* or *mektubs* of the *kadıs*, emphasise the oldness of the structure and its being in use at the time of the conquest. The argument that the place of worship dated from the time of the conquest figures even in cases where this was clearly not true – because the very settlement dated from after the conquest, or because the churches in question were located far beyond the limits of the medieval settlement.⁸⁴

Other arguments could also be brought forward: for example, religious homogeneity, that is, that the settlement was entirely *zimmi* and no Muslims lived in it.⁸⁵ This is an

mahallâtından [illegible] *mahallesinde ehl-i zimmet reayası ordu-ı hümayunuma gelüb*; MD 110.435.1925: *İsmail Geçidi kasabası mahallâtından Rum mahallesinde sakin ehl-i zimmet reaya taifesi ordu-ı hümayunuma arzuhal edub*; MD 110.409.1796 (Arapkir, mod. Turkey); MD 110.487.2199 (for the *zimmi* population of a village in the *kaza* of Belgrade).

81 Most often: *feth-i hakanîden beru yedlerinde terk olunan kilise...*; MD 110.344.1523. But also see S 14.4v.I, where the local Christians apply for the restoration of all the churches in the *kaza* of Vidin without specifying that they had existed since the time of the conquest.

82 We should note here that the word used in Ottoman documents is *kilise/kenise*, even with regard to Jewish places of worship. Cases of the use of *havra* are rare.

83 The way in which a settlement was conquered by the Ottomans was brought up only in discussions about some symbolic cult structures, mainly in Istanbul, and about places of worship again in this city; Gradeva, ‘Ottoman Policy’, 22, 29. For the synagogues, in particular, see Veinstein, ‘La prise de Constantinople’; Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community*. For the churches see E. A. Zachariadou, ‘La chute de Constantinople en 1453 et la mythologie postérieure’, in U. Marazzi (ed.), *Turcica et Islamica: Studi in memoria di Aldo Gallotta* (Naples 2003), 1021–1031.

84 See the examples of Tatar Pazarcık and Rusçuk discussed in Gradeva, ‘On Zimmis and Their Church Buildings’, 208–222.

85 MD 112.37.144: *cümle ahalisi ehl-i zimmet keferesi olub*, for a village in the *kaza* of Delvine; Salakidis, *Ta sultanika*, 203, doc. 1: *karye-i mezbure umumen zimmi olub*, for the village of Kozani, mod. Greece; Refik, *Türk İdaresinde Bulgaristan*, 37, doc. 55: *bunların karyeleri zimmi karyesi olup*, for a village in the *kaza* of Kazanlık, mod. Bulgaria. But sometimes even a

interesting point because, according to *fetvas* by *şeyhülislams*, this was required for new non-Muslim places of worship to be constructed, but not for repairing already existing buildings. A condition for the latter could be that they ‘did not disturb the view and the hearing’ of the Muslims, and that the repairs did not lead to the enlargement or the improvement of the buildings.⁸⁶ It is only in a few cases that the sultanic orders would set the additional requirement that the cult building be at a distance from Muslims.⁸⁷ But, in any case, they suffice to explain the emphatic statement in some applications that they concerned *zimmi* villages.

The name of the church or monastery, rarely of a synagogue, might also, but not always, be recorded in the Ottoman documents: Panaya/Panagia, Ayo Atanas, Aya Yorgi, Aya, Ayo İvan, Nikoli, İliya, Toriche (Troitsa, that is, Trinity), Meryem Ana (Virgin Mary), Sveti Otets (Holy Father), Sveta Petka, Ayo Kiryaki, Garabed, to mention just a few that crop up in the documents. I am inclined to think that the reason for this is that the name was not significant from the point of view of the legal-administrative procedure. The location of the building, however, especially when urban, would be usually carefully described.⁸⁸ Then follows the explanation that in the course of time (*mürur-i eyyam*) the structure had decayed and some parts needed repair, or that the building as a whole was in ruins or on the verge of collapse (*harabe müşrif*). The latter expression almost invariably figures in the documents related to permits.⁸⁹ Finally, the documents conclude with a request to the Sultan to allow the reconstruction.

The response from the imperial council (*divan-ı hümayun*), a *ferman*, was usually addressed to the *kadı* or the *naib*;⁹⁰ rarely would other officials (e.g., *vali*, *sancakbeyi*, *muhafız*, *kapudan paşa*), too, be listed among the addressees.⁹¹ It is not clear why the latter were among the addressees, whether they were assigned some role in the procedure, or simply as a guarantee against the intervention of local officials (*ehl-i örf*) or other lo-

majority would suffice: *kenise-i mezkûrenün harab olan mevazilere ber üslub-i kadim tâmire ruhsat ve karye-i mezburenün ekser-i sükkâm kefare olmağla*; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 146.

⁸⁶ Gradeva, ‘Ottoman Policy’, 25, 30.

⁸⁷ ... bunların karyeleri zimmi karyesi olup şeyyiri İslâm icra olunmıyup kadimen yedlerinde terkolan kiliselerinin bazı mahalleri termime muhtaç ... babında Hükmü Hümayunum rica eyledikleri ecelden civarı müsliminden bait ise şer’an mesağ olduğu üzere termim etmelerine; Refik, *Türk İdaresinde Bulgaristan*, 36, doc. 53. The issue of the instruments used by non-Muslims in order to construct new places of worship has been discussed in Gradeva, ‘Ottoman Policy’, 27-28; Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, 113ff.

⁸⁸ See, for example, MD 115.520.2298, about Garabed Monastery in the *kaza* of Kayseri, located at an hour’s distance from the village of Atlre (?).

⁸⁹ Variants that may appear are in the details rather than the substance. See, for example, Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 39: *mürur-i eyyam ile çürüyüb ve eskiyüb harabe müşrif olmağla*.

⁹⁰ MD 110.587.2700, Maraş; MD 110.613.2831, Köstendil; MD 110.662.3075, Midilli/Lesbos.

⁹¹ MD 115.593.2629: an order to the *muhafız* and the *kadı* of İnebahtı; MD 115.506.2256: an order to the *mutasarrıf* of Niğbolu, who held it as an *arpalık*, and the *kadı* of Niğbolu; MD 110.557.2586: an order to the pasha and the *kadı* of Sivas.

cal figures who might block the repair works.⁹² The order explicitly stated that this was not yet the permit, and required from the Sharia court that it should inspect the ‘oldness’ of the church *in situ*, issue a Sharia permit (*mesağ-ı şer’î*, rarely *izin* or *icazet*),⁹³ and then send back an *ilâm*⁹⁴ or an *arz* on the issue,⁹⁵ confirming the legality of the application.

Armed with the relevant order, representatives of the non-Muslim community then appeared in court and requested an inspection *in situ* (*keşf*). There are indications that judges were not allowed to carry out the inspection without authorisation by the central authorities (the Sultan). Thus, a *naib* at the Sofia Sharia court was arrested and imprisoned in Eğri Palanka for having performed an *in situ* inspection and issued a *hüccet*⁹⁶ for the repair of a synagogue in the *mahalle* of Kaloyan, one of the *varoş* neighbourhoods, without a relevant sultanic order.⁹⁷ The court appointed a *naib* or a *kâtib*, often accompanied by a *muhzır*, who led a group of Muslims as representatives of ‘public opinion’. Occasionally one sees builders, architects, or unspecified expert witnesses (*ehl-i vukuf ve ehl-i hibreler*)⁹⁸ on the commission, but the majority belonged to the local lower *ulema* (imams, *müderrises*, members of Sufi brotherhoods).⁹⁹ Upon their return, they informed the court about their findings. A *hüccet* was then compiled which included a detailed description of the building in question and identified the parts which needed repair. It usu-

92 The role of the provincial governor and other military and police officials in this procedure still needs to be clarified. Sometimes they seem to have been an integral factor in the process. See, for example, a *tezker*e issued by the *mutasarrıf* of Rhodes in 1638 allowing the monks in the Monastery of Hagia on Andros to construct a courtyard. This was followed, 13 months later, by inspection on the site and the issuance of a *hüccet* by the *kadı* of Andros; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, docs 125, 127. Most often they seem to have been engaged in checks, and to have carried out regular or special inspections of churches and monasteries with a view to discovering unauthorised repairs; see the next section (‘Possible Epilogues’).

93 See S 1 bis.108.II, where Papas Pop (*sic*) Velcho appears before the Sharia court in Sofia on behalf of a group of inhabitants of the village of Zlatusha, and says: *İzin ve icazet taleb ederim*; see also S 1 bis.116.III. Sultanic orders speak of *mesağ-ı şer’î*.

94 Described by Velkov, *Vidove*, 73-76, as a dispatch/report to the central authorities on a variety of issues; cf. Nedkov, *Osmanoturkska diplomatika*, 1:78, 125, 157-159. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili*, 345-350, relates it to the *arz*. In the documents concerning permission for the restoration of places of worship, *arz* and *ilâm* seem to have been used interchangeably.

95 A typical formula is: *vazı-ı kadimî üzere mahalinde şer’le keşf ve ilâm/arz olunmak için yazıldı*. See, for example, the orders referred to above for Vidin and Meğri; MD 115.588.2604, an *ilâm* for the *vakıf* village of Platanoz in the *kaza* of Bursa; MD 115.592.2624, an *arz* for the *mahalle* of Usta, in the town of Lovech, Bulgaria.

96 On the *hüccet*, see Velkov, *Vidove*, 150-153; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili*, 350-359.

97 MD 115.540.2386. So far, however, this is the only document that states explicitly that this was mandatory. For indirect evidence that this was the rule, at least for monasteries, see n. 115 below (S 85.183.I).

98 MD 115.541.2392: *ferman mucibince kasaba-ı mezburede sakin dülgler taifesinden Hacı Mehmed ve ma’lûmî’l-esamî müslimîn ile taraf-ı şer’den kilise-i mezburenin üzerine varılıb şer’le keşf*. Cf. Kuran (ed.), *Mahkeme Kayıtları*, 742-746, doc. 388; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 85.

99 S 1 bis.108.II: *âmm-i ulema-ı müctehidîn ve kâffe-i fukaha-ı din-i rıdvanullah-u taalâ*.

ally, but not necessarily, contained the exact dimensions, the number of windows and doors, the building materials, the roof covering, and other structures that formed part of the compound.¹⁰⁰ Also registered were the specific problems such as that the roof/ceiling was leaking when it snowed/rained, the plaster had fallen from the ceiling, there had been damage to the walls, the fence, or whatever. Sometimes the *hüccet* explained the cause of the poor condition of the building: fire,¹⁰¹ earthquake,¹⁰² or just ‘the course of time’;¹⁰³ but often the description is reduced to simply recording the parts that needed repair without exact measurements, or even to a mere statement about the need for re-construction works to be carried out.¹⁰⁴ In other cases, it was explicitly stated that this established the canonical permissibility of the repairs, and thus legal permission (*izin ve icazet, izin, ruhsat, mesağ-ı şer’î, istizan*) was granted provided no improvements were introduced in the materials nor would there be any enlargement of the building;¹⁰⁵ a summarised version might be recorded in the *sicil*. The *hüccet/vesika/huruf* which reflects the findings of the inspection – single documents or entered in the *kadı sicils*, does not necessarily refer to an order from the Sultan that initiated the inspection,¹⁰⁶ nor does it mention orders sent by other military or administrative officials, despite the clear connection between them.¹⁰⁷ At present I am unable to offer a plausible explanation for this fact, which does not square with the obvious importance of the Sultan’s authorisation. Sometimes the *kadı*

100 S 1 bis.116.III; OAP, dossier 21, fol. 5r, about the monastery on the island of Santorini; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, docs 63, 83, 224, 246.

101 MD 115.541.2392; S 1 bis.116.II; Kuran (ed.), *Mahkeme Kayıtları*, 742-746, doc. 388; MD 110.489.2207, which specifies that Ravanica Monastery had suffered from fire during the “infidels’ invasion” (*istilâ-ı keferede*).

102 NBKM, Or. Dept, F. 317A, a.u. 47A, about the Jesuit church in Izmir; Alexander, ‘Thessaly’.

103 S 1 bis.108.II; cf. S 14.4b.I; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 39. *Mürur-ı eyyam ve kürur-ı a’vâm ile*, or simply *mürur-ı eyyam ile*, is probably the most frequent reason for damages.

104 S 1 bis.108.II; S 149.25a.I.

105 NBKM, Or. Dept, F. 317A, a.u. 47A: *bilâ tevsi ve lâ terfi ve lâ ziyade vazı-ı kadimî üzere*; S 1 bis.108.II: *vazı-ı kadimden ziyade olunmamağını tenbih ve te’kid*; S 149.25a.I: *tarz-ı kadim üzere ta’mir*; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 39: *meremmetü’l-kenais ale’l-vazı’s-sabık ve yu’ad ma-anhadam mine gayr-i ziyadet fi’l-usul ve’l-levahık mazmunu üzre kenise-i merku-menün harabe olan yerlerin ber üslub-ı kadim tâmirine sevb-i şer’den ruhsat verildiği bi’t-taleb sebt olındı*; doc. 44: *zıkr olunan hücerat ve ahurların tâmirine kibel-i şer’den izin verilüb*; doc. 63: *şimal tarafı harabe bulunmağın üslub-i sabık üzere kibel-i şer’den tâmirine izin verilüb*; doc. 72: *kenise-i mezburenün bilâ-tecaviüz an vazatü’l-kadim tâmir ü terminine izin ve icazet verilüb*.

106 See S 1 bis.108.II, for the village of Zlatusha, in the *kaza* of Sofia; S 1 bis.116.III, for the village of Tırnovo, in the *kaza* of Sofia; S 308.1a.I, for the village of Kurilo, in the *kaza* of Sofia; S 149.25a.II, for a monastery near the village of Seslavche, in the *kaza* of Sofia; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, docs 43, 63, 72, 128. That such a sequence existed is clear from some of the single *hüccets* and from the collections: NBKM, Or. Dept, F. 317A, a.u. 47A, for Izmir in 1688; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, docs 40 (*ferman*), 44 (subsequent *hüccet*); Ilchiev (ed.), *Turskite dokumenti*, 348-349, doc. 20 (*hüccet*); Kuran (ed.), *Mahkeme Kayıtları*, 742-746, doc. 388, 753-757, doc. 392, for Istanbul.

107 Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, docs 125 and 127.

or the *naib* issued a *mürasele*¹⁰⁸ or a *tezkere*¹⁰⁹ to the applicants which summarised the *hüccet* or simply declared the repair lawful.¹¹⁰

For the general framework of the status of non-Muslims, and specifically about their places of worship, the *kadıs* relied on a variety of sources: the Sultan's orders and instructions, versions of the so-called 'Pact of Umar' (*ahdname-i hazret-i Umar ibn al-Hattab*),¹¹¹ *fetvas* of Ottoman *şeyhülislams*, and other muftis.¹¹²

So far, I have not come across any case where the inspection would conclude with a negative resolution regarding the request. Documents produced by Christian communities suggest that this was a costly enterprise, prepared in advance and 'supported' with extra-legal arguments.¹¹³ Indeed, protests by local Muslims against the permits, which include accusations of bribes to officials for granting permission, may be attributed to religious intolerance, lack of will to allow the 'infidels' to practice their cult, or both,¹¹⁴ but

108 Letter; Velkov, *Vidove*, 24.

109 Certificate (among many other meanings); *ibid.*, 39.

110 See, for example, Ilchiev (ed.), *Turските документи*, 677-679, doc. 1, a *mürasele* by the *kadı* of Dupniçe to the monks in the Rila Monastery which explicitly describes the following steps: a Sultan's order, issued in response to the monks' *arzıhal*, authorised an inspection on the site of the monastery, and entailed the compilation of a *hüccet* and the *mürasele* in question giving the green light for the repairs. *Müraseles* and *tezkeres* with similar content are to be found in the Andros collection; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, docs 125, 127, 240, 242, 266, 355.

111 NBKM, Or. Dept, Or. 3739, fol. 52v, a 'Handbook of the *kadı* of Eski Cuma' (Turgovishte), compiled in 1674. Among other things, it contains a version of the 'Pact' which prohibits the "construction of churches, monasteries, and *kelia* (cells) in the towns", and prescribes the death penalty for those who breach this regulation.

112 A *sicil* of the *kadı* of Rusçuk of 1656-1657 contains a *fetva* in response to a query concerning the legality of the (re)construction of a village church with larger dimensions and more solid material. It reproduces the views of three authorities belonging to three different legal schools, including those of Kadikhan (Hanafite) and as-Suyuti (Shafite). They range from plain prohibition of the reconstruction to permission but only on exactly the same site and with the same dimensions; R 1.25r.III. The *fetva* is not dated, nor is its author recorded; probably he was a local mufti. None of the *sicil* entries prompts this record, and thus we can only speculate as to whether the *kadı* needed it as general guidance or there was a concrete case in his legal practice. The collections of the Ottoman *şeyhülislams* usually contain *fetvas* devoted to the status of non-Muslim places of worship.

113 For a description of such a 'preparation' see Giakoumis and Egro, 'Ottoman Pragmatism': in 1773 the Bishop and the notables of Gjirokastër allocated money not only for the regular procedures, involving the *vali* and the *kadı*, but also for bribes and other liabilities accrued by officials in Istanbul, the *vali*, the *ayan*, other 'outsiders', and the local *kadı*, to be paid by the entire Orthodox community. In the case of the Church of the Almighty, these amounted to 1,250 out of a total of 6,141 *guruş*, and, in that of the Taxiarches, to 1,312 of the total of 7,633 *guruş*. Petar Bogdan, a seventeenth-century Bulgarian Catholic archbishop, also wrote of significant sums spent 'on the way' to the permit, not necessarily securing the successful resolution of the problem; Stanimirov (ed.), *Dokumenti za katolicheskata deynost*, 104-105, 190-192, 321-323, 335-337.

114 Refik, *Türk İdaresinde Bulgaristan*, 43, doc. 46 (for Stanimaka/Asenovgrad), and 52, doc. 60 (Kavarna); Gradeva, 'Ottoman Policy', 30-33.

most likely also to a relaxed application of the legal framework by the local and central authorities. (Re-)construction works without authorisation are also mentioned in some general and specialised sultan orders.¹¹⁵

The *kadı* then prepared the required *ilâm* or *arz*. Documents from the *mühimme defters* and single *fermans* reveal once again the two possible channels for the information to reach the central authorities. One of them was a *mektub/ilâm/arz* sent by the *kadı* giving the information that the non-Muslims had approached the *kadı* court with a request for a Sharia permission for the repairs of the church/monastery/synagogue, and that an inspection had been carried out *in situ*; the document also reported the results of this procedure, including the measurements of the structure in question and the parts which needed repair, that is, an annotation of the information contained in the *hüccet*.¹¹⁶ In other cases, however, the community sent directly to the central authorities an *arzuhal* which summarised the data from the *hüccet*,¹¹⁷ or a man and an *arzuhal*,¹¹⁸ or, as the Ottoman sources put it, they simply ‘came’.¹¹⁹ But, in this case as well, as required in the *ferman*, a document issued by the *kadı* (*arz* or *ilâm*) would also be despatched to the capital – either separately or written on the same sheet.¹²⁰ Sometimes the *hüccet* itself was submitted to the central authorities, along with an *arz* or *ilâm* as a separate document or written on the same sheet. A *hüccet* from Izmir bears two verifications, of the local Izmir *kadı* and of the judge of Galata (*İbrahim müvellâ hilafeten bi medine-i Galata el-mahmiye*), but the role of the latter remains obscure; probably he exerted some sort of formal control over the procedure or of the seal and signature of the *kadı* of Izmir, or both.¹²¹ The majority of the *hüccets* which bore verification by the respective *kadı* probably stayed with the applicants.¹²²

This petition of the applicants might be supported by one or more *fetvas* of the incumbent *şeyhülislam* or other muftis.¹²³ Unfortunately, we learn about them only from

115 Shopova, *Makedonija*, 89, doc. 66, an order to all the *kadıs* in the *sancak* of Ohrid (1613) concerning churches constructed recently without authorisation; Refik, *Türk İdaresinde Bulgaristan*, 75–76, doc. 83, an order of 1740 concerning unauthorised repair works, or probably even a new church, started by the Wallachian voivode near Silistre; S 85.183.I, a *buyruldu* of the *vali* of Rumelia (January 1681) regarding the ‘habitual inspection’ (*yoklama*) of the monasteries on the territory of the province, to identify unauthorised (i.e., without *ferman*) repair works.

116 MD 115.638.2796, the village of Platanoz, *kaza* of Bursa.

117 MD 115.548.2434, the village of Chervena Voda, *kaza* of Rusçuk.

118 MD 115.520.2298, Garabed Monastery, *kaza* of Kayseri.

119 MD 115.541.2392, İsakçı (mod. Isaccea, Romania).

120 Sariyannis and Spyropoulos, ‘To othomaniko archeio’, doc. 12, which includes both the *arzuhal* and the *ilâm*, and verifications.

121 NBKM, Or. Dept, F. 317A, a.u. 47A.

122 OAP, dossier 21, fol. 5r; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, docs 72, 85.

123 Refik, *Türk İdaresinde Bulgaristan*, 50, doc. 58 (Shiprovo [?], *kaza* of Şumnu); Salakidis, *Ta soultanika*, 203, doc. 1 (Kozani); MD 110.344.1527 (Tatar Pazarcık); MD 110.386.1686 (Chervena Voda); MD 104.264.1212 (Hezargrad); MD 110.247.1124–1125 (Mazgird, mod. Turkey); MD 110.300.1355 and 110.381.1665 (Galata, Istanbul, Jews), in which there is reference to *fetvas* by *şeyhülislams*, *hüküms*, and even an *ahdname-i hümayun*; MD 110.385.1685

the highly abridged texts in the *mühimme* registers or from the single *fermans*. In neither case do we have their content, just reference to the fact that they were part of the ‘dossier’. This does not allow me to speculate about what had triggered this additional activity of the applicant community, whether *fetvas* were sought in order to neutralise possible objections in difficult cases¹²⁴ or were undertaken by well-off communities which could afford them, and thus sought to speed up the issuance of the permit and to ward off negative reactions among the local Muslim community.

Possible Epilogues

Theoretically, the last step in acquiring the permit and the end of the saga was to approach the imperial council with a request for the final decision. This was supported by the *mesağ-ı şer'î*. At this stage, the Sultan's response did contain permission for the repair works but again contingent, with an explicit warning that all the facts in the application were subject to verification. The order was addressed to the local *kadı*, and, very rarely, to military and administrative officials. Also, in theory, and probably in practice, this order allowed the community to finally turn to the building at stake. Maybe in many cases this was the end of the process: the non-Muslims finally repaired their place of worship, and continued to use it until it again needed repair. Looking back at the cases to hand, it is safe to say that powerful and rich monasteries, and prosperous *vakıf* settlements had better chances of achieving permission in a relatively short time,¹²⁵ but this was not always the case. The permission procedure could last for many years.¹²⁶

It seems, however, that the Sultan's blessing for the repairs, and even its putting into effect did not always bring the odyssey to its end. Problems often arose precisely from the stipulation at the end of the Sultan's order recalling the obligation to stick to the origi-

(Lefkoşa/Nicosia, Cyprus). Some church and monastery archives keep *fetvas* about church repairs, probably meant to be used in their applications, or as protection in the case of intervention by Ottoman officials; see, for instance, Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, doc. 351.

124 In some of the cases, such as in Tatar Pazarcık, Chervena Voda, and Hezargrad, it is clear that, despite the claims of the applicant community about the age of the church concerned, the status of the latter was problematic, as it dated from after the Ottoman conquest and was in a mixed settlement. See Gradeva, ‘On Zimmis and Their Church Buildings’, 217-229; M. Kiel, ‘H'razgrad – Hezargrad – Razgrad: The Vicissitudes of a Turkish Town in Bulgaria (Historical, Demographical, Economic and Art Historical Notes)’, *Turcica*, 21-23 (1991), 495-563.

125 MD 115.588.2064, and 115.638.2796, for the village of Platanoz, *kaza* of Bursa, of the *vakıf* of Gazi Hüdavendigâr, that is, Sultan Murad I (r. c.1361-1389); MD 111.180.641, and 111.201.708, for the Panaya Halevi Monastery in Crete, following a petition by the monks of the Arkadi Monastery, a powerful monastery which concluded its own pact with the Ottoman conquerors before 1650; E. A. Zachariadou, ‘Faith and Necessity’, 225; Gradeva, ‘Orthodox Christians’, 198-199.

126 At least seven to eight years, and only after the intervention of the Habsburg ambassador Count Oettingen, for the village of Çalıkavak, and nearly 15 years for the church of St John (Ivan), in the village of Chervena Voda; Gradeva, ‘On Zimmis and Their Church Buildings’, 236.

nal measurements and shape of the building. It was not without grounds that at the end of their applications non-Muslims asked specifically that the order should serve to prevent intervention by the *ehl-i örf* who, contrary to the Sharia, might raise obstacles to the repairs.¹²⁷ Known references to problems created by the *ehl-i örf* vary in terms of causes, acuteness, and duration. Here I shall mention just a few which illustrate the significance of the problem.

Instructive here is the case of the Rila Monastery, Bulgaria, an influential and financially strong institution. A series of documents from its archive¹²⁸ reveals the vicissitudes through which its monks went in their attempt to acquire permission for the restoration of its damaged parts; it also shows that even powerful monasteries could have serious problems in such an endeavour. The series includes an *arzuhal* of 15 September 1742 which describes the poor condition of the monastery buildings following a fire and natural deterioration. This had caused the dispersal of the monks, and hence their inability to pay the taxes due to the *vakıf* of the late Kara Mustafa Paşa in Gebze. Then follows the request for permission to repair the damaged structures. The document bears a positive resolution of the *sermuhasibeci*, and another, on behalf of the *dersaadet ağası*, and recommends the issuance of the permit. On 9 August 1743, the *kadı* of Dupniçe (Dupnitsa, Bulgaria) sent an *emirname* to the local *zâbit* informing him about a *mürasele* issued to the monks (who had supported their application with a *fetva*) for an inspection of the site of the monastery, and the findings of the commission which confirmed the dilapidated state of the monastery buildings. The folio bears also the *buyruldu*, dated 8 November 1744, of the *kaymakam* of the *sancak* of Köstendil which allowed the repair works. This, however, is not the last document related to this undertaking of the Rila monks. On 2 January 1749, the Rumeli Divan (i.e., the council of the governor of Rumelia) issued a *buyruldu* based on a *ferman* by the imperial council which warded off intervention of outsiders, and referred to: i. an earlier application of the monks, and ii. a subsequent permit from the former *mütevelli* of Kara Mustafa Paşa's *vakıf* (probably the ones described above), but also iii. permission from the incumbent *mütevelli*, at the expense of doubling the annual rent that the monks paid to the *vakıf* (from 6,000 to 12,000 *akçes*). The authorities of Rumelia warned against preventing the monks from carrying out the repairs. The next act took place again in the Sharia court in Dupniçe which issued, on 26 June 1750, an *ilâm* confirming the right of the monks to repair the damaged buildings, and warning the *ehl-i örf* against obstructing the monks. Finally, it allowed the monks to apply for a *ferman* which would give the green light for the repair of the buildings destroyed by the fire. Unfortunately, the *ferman* has not survived, and there are no other documents related to the saga. We do not know exactly how long it took the monks to complete the project. The *ilâm* speaks of five years that had elapsed; on the basis of the available documentation, we may say at least eight. The exact expenditure for this endeavour of the monastery also

127 MD 110.570.2629 (Çalıkavak); MD 104.159.681 (Rusçuk).

128 Ihchiev (ed.), *Turskite dokumenti*, 255-256, doc. 1; 348-349, doc. 20; 417-419, doc. 1. Cf. the case of the Monastery of Dousiko, whose monks also had to struggle with local opposition to the repair of the *katholikon* following an earthquake in 1544; Alexander, 'Thessaly', 225-230.

remains unknown, but it is clear that, apart from the undisclosed fees and bribes, they had to agree to doubling the rent that they paid to the *vakıf*.

An earlier order, of 1708, describes the problems of Jews in the *kaza* of Niğbolu (Nikopol, Bulgaria) in their quest for permission to repair their synagogue (*kilise*) in the Atik Hamam *mahalle*. Following an *arz* of the former *kadı* of the city in 1692/1693, they were allowed to carry out the necessary repairs, but by 1707 they had still been unable to do so because of the intervention of unnamed *ehl-i örf*. This was the reason for the issuance of yet another order “forbidding oppression contrary to the Holy Law”.¹²⁹ It seems that intervention of members of the same group had also prevented the inhabitants of Kozani from enforcing the permit that they had obtained in 1701. Following a *buyruldu* of January and a *ferman* of August 1721, they were able to carry out the majority of the repair works in the months that followed.¹³⁰

A document from the *şikâyet defters* related to the churches in Ortaköy/Bulgarohoryo (mod. Ivaylovgrad, Bulgaria) shows a possible scenario in the case of such interventions. Sometime before 1698, following an inspection on the site carried out by a state agent (*mübaşir*) and on condition that no changes or improvements would be introduced into the buildings, the villagers had received permission to repair their two churches which had been “in their hands” since the time of the conquest. Apparently the local Muslims suspected that the latter condition had not been observed, and initiated a new inspection, which found out that there had been changes. The situation did not look very promising for a prompt solution, and the Christians turned again to the Sultan.¹³¹ A similar case crops up in Varna. According to the petition (*mahzar*) of the local *ulema*, some Armenian merchants tried to build a new church. The local Muslims complained that: i. the Armenian merchants in question had settled in the *mahalle* of Abdurrahman Efendi only some 20 to 30 years earlier, and bought a house which they used as a guesthouse (*misafirhane*); ii. claiming that this was a church in olden times, they obtained a sultanic order and a *hüccet* for the parts that needed repair; and iii. false testimony helped them receive a record that the building was an old church which they used to build a new church.¹³² The Varna *ulema* grounded their protest on two facts. In the first place, they disputed the ‘oldness’ of the church which obviously did not date from the time of the conquest of the city. The second objection was related to the location of the church, between two mosques. What happened afterwards we can only guess, but another case, from Kavarna, suggests one of the possible turns. Apparently the local Christians claimed to have possessed since olden times a ‘church site’ in the Muslim *mahalle*, and built a church there. Then, the

129 MD 115.506.2250.

130 N. Ambraseys, ‘Early Earthquakes in the Kozani Area, Northern Greece’, *Tectonophysics*, 308 (1999), 291–298; Salakidis, *Ta sultanika*, 203, doc. 1.

131 Quoted from E. Grozdanova and S. Andreev, ‘Iz Rodopite bez ranitsa. Istoricheski marshruti ot 1650 do 1750 g. s putevoditel “Knigite na zhalbite”’ [Without a rucksack around the Rhodopes: historical routes from 1650 to 1750 with the ‘Books of Grievances’ as a travel guide], *Rhodopica*, 2002/1–2, 256.

132 Refik, *Türk İdaresinde Bulgaristan*, 47–48, doc. 71.

Muslims obtained an order which sanctioned its destruction. The Christians again built a church and a *metochion* on the site. Muslims responded by procuring a *fetva*, and sent a grievance to the Sultan requesting its destruction.¹³³ We do not know how long this exchange continued.

Conclusion

The procedure leading to permission for repairs or reconstruction, probably also for the construction of a new church or other religious structure, was normally started by the whole community of the Christians or Jews who lived in a given settlement. This applies to the great majority of the villages, towns, and cities, especially where the non-Muslims were a minority and where they possessed only a limited number of places of worship. Cases where the applicants were the inhabitants of only one neighbourhood, usually in bigger cities (Istanbul, Salonica, Bursa, Edirne, Amasya), more rarely in villages (Chervena Voda), where the relevant community was numerically and financially strong and had a viable ecclesiastical network, were exceptional. A specific case was the *Rum taifesi*, which crops up as a distinct sub-division within the larger Orthodox community in a settlement. Unfortunately, available sources rarely reveal the names of the persons involved in the procedure, probably only the most outstanding members of the community. From the second half of the seventeenth century, the *varos*, a term which describes the Orthodox Christian community in an urban settlement in the Balkans, in the islands, and in western Anatolia, initiated the procedure, although it is rarely visible in the Ottoman documentation. Along with the laymen, the clergy often appear among the initiators of the procedure. Abbots and monks, sometimes backed by Christian laymen and clergy from nearby settlements, usually started it when it was about a monastery. For churches of more than local significance such as the Patriarchal Church in Istanbul or the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the applicants were led by the Patriarch in question. Patriarchs, however, rarely appear among the applicants in other cases. In my view, the diversity of the practices reflects both standing patterns as well as momentary configurations within a community and the availability of places of worship at the concrete time and place. The *Acem tiiccar* were occasionally specifically indicated when Armenians were striving for permits, but they never acted independently. This is understandable as, despite their specific status and probably some level of self-organisation, they relied on the local Armenians' arrangements for their religious needs. As for Jews, although it is clear that Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Frenk, Romaniot, or others had separate places of worship, and occasionally the internal divisions were evident, when it came to permits for synagogues, they acted collectively and appeared before the Ottoman authorities as a monolithic unit. It is rarely possible to understand from the documents which group's synagogue was at stake.

During the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, in order to secure the needed permission for the restoration of or repairs to their places of worship, the non-

133 Ibid., 39, doc. 60.

Muslim communities in Rumelia and Anatolia needed to undertake the following steps which involved in the first place the *kadıs* and the imperial council: i. secure a sultanic order for an inspection *in situ* of the building which needed repair; ii. obtain a Sharia permission (the so-called *mesağ-ı şer'î*) from the local *kadı* court; this described the structure, and supplied the exact dimensions of the building and other structural elements, as well as the parts which needed repair; and finally, iii. obtain subsequent permission from the imperial council to carry out the repairs based on the Sharia court document. These three stages appear in the cases of patriarchal, town, and village churches, of village monasteries and centres of regional importance, Orthodox Christian, Armenian, Catholic, and Jewish structures.¹³⁴

The procedure displays some variations: in the choice of how to start the application, via the local *kadı* court or by addressing the imperial council/the Sultan directly (the same choice applied to the final stage); in the role and intervention of the military and administrative functionaries, the council (*divan*) of the provincial governor, or others;¹³⁵ in the decision to seek a *fetva* as additional support for the request. *Fetvas* were probably sought not just because the property status of the community allowed it, and to speed up the procedure, but also as a kind of protection, to ward off oppression from local bodies of authority and local Muslims. Whatever the real situation, applicants always felt the need to stress expressly that it was a matter of an old building, often specifying that it dated from the time of the Ottoman conquest. It seems also that, not only when they attempted to secure a new building or the expansion of an existing one, but even when they simply wished to obtain permission to repair an officially acknowledged place of worship, non-Muslims often needed to rely on extra-legal 'arguments' such as gifts and bribes. In cases of buildings with a problematic history, the non-Muslims secured false testimonies in order to obtain the sanction of their endeavour by the local court, the crucial component in the procedure. Yet, even the *kadı*'s goodwill or observance of rules was sometimes neutralised by the hostile intervention of local military and police functionaries or by groups of active and/or sensitive Muslims led by lower *ulema* who could turn the endeavour into a protracted struggle at many administrative levels, carried out with a range of devices and with unforeseeable results.

134 See MD 115.541.2392 (İsakçı), which describes the steps in securing the final permission: (i) in compliance with a *ferman*, (ii) the site was inspected, and the dimensions and other details of the church building were recorded; then (iii) a *hüccet* was issued, which (iv) was submitted to the central authorities by the applicants, with a request for a final permit.

135 The *buyruldu*s in the Andros and Rila monastery archives show the state functionaries rather as a body of control who often exceeded their powers in an attempt to obtain money and other gifts. See S 85.183.I; Ilchiev (ed.), *Turските документи*, 36–38, doc. 1, which explicitly explains that inspections of stavropegic monasteries might not be carried out with just a *buyruldu*, that is, without a *ferman*. The *buyruldu*s dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the collection of the Rila Monastery reveal that such inspections were conducted regularly; *ibid.*, 255–295, *passim*. The Andros collection suggests that the *buyruldu*s and *tezkeres* issued by these functionaries sometimes played the role of the documents issued by the imperial council; Kolovos (ed.), *A Database*, docs 67, 68, 125.

How can we explain this complex situation in which non-Muslims apparently were granted occasionally the right to build new places of worship, contrary to the law, but at the same time were confronted with such difficulties even when it was a matter of legitimate structures and repairs? Ottoman pragmatism in this respect has been discussed in various contexts,¹³⁶ and there is no need to repeat here the debate about Ottoman toleration of the non-Muslim communities in general or of particular groups among them. It seems that Ottoman pragmatism went through ups and downs influenced by internal and external factors. The seventeenth century, in particular, seems to have been such a period of drastic changes and variations. It began with a relatively mild policy vis-à-vis non-Muslim places of worship, but, under the impact of the Kadızadeli movement and other ideological trends with similar orientation, gradually turned into one of the most difficult periods in the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, especially in the so-called 'core' territories. Around 1690, the more moderate policy regarding the non-Muslims and their places of worship, in particular, seems to have been restored.¹³⁷ Such variations can be attributed to the complex interaction between ideological trends within Muslim society and the pragmatic considerations of government, and the need to keep the Ottoman non-Muslim subjects loyal by providing the basics of the cult, and also ensure the regular revenues accruing from the issuance of permissions. Factors of an economic nature and security, related to the importance of each of the communities for the treasury revenues, the need to revive some areas, including by attracting non-Muslim groups with specific skills, winning over the non-Muslim groups at times of war, all had their role in specific periods and places. In these cases, the central authority tended to overlook some of the restrictions, and even to allow breaches of the law. However, it remained an Islamic authority, and as such it treated the non-Muslims as subjects of a religiously inferior order, even when it needed them vitally. As the *fetvas* tell us, their introduction to/affiliation with Islam was the ultimate goal, sometimes even at the expense of the strict application of rules. Thus, in the dilemma between pragmatism and fidelity to religious principles, either the one or the other might prevail in different circumstances and under different conditions. The situation became even more complex owing to the interference of yet another factor, which was difficult to foresee, namely, the disposition of the local Muslims. Considerations of state importance mattered little to them. In a period when the Empire was no longer an undisputed victor on the battlefields and the Christian armies were able to penetrate deep in its Balkan provinces, local Muslims became more and more sensitive to manifestations of confidence by the 'infidels'. On this complex canvas of contra-

136 See, for example, H. İnalçık, 'The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 23-24 (1969-1970), 229-249; Giakoumis and Egro, 'Ottoman Pragmatism'.

137 I have discussed these developments briefly in Gradeva, 'Orthodox Christians', 177-183. This guess is corroborated by an early eighteenth-century chronicle attributed recently to Demetrios Ramadanis, which remarks that Grand Vizier Köprülüzade Mustafa Paşa (in office 1689-1691) "was very easy in granting orders to build churches, and thus many churches were built (or repaired) in his time"; K. Sathas, *Mesaionike vivliotheke* [Medieval library], Vol. 3 (Venice 1872), 47. I wish to thank M. Sariyannis for this reference.

dictions, conflicts of interest, and considerations of a diverse nature, the non-Muslims managed slowly and gradually but persistently to expand the presence of their cult in the settlements where they lived, by building new places of worship, and expanding or making more solid the existing ones. This they achieved again via a combination of devices, including large-scale and long-term strategies, that we may call political, to neutralise the limitations of their *zimmi* status, and the application of small construction tricks, such as building high walls around the buildings in question (for which, too, they needed permission!), and half-burying them in order to achieve larger internal space, and thus reaching their goal without openly challenging the law and the Muslims. All this required solid organisation on the part of the *zimmi*s and was the result of protracted struggles and negotiations at all levels of Ottoman administration, implying significant financial strain and networking on the part of the communal bodies. But it also helped the wide circles involved in the 'enterprise' to cultivate specific skills, develop their understanding of the various Ottoman realities, accumulate useful knowledge about bureaucratic and legal procedures, and, overall, amass experience which may undoubtedly be called political.

In the general assessment of the status of the *zimmi*s and of their places of worship, one should not forget that, in the centuries in question, 'toleration' had not yet become a virtue which was consciously sought. In the context of the general situation in the rest of the world, the very existence of places of worship of the 'other', the 'infidel', and the possibility, despite the difficulties, of repairing them and even constructing new buildings were important factors for the survival of religious and ethnic diversity within the Ottoman Empire. The various aspects of the relations between the Ottoman authority, in the capital and locally, and its subjects of 'other' faiths, the problems which the religious communities in the provinces faced and the factors which influenced them, the complex intertwining of theoretical requirements and actual practices, the mechanisms employed by the non-Muslim communities in their struggle to preserve and possibly expand their presence in their places of residence, how this affected their ability for self-organisation and carrying out the onerous and costly procedures related to cult and financial issues, the role of their experiences in these fields in building up their legal and political culture, all need still to be researched in their local and Empire-wide dimensions. In many ways, the efforts of the non-Muslims to secure the material basis for their worship bring all of them into one single knot.

THE RIGHT OF APPEAL TO STATE INTERVENTION
AS A MEANS OF POLITICAL MOBILISATION
OF THE *REAYA* IN THE OTTOMAN PROVINCES:
SOME PRELIMINARY REMARKS
ON THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MOREA (PELOPONNESE)

Demetrios PAPASTAMATIOU*

THE OTTOMAN STATE HAS COMMONLY been conceived as an excessively centralised mechanism which monopolised all political initiatives and ensured firm political control through ideological, bureaucratic, and coercive means. Ideology aimed at legitimacy, the rationale of which was developed along two seminal axes. The first one was the divine origin of the prevalent and eternal social order, which was reflected in the division of the population between *reaya* and *askeri*. The second principle was the paternalistic image of the Sultan as the ultimate dispenser of justice (*adalet*), protector of the welfare of the *reaya*, and redresser of the arbitrariness and the wrongdoings of his officials.¹ These fea-

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1 For the notion of *adalet* see H. İnalçık, 'Adâletnâmeler', in Idem, *Osmanlı'da Devlet, Hukuk, Adâlet* (Istanbul 2000), 75-194. Regarding the political ideology of the Ottoman state, there is no comprehensive study but only piecemeal attempts. For a short outline see L. T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1996), 283-299; H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. 1, Part 1 (London 1950), 26-38; A. Y. Ocak, 'Osmanlı Siyasi Düşüncesi', in E. İhsanoğlu (ed.), *Osmanlı Devleti ve Medeniyeti Tarihi*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 1988), 164-174. For a select bibliography see M. Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Critics of Society and State, Fifteenth to Early Eighteenth Centuries: Toward a Corpus for the Study of Ottoman Political Thought', *ArchOtt*, 25 (2008), 127-150. For the ideology of the early Ottoman state see C. Imber, 'The Ottoman Dynastic Myth', *Turcica*, 19 (1987), 7-27; Idem, 'Ideals and Legitimation in Early Ottoman History', in M. Kunt and C. Woodhead (eds), *Süleyman the Magnificent and his Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World* (London and New York 1995), 138-153; H. İslamoğlu-İnan, 'Peasants, Commercialization, and Legitimation of State Power in Sixteenth-Century Anatolia', in Ç. Keyder and F. Tabak (eds), *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East* (Albany 1991), 57-76; R. Lindner, 'Stimulus and Justification in Early Ottoman History', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 27 (1982), 207-224. For the decision-making processes see C. H. Farah (ed.), *Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire* (Kirkville 1993).

tures formed the core of the Ottoman political ideology, underpinned by classical Middle Eastern socio-political concepts, such as the circle of equity.

These notions were actually tailored and refined by the *ulema* elite and did not concern the commoners. Philosophical political thought, either legitimising or all in all theoretical, retains a scholarly or even hermetic character and does not address the uneducated laymen. Thus, the inaccessibility of political theory by the *reaya* entailed the reliance of social stability upon what Hakan Karateke defines as factual legitimacy, namely the acceptance of state attitudes and policies by society.² In a way, social concession was integral to the modus operandi of a pre-industrial state like the Ottoman Empire, so that it would obviate social unrest and uprisings. It is not surprising then that factual legitimacy was based on the accommodation of the needs and the demands of the *reaya*. The regime and the Sultan were compelled to portray themselves as caretakers of all significant, as well as mundane, problems of the subjects. It was crucial for the Sultan to assume the role of a ruler not solely interested in taxation and the usurpation of the *reaya*'s surplus, but also in the maintenance of social order, equity, and prosperity.

The *reaya*'s right to appeal to the sultanic authority for the satisfaction of their complaints through the dispatch of petitions (*arzuhâl*) to the Sublime Porte was the major form of practical expression of this kind of legitimacy. As Suraiya Faruqi has pointed out, this activity engaged the *reaya* in a form of political discourse with the state and enabled commoners to take political initiatives or even challenge the power of the state.³ The requisite social consensus rendered the subjects an indispensable part of the smooth running of the state, and constituted an integral aspect of Ottoman society since the sixteenth century at the latest.⁴ Hence, legitimacy was as critical for the consolidation of the state power as control over the resources and the means of production.

Moreover, the countless grievances reaching Istanbul formed an information collage which allowed the Sublime Porte to be aware of all kinds of social tensions even down to the level of a village. Despite their frequently trifling content, the petitions constituted a unique medium of political control for the state, and rendered the subjects of all social and economic strata a useful tool for the Sublime Porte, alongside the *kadıs* and other officials of the provincial administration.⁵

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- 2 For the distinction between normative schema and concrete legitimacy procedures, and the relation between the two notions see H. T. Karateke, 'Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis', in Idem and M. Reinkowski (eds), *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (Leiden 2005), 15-19 and 34-52.
 - 3 S. Faruqi, 'Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Some Evidence for their Existence', in Eadem, *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1720* (Istanbul 1995), 1-11.
 - 4 Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj stresses that the core of the legitimacy devices consisted of this integration of the subjects into the state decision-making procedures; see R. A. Abou-El-Haj, 'Aspects of the Legitimation of Ottoman Rule as Reflected in the Preambles to Two Early *Liva Kanunnameler*', *Turcica*, 21-23 (1991), 373-383.
 - 5 For the political role of the *kadıs* as supervisors of the sultanic order in the provinces see R. Gradeva, 'The Activities of a Kadi Court in Eighteenth-Century Rumeli: The Case of Hacıoğlu

Petitions of appeal to sultanic intervention were irregularly recorded in the *mühimme defters* before the enactment of their systematic bureaucratic registration in the second half of the seventeenth century. Appealing to the Sultan had constituted an essential form of political activity for the *reaya* since the 'classical' period, along with the flight from their settlements, abandonment of their cultivated land, recourse to nomadic life or banditry, and admission to the group of clients of a potent provincial peer.⁶

In 1649, the new series of *şikâyet defters* was enacted, comprising rescripts addressing exclusively complaints to the Porte, while the *mühimme* registers were restricted to administrative, military, and political issues. In 1742, the ongoing rationalisation of bureaucracy led to the creation of the new series, the *ahkâm defters*, with the same content as the *şikâyet defters*, but arranged according to the province that they concerned.⁷ This steady bureaucratic adjustment indicates the assiduous effort of the central administration to keep an eye on the provinces, irrespective of its actual ability to control or intervene in them. The shift from a lax bureaucratic grasp on them, largely confined to the upkeep of the fiscal and public order, to the more structured and centripetal supervision of provincial social dynamics is reflected in the stable diversification of the bureaux in the imperial capital. As Faroqhi has noted, the eighteenth century is characterised by the intensification of the state legitimacy programme through the establishment of a regular and efficient contact between the centre and the periphery.⁸

In this light, the *ahkâm* registers should be studied as a unique type of documentation in that they may allow us some insight into the political behaviour of the *reaya* and their attitudes towards the state. But before embarking on a formalistic description of the political demeanour of the Ottoman subjects, Faroqhi's seminal assumptions have to be expanded and refined with more empirical studies. In this vein, Fatma and Ramazan Acun have undertaken a quantitative analysis of a uniquely early *ahkâm defteri* dating from 1501.⁹ Despite their invaluable remarks, this register outlines an early and prema-

Pazarcık', in Eadem, *Rumeli under the Ottomans, 15th-18th Centuries: Institutions and Communities* (Istanbul 2004), 53-66; Eadem 'On Kadis of Sofia, 16th-17th Centuries', in Eadem, *Rumeli*, 67-106; Eadem, 'Orthodox Christians in the Kadi Courts: The Practice of the Sofia Sheriat Court, Seventeenth Century', in Eadem, *Rumeli*, 165-194; U. Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, ed. V. L. Ménage (Oxford 1973), 220; R. C. Jennings, 'Limitations of the Judicial Powers of the Kadı in 17th Century Ottoman Kayseri', in Idem, *Studies on Ottoman Social History in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Women, Zimmis and Sharia Courts in Kayseri, Cyprus and Trabzon* (Istanbul 1999), 247-276; S. N. Laiou, *He Samos kata ten othomanike periodo* [Samos during the Ottoman period] (Salonica 2002), 78.

6 Faroqhi, 'Political Initiatives', 5-10.

7 H. İnalçık, 'Şikâyet Hakkı: 'Arz-i Hâl ve 'Arz-i Mahzar'lar', in Idem, *Osmanlı'da Devlet*, 49-51; S. Öztürk, 'Sosyo-Ekonomik Tarih Kaynağı Olarak Ahkâm Defterleri', in K. Çiçek (ed.), *Pax Ottomana: Studies in Memoriam Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç* (Ankara 2001), 611-613.

8 S. Faroqhi, 'Guildsmen Complain to the Sultan: Artisans' Disputes and the Ottoman Administration in the 18th Century', in Karateke and Reinkowski (eds), *Legitimizing the Order*, 179-183.

9 F. Acun and R. Acun, 'Demand for Justice and Response of the Sultan: Decision Making in the Ottoman Empire in the Early 16th Century', *EB*, 2007/2, 125-148.

ture phase of the legitimising interaction between the state and the petitioners. A fully-developed legitimacy procedure, revealing political attitudes and stances of the subjects, can be recorded in detail chiefly in the eighteenth century.

This paper constitutes part of a broader study, still in its early stages, of the social history of the Morea (Peloponnese) during the period 1715-1821 through the 18 volumes of the *Mora Ahkâm Defterleri*. This series of registers is of great value to research into the social and political conditions of the Morea, since no *sicils* from this province have been preserved. In this paper we will focus on the information channels which led from the *reaya* of the Morea to the central government, i.e., we will study political tactics from a 'bottom-up' perspective and the ways in which the subjects took advantage of their right to appeal to the Sultan. Our aim is to depict some characteristic cases and to suggest some essential patterns of the *reaya*'s political attitude. Because the project is in a preliminary stage, our argumentation and conclusions inevitably have a tentative character.

The Morea is an exemplary province for such a project, since delicate political strategies of self-management were extensively used by its inhabitants during the eighteenth century. This was owing to the emergence of a particularly enterprising local elite of *ayan* and *kocabayıs*, the absence of significant Ottoman military forces, the demographic predominance of the Christian population, the remoteness of the province from the imperial centre as well as its proximity to Venetian territories. All these factors led to a looser control of the province by the central administration and the great potential of the subjects to utilise all available methods of political mobilisation. Thus, the province enjoyed a long period of 'autonomy' in terms of settling its domestic affairs during the period 1715-1821, i.e., between the Ottoman re-conquest of the peninsula and the Greek War of Independence.¹⁰

Since the content of the first three volumes does not tally with their title,¹¹ we have used the *defter*s 4-9, which correspond to the period between 1742 and 1769. A selection of 300 edicts (*hüküm*) regarding the principal *kazas* of the province has been stud-

10 The bibliography on the Morea is immense, though not always of scholarly validity. For the social, political, and economic conditions in the province during the eighteenth century see J. C. Alexander, *Brigandage and Public Order in the Morea, 1685-1806* (Athens 1985); V. Kremmydas, *To emporio tes Peloponnesou sto 18^o aiona (1715-1792)* [The commerce of the Peloponnese in the eighteenth century] (Salonica 1972); M. Sakellariou, *He Peloponnesos kata ten deuteran Tourkokratian (1715-1821)* [The Peloponnese during the second Turkish occupation] (Athens 1939); and F. Zarinebaf, J. Bennet, and J. L. Davis, *A Historical and Economic Geography of Ottoman Greece: The Southwestern Morea in the 18th Century* (Athens 2005).

11 The first *defter* contains edicts issued by the *kapudan paşa* in response to *arzuhal*s forwarded by the French ambassador between 1716 and 1728. The second *defter* comprises sultanic replies to complaints from various provinces of the Empire for the period 1728-1749. The third *defter* includes rescripts concerning petitions from the islands of the Aegean Sea (*Eyalet-i Bahr-i Sefid*) between 1742 and 1745. These three volumes apparently belong to the older series of *şikâyet defterleri*, and were erroneously included in the *Mora Ahkâm Defterleri*. It has to be noted that the title *Mora Ahkâm Defterleri* is inaccurate, since the series comprises edicts about the province of Rumelia as well.

ied: Anabolu (Nafplio), the military centre of the peninsula, Balya Badra (Patra), the rapidly developing trading port, Tripoliçe (Tripoli), the administrative capital, Mezistre (Mistras), the wealthiest and most extensive *kaza*, Gördes (Corinth), a militarily strategic *kaza*, Gastun (Gastouni), a fertile *kaza* in close proximity to the Venetian territory, Kalamata and Andrusa (Androusa), small *kazas*, but over-represented in the political scene of the province by dint of their influential notables. We follow the argumentation lines of Faroqhi and the Acuns, hoping to clarify the role of *ahkâm* registers as a vehicle of political expression for the commoners.

The Identity of the Petitioners

The first issue which has to be dealt with concerns the identity of those using this political methodology. In principle, anyone could invoke the sultan's intervention as long as he/she was not in arrears with taxes.¹² Accordingly, this practice was widely made use of by all social strata of the Morea, from wealthy and powerful *ayan* and *kocabaşıs* to utterly obscure peasants. As a matter of fact, the number of individuals of low social status accessing the Sublime Porte is impressive, and allows us to consider this practice the most 'open' institution of the Ottoman state. The early stage of our project does not allow us to embark on reliable quantification, since we have yet to specify the analytical categories which will take into account all the local peculiarities of the province under study and allow meaningful statistics. Nevertheless, we hope that a brief and descriptive account of the different groups of applicants will provide us with some insight into the people who took refuge to this mode of political activity.¹³

The majority of petitioners consisted of members of the rural population, mainly Christian peasants acting energetically in defence of their interests. A torrent of Christian names fills the introductory lines of the *hükûms*, though quite often no details are recorded concerning the identity of the petitioners save their first names. Peasants took action as individuals, in groups of co-operating villagers, in clusters of allying villages, or even as a corporate body representing the entire *kaza*. Proxies (*vekil*) deputising for the *reaya* in Istanbul were usually obscure persons (when their name was recorded), since notables were generally reluctant to leave their provincial headquarters or stay in the capital for long. As joint action was a guarantee of success, we reckon that some claims of collective representation might have been spurious, especially in controversies between *zimmis* and notables or members of the Ottoman administration.

Christian *sarrafs* and Jews from Tripoliçe, Balya Badra, and Mezistre, where a fairly numerous Jewish community thrived until 1770, were also frequent lodgers of *arzuhal*s. Also the Moreot notables took advantage of this practice so as to launch a great number

12 S. Faroqhi, 'Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultan's Legitimation (1570-1650)', in Eadem, *Coping with the State*, 37.

13 Since most of the protagonists in these register entries will reappear in our discussion of the most characteristic cases, no examples, save some very intriguing ones, will be cited at this point in our paper.

of petitions. *Sarrafs*, Jews, *ayan*, and *kocabaşıs* were those for whom it must have been rather easy to take on the expenditure of forwarding an *arzuhal* or finance a *vekil*.

This practice was also used by members of the military, janissaries or *sipahis*, acting either as individuals or as military units. Not surprisingly, almost all the janissaries came from Anabolu, the former capital of the *sancak*, and the only fortress with significant military forces in the peninsula. Besides, this strand of action was taken on by members of the provincial administration and the tax-collecting hierarchy, that is to say, *voyvodas*, *mültezims*, or *kethüdas*. Quite often *sipahis* took action together with *zimmis*, forming a kind of alliance, which suggests a society with lax interreligious and social boundaries. Sometimes, people who were simultaneously *sipahis* and merchants turned up, telling evidence of the collapse of the old timariot order and the rise of new social and economic identities and relations.

Provincial urban life took up a fair proportion of the edicts. Complaints were submitted to the Sublime Porte by individual city-dwellers or by cities as corporate bodies,¹⁴ even though the rather complex urban life and the conflicts between diverse factions of the Moreot cities do not justify claims of unanimity and conformity.

Now and then inhabitants of Istanbul, all having usurious relations with Moreots, turned up in the *hüküms*.¹⁵ Women constituted a substantial proportion of applicants, if we take into consideration the inherent difficulties of their endeavour on account of their gender. They were consistently Muslim, many times denouncing men. On the other hand, monks, dervishes, *kadıs*, Christian members of the provincial administration, like dragomans (*tercüman*), consuls, or *beratlıs* are under-represented.

The applicants did not belong only to the wealthiest families of the peninsula; all different walks of life show up in the pages of the registers. We assume that the accessibility of appealing to the Sultan to nearly all categories of the Moreot population can be correlated with the growing monetarisation of the local economy. The availability of cash funds enabled almost all social strata to make the best out of this state legitimacy mechanism. Certainly, many ostensibly fragmentary complaints should be interpreted in the context of the provincial power balance and the political conflicts. This means that, while many villagers seemingly acted on their own initiative, they might have been agents of notables who were financing their petitions.

The bureaucrats in Istanbul made no discriminations and treated all applicants, Muslims or *zimmis*, *askeri* or *reaya*, in the same way, recording the replies to their claims in simple chronological order. Thus, they did not conform to the Islamic tradition of sharp distinctions between different categories of population according to their religion, nor did they stick to the classic Ottoman segregating lines between tax-paying and tax-free subjects. Apparently considerations related to the need for enhanced legitimacy and the

14 The cities of Balya Badra, Mezistre, and Tripoliçe acting as a whole are distinctive examples. See BOA, Mora Ahkâm Defteri 5, p. 61, *hüküm* No. 1; Vol. 6, p. 239, *hüküm* No. 3; Vol. 8, p. 118, *hüküm* No. 2; and Vol. 9, p. 41, *hüküm* No. 2. Henceforth, 'Mora Ahkâm Defteri' will be abbreviated as 'MAD', followed by the numbers of volume, page, and order (*hüküm*).

15 For example, see BOA, MAD 6.74.4, 7.55.5, 8.23.1, 8.80.5, 8.91.4, and 8.119.1.

slow-paced but steady rationalisation of the central bureaucracy enabled the scribes to rid themselves of any theoretical constraints.

The Procedure of the Application

The issuance of an *arzuhal* by the local *kadı* was the typical way of forwarding a complaint; nevertheless, it was quite common for the petitioners to write the report themselves or have it issued by an eminent local Muslim, usually bearing the title of *mevlâna*.¹⁶ In this case the report was not deemed an *arzuhal*, but a letter (*mektub*). Nonetheless, the difference was simply formalistic and not of any factual value for the Sublime Porte with regard to the satisfaction of the request. It is noteworthy that in 1768 three *arzuhals* were written by the renowned Moreot scholar Süleyman Penah Efendi, inhabitant of Tripoliçe, where at the time he was making a living as *tezkereci*.¹⁷

The *kadı* had to be co-operative enough to write or edit an *arzuhal*, since the great majority of the Moreot population, regardless of religion, were ignorant of the Ottoman language or the formulae of the bureaucratic jargon. Also, since the *kadı* was subject to pressures by local notables, the petitioners often needed to be initiated into a patronage network. Where a *kadı* declined to satisfy a claim or was not trusted, the interested parties would turn to *kadıs* of other *kazas*, and not necessarily neighbouring ones.

The applicants quite often had to travel to the imperial capital to present their petitions themselves, staying there for long periods of time or paying multiple visits to the Sublime Porte when the conflicts were particularly complicated. When the applicants could not afford the journey or regarded their presence in the province as necessary for their interests, they would authorise someone in the capital to submit the petition and act on their behalf. In the same vein, all rival parties would dispatch contradictory reports supported by *vekils* in the imperial capital. Thus, the provincial conflicts, with all their intensity and complexities, would be transferred and continued there.

Despite all the above-mentioned impediments, the great number of complaints sent from the Morea shows that in the eighteenth century the image of the remote and inaccessible imperial administrative centre was gradually becoming a thing of the past. The political interplay between the periphery and the centre seems to have been significantly routinised. Undoubtedly, we should not overestimate the intensity of this process, or oversimplify the analysis of this interactive practice, since the intensification of relations between the Morea and the Sublime Porte may also attest the spread and firm consolidation of the Moreot patron-client networks in the capital. For this reason, the quantitative as well as qualitative comparative study of the *ahkâm defters* from different provinces is essential if we wish to establish these particularities.

¹⁶ For instance, see BOA, MAD 6.39.2, 6.230.2, 7.70.1, 8.92.5, 8.201.1, 8.203.5, 8.205.2, 8.213.2, and 8.229.2.

¹⁷ BOA, MAD 9.286.1, 9.318.4, and 9.319.1.

The Objectives of the Petitioners

The petitioners invariably requested the restoration of justice,¹⁸ that is to say, either the enforcement of a *ferman* or a *hiicet*, or the redress of injustice committed by the local court of law. Thus, these petitions can be considered a form of appeal to a higher court, and, at the same time, an indicator of the inability or unwillingness of the local courts and the provincial administration to appease provincial tensions and enforce their decisions.

We cannot estimate the effectiveness of this practice. It is possible that the appeal to sultanic intervention was a mere tool of pressure that would not necessarily ensure the fulfilment of the entreaty. The repetition of *hükiims* with the same content proves that often the rescripts were not implemented, but were ignored both by powerful provincial notables and humble villagers. The defiance of the sultanic will points out that the political conditions which had to be satisfied for the enforcement of a local court decision were still at issue after the recourse to state intervention.

Nevertheless, the large number of petitions from the Morea proves that the Ottoman subjects held this practice in high esteem, for reasons that we can only surmise for the time being. The issuing of a *ferman*, even if it simply prescribed the re-examination of the case, was worth the money and the risks of the respective *arzıhal*. We assume that a certain number of requests were indeed satisfied, since the *kadı* and the other local officials would feel the pressure of the central administration to some degree. Moreover, it is probable that many applicants wished to have their standpoint recorded in the *defters* of the imperial bureaucracy, particularly in prolonged contentions, such as disputes about inheritance rights. The same practice was also of symbolic significance for the litigants, since in this fashion they increased their prestige and potentially had their renown spread beyond the narrow limits of their locality by having had the imperial mechanisms set in motion in their favour.

The State Response

The issuance of a *hüküm* attested the fulfilment of the Sultan's divine mission. This notwithstanding, the legitimacy argumentation found in the *ahkâm* registers differed from that of the *mühimme defters*, to wit, the rhetoric of the good ruler with the benign will, the adherence to justice, and the intermittent strife against the arbitrary deeds of his administrative agents.¹⁹ Accordingly, the recommendations to the local officials to abstain from oppression were rare.

18 Standard formulae were “müdahale ettirilmeyüb men ve def olunmak babında”, “muhalif ve ıbtal-i hak ve gadr sevdasında olduğı”, “hilâf-ı şer’-i şerif zahir olan taaddileri men olunmak babında hükm-i hümayun rica etmeğın”, “hilâf-ı şer’-i şerif taaddi ve muhalefet ettirmeyüb”, “mukaddema sadır olan emr-i şerif intikal ve ihkak-ı hak ve keyfiyeti Deraliyeme ilâm ve işarete mübaderet olunmak”.

19 For the rhetoric of the *mühimme defters* see Faroqi, ‘Political Activity’, 23-24.

What the Sublime Porte did was to command the local *kadı* to investigate the case once more, thus assuming a neutral stance of arbitration, in conformity with the Sharia rationale of social concession. This impartial attitude can also be ascribed to the desire of the imperial government to safeguard its legitimising prestige from the troublesome complexities of provincial controversies. In this way, the Sultan did not have to take sides with any of the litigants, thus displeasing the rival party, while at the same time he avoided the discredit which would stem from any embarrassing failure to implement his will. Thereupon, the responsibility for the settlement of an issue was transferred to the recipients of the *ferman*, i.e., the local *kadı*²⁰ or, quite often, the governor (*vali*, *muhafız*) or his deputy (*mütesellim*). There were no arguments for this neutral stance in the *ahkâm* registers; what was stated clearly was that future violations of the Sharia or the *kanun* were strictly prohibited. This means that the resolution of provincial political and social crises was eventually determined by the factors which had contributed to their outbreak in the first place. In this respect, the Sublime Porte conceded to the provinces a kind of self-government in matters of domestic affairs, thus reinforcing the patron-client networks and the substitution of legality by private interests.

Nevertheless, this neutrality was sometimes abandoned, and a specific order was given, mainly when issues of public order were involved.²¹ When the petition was instigated by a breakdown of public order, the extensive use of armed violence, or the widespread discontent of the population, a state agent (*mübaşir*) was appointed and commanded to do everything so that the subjects would be pleased and cease to feel oppressed.²² Some financial matters asked for a specialised investigation (*istima*) and the dispatch of a report to Istanbul,²³ whereas at times a judicial inspection was rendered indispensable, for instance, in cases of revision of landownership titles.²⁴

Cases and Argumentation in the Ahkâm Defters: Some General Observations

A wide variety of social issues is set out in the *ahkâm defters*.²⁵ However, their exposition reflects the vested interests of the petitioners and should not be understood verbatim. In fact, the divergence between reality and text necessitates knowledge of the local political and social dynamics, so that we are able to understand the background of the cases which are recorded in the registers. Besides, the narrative is structured upon a multi-layered web of meanings and intentions consisting not only of the complainants' arguments, but also of their understanding by the *kadı* and the imperial scribe, and their adaptation into

20 The usual formula was "mahalinde şer' ile görülüb ihkak-ı hak olduğu...".

21 BOA, MAD 6.223.4.

22 BOA, MAD 4.17.2: "... ref ve zulm ve taaddini reaya fukarası üzerlerinde men ve def ve Me-zistre sakinlerinden (*sic*) evza ve atvarından razı ve hoşnud oldukları...".

23 BOA, MAD 7.5.3.

24 BOA, MAD 9.26.1.

25 For an account of the commonest cases see İnalçık, 'Şikâyet Hakkı', 51-54, and Öztürk, 'Sosyo-Ekonomik Tarih', 622-639.

the bureaucratic rhetorical mould. A more comprehensive knowledge of a case calls for cross-examination of many independent sources, including the original *arzuhal* and the final *ferman*. Thus, the *ahkâm* entries should not be deemed credible narratives, but carefully constructed accounts according to formalistic narrative modules.²⁶ The elliptical content of the *ahkâm defters*, their syntactic inaccuracy, the wrong dates, the omission of place or personal names, the orthographic carelessness of the scribes, even the decay of the paper or the ink blur the narration of the events. As a result, the particularities and details of each case, the decision-making processes, and the strategies adopted by the interested parties are not readily, if at all, discerned.

In contrast to the flowery syntactical and rhetorical patterns, the emphatic and difficult vocabulary of the *arzuhal*s, the *ahkâm* entries are characterised by their stylistic plainness and simple wording. The description of the illegal conduct of the accused lacks the dramatic details recorded in *arzuhal*s, and is moulded in a colourless and neat style. Sometimes, vivid details, apparently copied from the respective petition, are included in forceful wording in edicts delineating violent and armed conflicts. These *ahkâm defter* entries always comprise a decision in favour of the petitioner, an indication of the scribe's interest in textual and argumentative coherence.

Perhaps the most revealing part of the *ahkâm* registers is the petitioners' argumentation. Despite the aforementioned limitations, the *ahkâm defters*, along with the *sicils* and *arzuhal*s, constitute the only bureaucratic documentation divulging political and social attitudes of the Ottoman subjects. The semantic opaqueness and the bureaucratic formulaic jargon do not prevent these documents from being telling evidence of the commoners' interests.

The argumentation of the petitioners was developed along two lines, a generic one, used regardless of the request,²⁷ and a specific one, dependent upon the content of the petition. The first category comprised three points: first, the emphasis on the petitioners' loyalty, to wit, their peacefulness, their law-abidingness, and their solvency.²⁸ Second, particular stress was laid on the disruption of the Ottoman order caused by the undue (*icab etmez iken*) violation of both Sharia and *kanun*.²⁹ The terms unfailingly used for the definition of injustice were *gadr* and *zulm*, whose semantic span was determined by the petitioners themselves in a uniquely subjective conceptual mode. Thus, all types of grievances were aptly included within the range of 'injustice'.³⁰ According to the petitions,

26 For similar considerations about the *sicils* see D. Ze'evi, 'The Use of Ottoman Sharī'a Court Records as a Source for Middle Eastern Social History: A Reappraisal', *Islamic Law and Society*, 5 (1998), 35-56.

27 For an outline of some basic arguments see Faroqhi, 'Political Activity', 16-37.

28 For typical examples see BOA, MAD 4.40.4, 4.40.5.

29 Typical formulae were "hilâf-ı şer' ve kanun fuzulen...", "hilâf-ı defter-i hakanî ve mugayir-i kanun olmakla", "fuzulî gasb ve gadr eyledikleri", "muhalif ve ibtal-i hak ve gadr sevdasında olduğu", "taaddi ve gadr murad eyledikleri", "bigayri hakkın ahz eyledi".

30 For the concept of *zulm* see G. Hagen, 'Legitimacy and World Order', in Karateke and Reinkowski (eds), *Legitimizing the Order*, 72-73.

the culprits always acted illicitly,³¹ while attention was drawn to their non-adherence to the Ottoman order (*kendü hallerinde olmayub*).³² Their inner motives were portrayed as psychological, confined to unwarranted avarice (*tama-ı ham*), or the qualities of ‘vice’ (*eşrar, muhalefet ve gadr sevdasında olduğu/oldukları*).³³ They were often supported by tyrants (*cebabireye istinaden*),³⁴ or acted in conspiracies.³⁵ Sometimes the wording was especially acrimonious, since the behaviour of the accused was described as wreaking public havoc.³⁶ The third argument was the lawfulness of the applicant’s request, which was based on evidence commonly used in Sharia courts: namely, oral testimonies,³⁷ or the possession of a *temessük*,³⁸ a *hüccet*,³⁹ a *fetva*,⁴⁰ a *berat*,⁴¹ a *buyruldu*,⁴² or a combination of such documents,⁴³ depending on the request. By way of contrast, the accused was portrayed as not possessing any of them or acting against them.⁴⁴ These three argumentative axes were used invariably by all petitioners, even by the powerful Moreot notables, in monotonously repeated formulae.

Our claim is that the subjects who appealed to the Sultan had fairly good knowledge of legal procedures. This is evident in the more specific argumentation which was contingent on the case presented. For this reason, we will attempt to expand upon a correlation of the cases recorded in the *defters* and the corresponding argumentation. Our aim is, first, to propose a typology of requests, second, to delve into their political character,

31 Typical formulae were “hilâf-ı kanun ve mugayir-i şer’-i şerif fuzulen müdahale”, “mahsul ve rüsumu kanun ve defter mucibince ahz u kabz murad eylediği ecilden hilâf-ı defter ve kanun ve mugayir-i berat muhalefet ve taaddi ve zulm oldukları/olduğu”, and “sulhu fesh olunmak”.

32 For a typical edict see BOA, MAD 4.40.5. A rarer formula was “şer’an bir nesne sabit olmuş değil iken”; BOA, MAD 7.18.2.

33 For such exemplary cases see BOA, MAD 6.39.2, 9.322.5.

34 BOA, MAD 5.76.2.

35 A usual formula was “yekdil ve yekcihet ve hilâf-ı şer’-i şerif bigayri hakkın”; BOA, MAD 4.40.5, 6.220.3.

36 BOA, MAD 7.6.1, in which Osman Bey calls Ahmed Ağa ibn Mehmed Ağa an impostor (“ziyade müzevvir”), who has committed frauds (“tezvirini eylediği alenen”) and risen in rebellion against the state (“mekkûrun hareketi memleketin ihtilâline bais”).

37 BOA, MAD 6.230m.2, 7.70.1, or 8.213.2, though this was not very common.

38 BOA, MAD 7.273.2, 7.274.1, 7.287.1, 7.295.1, 8.79.1, 8.131.2, 8.288.3, 8.291.3, 8.342.1, 8.347.3, 9.80.3.

39 BOA, MAD 7.217.4, 9.72.4.

40 BOA, MAD 5.59.2, 6.150.4, 7.6.1, 7.44.4, 7.71.1, 7.74.3, 7.75.4, 8.119.3, 8.119.4, 8.201.1, 8.341.2.

41 BOA, MAD 8.111.4, 8.201.2.

42 BOA, MAD 9.91.2.

43 BOA, MAD 8.115.3, 8.199.2, 8.345.3, 8.367.1.

44 Typical formulae from BOA, MAD 6.29.4: “memnu olmayub mugayir-i hüccet-i şer’iye niza ve taaddi ve zabtna muhalefet eyledikleri...”; and BOA, MAD 7.124.2: “hilâf-ı defter-i hakanî”, “mugayir-i hüccet-i şer’ ve kanun ve defter-i öşr talebiyle fazla taaddi eylediği...”. A more concise formula from BOA, MAD 8.214.3 is “hilâf-ı şer’-i şerif fuzulen zabt edüb gadr eylediği...”.

and, finally, to outline some ways in which the Ottoman subjects conceived and utilised the state legitimacy claims. Last but not least, it has to be noted that the examples cited are the quintessence of the petitions and by no means unique cases.

The Provincial Notables

The provincial elite of *ayan* and *kocabaşıs* made repeated use of the right to appeal to the Sultan during their contentions for the control of sources of income. These conflicts were particularly fierce in the Morea, sometimes turning into armed clashes and affecting the whole peninsula from the fourth decade of the eighteenth century. The warring camps employed their patron-client networks, both vertical and horizontal, gangs of bandits, Maniot or Albanian outlaws, retinues of pages, and Western consuls (Venetian or French).⁴⁵

Nevertheless, this violent turmoil did not lead to the subversion of state authority, since the Moreot notables' elevated status relied heavily on their *iltizams* and *çiftlik*s, and, thus, their vested interests converged with the maintenance of the Ottoman order. For its part, the central administration refrained from getting involved in the complicated Moreot conflicts, and preferred to oversee the warring camps discreetly. In this way the state was able to exploit the influence that the notables exerted on the lower social groups and stabilise its control over a province far away from the imperial capital and bereft of a large Muslim population or substantial military forces. In this context, the appeal to sultanic intervention was a favoured and welcome methodology for both the state and the provincial magnates.

The *Mora Ahkâm Defterleri* are replete with *hüküms* concerning notables who had made contradictory claims over the same issue. The number of petitions indicates that turning to the Porte constituted an important and integral part of the local contentions. Essentially political in their nature, the petitions record many of the complex tactics that the elite used during their strife. The rival parties attempted to entangle the central administration in their clashes, while the state employed these appeals as information channels and a vehicle of supervision over the provincial power balance. Moreover, as we have already stressed, many *hüküms*, ostensibly unrelated to these conflicts, may have been connected with underlying antagonisms between eminent notables.⁴⁶

45 For the predominant role of the *ayan* and *kocabaşıs* in the Moreot political scene see A. T. Photopoulos, *Hoi kotzampasedes tes Peloponnesou kata te deutere Tourkokratia (1715-1821)* [The *kocabaşıs* of the Peloponnese during the second Turkish occupation] (Athens 2005), and Y. Nagata, *Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa ve Âyânlık Müessesesi* (Tokyo 1982).

46 For the prolonged clash between the *kocabaşı* of Kalamata Panayotis Benakis, the *ayan* Ahmed Hotoman of Holomiç, Halil Bey of Gördes, and the family of Musa Ağa of Andrusa see D. Papastamatiou, 'Oikonomikokoinonikoi mechanismoi kai to prouchontiko phainomeno sten othomanike Peloponneso tou dekatou ogdoou aiona: he periptose tou Panagiote Benake' [Socio-economic mechanisms and notables in the Ottoman Peloponnese in the eighteenth century: the case of Panayotis Benakis], unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2009, where all the relevant edicts are discussed.

The commonest argument used in these conflicts was the defiance by the accused of edicts which had already been issued.⁴⁷ The complainants also took pains to present their case as a communal one and not to involve their interests in their argumentation as far as that was possible. In a typical example, the *kocabaşı* of Mezistre Dimitrakis Krevvatas, Yannakis Meletis, and Panayotis claimed that the *ayan* Hamdi Bey had grabbed 63 *keses* (31,500 *guruş*) and their real property, while he was claiming another 80 *keses* (40,000 *guruş*) from them. Their main argument was that they were delegates of their *kaza*, and, thus, through them Hamdi was oppressing its population.⁴⁸

Concealment of the interested parties' identity was crucial when large-scale raids and military operations took place, a fact which constituted a striking breach of the sultanic order. Complicity with brigands or the warlike clans of Mani, in particular, was used extensively as an indictment; in these cases the narration takes on its most polemical style, a unique exception to the flat and colourless monotony of the *ahkâm* register entries. In many cases, the petitioners also provided elaborate and detailed accounts of hostilities and the damage inflicted on them. In a characteristic *hüküm*, the inhabitants of Mezistre described how some vicious people from their town, with the pretext of the death of Yannakis Malakis and his brother-in-law Kiriakos Fradatos, called the Maniots, whose ring-leader Theodoroyannis grabbed the properties, the animals, and the fields of the villagers, plundered the villages of Sabitsa, Anavriti, and Doriza, humiliated Muslims, and killed two Christians in Anavriti.⁴⁹ Likewise, the *vekils* of the *kaza* of Mezistre accused in very dramatic language the renowned Hamdi Bey, for he had plunged the area into violence, injustice, and murders. Hamdi was accused of having co-operated with the local metropolitan, 40-50 brigands and another Christian notable.⁵⁰ Both incidents, as was the one discussed in the previous paragraph, were related to the longstanding rivalry between the *kocabaşı* family of Krevvatas and the *ayan* Hamdi Bey in Mezistre.

47 See, for instance, BOA, MAD 6.220.1, 6.220.2, 6.220.3, 6.227.2, 6.229.2, 7.6.1, 7.36.2, 7.44.4, 7.74.3, 7.217.4, 8.205.2, 8.345.3, 8.367.1, 9.41.3, 9.72.4, 9.91.2, 9.93.2, 9.105.2.

48 BOA, MAD 6.40.1 (evasıt-ı Rebiyülâhır 1167/5-14 February 1754).

49 "reaya fukarasının arzları mülk ve emlak ve emval ve arsa ve akarları cebren fuzulen zabt eylediklerinden gayri aveneleri olan şaki-i mesfûri ümmet-i Muhammed ve reaya fukarasına tazyik için taslit ve kaza-ı mezbura tabi Maina ittisalında Sabıça ve Anavriti ve Dordi ve sair kuralarda mütemekkin reaya fukarasına varub ve mevakilerini ve sair emvallarını mesfûranın tahrikleriyle (*sic*) şaki-i mesfûr nehb ve garet ve ehl-i islâm bigayri hakkin katl ve iki nefer zimmileri Anavriti karyesinde katl ve medine-i Mezistre ahalisinden ma'lûmü'l-esami kimesneleri gece ile basub emvaların garet ve mesfûrların zahir olan şer ve şekavetlerinden naşı bir türlü emn ve rahatlar kalmayub..."; BOA, MAD 5.61.1 (evahir-i Muharrem 1164/20-29 December 1750).

50 BOA, MAD 6.258.3 (evail-i Muharrem 1171/15-24 September 1757). The inhabitants of the *kaza* had previously sent four group petitions (*mahzar*) to different *naibs* and *kadıs*, but apparently nothing had changed up to that moment.

The Humble Reaya

Appealing to the Sultan was a unique channel through which members of the lower social strata could partake in the politics of their village or town and make their voices heard. The petitions were of seminal political value for the *reaya*, since they constituted the only licit means of defending their interests. Regardless of the triviality of the complaints, the petitions enabled even the most undistinguished *reaya* to inform the Sultan about major or minor disorders in their locality.

Complaints against members of the provincial administration or the army were a popular topic of the petitions forwarded to the Sublime Porte. Over-taxation and illegal levies were the commonest misdeeds of the accused in this category of petition. These *arzuhal*s were almost always issued by communities, cities, or even *kazas*, a fact which pinpoints the degree of mobilisation that fiscal oppression would cause. The frequency of such collective mobilisation should also be attributed to the rapid development of the quasi-institution of community in the Morea.⁵¹ In such a typical petition, a certain Ahmed Ağa and his retinue were accused by the inhabitants of the *kaza* of Ayos Petros of illegally grabbing 50,000 *guruş*.⁵²

Similar indictments were also launched against *kocabaşıs* who were appointed delegates of their villages or towns. In such a case, the villagers Panayotis, Drakos, Thanasis, and another, whose name is not legible, accused the *kocabaşıs* of the villages of Mezistre Vervena, Kazani, Masaneya (or Masayena), Burkci, Ayoriani, Barinca (or Yarinca), Vamvakos, Vrestena, Dralina (or Dranila), Loganiko, Rahula, and Kavlina of collecting money illegally when they were proxies of their communities.⁵³ Similarly, the dwellers of Mezistre complained against their delegates Nikolis Dimitrakopoulos and Panayotis Alexandrakis.⁵⁴

But the commonest complaints of the *reaya* concerned landownership issues and conflicts, most of them related to *çiftlik*-formation processes. The *Mora Ahkâm Defterleri* abound with examples of the way in which petitions were used by the Christian peasantry and all those who felt victimised by the aggression of the land usurpers. In such an instance, Yannakis Kourkoutis accused one Selim from Tripoliçe of encroaching on his lands at the village of Kalo Nero.⁵⁵ At other times the complainants were delegates of Christian villages, like those of Delinami in Gördes, who protested against the rapacity of their former *voyvoda*;⁵⁶ or groups of villagers who had been deprived of their fields, such as the inhabitants of the village of Mavros in Gördes Nikolos, Yannis, Mitros, and

51 In contrast, Acun and Acun, 'Demand for Justice', 141, found only one case of collective complaint in the register of 1501.

52 BOA, MAD 6.225.3 (evahir-i Rebiyülâhır 1170/13-21 January 1757).

53 BOA, MAD 5.62.1 (evail-i Safer 1164/30 December 1750-8 January 1751).

54 BOA, MAD 7.23.3 (evahir-i Safer 1172/24 October-1 November 1758).

55 BOA, MAD 9.83.2 (evahir-i Rebiyülevvel 1180/27 August-5 September 1765).

56 BOA, MAD 6.270.1 (evail-i Rebiyülevvel 1181/28 July-6 August 1767).

another Nikolos, who accused Mehmed Beşe for the same reason.⁵⁷ In a characteristic *hüküm*, all the inhabitants of the small town (*kasaba*) of Trikala in Gördes denounced a certain Mehmed who was trying to appropriate their land by force.⁵⁸ Sometimes villages formed a sort of alliance and co-operated against the pressure exerted on them, as four villages of the *kaza* of Mezistre did in order to foil the landownership expansionism of the local *sipahis*.⁵⁹ In a unique case, the villagers of Ayos Vasilios in Gördes defended the real property of their church from the greed of one Mehmed.⁶⁰

A great number of *ahkâm* registers comprise cases of minor landownership disputes over small-size fields. It is intriguing that villagers complained about such petty cases to the Sultan himself, that their requests reached the Sublime Porte, and that the imperial bureaucracy dealt with them. For example, three anonymous Moreots accused Yannis Marutoğlu that he had encroached upon their houses and orchards when he bought the adjacent field of the *ayan* Ali Efendi.⁶¹ Many of these disputes were about inheritance rights; for instance, Andrikos claimed that, even though he had inherited the land of his brother Anastasis legally and cultivated it for more than 30 years, the latter's son, Panayotis, had turned up and claimed the property.⁶² Similar cases were common among Muslims as well: Hayrici accused Abdülkerim, the executor of his father's will, of illegally selling one vineyard, one orchard, and the production of a *çiftlik* while he was under age.⁶³ Moreover, there were cases when Muslims accused Christians of encroaching upon their properties, a typical case being the accusations of the *sipahi* and merchant Mustafa against Yorgos and Hristos, who had allegedly seized one orchard, one house, and one building plot of his while he was a minor.⁶⁴ Lastly, many times the accused took advantage of the landowner's absence from the Morea, as was the case of Yannis, Yorgos, and Salakina, inhabitants of Istanbul, who accused the residents of Tripoliçe Stamatis and Panayotis of depriving them of their family property in the Morea.⁶⁵

Land which was left uncultivated constituted another cause for disputes; for instance, Zacharias from the village of Hrisikula in Mezistre accused three of his compatriots of usurping land that he had taken over as uncultivated.⁶⁶ In addition, many people tried to take advantage of the right to appeal to the Sultan in order to recover property that they

57 BOA, MAD 7.124.2 (evahir-i Safer 1173/14-22 October 1759). For similar cases see BOA, MAD 7.19.2, 7.30.1, 7.195.3.

58 BOA, MAD 9.122.3 (evahir-i Şaban 1180/22-30 January 1767).

59 BOA, MAD 5.14.4 (evahir-i Şaban 1163/26 July-3 August 1750).

60 BOA, MAD 9.52.4 (evasit-ı Zilkade 1179/21-30 April 1766).

61 BOA, MAD 8.214.3 (evahir-i Şevval 1177/23 April-1 May 1764); cf. BOA, MAD 6.325.2.

62 BOA, MAD 6.33.4 (evahir-i Safer 1167/18-26 December 1753).

63 BOA, MAD 5.79.3 (evahir-i Receb 1164/15-24 June 1751).

64 BOA, MAD 6.106.2 (evail-i Receb 1168/13-22 April 1755).

65 BOA, MAD 8.119.1 (evahir-i Zilkade 1176/3-12 June 1763) and 8.119.2 (evail-i Zilhicce 1176/13-22 June 1763); the accused took advantage of the death of the complainants' father who lived in Tripoliçe.

66 BOA, MAD 6.144.1 (evahir-i Zilhicce 1168/28 September-6 October 1755); cf. BOA, MAD 6.144.2, 6.179.1.

had lost, like Doris from the village of Vrastina in Mezistre who accused the offspring of Lidas as land-grabbers of ten of his fields; Lidas had appropriated the land as a pledge for some loan.⁶⁷

The major priority of a usurper was to rid himself/herself of the disputed item by selling it to someone else, thus transferring to him/her the burden of proving that the ownership was legal. *Ayan* and *kocabaşıs* were favourite purchasers, since they knew the way and had the means to appropriate land that they had obtained illegally. Numerous examples of this tactic are recorded in the *Mora Ahkâm Defterleri*, even though we obviously cannot be sure when the complainant was on the right. A characteristic case is described by Hadice who claimed that she possessed a field at the village of Kuza in Gördes as an heir of Seyyid Mahmud. Even though the latter owned the field legally, when its cultivator died without heirs, an illegitimate son of his turned up and sold the land to the *ayan* Yusuf Bey.⁶⁸

Despite the fact that the petitioners were humble villagers, they demonstrated a masterly use of the appropriate reasoning in their petitions. The transgression of the *kanun* and the imperial *defters* by the accused was a typical argumentation contrivance that they used.⁶⁹ Apart from the invocation of documents proving their ownership rights,⁷⁰ particular stress was laid on the petitioners' adherence to the fiscal order,⁷¹ the uninterrupted continuity of cultivation, and the hereditary right over the disputed land before its illegal seizure.⁷²

Arguments were also developed around ethical insinuations, sometimes exceptionally vehement ones, the aim of which was to demonstrate the immoral ways of the usurpers; in addition to their tyrannical nature (*müteğallibe*, *cebabire*), they were accused of taking advantage of unpaid loans or exigencies like droughts and the consequent rise in prices.⁷³ The use of violence by the accused,⁷⁴ or their alleged collaboration with *ayan* and other notables (*ayan ve zalimîne istinaden*) and men of the provincial administration

67 BOA, MAD 5.9.2 (evasıt-ı Receb 1163/16-25 June 1750).

68 BOA, MAD 6.315.1 (evahir-i Şaban 1181/12-20 January 1768).

69 For a typical example see BOA, MAD 5.79.4 (evahir-i Receb 1164/15-24 June 1751), according to which the inhabitants of the village of Anavriti in Mezistre complained about the fiscal oppression exerted on them by their *zâbit*.

70 “sahib-i arzdan resm-i tapu ile (*sic*) aldıktan sonra rızası ve sahib-i arz ma’rifetiyle bunun ferağ ve tefviz (*sic*) ve yedine verilen temessük mucibince murad eylediği...”; BOA, MAD 6.315.1.

71 “bunları kendü hallerinde olub hilâf-ı şer’-i şerif kimesneye vazı (*sic*) ve taaddilerini etmeyüb ... kimesneye akçe ver[meyi] emr etmeyüb...”; BOA, MAD 4.40.4.

72 “kadimden ziraat ve öşr ve resm sahib-i arzına (*sic*) eda eyledikleri...”; BOA, MAD 7.90.2. See also BOA, MAD 7.195.3, where it is stressed that “69 senesinden resm ve ma’rifet-i şer’ ile ba hüccet-i şerif alub 3 sene mikdar zabt ve ziraat ve öşr ve rüsumatı sahib-i arza eda eyleyüb tapu ve temessüklü yerlerine müdahale olunmak icab etmez iken...”.

73 For example, see BOA, MAD 6.270.1 (evail-i Rebiyülevvel 1181/28 July-6 August 1767), where the *voyvoda* of the village of Dilenami in Gördes is denounced by its inhabitants for oppressing them; the accused allegedly took advantage of a loan that he had given them when the area was afflicted by drought and the consequent increase in food prices (“kaht ve galâ takrib ile”).

74 For example, see BOA, MAD 9.122.3 (evahir-i Şaban 1180/22-30 January 1767), where it is

(*ehl-i örf*) were recurrent points aimed at demonstrating the weakness of the villagers against the unfailingly suspect provincial magnates. This argument did not prove anything, but bore 'emotional' connotations favourable for the petitioners.⁷⁵ Collaboration of the accused with illegal armed groups was also a regular indictment. The accomplice of the bandits could be an oppressive member of the local administration, as was the case of the *voyvoda* of Gördes el-Hac Ahmed Ağa, against whom all the local notables and commoners allied.⁷⁶ The rhetoric put more emphasis on the *voyvoda*'s and the bandits' immorality (*ashab-ı ağraz cibilliyetlerinden*) than on the unlawfulness of their activity. The usurpation of land was described with a variety of terms all stressing injustice and aggression (*müdahale*, *taarruz*, *taaddi*, *gadr*, *dahl*), while what was requested was reinstatement of the previous state of things.⁷⁷

A significant feature of argumentation of the petitions about fiscal issues was precision; the complainants deemed it appropriate to cite all their taxes due and the amounts extracted illicitly from them. For instance, when the *voyvoda* el-Hac Osman Ağa and his assistant Ahmed, responsible for the levy of the *bac-ı bazar*, were accused of over-taxation by the *sipahis* Hasan and Hüseyin, Konstantis, Dimadis, and his brother Todoris, inhabitants of Tripoliçe, extensive details about the latter's fiscal burdens were given.⁷⁸ In the same way, the inhabitants of the *kaza* of Tripoliçe reported in every detail all the tithes levied illegally by Yorgi Kalkapçı, delegate of one Ahmed Paşa.⁷⁹

Carefully voiced, but bold threats of flight from their villages also constituted a sort of commonplace for the petitioners.⁸⁰ That was a basic point made by the inhabitants of the villages of Keravidi, Damala, Didirovo, and Korfos in Anabolu, who leagued together against their oppressive *sipahis* and *zâbits*.⁸¹ This was a major argument also used by the dwellers of the village of Vitina in Anabolu, who claimed that their *ayan* and *kocabaşıs* had grabbed their timber, hay, and corn.⁸²

recorded that "mutasarrıfının olan arazileri zabt ve feragat etmeyüb bunların tasarruflarında olan tarlalarını cebren alub..."

75 That was a point made against Vaskanis, inhabitant of the village of Ayos Vasilios in Gördes, by his fellow-villagers, when the latter accused the former of forging a *temessük* and illegally levying 214 *guruş*; BOA, MAD 9.52.5 (evasıt-ı Zilkade 1179/21-30 April 1766).

76 BOA, MAD 6.33.2 (evahir-i Safer 1167/18-26 December 1753).

77 For a repetitive and typical formula see BOA, MAD 7.90.2: "sahib-i temessük mucibince ke-makân kendülere zabt ve ziraat ettirilüb mezburun hilâf-ı kanun ve sahib-i temessük zahir olan müdahale ve taaddi[si]ni men ve def olunmak babında emr-i şerif rica eyledikleri..." Of course, there were some rhetorical variations, but with no alteration of the semantic content.

78 BOA, MAD 6.231m.2 (evahir-i Receb 1170/11-20 April 1757).

79 BOA, MAD 7.7.3 (evahir-i Zilhicce 1171/26 August-3 September 1758).

80 For instance, see BOA, MAD 4.17.2 (evasıt-ı Safer 1155/17-26 April 1742), according to which the *reaya* declared that they could not stand the violence of Musa ("... fukarasında bir türlü tahammülleri kalmayub") and intended to flee ("perakende ve perişan olacağına bais olduğunu bildirüb"); cf. BOA, MAD 6.39.2 and 6.336.2. For a similar use of the threat of flight by peasants in the seventeenth century see Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 291.

81 BOA, MAD 7.12.3 (evail-i Muharrem 1172/4-13 September 1758).

82 BOA, MAD 7.29.1 (evahir-i Rebiyülevvel 1172/22 November-1 December 1758).

The petitions were used as an instrument of pressure on the state for other reasons, too; namely, populations who had abandoned their villages because of debts and wished to return home, apparently taking advantage of new political or economic conditions, appealed to the Sultan. Thus, in 1766, the descendants of fugitives from various villages in Anabolu and Mezistre asked for permission to return to their native places. As they explained, their ancestors had fled 90 years earlier because of debts to usurers to whom they had also sold their properties.⁸³ Their main arguments focused on the injustice done to their families, and their registration in the imperial *defters* as inhabitants of their ancestral lands. That same year a petition with identical content and argumentation was forwarded to the Sublime Porte by the villagers of Krileba in Gördes; they laid particular stress on their being hindered from repatriation by *ayan* and *kocabaşıs*.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the villagers cleverly invoked the *sipahi* whose interests had also been infringed, thus presenting themselves as defenders of the Ottoman order. We do not know if the two interested parties had formed a kind of alliance or whether this was only an argumentation stratagem of the villagers. Similarly, the Christian inhabitants of three villages complained to the Sublime Porte of the breach of their landlord's rights over 15-*dönüm* fields, orchards, and vineyards by one Mehmed.⁸⁵ We do not know whether the landholder appealed to the Sultan as well, but apparently the petitioners cannot have been pleased with the change of their landholder.

Sipahis, Other Military Personnel, Mütevellis, and Mültezims

Disputes concerning rights over sources of income, such as tax-farms, tithes, and other taxes, or salaries, among *sipahis*, *mütevellis* or *mültezims* were a common subject-matter of the *ahkâm* registers. Despite the fiscal nature of these conflicts, the respective *hüküms* retain an essentially political character, since the stability of the Ottoman order was contingent on the regularity of the flow of income towards its beneficiaries. Moreover, petitioning constituted an accessible outlet of political discontent for the lower members of the provincial administration. Intra-*askeri* disputes often concerned levies on villages, like the conflict between the *dizdar* of Anabolu Mahmud and the *sipahi* Osman concerning the tithe and other taxes of the village of Yoban in Gördes.⁸⁶ In another typical example, Mevlâna Hâfız Mustafa claimed that the *subaşı* Ahmed Ağa from the village of Pigada in Gördes had illegally collected a total of 8,400 *guruş* from his *çiftlik* and his *iltizams*.⁸⁷ Many *hüküms* concerned disputes about salaries between members of the *askeri*.

83 BOA, MAD 9.66.2 (evahir-i Muharrem 1180/29 June-8 July 1766).

84 "... reayaları buldukları mahallerden kanun üzere kaldırub kadimî karyelerine nakl ve iskân murad eyledikde ... ba'zı ayan ve çiftliğin ashabına istinaden hilâf-ı kanun ... tımar mahsulün garet olduğu..."; BOA, MAD 9.82.1 (evasıt-ı Rebiyülevvel 1180/17-26 August 1766).

85 BOA, MAD 9.277.2 (evail-i Rebiyülevvel 1182/16-25 July 1768).

86 BOA, MAD 7.167.3 (evahir-i Şaban 1173/8-16 April 1760) and 7.201.1 (evahir-i Muharrem 1174/2-11 September 1760).

87 BOA, MAD 7.121.2 (evahir-i Safer 1173/14-22 October 1759).

In a characteristic case, the horsemen of the left wing of the garrison of Anabolu accused the *zâbit* of Tripoliçe of not delivering their salaries to them.⁸⁸

It was not rare for the collection of waqf income to give rise to disputes. In their petition, the monks of an unnamed monastery, owner of a waqf at the village of Asprohoma in Kalamata, protested about the difficulties that they encountered in levying their waqf's revenues.⁸⁹ Firm competitors of the *mütevelli*s were the *ayan* and *kocabaşıs* of the peninsula. For instance, one Zilha accused the renowned *kocabaşı* of Mezistre Yannis Krevvatas of usurping the 500 *guruş*-worth of produce of a waqf comprising a field with 90 trees at the village of Axos and olive trees at the village of Birinio. Furthermore, Krevvatas did not deliver 750 *guruş* owed to the *kaymakam* Mehmed Efendi. Krevvatas used to lease the waqf, but, after the death of its *mütevelli* Hüseyin Efendi, he attempted to appropriate it.⁹⁰

There were also *mültezims* who complained about their failure to collect their income owing to the recalcitrance of the *reaya*, as did the *mültezim* of Tripoliçe and Karitena who could not collect the tax on grapes.⁹¹ In another case, the inhabitants of the village of Brina in Mezistre failed to deliver the money due to the *mültezim* Hasan.⁹² This phenomenon was particularly common when the *mültezim* resided in Istanbul and was represented in the Morea only by a *vekil*, as was the case of the *kapıcı ağa* of the Sublime Porte Mustafa, who could not have his 300 *guruş* from the office of *muhzirbaşılık* in Tripoliçe delivered to his *vekil* Hasan.⁹³ Sometimes the revenues could not be delivered on account of rowdy outsiders, like the Albanian trouble-makers who prevented Hamdi Bey from having his 1,000-*guruş* income from the market of Mezistre delivered.⁹⁴ The great number of *hüküms* with the same content proves that this was a recurrent problem for the tax-collectors and, more generally, the officials of the provincial administration in the Morea.

The timariot class was plagued with conflicts among its members. It was quite common for *sipahis* to encroach on property of deceased colleagues of theirs, a fact which did not deter the latter's widows or daughters from claiming their income. In such a case, Ayşe from Anabolu appealed to the Sultan in order to get back her late father's revenues from two watermills and the surrounding fields, six walnut trees, and a house, which had been seized by the *sipahi* Mustafa Dulkoğlu and bequeathed to his daughter Havva.⁹⁵ Since the name of the aforementioned Ayşe's father is not recorded, we cannot be sure whether another Ayşe from Anabolu striving to retain the possession of the Sirav

88 BOA, MAD 8.77.2 (evasıt-ı Receb 1176/26 January-4 February 1763). For a similar case, where the names of all the *askeri* complainants are recorded, see BOA, MAD 9.83.5.

89 BOA, MAD 4.24.2 (evahir-i Zilkade 1155/17-26 January 1743).

90 BOA, MAD 9.103.4 (evahir-i Cemaziyelâhir 1180/24 November-2 December 1766).

91 BOA, MAD 6.314.1 (evahir-i Şaban 1171/30 April-8 May 1758).

92 BOA, MAD 6.29.1 and 6.29.2 (both evail-i Safer 1167/28 November-7 December 1753). The notables of the village were papa-Yorgis, Kamaris, Panayotis, Dimitris, papa-Andreas, Vasilis, Todorakis, Yannis Robotis, and two more, whose names are not recorded.

93 BOA, MAD 9.156.3 and 9.157.3 (both evahir-i Zilhicce 1180/20-29 May 1767).

94 BOA, MAD 9.125.2 (evasıt-ı Ramazan 1180/10-19 February 1767).

95 BOA, MAD 8.32.1 (evasıt-ı Zilhicce 1175/3-12 July 1762).

Çavuşlar (*sic*) çiftlik at the village of Borki (Borgo) a few years earlier was the same person. The çiftlik once belonged to her brother Ömer Bey ibn Mehmed, but now its income had been seized by Molla Ömer, Mehmed Odabaşı, and Seyyid Mehmed Ağa.⁹⁶

At times the Christian inhabitants of a *timar* would react en masse and take over its arable lands against the will of the *sipahi*. This rather serious demonstration of defiance and disruption of the Ottoman order is described in a *hüküm* according to which the inhabitants of a *timar* in the *kaza* of Anabolu embezzled it, even though it belonged to one Mehmed.⁹⁷ It is interesting that the only way in which the *sipahi* could re-establish the previous order was to appeal to the Sultan. The weakness of the provincial administration and the political importance of the appeal to the Sultan are reflected even better in a *hüküm* which records the seizure of an 8-çift landed property at the Akça Bey çiftlik by a group of villagers. The property belonged to the *ağa* of the left wing of the garrison of Anabolu Mehmed and his brother İsmail, and the encroachers defied all commands of the provincial authorities for the restoration of order.⁹⁸ This weakness of the *sipahi* stratum in dictating its will to the *reaya* is undoubtedly a sign of the disintegration of the old timariot order, or at least of its precarious position in the province of the Morea. Comparison with documentation regarding the authority of the *sipahis* in other parts of the Ottoman Empire would be most useful, since it would clarify the significance of any regional peculiarities. Only in this way will we be able to evaluate the importance of factors such as the small number of the Muslim population or the disproportionate social, political, and economic authority of the *ayan* and *kocabaşıs*, in the case of the Morea, in the devaluation of the political leverage of the timariots.

The *ahkâm defters* also contain another type of landholding crisis, namely, claims for restoration of *timar* land by their former beneficiaries when the usurper, usually an *ayan*, died without leaving any heirs, or when his family could not defend his economic and political position. Then, scores of petitions would flow to Istanbul with contradictory claims over the same land, embarrassing the Sublime Porte, since no rational decision-making process was possible on the basis of the incoming information. A characteristic case was the demise of the house of Musa Ağa of Andrusa and the perplexing court dispute which broke out between his last two remaining offspring, Fatma and Ayşe, and numerous *sipahis* claiming the family landed property.⁹⁹

The disputes over urban properties, mainly shops, were rarer because of the economic predominance of agriculture in the Morea and the semi-rural character of its small towns. From the relevant *hüküms* it is clear that what was at stake was not the ownership of the

96 BOA, MAD 9.323.2 (evail-i Ramazan 1184/19-28 December 1770).

97 BOA, MAD 6.77.1 (evahir-i Zilhicce 1167/9-17 October 1754). The villagers were Yorgos, Balos, Yannis Laskas, Yorgos Kalovorıs, Dimitris, Stamatis, Dalkos, Kalodimos, Tasos, Yannis, Kiriakos, Koulis, papa-Ikonomos, Makos, Argiris, and Angelos. The name of the *timar* is not recorded.

98 BOA, MAD 7.196.2 (evail-i Muharrem 1174/13-22 August 1760). The villagers disregarded an *ilâm*, a *hüccet*, and a *buyruldu*.

99 Papastamatiou, 'Oikonomikokoinonikoi mechanismoi', 247-267, where all the pertinent *hüküms* are mentioned.

shops themselves but their exploitation. Thus, in two consecutive *ahkâm defter* entries, the resident of Tripoliçe Hüseyin accused İbrahim, Hasan, another Hasan, and the brothers Ali, Hasan, and Abdülkerim of having seized 14 years earlier eight and a half shops that he owned. Surprisingly, he did not ask for the return of his property, but for compensation for the revenue that he had lost during all those years.¹⁰⁰

The argumentation in cases of disputed income focused on the lawfulness of the claim, while the complainants often expatiated on the nature of the income, its value in *guruş*, the length of time they enjoyed it, and the possession of the appropriate documentation (mainly a *berat* and a registration in the imperial registers).¹⁰¹ Thus, the horseman of the garrison of Anabolu Mehmed forwarded a petition replete with details and precise dates regarding the appropriation of his *timar* Ayos Yorgos by one Bursalı Ali.¹⁰²

Particular emphasis was also laid on the weakness of the *sipahi* when faced with the new landholding elite backing the offenders. The negative connotation of any mention of the *ayan* and the *kocabaşı* was also exploited appropriately by the petitioners, but maybe not convincingly enough, since providing specific names was extremely rare. In such a case, the inhabitant of the *mahalle* Mesa Hora in Mezistre el-Hac Mehmed accused the *reaya* Dimitraki, Yorgaki, Kara, and Thanasi that they had appropriated his right over the produce and the pasture of his *mukataa* at the Vuralı *çiftlik* that he had owned for 34 years. The accused were supported by unnamed notables, well-organised and powerful enough to bring Muslim false witnesses to court when sued.¹⁰³ Sometimes the petitioners provided more concrete evidence, as did Abdüllâtif who accused Yannis Mativos, inhabitant of the town of Mezistre, that he had taken advantage of his office as a *beratlı* dragoon to embezzle the occupancy of a 20-*dönüm* field and not fulfil the financial obligations which stemmed from his right to use a watermill.¹⁰⁴

Finally, it is intriguing that tax collection was described in terms of a private enterprise and not as part of the imperial fiscal politics. The arguments of the petitioners were tailored to the rhetorical mould of injustice directed against them and not against the state. Despite the emphasis on the violation of the *kanun*, the core of their argumentation resembled that used for private disputes. In other words, the complainants argued as if

100 BOA, MAD 5.112.2 and 5.112.3 (both evahir-i Ramazan 1165/2-11 August 1752). For other cases see BOA, MAD 4.10.1 and 4.11.3.

101 For such a typical argumentation see BOA, MAD 7.121.2: "Sultan Osman Han (?) cami-i şerife ve imaret âmmeye evkafı mülhakatından cezire-i Morada vaki Gördes kazasında çiftlik-i kebir ma tevabi beher sene 2250 guruş maktuan caiz vakıfdan lâzım olduğuna binaen 1171 senesi merhumun iltizamını memur olan Mora muhassıl kaymakamı İsmail Ağa ve temessükle mutassarıf olan...".

102 BOA, MAD 9.278.1 (evail-i Rebiyülevvel 1182/16-25 July 1768). The same person accused also Abdi Bey, horseman of the right wing, of appropriating income equivalent to 2,500 *guruş* from his *timars* on 25 Zilhicce 1181; BOA, MAD 9.273.1 (evahir-i Safer 1182/7-15 July 1768).

103 BOA, MAD 5.76.2 (evasıt-ı Receb 1164/5-14 June 1751).

104 BOA, MAD 9.113.2 and 9.113.3 (both evahir-i Receb 1180/23 December 1766-1 January 1767).

they could not get back the money of a private debt, adhering thus to the business aspect of the tax leasing enterprise – that is, to its nature from a purely legalistic, and not political, point of view.¹⁰⁵

Loans and Debts

A large number of *ahkâm defter* entries concerned loans, insolvency, guarantees (*kefalet*),¹⁰⁶ financial settlements,¹⁰⁷ or disputed debts.¹⁰⁸ The creditors belonged to all religious groups;¹⁰⁹ sometimes we encounter Christians protesting against office-holders who owed them money.¹¹⁰ The debtors were usually individuals, either Muslims¹¹¹ or Christians,¹¹² but, occasionally, cases of insolvent communities¹¹³ were recorded.

A great many complaints were about debts of deceased persons that their heirs refused to pay. In a series of characteristic *hüküms*, the son of the murdered Halil Bey from Gördes was denounced because he refused to settle the debts of his father, i.e., 1,000 and 8,073 *guruş* to *çavuş beşe* Selim and another Halil, respectively.¹¹⁴ The most interesting disputes were related to debts and the dire financial straits of Moreot notables, such as the considerable amount of 15,010 *guruş* owed by the three prominent *ayan* Ahmed, Musa Ağa, and Mustafa Hotoman to the Jew Balasuf (*sic*) from

105 For example, see BOA, MAD 9.157.3 (evahir-i Zilhicce 1180/20-29 May 1767): “300 *guruş* ilhak-ı hak olub defaatla taleb eylediği havalarına tabi ehl-i örfe istinaden bi-vech-i şer’î edaya muhalefet ve gadr sevdasında oldukları ve tarafından el-Hac Mehmed nam kimesneye vekil ettirdiği bildirüb...”.

106 For example, in BOA, MAD 9.286.1 (evahir-i Rebiyülâhır 1182/4-12 September 1768), Yusuf Bey, inhabitant of Tripoliçe, is accused of refusing to pay back, as guarantor, a 500-*guruş* loan that a certain Abdülkerim had taken.

107 For instance, according to BOA, MAD 9.79.1 (evail-i Rebiyülevvel 1180/7-16 August 1766), Seyyid Mehmed and his father Abdürraîf refused to pay 500 *guruş* as a settlement for a dispute over a loan of 1,950 *guruş*.

108 For example, see BOA, MAD 7.144.2 (evail-i Cemaziyelevvel 1173/21-30 December 1759), according to which Panayotis, Antonis, and Yorgos Zaimoğlu blamed Selim Ağa and his *vekil* Osman Ağa for oppression, since the latter claimed 1,750 *guruş* which had already been paid off.

109 For some characteristic cases see BOA, MAD 6.35.2, 6.35.3, 6.41.2, 6.41.3, 7.12.2, 7.55.5, 8.5.1, 8.23.1, 8.80.5, 8.171.4, 8.268.1, 9.65.1.

110 BOA, MAD 9.135.1 (evahir-i Şevval 1179/2-10 April 1766), according to which the *voyvoda* of Dimiçana Ahmed failed to pay out 1,050 *guruş* that he owed to Luka, dweller in the same village.

111 For some typical cases see BOA, MAD 5.18.2, 6.149.2, 6.238.4, 7.146.1, 8.72.3, 8.72.4.

112 For example, see BOA, MAD 8.92.2.

113 For example, BOA, MAD 6.149.3 and 6.149.4 (both evasıt-ı Muharrem 1169/17-26 October 1755), according to which the *reaya* of the village of Pıgada in Gördes borrowed 2,572 *guruş* from the inhabitant of Anabolu el-Hac Ahmed, but paid back only 672.

114 BOA, MAD 7.54.4 (evail-i Receb 1171/11-20 March 1758) and 7.115.4 (evail-i Safer 1173/24 September-3 October 1759); cf. 6.127.2, 6.207.2, 7.55.5, 7.247.4, 8.244.2, 9.315.2, 9.319.1.

Balya Badra.¹¹⁵ Another eminent *ayan* who seemingly was in arrears was Hamdi Bey of Mezistre,¹¹⁶ while the *kocabaşı* family of Krevvatas of the same town found themselves at a similar financial dead-end.¹¹⁷ At times, the accused were members of the religious elite or holders of prestigious *berats*.¹¹⁸ Often it is not clear whether the accused took loans for themselves or were acting as delegates of their *kazas*, as was the case of the aforementioned Hamdi Bey, *kocabaşıs* Linardos Kahveci, Yannakis and Kannelos Krevvatas, Panayotis, Alexandris, Yorgos Kondopoulos, and Yorgakis Hrisokalis, who borrowed – and then failed to repay – 19,006 *guruş* from Ali and el-Hac Hasan.¹¹⁹

These cases constitute an example of how the petitioning process as an institutionalised mode of communication between the centre and the periphery could turn into a means of pressure by the centre on the provincial social strata, in other words, functioning in a reverse ‘top down’ mode. The above-mentioned notables must have felt this, since they were also accused of not delivering 4,434.5 *guruş* to the *mültezim* of their *mukataa*, *muhafız vezir* Hamza Paşa.¹²⁰ Accordingly, the appeal to state intervention, usually with the pretext of money owed to notables by the population of their *kaza*, must have been suitably employed by the former so as to increase their political influence on the peasants.¹²¹

The repetitiveness of these accusations and the fact that a significant proportion of the accused inhabited small villages indicate the degree of money circulation in the Moreot countryside.¹²² It is not surprising that the amounts claimed were significant in most cases, since it had to be worthwhile to take on the expenses and the risk of sending an *arzuhal* or travelling to Istanbul. Five thousand *guruş* was an average debt value which made it worth appealing to the Sublime Porte, while the amounts of 19,006, 15,010, and 10,300 *guruş*,¹²³ owed by provincial notables or merchants, were the most considerable ones that we come across in the *ahkâm defters*. On the other hand, the petty amount of 139 *guruş* did not prevent Mevlâna Hüseyin from travelling all the way from the Morea to Istanbul.¹²⁴

115 BOA, MAD 6.216.4 (evasıt-ı Rebiyülevvel 1170/4-13 December 1756); cf. BOA, MAD 7.55.5, 7.114.2.

116 BOA, MAD 6.35.2, 6.41.2, 8.171.4, 8.268.1, 9.65.1. Among his creditors were the Jews Yakob and Sinur (?) Hekimoğlu.

117 BOA, MAD 7.73.2 (evail-i Ramazan 1172/28 April-7 May 1759).

118 According to BOA, MAD 9.315.3 (evail-i Şaban 1182/11-20 December 1768), the Bishop of Patmos, who resided in Tripoliçe, was accused of owing 2,500 *guruş* to some Alexis from Istanbul. In another instance, the Consul of Sicily Dimitris Manos from Balya Badra was similarly accused of a debt of 10,300 *guruş* to the dragoman of the *divan-ı hümayun* Yannakis; BOA, MAD 6.76.4 (evahir-i Zilhicce 1167/9-17 October 1754).

119 BOA, MAD 8.19.3 (evahir-i Şevval 1175/15-23 May 1762).

120 BOA, MAD 8.67.4 (evasıt-ı Cemaziyelevvel 1163/18-27 April 1750).

121 For such a typical use of appeals to the Porte see BOA, MAD 8.383.1 (evasıt-ı Cemaziyelevvel 1179/26 October-4 November 1765), according to which the *vekil* of Mezistre *kocabaşı* Manolis Krevvatas accused the *reaya* of the town (*kasaba*) of not having delivered 1,500 *guruş* owed to him.

122 For such cases see BOA, MAD 5.57.3, 8.79.3, 8.131.3.

123 See, respectively, BOA, MAD 8.19.3, 6.216.4, 6.74.4.

124 BOA, MAD 5.18.2 (evasıt-ı Şevval 1162/24 September-3 October 1749).

These *ahkâm defter* entries are short and very formulaic with scant variations between each other. Many times the only change is the names of the litigants and their places of origin. They invariably end with the same account of the debtor's refusal to stick to his financial obligations (*bir türlü illet ve bahane ile edaya muhalefet ve ibtal-i hak ve gadr sevdasında olduğu/oldukları*). The evidence usually used by the creditors focused on the possession of the pertinent documents, chiefly *temessüks*, the number of which depended on the installments of the debt.¹²⁵ Many times, the creditors had obtained *fetvas* as well, an indication that the debtors had called into question the legality of the arrears.¹²⁶

Violence, Bandits, Business Disputes, and Other Cases

Commoners were also motivated to seek state intervention over problems of internal security and criminal law, primarily assassinations and armed robberies. These petitions functioned as a primary information channel for the imperial centre on matters of public order. In a petition of this kind, Ahmed and Fatma informed the government that their son Pehlivan Mustafa Ağa had been robbed of 1,600 *guruş*, his horse and the movable property that he bore, and was murdered by bandits at a mountain pass (*derbend*), while he was travelling from Argos to Gördes.¹²⁷ Cases of violence were also related to controversies between Muslims, such as the murder of Hasan Çavuş by Feyzullah in Tripoliçe,¹²⁸ or reflected entrepreneurial conflicts, like the murder of Hasan's brother by el-Hac Mehmed, merchant and inhabitant of Balya Badra.¹²⁹ Nor did the janissaries abstain from such violent acts, as we are informed by one Halil: the janissaries of the 27th *cemaat* of Anabolu İsmail, Mustafa, Ahmed, and Mehmed Odabaşı shot and killed Halil's brother Usta Hüseyin.¹³⁰ Break-ins were also reported, such as the raid on the storehouse of İbrahim bin İbrahim from the village of Velina in Gördes.¹³¹

It is debatable why serious violations of public order and cases of banditry were registered in the *ahkâm* and not in the *mühimme* registers, where similar cases were usually recorded. Presumably, these acts of violence were considered private affairs, and not a threat against the state or the Sultan. A lack of definite dividing lines between the pri-

125 For examples see BOA, MAD 5.57.3, 6.81.3, 7.146.1, 9.52.3.

126 BOA, MAD 6.239.3.

127 BOA, MAD 6.139.2 (evail-i Zilhicce 1168/8-17 September 1755). Mustafa was the *kethüda* of the *mütevelli* of the *kaza* of Argos.

128 BOA, MAD 9.79.3 (evasıt-ı Şevval 1179/23 March-1 April 1766).

129 BOA, MAD 8.182.1 (evahir-i Muharrem 1177/1-10 August 1763). The accused paid someone to commit the murder; the victim died of his wounds ("vekil ile harb ve cürm ve müteessiren fevt olub").

130 BOA, MAD 9.140.2 (evail-i Zilkade 1180/31 March-9 April 1767). Even though the reasons are not recorded, we assume that there was a judicial dispute. The *yeniçeri ağası* Hüseyin Ağa was ordered to investigate the matter and send a report (*ilâm*).

131 BOA, MAD 7.191.1 (evasıt-ı Zilhicce 1173/25 July-3 August 1760). The burglars took away large quantities of food, clothes, metal items, tobacco, silk, honey, and other types of merchandise. The *ahkâm* register contains a list of the stolen goods.

vate and the public is more than evident in such cases of breach of the public order. For example, when a group of inhabitants of Mezistre complained about the rapacity of the Albanians Mustafa, Hasan, Hüseyin, Ali, and Stusok (*sic*), who had forced the *reaya* to grant them hospitality and had grabbed their food, the complainants felt the need to focus on their loyalty to the sultanic order: they stressed that they had been paying their tithes and the other imperial taxes, that they did not owe money to anyone, and that they had never pestered anyone, an argument indicative of the manner in which the pre-modern state was conceived by its subjects.¹³² The rowdy behaviour of the Albanians was understood in terms of a private affair, and not as an issue concerning the state and public order. In this context, the petitioners felt the need to prove their adherence to the Sultan before they could ask for anything.

Business affairs also found their way into the *ahkâm defters*. In such an instance, a certain mason Yorgos from Tripoliçe protested because some people had taken on building works without being authorised to.¹³³ In another case, an inhabitant of Ayos Yannis of the *kaza* of Ayos Petros accused his partner *kocabaşıs* of not delivering to him eight *okkas* of silk cocoons, eight *okkas* of silk, 96 *kiles* of corn, and red paint, as they had agreed.¹³⁴

There were also petitions whose content cannot be classified readily, but shows us a more mundane aspect of everyday life. These *ahkâm* register entries demonstrate that people would have recourse to sultanic arbitration for a wide variety of matters, sometimes rather trivial ones. For example, Fatma from Mezistre accused her ex-husband Hamdi Bey of refusing to pay her for a *hamam* that she had sold to him, on the pretext that the *hamam* was in bad condition.¹³⁵ In another case, one Mustafa accused a certain Dimitris from Tripoliçe that the latter had hidden and then appropriated his slave who had escaped from him.¹³⁶ It is clear that the commoners made the best out of their right to address the state and did not hesitate to present their rather insignificant demands to the Sultan. What is more, despite the triviality of these requests, the imperial bureaucracy did not refrain from looking into them.

Some Tentative Conclusions

So what can we make of these seemingly countless cases? The political importance of the appeal to the Sultan can be conceived from two viewpoints, namely, its functionality for

132 “âşar-ı şer’iye ve sair hukuk ve rüsumları kanun ve defter mucibince zâbitlerine ve cizye-i şer’iye ... eda edüb kimesneye deyn olmayub bir türlü dahl ve taarruz olunmak icab etmez iken...”; BOA, MAD 5.13.3 (evasıt-ı Ramazan 1163/14-23 August 1750).

133 BOA, MAD 9.41.2 (evasıt-ı Şevval 1179/23 March-1 April 1766).

134 BOA, MAD 8.101.1 (evasıt-ı Ramazan 1176/26 March-4 April 1763). For other characteristic cases of this kind see 8.171.3 and 9.55.4.

135 BOA, MAD 8.202.3 (evahir-i Ramazan 1177/24 March-2 April 1764). Apart from the *hamam*, Fatma had sold to Hamdi 26 shops, one inn of 10 rooms, 800 mulberry trees, and 34 *mülk* properties for 15,000 *guruş*.

136 BOA, MAD 8.357.2 (evahir-i Muharrem 1179/10-19 July 1765).

the state and its utility for the subjects. As far as the state is concerned, this practice was an invaluable means of political control over the provinces. The transfer of provincial politics to the imperial capital through the *arzuhal*s did not mean so much to appease political tensions, as to get the Sublime Porte informed about them, although, as has been noted above, state intervention did take place in a limited number of cases, by and large in accordance with the estimated significance of the social tension which arose or its imminent hazard for the sultanic grip on the provinces. Thus, in face of the disintegration of the *timar* system and the centrifugal tendencies of the new provincial elites, the sultanic authority extended its web of supervision over the provinces, by adding the *reaya* to its informers.

On the other hand, the use of this practice by the commoners poses questions about the way in which we should comprehend political activity in a pre-industrial context. We think that a functional definition of politics in the Ottoman eighteenth century should stretch its semantic span to the way in which the subjects appealed to state intervention about almost any problem of theirs. We do not claim that all the requests had an undisputed political character, but that private and public considerations fused into one another in the Ottoman mentality, a fact with an undeniable political character. We do not regard the recording of cases concerning public order in the *ahkâm* instead of the *mühimme defters* as a bureaucratic lapse but a substantive feature of how the Ottomans viewed the relations between the Sultan and his subjects.

In the eighteenth century, the Sultan apparently was not regarded an inaccessible monarch, since commoners would address him for almost every imaginable reason. That means that the sultanic propaganda and ideological mechanisms were particularly successful, since factual legitimacy became an indispensable part of provincial politics and life. The subjects accepted the Sultan's role as the ultimate dispenser of justice and redresser of inequity, and made the best out of it. In a way, they partook of the state decision-making processes, although their role was limited to that of the informer. This legitimising acquiescence presumed and entailed a change in the attitudes of the *reaya* towards the state institutions. They had to be, and indeed became, informed about judicial manoeuvres and practices so as to attain their objectives. It is highly possible that this situation also entailed the development of a network of specialists making a living out of *arzuhal*s, i.e., scribes, *kadıs*, muftis, and mediators in Istanbul. Nevertheless, the existence of these specialists does not discredit the increasing familiarity of the subjects with political, judicial, and legitimacy processes.

These considerations are subject to revision and modification as more cases are taken into account. As the registers to be studied cover a long period during which many social changes took place, we believe that these new conditions will be reflected in the *ahkâm* registers of the period. Moreover, quantification of all the recorded cases and argumentation will reveal more patterns of political behaviour and rhetoric. But above all, it is essential that our conclusions about the Morea be confirmed or confuted by the comparative study of *ahkâm defters* from other provinces. Only in this way shall we be able to acquire a more accurate and comprehensive conception of the relations between the state and its subjects during the eighteenth century.

RECONFIGURING THE OTTOMAN POLITICAL IMAGINATION: PETITIONING AND PRINT CULTURE IN THE EARLY TANZIMAT

Evthymios PAPATAXIARCHIS*

Petitions in the Low Politics of the Early Tanzimat

IN HER CLASSIC PAPER ON 'POLITICAL INITIATIVES 'from the bottom up'' in early modern Ottoman society,¹ Suraiya Faroqhi suggests a programme that gives close attention to historical actors and considers their moves and strategies as having effects on 'higher' levels of governance.² Petitions are the stuff of the low politics that she unravels in her analysis. Faroqhi treats them as privileged means at the hands of the 'ordinary people' for pursuing political initiatives such as lodging complaints against administrators, making

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- 1 S. Faroqhi, 'Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Some Evidence for their Existence', in H. G. Majer (ed.), *Osmanische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vančo Boškov* (Wiesbaden 1986), 24-33.
- 2 In this regard Faroqhi's approach is connected with the wider move to apply 'bottom-up' perspectives in the historical anthropology of social and political practices in early modern European society; for example, see N. Z. Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford 1987) and A. Farge, *Fragile Lives: Violence, Power and Solidarity in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, trans. C. Shelton (Cambridge, Mass. 1993).

demands for 'just' taxation, or redressing official malpractices.³ She further locates the flourishing of petitioning during the period of the weakening of the central state's ability to control its provinces, which started in the late sixteenth century and ended at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

From my perspective, the perspective of a historically-minded anthropologist,⁴ Faroqhi's innovative analysis is highly relevant to understanding the early Tanzimat realities as well. It provides in particular a very useful framework for systematically exploring the micro-history of political moves and practices by the marginal Greek-speaking Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire during the upheaval that followed the successful Greek Revolution. Here, therefore, I take Faroqhi's lead to address the function of petitions at the very end of the period that she considers to be the golden era of petitioning. What I intend to show is that in the early phases of the Tanzimat there is evidence suggesting that political initiatives of this kind to some degree intensified. Yet they also diversified in form, particularly as they creatively merged with other genres of communicating grievances and expressing opinion, often dissenting, in the emerging spheres of publishing and journalism, such as letters in the press.

In the extensive historiographic literature on the subject, petitions have been defined as formalised written statements articulating interests⁵ – in particular, pressing “demands for a favor or for the redressing of an injustice”⁶ – and voicing opinion⁷ that may be heterodox in nature. In this capacity they have been analysed as more or less bureaucratic means of conferring agency on allegedly ‘silent’ subjects⁸ and contributing to changes in

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- 3 For centuries, as Faroqhi has shown, petitions constituted the principal framework for the legitimate expression of popular protest in the form of grievances and complaints personally addressed to higher officials or the Sultan. On the use of petitions in Ottoman society, also see S. Faroqhi, ‘Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)’, *JESHO*, 34 (1992), 1-39 and E. Gara, ‘Popular Protest and the Limitations of Sultanic Justice’, in Eadem, M. E. Kabadayı and C. K. Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi* (Istanbul 2011), 89-104. For a review of the literature on petitions in Ottoman historiography see M. E. Kabadayı, ‘Petitioning as Political Action: Petitioning Practices of Workers in Ottoman Factories’, in Gara, Kabadayı and Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest*, 57-74.
 - 4 On the unpopularity of anthropological history and ‘micro’-approaches among historians of the Ottoman Empire, see S. Faroqhi, ‘The Fieldglass and the Magnifying Lens: Studies of Ottoman Crafts and Craftsmen’, in Eadem, *Making a Living in the Ottoman Lands, 1480 to 1820* (Istanbul 1995), 85.
 - 5 A. Würgler, ‘Voices from Among the “Silent Masses”: Humble Petitions and Social Conflicts in Early Modern Central Europe’, in L. H. van Voss (ed.), *Petitions in Social History* (Cambridge 2002), 14.
 - 6 L. H. van Voss, ‘Introduction’, in Eadem (ed.), *Petitions in Social History*, 1.
 - 7 G. Shapiro and J. Markoff, ‘Officially Solicited Petitions: The *Cahiers de Doléances* as a Historical Source’, in van Voss (ed.), *Petitions in Social History*, 79-106.
 - 8 I borrow the term from the title of Würgler, ‘Voices from Among the “Silent Masses”’. In the Ottoman context, this perspective is adopted by L. T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1996), 283-299. The ideology of the ‘Circle of Justice’, which

local configurations of power. In early modern contexts especially, both inside and outside Europe, where there were limited means of politics available to the lower ranks of society, collective petitioning constituted a quasi-judicial and therefore legitimate form of popular politics.⁹ In many cases, petitions provided ways of allying with the political centre against intermediate power-holders.¹⁰ In others, they functioned as a means of exerting pressure on the central government and its institutions from the 'outside', a tendency that intensified in conditions of rapid change, unrest, and popular radicalism in the course of the nineteenth century.¹¹

Here I adopt a much broader approach that turns attention to the writing and use of petitions beyond the bureaucratic context. Petitions are treated as texts which have a shaping influence on the world and, more specifically, as interested textual practices with a powerful communicative potential.¹² Viewed from this angle, the drafting of petitions shares common characteristics with the writing of letters to the press, journalistic reports, and other textual practices that, in conditions of socio-political strife, may also pursue political goals and perform a political function. Petitions, therefore, should be analysed in conjunction with other printed materials.¹³ After all, together they constitute the very stuff of contentious politics.¹⁴ Furthermore, as I will try to show, petitioning, epistolography, and other forms of publishing are often mixed and mutually transformed, as they are engaged in the service of political mobilisation. I believe that an open-minded approach to these mixings may reveal the wider political effects that petitions often have.

informed the constitution of the Ottoman state, suggested the interdependency of rulers and ruled, and, therefore, provided room for the expression of both consent and resistance. According to Darling, petitions were devices for correcting eccentricities of the 'Circle of Justice'.

9 See R. W. Hoyle, 'Petitioning as Popular Politics in Early Sixteenth-Century England', *Historical Research*, 75 (2002), 365-389.

10 Van Voss, 'Introduction', 4.

11 C. Leys, 'Petitioning in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Political Studies*, 111 (1955), 47.

12 My approach is inspired by a theoretical tradition that treats text as discursive practice to be analysed in context and focuses on the constitutive function of the text in the world. Historians who adopt the practice perspective as well as followers of the 'linguistic turn' in historiography have contributed to this new way of dealing with the written sources. Here I would like to refer to Roger Chartier's intervention in the debate over the 'Great Cat Massacre'; R. Chartier, 'Text, Symbols and Frenchness: Historical Uses of Symbolic Anthropology', in Idem, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, trans. L. G. Cochrane (Cambridge 1988), 95-111. Also see Idem, 'History between Narrative and Knowledge', in Idem, *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices*, trans. L. G. Cochrane (Baltimore 1997), 13-27. This analytical framework has been innovatively applied in the study of letters of pardon and remission by Natalie Davis; Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*.

13 See D. Zaret, 'Petitions and the "Invention" of Public Opinion in the English Revolution', *American Journal of Sociology*, 101 (1996), 1508.

14 For example, see C. Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834* (Cambridge, Mass. 1995), 54-56.

This brings us to the key issue: how do petitions work? I am particularly interested in one important aspect: petitions constitute a legitimate, institutionally formalised way of referring to a higher order – the state bureaucracy, the Church, regional authorities (or even the press) – and involving it in an interested scheme of action that is initiated and partially executed ‘from below’. In this capacity, petitions work as stimulators: they transmit political messages to higher levels of governance – often, especially in the case of collective petitions, through the use of appointed delegates and structures of interpersonal mediation – and eventually produce responses.¹⁵ For example, they give greater visibility to a ‘cause’, thus making it adoptable by particular bureaucratic agents. I want to consider how, under special conditions, petitions may change their form and mould political messages in novel ways, and to assess the wider implications of such innovations.

The development and spread of the press and publishing were the catalysts in the transformation of petitioning as a traditional means of political communication.¹⁶ Print culture introduced new principles of communication which both transcended the norms governing petitioning and shifted its content in innovative directions. This is a process that, as David Zaret has shown,¹⁷ initially emerged in the course of the English Revolution, when petitions were extensively printed.¹⁸ Printing transformed the petition as a traditional instrument of communication and superseded norms of secrecy that dominated its practice. In the hands of radical groups, printed petitions were subjected to political uses that contributed to ‘democratic speculation’ and further facilitated the development of public opinion. This is a particularly useful insight in understanding the transformations that the Greek Revolution brought into effect in the Ottoman Empire when, during the early Tanzimat, petitioning became enmeshed in the developing print culture and was transposed from the bureaucratic to the journalistic mode of expressing opinion.

The above issues will be addressed through the lens of the micro-historical analysis of factional conflict in Ayvalık/Kydonies¹⁹ during the first years of the Tanzimat. Con-

15 In systemic terms, petitions could be seen as administrative means for restoring imbalances in the relations between the rulers and the ruled. See Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 284.

16 On print culture and its effects, see, besides the classic texts of E. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge 2005 [2nd ed.]) and B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London 1991), R. Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, trans. L. G. Cochrane (Princeton 1987).

17 See Zaret, ‘Petitions’ and Idem, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton 2000).

18 Revolutionary moments of mass political mobilisation, such as the English, the French, and the American Revolutions, have provided very productive frameworks for the study of petitions. Political ruptures in early modern contexts constitute interesting parallels with the case at hand. On the use of petitions in the context of the French Revolution, see A. Farge and M. Foucault, *Le désordre des familles. Lettres de cachet des Archives de la Bastille au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris 1982). On the ‘Cahiers de doléances’, also see Shapiro and Markoff, ‘Officially Solicited Petitions’ and R. Chartier, ‘From Words to Texts: The Cahiers de doléances of 1789’, in Idem, *The Cultural Uses of Print*, 110–144.

19 In relation to the Ottoman context I am using as descriptive geographical terms those of the Ot-

flict had been endemic in Ayvalık's social life since the early 1830s, when the so-called 'regime of dual governance'²⁰ was restored, and Christian properties, which had been confiscated after the 'destruction' of the town by the Ottoman army in the first year of the Greek Revolution, were returned in exchange for a huge monetary sum for which the 'community' became indebted to the Porte.²¹ Throughout the 1830s the two main factions, the Chatzedes and the Saltaioi, both mostly representing the commercial and landed elites of the town, were rotating in office, and, despite their antagonism, there was considerable stability in the local political scene. Yet the promulgation of the *hatt-ı şerif* in 1839 and the reform of local and provincial government in 1840 – which instituted new rules of the political game, including a new way of electing the members of the local

toman official taxonomies. Only when I refer to subjective perceptions of identity in relation to place-names do I use Greek terms.

20 I am using this term to refer to the sharing of power between Muslim officials and Christian notables, who functioned as intermediaries, particularly at the level of localities. On the networks of power that involved Christians at the multiple levels of Ottoman governance, see C. M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley 2011). The period that starts with the proclamation of the Tanzimat (1839) and concludes with the voting of the General Regulations of the *Rum milleti* (1861-1862) was described by an important nineteenth-century ecclesiastic figure, the Ecumenical Patriarch Ioakeim III, in his Memorandum (*Hypomnema*) as "an epoch of comfort" (*aneseos epoche*), characterised by the predominance of the "faithful *reaya* status" (*pisto ragialiki*) and "reasonable" (*lelogismene*) lay involvement in the administration of the Patriarchate. On Ioakeim's Memorandum, see S. Ziogou-Karastergiou, 'Eisagoge' [Introduction], in Eadem (ed.), *To Oikoumeniko Patriarcheio, he othomanike dioikese kai he ekpaideuse tou genous: keimena – peges, 1830-1914* [The Ecumenical Patriarchate, Ottoman administration, and the education of the race: texts – sources, 1830-1914] (Salonica and Athens 1998), 23-44. Another influential commentator, Manouel Gedeon, in his 'Kanonismon apopeirai' [Attempts to institute regulations], *Ekklesiastike Aletheia*, 43 (1919), 215, from a different perspective, speaks about an "era of abuses" (*epoche katachreseon*), and castigates the "pillage of the communal finances" (*leelasia koinon*).

21 The 'communal debt' was arranged between the Christian notables (primarily big landowners and moneylenders) and holders of municipal power and the Porte, and equalled the monetary sum in exchange for which they were given repossession of their confiscated landed properties. On earlier instances of factional strife in Ayvalık between the major kinship groups on educational and ideological matters in the decades preceding the Greek Revolution, see I. N. Karablias, *Historia ton Kydonion* [History of Kydonies], Vol. A (Athens 1949), 140-146. Particularly on the 1817 and 1819 crises, see G. Sakkares, *Historia ton Kydonion* [History of Kydonies] (Athens 1920), 92-100 and K. Lappas and R. Stamoule (eds), *Konstantinos Oikonomos ho ex Oikonomon: allelographia* [Konstantinos Oikonomos of the Oikonomoi: correspondence], Vol. 2 (Athens 2002), 69-73, 275-280, 339-343, 458-463. Despite their interested nature and the often biased and distorted view of actual events, 'local histories' have been valuable historical sources in the reconstruction of the Ayvalık tax revolt, particularly after they have been correlated to archival materials and placed in the wider context of academic historiography. On an assessment of the local historiography of Ayvalık, see I. Petropoulou, 'Gyro apo ten historiographia ton Kydonion' [On the historiography of Kydonies], *Deltion Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon*, 3 (1982), 231-241.

council (*meclis*) – upset the structures of brokerage, and gave rise to successive breaks with the regime of dual governance.²²

The first move was made by the Saltaioi faction, whose political position was strengthened because its key figure, Bishop Anthimos Koutalianos,²³ was well connected with the upper echelons of the Tanzimat bureaucracy and belonged to the network of Stratford Canning, the British Ambassador in Istanbul. The Saltaioi, and particularly Panages Ioannides, a relative and local representative (*vekil*) of Anthimos, brought the administration of the huge communal debt to the centre of local politics by raising the issue of the ‘accounts’: they demanded the exact calculation of the tax burden by a special committee and ways of dealing with it. Their move was initially successful and on those grounds they took the control of the local council from the traditionalists, the Chatzedes. Yet this was a temporary victory. Their failure to pursue the checking of the ‘accounts’ and strong criticism from within brought a new player into the game, the ‘party of the poor or *laos* (people)’, an alliance of small *oikokyraioi* (householders) and merchants (some claiming Hellenic protection) who had strong links with the large community of exiled Kydonians in the Hellenic town of Hermoupolis on the island of Syros. The newcomers won control of the council both in 1841 and 1842 in conditions of bitter conflict against the alliance of the two historic factions, who used a wide range of means in order to remove them from power. The conflict eventually escalated into a revolt of the local population against the local authorities in April 1842,²⁴ and the eventual imprisonment of the leaders of the ‘party of the people’ in the infamous *baigne/bagno*, the prison of the imperial

22 On the reform of local government in 1840, see C. V. Findley, ‘The Evolution of the System of Provincial Administration as Viewed from the Center’, in D. Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem 1986), 3-29; İ. Ortaylı, ‘From the Ottoman Experiment in Local Government to the First Constitutional Parliament of 1876-77’, in Idem, *Studies on Ottoman Transformation* (Istanbul 1994), 109-115; S. Shaw, ‘Local Administration in the Tanzimat’, in H. D. Yıldız (ed.), *150. Yılında Tanzimat* (Ankara 1992), 33-49.

23 Anthimos Koutalianos, who later became Patriarch Anthimos VI, was a key player in the central political scene of the Ottoman Empire for almost four decades. At the time of the crisis he was one of the powerful *gerontes*, holders of the Patriarchal seal, while his diocese was one of the biggest in size and richest in revenues. On the role of Anthimos VI in the complex scene of *millet* politics, see D. Stamatopoulos, *Metarrythmise kai ekkosmikeuse: pros mia historia tou Oikoumenikou Patriarcheiu ton 19o aiona* [Reform and secularisation: towards a history of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the nineteenth century] (Athens 2003).

24 The revolt followed the initial arrest of members of the newly elected local council by the Ottoman authorities, and involved clashes between the Christian inhabitants of the town and military forces. Few casualties were reported. Although the local leaders were set free, the town officials, in co-ordination with Bishop Anthimos and his followers, asked for reinforcements from the capital, thus leading to the flight of hundreds of inhabitants to the islands, to the expulsion by the authorities – acting in co-ordination with the Greek vice-consul – of a few among the many Hellenic subjects who were involved in the clashes, and to the arrest of nine councillors who belonged to the ‘party of the people’ and were eventually sentenced to 5-7 years imprisonment.

arsenal in Istanbul. Anthimos thus eventually reaffirmed his authority and consolidated his control of local governance.

Collective or individual petitions together with letters to the press were extensively employed by the competing parties during the conflict over the 'accounts'.²⁵ In fact, they were the most marked feature of this set of events. Of the many petitions employed in the Ayvalık conflict from 1840 to 1843, I have studied twenty, ten of which were addressed to the Sultan or the *Kapudan Paşa* (Admiral),²⁶ one to the Patriarch, and nine to the King of the Hellenes, the Hellenic Secretaries of Foreign or Domestic Affairs, or Hellenic consular authorities.²⁷ Most of these documents are to be found in the *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi* and the Archives of the Patriarchate in Istanbul, and the Archive of the Hellenic Foreign Ministry in Athens, respectively (see Appendix – Table I). I also studied a large number of letters and reports by locals, which were published mostly in newspapers of Hermoupolis and Athens and secondarily Izmir.

In this paper I want to consider the reconfigurations brought about by these events and the role played by the petitions in facilitating these reconfigurations. The use primarily of petitions and letters will be analysed in three phases: before, during and after the crisis. I will also discuss how, as the conflict developed, the mode of politically conducting and communicating the conflict shifted from bureaucratic to journalistic and the main context of the confrontation moved from the Ottoman Empire to the Hellenic Kingdom.

I will consider these issues through giving greater attention to the middle and later phases of the crisis and focusing on a single example, a hybrid form of petition that was published as a book immediately after the revolt. Undoubtedly a highly idiosyncratic text, this document, which resists easy classification, provides the opportunity of understanding the multiple transformations that were taking place in the political practices of the Christian subjects of the Empire and their subsequent extrapolation in the Ottoman political imagination at this early phase of the Tanzimat.

The Use of Petitions and Letters during the Ayvalık Crisis (1840-1843): The Shift from the Bureaucratic to the Journalistic Mode of Petitioning

Petitioning in the Ottoman and Hellenic societies of the 1830s exhibited contrasting characteristics that reflected the distinct jurial orders of the two states and the differential development of print culture as well as the uneven spread of notions of the 'public' and 'public culture' in the two contexts. In the Ottoman context the dominance of a 'commu-

25 In moments of conflict and crisis the use of petitions eventually intensified. This is definitely what happened during the Ayvalık conflict over the 'accounts'.

26 For example, see BOA, HH 2270.

27 For example, see the two letters that Apostolos Giannares sent to the King on 2 January 1843 (AYE [= Archive of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 1843, 39/12-I/4), and on 19 April 1843 (AYE, 1843, 39/12-II/6), or the letter against the vice-consul Spyridon Semeriotēs sent by a number of Hellenic subjects to the Secretary of Domestic Affairs on 2 June 1842 (AYE, 1842, 39/12-II/1).

nitarian structure', built around religion and the state, left little room for intermediate institutions such as secular law, and severely limited the development of 'civil society'.²⁸ The Ottoman patrimonial state seemed not to be a suitable environment for the spread of print culture. The latter had not yet pervaded the social and political life of the Empire, with the exception of the commercial enclaves of major port towns, such as Izmir, where newspapers and professional associations provided the core of an emergent public.²⁹ Under such conditions, petitioning went on being a principal means of delivering eponymous political messages and doing politics 'from below', while its conduct was primarily a bureaucratic affair dominated, particularly in the case of individual petitions, by norms of secrecy.

On the other side of the Aegean during the same period, the Hellenic Kingdom was developing a public that drew much of its vitality from the spread of the ideas of the Enlightenment among the educated elites and the expansion of print culture from the end of the eighteenth century onwards. The young Hellenic state was modernist in form, and its institutions – jural, political, educational, etc. – were ideologically informed by liberal ideas that favoured the expression and dialogic confrontation of opinion in public, particularly through the press. The Hellenic 'public' (*koinon*) was structured around a multiplicity of newspapers which, despite occasional censorship, debated issues of local or national significance from different political angles.³⁰

This definitely affected petitioning in a number of ways. *Anaphores* (petitions) were not the only nor the principal way of articulating interests 'from below', but they were

28 Ş. Mardin, *Religion, Society, and Modernity in Turkey* (Syracuse, NY 2006). But see Anastasopoulos's critical comments in this volume.

29 See R. Kasaba, 'Economic Foundations of a Civil Society: Greeks in the Trade of Western Anatolia, 1840-1876', in D. Gondicas and C. Issawi (eds), *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism: Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton 1999), 77-87. The influence of the press was small and varied according to ethno-religious group, context (urban/rural), and other factors. Newspapers in the Greek language, though very limited in number, constituted a dynamic ingredient of the Ottoman press in the major port towns, such as Izmir. They often applied a strategy of closing and re-appearing under a new name in order to overcome the obstacles of strict censorship and limited means. For a good example of journalistic strategies against censorship see the case of the 'Erigenia' (1840-1841) of Spyridon Avlonites. In July 1841 it merged with 'Ethnike', which was closed down by censorship a few months later, only to re-emerge as 'Elpis'; C. S. Solomonides, *He demosiographia ste Smyrne (1821-1922)* [Journalism in Smyrna (1821-1922)] (Athens 1959). On the turcophone Ottoman press, see O. Koloğlu, 'The Printing Press and Journalism in the Ottoman State', *Boğaziçi Journal*, 18 (2004) [special issue: *Media Issues for Turkey*], 27-33.

30 The Hellenic newspapers were hierarchically distinguished by place of publishing (capital/periphery), and then readership, type of information provided (political, commercial, literary, etc.), factional affiliation (particularly in relation to the three main 'parties': the 'English', the 'French', and the 'Russian'), and level of political significance. Among the Athenian newspapers, 'Athena' and 'Aion', as opinion leaders, analysed matters of central political significance, such as state policies, in their international relevance. On the Hellenic press of that era, see A. Koumariou, *Historia tou hellenikou typou, 18^{os}-19^{os} ai.* [A history of the Hellenic press: eighteenth-nineteenth centuries] (Athens 2010).

part of a wide range of more or less formal means – including letters to the press, lawsuits (*egkleseis*), etc. – for the pursuit of individual or collective concerns. Also, in the Hellenic context, the press provided an outlet for the public expression of petitioning. In the early 1840s there was already a tradition of publishing petitions – side by side with letters – in newspapers. The press turned petitions into an instrument for shaping the opinion of the public and more generally into a vehicle of high-order politics. Thus, through the publicisation of the petitions the better integration of lower and higher levels of the political process was achieved.

The Ottoman Context: Arzuhal and Dual Governance in the Early Tanzimat

The Christian Greek-speaking subjects of the Empire had long experience in collective petitioning. As a process, this involved a set of moves.³¹ A petition was usually drafted in the administrative context of the ‘community’ (*koinon*) by its educated officials or other literati and was validated by the seal of the *koinon*.³² Money was collected by the well-to-do in order to support the journey of the appointed delegates (*vekil*) to the capital to deliver the petition either to the Patriarchate, the officials of the Porte, or the Sultan himself. It was also used for bribes that were needed to secure a meeting with higher authorities and deliver by hand the important document.

Most significant, the drafting of a collective petition included the collection of a number of signatures: the greater the number of the signatories the wider the political impact of the move.³³ In ordinary conditions the collection of signatures was easy enough, since it relied on the efficient mobilisation of the local elite. Yet, in conditions of internal strife and competitive antagonism for communal influence, the mobilisation of human resources in favour of factional moves was much more complicated and its outcome was often contested by the adversaries.³⁴ On the other hand, the collection of signatures estab-

31 Documents registered in the Codex of the Diocese of Mytilene describe the main steps in the process of petitioning as this was conducted in the early 1840s.

32 In the case of Ayvalık, each faction had its literati who specialised in the drafting of petitions. Among the Saltaioi this role was played by Nikolaos Salteles and Demetrios Amanites; see Anonymous, *Ta Kydoniaka e hoi neoi ton Kydonion triakonta tyrannoi* [Kydonian affairs or the new thirty tyrants of Kydonies] (Malta 1842), ie-ith (= xv-xix). Stavrakes Anagnostou, secretary of the council of 1841, and Apostolos Giannares, one of the most active Hellenes of Ayvalık, were most probably responsible for the drafting of petitions on behalf of the ‘party of the people’.

33 In fact, as Van Voss rightly points out, “the meeting in which a petition was debated was an exercise in politics, as was the soliciting of signatures”; Van Voss, ‘Introduction’, 3.

34 See, for example, the public questioning of the authenticity of signatures and of the methods that were applied in their collection. In a report from Ayvalık published in ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’, No. 68, 2 July 1842 (also see ‘Anexartetos’, No. 7, 9 August 1842), the anonymous author castigates the collection by Salteles of schoolchildren’s signatures (signing on behalf of their relatives) using “73 types of ink”. In another, signed, letter, published in ‘Anexartetos’, No. 39, 18 March 1843, Semeriotis was accused of forging signatures in a petition in his defence. The author of *Ta Kydoniaka*, 118–119, accuses Bishop Anthimos of collecting signatures

lished the factions on firmer ground, along kinship, economic, or ideological lines, since it amounted to the explicit and formal (because it was written) individual declaration of support.³⁵ Also it further added an ingredient of representation: those who drafted the document and collected the signatures as well as those who managed its delivery to the higher authorities in the capital emerged as representatives of the wider group of signatories.

Recourse to higher orders of the Ottoman bureaucracy required therefore access to interpersonal networks and top officials who mediated. In this sense, petitioning was an integral aspect of dual governance. In the Ayvalık case, the structures of the Patriarchate provided a valuable channel in the early stages of the conflict, yet this was quickly superseded, as the religious leadership became deeply involved in it. It seems that each faction preferred to address its petitions to officials with whom they had a certain affinity as part of the strategy to forge, consolidate, or exploit (existing) linkages (Appendix – Table I). The Saltaioi faction had a relative advantage because of its easy access to higher ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy through the participation of its leader, Bishop Anthimos, in the network of the men of the Tanzimat. At the climax of its confrontation with the ‘people’, it preferentially addressed its petitions to the *Kapudan Paşa* (and secondarily to the Sultan). It further employed the services of the local governor, Mustafa Bey. The ‘party of the people’, on the other hand, had more limited options since it was alienated from the Tanzimat circles, yet it probably achieved some access during the re-arrangements in the Ottoman government in the summer of 1842.

To turn to the forms and structure of petitioning, in bureaucratic terms, petitions to officials of the Porte or the Sultan himself were classified in various categories: *arz* – a formal individual petition or application by an official to a higher authority; *arz-ı hal/arzuhal* – a private petition by a *reaya* or an *askeri*; and *mahzar* – a collective *arzuhal*.³⁶ In the 1830s, the content of the Ayvalık petitions was highly formalised in a submissive style,³⁷ and structured around the concepts of *pisto ragialiki* (being loyal *reaya*) and *ragiadikos charakteras* (*reaya* character) through which the petition functioned as a statement of submission to sultanic rule. The petitions also employed standard linguistic motifs that acknowledged the absolute power of the Ottoman state (*krataion kai hypselon devleti*), or the personal qualities of the Sultan, such as his mercy and his interest in the

by the use of violence. On the other side, the Greek Ambassador in Istanbul, Alexandros Mavrogordatos, in a letter, dated 13 April 1843, to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Iakovos Rizos Neroulos, argues that the signatures on the basis of which Giannares acted as *epitropos* were forged; AYE, 1843, 39/12-II/4.

35 Zaret argues that the published petition provided a novel opportunity for the making of an association of private individuals, i.e., a ‘party’, as distinct from the natural community; Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 15.

36 On the bureaucratic handling of petitions in the Ottoman context, see Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 246–280, 281–306. Also Gara, ‘Popular Protest’. On the differences between the various Ottoman bureaucratic categories of petition, see M. S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)* (Istanbul 1998), 217–220, 303–315, 315–321.

37 On the rhetorical devices employed by petitions as cultural forms that have constitutive function, see Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*.

well-being of his subjects (*Ho megaleiotatos kai eusplachnikotatos hemon Anax*). *Time* (honour) – regarded as ‘sacred’ – and *to dikaion* (just cause) were the main values that marked collective petitioning, particularly before 1839 (Appendix – Petition 1).

The Christians of Ayvalık had long experience in the use of petitions as a means of pursuing demands. Till the beginning of the Tanzimat the petitions that were drafted by inhabitants of Ayvalık had a somewhat standard content: they contained grievances against the local governor or asked for his replacement.³⁸ So, in a way, they worked across ethno-religious lines. Yet, when the issue of the ‘accounts’ became the focal point in local politics and, particularly, from the moment that the ‘party of the people’ took control of the local communal council in spring 1841, the content of the petitions changed. As they turned into major weapons of antagonism within the ‘community’, they became more grounded in local micro-politics.³⁹ The first petition asking for the inspection of the ‘accounts’ by the church authorities was sent by the Saltaiοi to the Patriarchate in 1840.⁴⁰ The existing evidence suggests that, once in office, the ‘party of the people’ intensified the use of petitions in order to challenge the traditional structures of dual governance and the control that the local bishop and his allies had over local affairs. In a shift of strategy they abandoned the effort to settle the issue of the ‘accounts’ either locally, through the elected *logistes* (accountants), or at the level of the Patriarchate, and turned to the Porte. In the summer of 1841 they asked the Porte to appoint an external official to inspect the ‘accounts’, a move that a couple of months later was followed by two petitions, one, signed by 206 inhabitants, asking again for the local inspection of the ‘accounts’ by the central authorities (Appendix – Petition 2),⁴¹ and another, signed by 76 inhabitants, asking for the withdrawal of foreign consular protection from the old managers of communal finances.⁴² A few weeks later their opponents reacted by the same means: in a petition sent to the *Kapudan Paşa* and signed by eight representatives of the “other party” they explicitly described the election of the new council as a “rebellion” (*ihtilâl*) and asked the authorities to suppress it and appoint a new council (Appendix – Petition 3).

These bureaucratic moves were partially successful but in ways that were not anticipated by the petitioners. No doubt they definitely managed to turn the attention of the

38 See, for example, the collective petition of 30 Kydonians asking in Greek for the replacement of their *voyvoda*; BOA, HH 26196 (Appendix – Petition 1).

39 For the sequence of the petitions that were submitted in the course of the crisis over the ‘accounts’ see Appendix – Table I.

40 Ecumenical Patriarchate Archives, Patriarchal Correspondence, Codex K, 287, 8 June 1841.

41 The ‘inspection (*theoresis*) of the accounts’ was a widespread motif in the political scene of the Patriarchate during this period and was linked to moves against financial abuses and lay attempts to control the patriarchal structures of governance. For example, on 21 March 1843, the accounts of the Patriarchate were inspected by a ‘big assembly’ that consisted of both lay and clerical members; Gedeon, *Kanonismon apopeirai*, 216. Also see Idem, *Historia ton tou Christou peneton* [A history of Christ’s paupers] (Athens 1939), 166–167.

42 Also, sometime in 1841, another petition by 65 inhabitants asked for the administrative transfer of Ayvalık from the *sancak* of Biga to that of Balıkesir.

Porte to Ayvalık. As a matter of domestic significance, the crisis was discussed at the highest level in the *Meclis-i Muhasebe-i Maliye* and then in the *Meclis-i Has*, where the direct intervention of the central authorities was decided upon.⁴³ As a result, a special envoy, Hüseyin Bey, in charge of a military force, was sent to the town. His mission was to inspect the tax registers in consultation with the two parties. The intervention of the central authorities, the investigation that was carried out in Istanbul, and other bureaucratic moves did not manage to bring peace to Ayvalık.⁴⁴ Soon the re-election of the ‘party of the people’ to the local council led to confrontation with the opposing faction. The conflict reached its climax with the violent events in spring 1842.⁴⁵

The Hellenic Context: Petitioning and the Dynamic of Print Culture before the September Revolution

The violent suppression of the revolt brought the issue of the ‘accounts’ to a conclusion. This was a serious setback for the council of 1842 and its followers. The arrest of their *vekils*, which was ordered by a special meeting of the *Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye* attended also by the Bishop and representatives from the two ‘parties’ in the summer of 1842, suggested the failure of their strategy of bringing the issue to the attention of the Porte.⁴⁶ The mission of Tevfik Bey, a higher official of the *Meclis-i Vâlâ* specialising in the management of crises, in Ayvalık was eventually successful. The restoration of the *ancien régime* and the recapturing of the structures of dual governance by Anthimos and his allies left no room for the continuation of the local debate on the communal debt. References to the issue faded away. A few months after the revolt, a large group of Kydonians stated in a *sened* (promissory note) that they humbly recognised their mistakes (*gnorisantes ede ta sphalmata mas, kai elthontes eis heautous*) and that thereafter they would refrain from “meaningless passions” (*anoeta pathe*) and lead a “peaceful life” (*zoen eireniken*).⁴⁷ The jailed Kydonians, in their turn, made a petition in which they “promised” to keep quiet, and asked for pardon.⁴⁸ In the autumn of 1842 they were eventually released from jail.

Yet, the conflict continued: it was reshaped around a new agenda on nationality. The new focus of factional conflict, nationality, was born out of the previous one through a debate concerning consular protection. This was a sensitive issue. Initially consular protection was a historical ingredient of economic strategies, particularly popular among

43 See the set of documents in BOA, İrade Dahiliye 2270, 2370, 3282.

44 *Ta Kydoniaka*, 75-76.

45 The first years of the Tanzimat were marked by numerous similar incidents of unrest in various regions of the Empire. On this issue, besides the classic paper of H. İnalcık, ‘Application of the Tanzimat and its Social Effects’, *ArchOtt*, 5 (1973), 97-128, see, for example, the documents quoted by A. Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler: Niş İsyanı Üzerine Ayrıntılı Bir İnceleme (1841)* (Istanbul 2002).

46 BOA, İrade MV 806.

47 BOA, İrade MV 916/1.

48 BOA, İrade MV 916/3.

Christian merchants who exploited the regime of the Capitulations against their Muslim competitors in order to dominate international trade as intermediaries. *Berat*-holders, the so-called *beratofermanlides*, were to be found in both camps of the conflict, and some of them were particularly able in applying shifting strategies and moving between alternative state protections through buying *berats* in the market.⁴⁹ Yet, in the conjuncture of the 1830s, protection was invested with new meanings. For example, the Greek Revolution added a new category of local veterans (*agonistes*) who held Hellenic travel documents and on these grounds demanded exemption from taxation (particularly from the *charatzil/cizye*), while retaining their rights to landed property (and even political representation). Also, during this period, the competition between an emerging category of Ottoman merchants specialising in local markets (rather than exports) and *berat*-holders intensified.⁵⁰ As an effect of these changes, the issue started being sporadically mentioned in mutual accusations before the authorities by both parties to the conflict. It also took on political overtones because of the ferocity with which Bishop Anthimos applied state policy to discipline Christians of ambiguous nationality by subjecting them to the *cizye* and imposing upon them the *reaya* status. However, the accusations against the vice-consul for failing to protect the Hellenes in Kydonies made the difference: they upgraded the issue of economic protection, politicised it, and transformed it into an issue of political nationality.

The decisive factors for this re-orientation were both internal and external to the locality. The persecution against the *reaya* and Hellenic subjects – merchants, captains, professionals – that followed the suppression of the revolt took multiple forms and did not allow for tactical manoeuvres in the Ottoman context. Thus, people associated with the defeated party shifted the terrain of conflict outside the Ottoman and into the Hellenic context. The main protagonists in this re-orientation were Hellenic subjects residing in Ayvalık who, through the use of petitions and letters, for the first time drew public attention to the involvement of the vice-consul on the side of the *Saltaioi* faction and to serious failures in the exercise of his duties.⁵¹ Their move in this new context found important backing

49 In the region of Izmir “the granting of indiscriminate protection was prevalent among the representatives of lesser powers, such as Greece”. See R. Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century* (Albany 1988), 71. On the trade of *berats* and foreign passports, also see E. Frangakis-Syrett, ‘The Implementation of the 1838 Anglo-Turkish Convention on Izmir’s Trade: European and Minority Merchants’, *NPT*, 7 (1992), 91–112.

50 See D. Quataert, ‘The Age of Reforms, 1812–1914’, in H. İnalcık with D. Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914* (Cambridge 1994), 837–841.

51 There is no evidence of criticism against the vice-consul Semeiotes in the Archive of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or the newspapers before the summer of 1842. The first published reference to his complicity in “the persecution of Hellenic subjects” was made in an important letter by ‘K.’ in ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’, No. 67, 19 June 1842, a couple of weeks after the collective petition to King Otto raised the issue of protection. A letter by ‘X.’, written on 15 June, and published much later, on 30 August 1842, in ‘Anexartetos’, No. 10, had a similar emphasis. Most probably these moves were co-ordinated.

among the Kydonians of the diaspora and sections of the Hellenic public who sympathised with the 'French' and 'Russian' parties.⁵² Yet, it also set in motion a dynamic that took the Ayvalık crisis far beyond its local scope. This was the dynamic of print culture.

As we have seen, petitioning initially followed the traditional channels and was restricted to the Ottoman context. Only after the violent confrontation and the arrest of the leaders of the 'party of the people' in April 1842, did the persecuted Kydonians and other Hellenic subjects living in Ayvalık take the matter to the comparatively thriving public sphere of the young kingdom. There, despite censorship, the expression of grievances followed more the journalistic than the bureaucratic path.⁵³ Side by side with formal petitioning through bureaucratic channels, letters to the press were a very popular and more flexible means of pursuing demands vis-à-vis officials and the state. In this regard, journalistic epistolography fused the expression of grievance with the public articulation of opinion on matters of general interest.⁵⁴ Therefore, the shift in the state context of reference transposed petitioning from the bureaucratic to the journalistic mode and affected both its content and its function.

The forms that this change took are to a degree suggestive of the wider transformations that were underway and in this regard deserve close attention. The first petition related to the Ayvalık crisis was addressed to the Secretary of Domestic Affairs of the Hellenic Kingdom just one month after the revolt, in June 1842. It was a collective petition signed by 22 Hellenic subjects residing in Ayvalık and remained unpublished (Appendix – Petition 4). One month later, a 'petition' addressed to the Sultan in book form (entitled *Ta Kydoniaka*) was published allegedly outside the Empire. I will come back to this important document, which provided a broad overview of the issue of the 'accounts', while it targeted the Hellenic vice-consul. Finally, in November 1842, the first individual petition in connection with the events of Ayvalık was published in the Athenian press: it was addressed to the King of the Hellenes by Anastasios Andronikos, a Hellenic merchant who was arrested in Ayvalık and prosecuted in Syros by the Hellenic vice-consul. It is important to consider these shifts and their connection to letter-writing more closely and place them in the wider context of publishing on the Ayvalık crisis.

Throughout the period of the crisis in Ayvalık, from the late 1830s till the middle 1840s, the issue of the 'accounts' in Ayvalık was discussed among the Greek-speaking public across the Aegean, primarily in the press of Hermoupolis ('Ephemeris ton aggelion', 'Hermes') and Izmir ('Amaltheia', 'Aster tes Anatoles'), but also of Athens

52 They were called so because of their pro-French and pro-Russian leanings, respectively.

53 Also, as noted above, the juridical order of the Kingdom provided an alternative, more formal, outlet for the expression of discontent between individuals, an outlet regulated by a modern penal code. On the introduction of modern penal justice in the Hellenic Kingdom, see M. Mavres, 'To systema aponomes tes poinikes dikaiosynes sten Hellada ton 19^o aiona' [The system of penal justice in Greece in the nineteenth century], *Ta Historika*, 26 (1997), 53-76.

54 It was also quite common to publish letters addressed to high officials including the King. Despite their formal structure, letters had a greater flexibility than petitions: they relied on ideological motifs that were fashionable at the time, and were often co-ordinated with the general ideological climate.

(‘Anexartetos’, ‘Athena’, ‘Hellenikos parateretes’, ‘Zephyros’, ‘Philos tou laou’, ‘Tachypteros pheme’). Information concerning Ayvalık and particularly the issue of the ‘accounts’ was regularly published in various forms that seem to constitute a continuum: reports by journalists or by locals, editorial notes, individual or collective letters sent by people who were involved in the conflict and used either their surnames or pseudonyms, and, last but not least, individual and collective petitions. As the close study of the surviving materials shows,⁵⁵ the use of these alternative forms was ordered in time. Therefore, the temporal sequence of moves with letters and petitions, particularly during the summer of 1842, is rather suggestive of the dynamics that shifted the conduct of the conflict in the direction of the ‘public’. It unravels a chain of events that make a dense fabric of interactions steadily surface at the macro level in an open debate over matters of wider significance such as nationality and Hellenic-Ottoman relations.

Before April 1842, it was mainly journalistic reports – often in the form of anonymous letters by locals – and occasional editorial statements which were published almost exclusively in the press of the major peripheral port towns of Izmir and Hermoupolis. These journalistic materials not only publicised developments in Ayvalık, particularly in relation to the issue of the ‘accounts’, but also loosely integrated these events into a wider taxonomic order – an order produced by literati, such as the ‘doctor of the poor’ and journalist Panagiotes Zontanos in Hermoupolis, or the merchant and poet Nikolaos Salteles in Ayvalık.

The Hellenic newspapers which more energetically reported on Ayvalık, i.e., ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’⁵⁶ and ‘Anexartetos’, were part of a network of newspapers⁵⁷ which were sympathetic to the perspective of the *agonistes* (‘fighters’, i.e., veterans of the ‘Struggle for Independence’, the Greek Revolution), and often relied on an embrative (mostly French-born) liberalism and radicalism. ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’ was close to the large community of exiled Kydonians in Hermoupolis and did not hide its sympathy for the ‘French’ party. ‘Anexartetos’, an Athenian newspaper directed by Panteles Panteles, owner of a printing house in Hermoupolis in the late 1830s, was published in 1841 and in the course of subsequent years played a key role in pursuing the ‘agonistic’ perspective against Alexandros Mavrogordatos, the Greek Ambassador in Istanbul, and the

55 We have continuous series of most of the Hellenic newspapers of this period. On the other hand, most issues of the newspapers of Izmir (and, most important, ‘Amaltheia’) are missing. The content of their reporting on Ayvalık or Hellenic-Ottoman affairs can be inferred indirectly through its reproduction in the Hellenic press.

56 The newspapers of Syros, particularly ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’, were initially close to the Saltaioi, yet gradually shifted in favour of the ‘party of the people’. This change of perspective is probably related to disillusionment with the Ottoman reforms. For example, in an editorial note of ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’, No. 66, 6 June 1842, its editor interpreted the revolt in Ayvalık as an index of Tanzimat’s failure. This attitude contrasted with the earlier very positive stance of the newspaper towards the Tanzimat; ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’, No. 2, 17 July 1840.

57 This included ‘Radamanthys’, which explicitly supported the Cretan Revolution, and stressed its ideological affinity with ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’ and ‘Zephyros’. See the attack against this network by ‘Aster tes Anatoles’, No. 11, 25 December 1841.

neo-Phanariot networks.⁵⁸ The experience of the ‘Struggle for Independence’ and particularly the notion of *agonistis* (singular of ‘agonistes’) was the thread that united the formation of the Hellenic Kingdom with the persecutions and sufferings of Christians in western Anatolia at the hands of the *kocabaşıs* (Gr. ‘kotsabasedes’) under Ottoman rule. These newspapers opposed the ‘system of European interests’, which demanded the submission of Anatolian Christians to Ottoman rule. In the name of ‘Hellenic rights’, they were critical of Ottoman reforms and battled against the network of newspapers which, in accordance with Mavrogordatos’s strategy, promoted the above ‘system of European interests’, and the policies of the ‘English’ party.

On the Ottoman side of the Aegean, Greek newspapers either sided with those who defended the project of dual governance, as in the case of ‘Amaltheia’, which was sympathetic to the Saltaioi, or were apologists for Ottoman policies and attacked the militant press of the Kingdom, as in the case of ‘Aster tes Anatoles’. As Ottoman censorship deprived them of any available space for views that were interpreted as pro-Hellenic, journalistic opinion became increasingly segregated across state contexts. However, it should be noted that before 1842 factional conflict was primarily conducted by bureaucratic means in the corridors of the Ottoman government.

During the next phase, from the days of the revolt till the publication of the first petition in the Hellenic press (in November 1842), journalistic coverage of the crisis expanded in size and changed in form. The violence of factional strife was followed by a war of letters. The number of letters, particularly in the local press of Izmir and Hermoupolis, increased and their tone became aggressive. Reporting was clearly overtaken by letters written by eponymous or anonymous individuals who explicitly argued across lines that drew upon but also re-invented the wider ideological currents that pervaded journalistic debate. Most probably a number of the protagonists, from both camps, in this journalistic warfare were among the petitioners to the Porte: when it is not explicitly clear, this is implicitly suggested by certain stylistic affinities between published materials and petitions, structure and content of argument, and secondary evidence.⁵⁹ Through this publishing activity the Ayvalık crisis and its protagonists achieved considerable visibility.

The single most important aspect of the Ayvalık crisis that emerged was the inadequate protection offered by the Hellenic consular authority in Ayvalık. The vice-consul, Spyridon Semeriotēs, was attacked in a barrage of individual letters in ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’ (anonymously, using pseudonyms such as ‘K.’, or eponymously signed, for example, by S. Antoniadēs), in ‘Anexartetos’ (by ‘X.’), or in ‘Zephyros’ (anonymously) for failing to defend the Hellenic subjects of Ayvalık and for selectively protecting his

58 ‘Hermes – Ephemeris tes Syrou’ was also printed at the printing-house of Panteles Panteles. In early 1843, Zontanos shifted his journalistic activity from ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’ to ‘Hermes’. These connections probably explain its special interest in the affairs of Ayvalık. ‘Anexartetos’ was heavily involved in the factional strife against Mavrogordatos’s consular network in western Anatolia.

59 This identification of petitioners with letter-writers is explicitly acknowledged in a letter signed by ‘the Hellenes of Ayvalık’ published in ‘Anexartetos’ on 23 August 1842.

friends and co-operating with the Ottoman authorities.⁶⁰ Greek merchants, such as Anastasios Andronikos and Apostolos Giannares, also eponymously accused Semeriotēs of conspiring with his allies in the Saltaioi faction against them and harming their businesses.⁶¹ Letters in 'Amaltheia', on the other hand, defended Semeriotēs. Soon after, the first collective letter from "refugees" from Ayvalık, published in 'Ephemeris ton aggelion',⁶² and a second one by the "Hellenic subjects of Kydonies" in 'Anexartetos',⁶³ added a strong grassroots component to the critique against Semeriotēs, while the ideological framework of the debate expanded to include powerful motifs such as the record of *agonistis*⁶⁴ that a number of those persecuted held, the practice of *charatzoma* (the forceful imposition of *cizye*), or the 'commercial convention' which was negotiated by the Ottoman and Hellenic governments.

During the summer of 1842, the journalistic discourse on the Ayvalık affair was clearly emerging primarily 'from below'. This had a decisive effect on the Athenian newspapers: in their editorial statements both 'Zephyros'⁶⁵ and 'Anexartetos'⁶⁶ added their voices to the press of Syros and acknowledged that under the growing popular pressure they had to support the case of the persecuted inhabitants of Ayvalık.⁶⁷ The sufferings of the Kydonians, side by side with the sufferings of the Samians, the Cretans, and other Greek-speaking Christians under Ottoman rule, were adopted as an icon of current political sensibilities.

Most important, the Athenian press, particularly the network of newspapers which opposed the realist strategy of the Anglophiles, moved the debate over Ayvalık to the higher level of foreign policy, thus achieving the mutual accommodation of their political agenda with the agenda of the protesting Kydonians. The issue of the 'accounts' was upgraded, as it was directly and explicitly linked to the criteria of choosing consuls and

60 At the same time, most letters went on attacking Bishop Anthimos and the core figures of the Saltaioi faction, primarily Nikolaos Salteles, Chatzemales Salteles, Panages Ioannides, and Demetrios Amanites.

61 These moves were coupled with legal warfare. The initial prosecution against Andronikos and Giannares by the vice-consul in the courts of Hermoupolis led to a legal vendetta since it was followed by a sequence of suits against Semeriotēs in the Hellenic courts. Legal suits, however, remained secluded in the bureaucratic channel rather than being exposed to the public through the press. See AYE, 1843, 39/12-I/8.

62 'Ephemeris ton aggelion', No. 72, 25 July 1842.

63 'Anexartetos', No. 13, 20 September 1842.

64 For example, the 'persecutor' Semeriotēs was denigrated for failing the 'national character' and lacking any record as an 'agonistis' in juxtaposition to his 'victim', who was known for his contribution in the Struggle for Independence; 'Anexartetos', No. 13, 20 September 1842, and No. 21, 14 November 1842; 'Zephyros', No. 117, 19 October 1842.

65 'Zephyros', No. 113, 20 August 1842.

66 'Anexartetos', No. 22, 21 November 1842.

67 As was stated by the editor of 'Anexartetos': "A wise advisor of a monarch used to say to him in such instances: 'The crowd is always right' (*Sophos tis symvoulos henos Monarchou elege pros auton eis toiautas periptoseis* "Opou to plethos kai to Dikaion")"; 'Anexartetos', No. 39, 18 March 1843.

the nature of consular representation, as well as to the Commercial Treaty which was currently being negotiated by Mavrogordatos in Istanbul.⁶⁸ The press refashioned the 'Kydoniaka' (the Kydonian affair) into a matter of wider significance for the Hellenic public and into a 'national' issue.

To turn to petitioning, none of the petitions which were addressed to the Ottoman authorities in relation to the 'accounts' was ever published in the press. More generally, there is no evidence of the publication of petitions by the Ottoman press during this period.⁶⁹ The Hellenic press, on the other hand, became involved in the management of petitions only when the Hellenic subjects who became implicated in the Ayvalık revolt by Semeriotēs's accusations and after being brought to Hellenic justice were finally acquitted turned against the vice-consul by various means, including petitions and lawsuits.

As we have seen, the first petition to the Secretary of Domestic Affairs in defence of the accused Hellenic subjects and against Semeriotēs by 22 Hellenic subjects who resided in Ayvalık also remained unpublished (Appendix – Petition 4). However, a whole sequence of collective or individual *anaphores* on the same issue that followed and were managed by two Greek merchants, Giannares and Andronikos, were published in November 1842 and in the course of the subsequent months in 'Anexartetos'. The timing of their publication, and particularly the delay of five months since the drafting of the first collective petition, could be attributed to fears that the upgrading of the conflict in the Hellenic context might damage the efforts to liberate the imprisoned Kydonians. Yet, the time sequence of journalistic moves suggests another factor. The temporal coincidence of the publication of the first petition in 'Anexartetos' with the open declaration of the newspaper's editor that it adopted the cause of the persecuted Hellenes shows that, once the newspaper established a position on the issue, it moved into publishing the petitions. The petitions were mobilised in support of the editorial policies, thus investing them with the authority of public voice as well as firmly grounding them on a formal bureaucratic basis.

The structure of mediation in the handling of collective petitions was rather complex and formally sanctioned. For example, the collective petition which was published in 'Anexartetos' in January 1843 was managed by a two-member committee of Hellenes of Ayvalık who settled in Athens in order to make local arrangements for the promotion of the cause of Ayvalık's Hellenic subjects. The authority of the two *plerexousioi/epitropoi* (plenipotentiaries/agents) to represent was verified by a formal letter (*epitropi-*

68 The upgrading of the Ayvalık crisis was realised at a conjuncture that was marked by public debate over a new governmental circular (*egkyklios*) which regulated the functioning of the consulates, and by widespread criticism of various consuls for "failing the Hellenic character". For example, see 'Ephemeris ton aggelion', No. 75, 19 September 1842. Throughout 1842, influential Athenian newspapers, such as 'Aion' (No. 373, 9 August 1842, No. 382, 23 September 1842, and No. 387, 11 October 1842), which was close to the 'Russian' party, demanded the exclusion of non-Hellenic subjects from the post of consul.

69 The lack of primary sources constitutes a major obstacle and calls for great caution on the part of the researcher into the Greek press of the Ottoman Empire in the 1830s and 1840s. For instance, only a few issues of 'Amaltheia' have survived for this period in the Theological School of Chalki (mod. Heybeliada).

kon).⁷⁰ The publicisation of these arrangements empowered those involved to challenge the moves of their opponents through accusations of exploiting norms of secrecy in order to forge their respective petitions.

In terms of content, the *anaphores* were organised around a common structure: they highlighted through various examples the failure of the vice-consul to represent adequately the financial and political “interests” of the Hellenic subjects and protect them from the “persecutions” (*diogmoi*) of the Christian notables, while they also castigated his “treacherous” behaviour in siding with the Ottoman authorities, insulting their “Hellenic character”, and contributing to their subjection to the “yoke of the Turks”.⁷¹ In contrast with the Ottoman petitions, they adopted not a submissive but a militant style: national pride and “respect” for the King and his Ministers, together with faith in the supreme authority, but not submissive loyalty, were the marks of these petitions. The texts were inspired by the nationalist rhetoric that was so prominent in journalistic circles: in the name of Hellenic “rights” (*dikaionomata*) and “interests” (*sympheronta*) and Hellenic “dignity” (*axioprepeia*) and in accordance with “Hellenic Law”, they asked the King to intervene and defend the Hellenic subjects. In this sense, they could be regarded as an early expression of what was later dubbed ‘the nationality issue’,⁷² an issue that haunted Hellenic-Ottoman relations for the rest of the nineteenth century.

Petitioning in the Hellenic context worked in two ways. In the bureaucratic context, it turned the Ayvalık crisis into a major headache for Mavrogordatos and the officials in charge of Hellenic foreign policy. The pressing demands of the Anatolian Greek-speaking Christians on property, taxation, and consular protection were in conflict with strategic considerations of the Hellenic government, and complicated its position on the Eastern Question.⁷³ In this respect, petitioning on the issue of the ‘accounts’ added Ayvalık to the wider set of ‘dissident’ localities,⁷⁴ and made it part of the topos on which

70 The whole process of mediation was described in a letter published in ‘Anexartetos’, No. 39, 18 March 1843. Also see the formal document assigning the role of *plerexousios* to G. Ch. Athenelles and Giannares (AYE, 1844, 39/12-I/9).

71 It is during this period that a new category of classification of archival materials entitled ‘Persecutions of Greeks’ (*Diogmoi Hellenon*) was instituted in the Archive of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

72 On the nationality issue, see S. Anagnostopoulou, *Mikra Asia, 19^{os} ai.-1919, hoi hellenorthodoxes koinotetes: apo to milleti ton Romion sto helleniko ethnos* [Asia Minor, nineteenth century-1919, the Greek Orthodox communities: from the *Rum milleti* to the Hellenic nation] (Athens 1997). Also see H. Exertzoglou, ‘Shifting Boundaries: Language, Community and the “Non-Greek-Speaking Greeks”’, *Historein*, 1 (1999), 75-92.

73 The Secretary of Foreign Affairs sent Emmanouel Valles, a special envoy from the Hellenic consulate of Izmir, to make a local investigation and check the accuracy of the accusations against the Hellenic vice-consul. Some of the formal moves of the Hellenic government to re-establish state control over Hellenic citizens in Ayvalık resembled the bureaucratic course of action taken by the Ottoman government.

74 Places such as Crete or Samos (not to mention Kalymnos and others) were regarded as dissident in the Ottoman context, essentially because of their heavy involvement in the Greek Revolution.

the Hellenic-Ottoman relations and particularly the Commercial Convention between the two states were being debated and decided.

For the wider Greek public, the publishing of the *anaphores* in the Athenian press marked a transformation in the representation of the Ayvalık crisis. In conjunction with the wave of letters in the Athenian press, the published petitions upgraded as well as segregated the factional conflict. The sufferings of the Kydonians, together with the troubles of other Greek-speaking Christians of the Empire, received wider attention as a matter of state policy and national significance. As journalistic opinion became increasingly divided across state contexts, public opinion in the Hellenic Kingdom turned decisively in favour of the “persecuted Hellenes”, while the more vocal defenders of the Saltaioi and their Hellenic allies were restricted to the Ottoman Empire.

Ta Kydoniaka: Hybridity and Reconfigurations in Petitioning

The Hybrid Petition

The story so far narrated exhibits a linear progression towards increased politicisation, greater state supervision, and national over-determination. This sort of national evolutionism risks the danger of oversimplifying a very complicated scene. The moves on the ground and ‘from below’ regarding the Ayvalık crisis – moves that contributed to the irredentist course that Hellenic foreign policy gradually adopted after 1844 – were complex, contradictory, often suspended between alternative courses. To grasp the polysemy that is so characteristic of these times, we will have to move a step backward in time.

In the middle of this process of shifts and transformations a rather unusual move took place. During the crucial first weeks and months of summer 1842 which followed the dramatic events in Ayvalık, while the decisive change of strategy by the victims of persecution and the clear turn to the Hellenic authorities for proper protection were underway, the first ‘petition’, addressed to the Sultan, on the issue of the ‘accounts’ appeared in print. This was a break with the norms governing the circulation of petitions in the Ottoman context. It is quite remarkable that the first petition related to the Ayvalık crisis which was published in Greek had the form of a book entitled *Ta Kydoniaka*⁷⁵ (1842). It is also important that this most complete and detailed analysis of the issue of the ‘accounts’ was published when the issue was being violently resolved and a new emphasis on protection emerged.

As it was produced in turbulent times, a lot of mystery surrounds its publication. This impressive document, consisting of 164 pages, was published anonymously a few months after the crisis, on 17 July 1842, when the ‘party of the people’ was under persecution and the future of those accused of revolting against the authorities was being debated in Istanbul. The place of publication is disputed. Probably it was printed in Hermoupolis, where there was an available infrastructure at the service of the sympathisers

75 ‘Ta Kydoniaka’ actually means ‘Kydonian affairs’, or ‘The events in Kydonies’. As an expression, it is the product of a genre blending categories of space and time.

of the cause of the ‘party of the people’. The mention of Malta, a neutral space outside the two states, on the cover, seems to have been an aspect of a rhetoric of political impartiality and a strategy to hide any Hellenic involvement that could jeopardise the prospects of the jailed Kydonians.

The book is clothed in the form of a petition. It starts with a dedication to Sultan Abdülmecid. This is immediately followed by a one-and-a-half-page statement, written in the first person plural and addressed to the Sultan in typical petition style. “The inhabitants of Kydonies” (who sign this introductory statement) appear on their knees (*gonyklitos*) and in tears (*me therma kai kardiostalakta dakrya*) before the throne and make a plea to the Sultan, addressed as “His Most Serene Highness the King” (*galenotate anax*), to listen to their sufferings (*pathe*) through reading the “booklet” and learn things that he had not heard before, in particular, how the *kocabaşıs* (*prouchontes*) had destroyed his kingdom and his poor subjects. Then he may decide not to give faith easily to the words of some of his ministers. The “booklet” aims at the benefit and happiness of the throne and the various “Nations” (*Ethne*) who live in his realm.

As on a theatre stage, the Kydonians are followed by the author. In a separate, two-page prologue, addressed “to the Readers”, the anonymous author, who signs as “the editor”,⁷⁶ presents himself and the circumstances of the book’s publication, speaking in the first person and using the rhetoric of impartiality and justice. Allegedly, he is an outsider, yet also a first-hand observer, since, even for a short while, he had been in Kydonies, as *agnoristos* (incognito), and saw what the *kocabaşıs* did against “this suffering and innocent people”. He also learned about it through speaking to “reliable” people in Izmir and Istanbul. “I always kept notes of what I was learning”, the author confesses, and eventually, when the recent crisis broke out, “I lost patience”, and decided “to appear through the Press before the Public”. As is mentioned in the concluding sentence of the book, it was written quickly, in ten days and in great urgency, that is why it has spelling mistakes!

From the very beginning, therefore, it is stressed that the book is not written by the accused Kydonians nor does it express their view, but the view of a stranger. In a paradoxical twist of the logic of petitioning, the petitioner appears to mediate with the higher authority and ask him to listen to the testimony of the impartial outsider.

The rest of the book is divided in three parts, followed by 35 pages of detailed “comments” (*scholia*) in the form of endnotes. The first part provides a detailed description of the tax system (various categories of taxes which are presented in the context of formal and informal tax practices), as this had been negotiated and settled between the local *kocabaşıs* and the higher authorities from the early 1830s till the initiation of the Tanzimat and the abolition of the local monopoly on olive oil. It is also a systematic description of the tax structures and mechanisms ‘from within’. The second part, entitled ‘The Shameless Tyranny’, is a detailed chronicle of the sequence of events that led to the cri-

76 By signing as the editor, the anonymous author – on whose identity I will not speculate here – seems to imply that his views reflect those of the ‘poor’ Christians of Ayvalık, whom at the same time he explicitly absolves of any responsibility for the book.

sis. In a remarkable ethnographic history of the present, the move for the “inspection of the accounts” and the successive changes in the composition and initiatives of the local council are systematically discussed. The third part, entitled ‘The Passions⁷⁷ of the Kydonians, or the New Thirty Tyrants of Kydonies’, describes the actual revolt and its aftermath. Here a rather sketchy reference to the complicity of the Hellenic vice-consul in the doings of the Saltaioi faction is also included. Finally, in the extensive endnotes the author offers rich additional information.

It is very clear that *Ta Kydoniaka* is not a ‘local history’ in the sense of the distinct genre that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. The author is uninterested in Hellenic origins, and totally abstains from the familiar, mythologising references to the classical past.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the very detailed as well as historically-minded description of informal tax practices and mechanisms through the analysis of actual cases reflects a developed ethnographic sense of the present. It also shows an exceptionally high information capacity. *Ta Kydoniaka*, in this sense, is quite remarkable.

All in all, the outcome is astonishing, yet difficult to classify particularly because of the hybridity of the text. *Ta Kydoniaka* stands right in the middle of a continuum of written documents – petitions, letters signed eponymously or under a pseudonym, anonymous reports by locals – which were employed by the competing parties during the Ayvalık crisis. As a hybrid text, it has eclectic affinities with all of them: it is their incomplete synthesis into the form of a book, the text of which retains all the heterogeneity of its constituent elements.⁷⁹

Ta Kydoniaka is a sort of grand petition in published, book form.⁸⁰ As in the case of formal petitions, in stylistic and ideological terms the author employs the language of *pisto ragialiki*, both in the introductory statement and throughout the text, in order to articulate particular claims and demands. Further, the book is full of passages rhetorically re-affirming the benevolence of the Sultan and the loyalty that he deserved from

77 The Greek term *pathe* clearly relates to Christ’s Passion and the powerful religious imagery of suffering followed by Resurrection.

78 Check its contrast with *Kydoniates*, a local history in verse written by Nikolaos Salteles, poet, secretary of the council of 1840, and one of the leaders of the Saltaioi faction. This book, which was published the same year (1842) in Athens, placed Ayvalık on the mythical map of classical Greece, yet said very little about the recent past and did not mention the bitter conflict that was taking place at the very moment of its writing, not to mention the role played by its author in this conflict. *Kydoniates*, probably because of its silences, eventually established itself at the centre of local historiography.

79 In this respect, it is reminiscent of the sixteenth-century letters of remission that have been described by Natalie Davis as a “mixed genre: a judicial supplication to persuade the king and courts, a historical account of one’s past actions and a story”; Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 4.

80 It also incorporates the full text of another petition within the ‘petition’. In this long, four-page document, “all the inhabitants of Kydonies” ask the Ottoman officials Şerif Ağa and Tevfik Bey to “acquit” them as well as “save” them from the old *kotsabasedes*; *Ta Kydoniaka*, ig-ist (= xiii-xvi). Equally interesting is the concluding paragraph of the long section with notes at the end of the book: there Patriarch Germanos is asked to “restrain” Bishop Anthimos as responsible for a “big scandal”; *ibid.*, le (= xxxv).

his faithful Christian subjects.⁸¹ Yet, in contrast with the traditional *sened* which was signed in autumn 1842 by many Kydonians promising to keep quiet and asking for pardon – a document that by being silent on the issue of the ‘accounts’ implicitly conceded guilt – the book grounds the plea for mercy on a direct confrontation with the issue of the ‘accounts’ and a detailed analysis of this economic matter. It is on these grounds that the alleged innocence of the persecuted *reaya* of Ayvalık and their just cause are demonstrated.

Of course, the hiding of authorial responsibility behind a posture of anonymity undermined the political weight of the submission offered as much as it also turned the stated claims into inchoate ideological statements. As an informal petition, the book lacked the pragmatic focus on concrete demands that gave petitions their distinctive mark. Also, by being published, it escaped the need to rely on (and therefore reproduce) the mediating structures which were often used by petitioners.⁸²

The book also has important eclectic affinities both in content and style with the letters that were published in the course of the crisis in the Hellenic, ‘agonistic’ press. Besides relying on first-hand knowledge of the facts, it is the synthesis in a single narrative and further expansion (in greater detail) of journalistic materials and particularly information that had been published in letters or reports in newspapers such as ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’ or ‘Hermes’. In ideological terms it borrows from the Hellenic press and reproduces the important motif of *antikotsabasismos*: it argues against the rule of the *kocabaşıs* as a relic of the authoritarian past that had to be abolished,⁸³ using the narrative conventions of the libel that were so common in the anonymous reports by locals from Ayvalık or in letters under a pseudonym that were published in ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’. The author often directly addresses the reader, and is engaged in a polemic with his opponents, castigating them (sometimes dialogically⁸⁴) in the second person plural, while at the same time he uses the more distant and ‘objective’ third person of ethnographic realism in describing particular de-

81 The author, writing one year before the 1843 Constitutional Revolution in Greece, could not possibly envisage the transformation of the King of the Hellenes into a constitutional monarch. It is more likely that the author, together with many other Greek-speaking Ottoman subjects, still played the card of an Ottoman constitutional monarchy.

82 That is, in contrast with the various, mostly collective, petitions that were addressed via the bureaucratic channel to the *Kapudan Paşa* or the Sultan by the various opposing parties (or the petitions addressed to King Otto).

83 *Antikotsabasismos* is a motif that became increasingly common and was enhanced by the letters and the reports by locals which were published in ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’ in relation to the Ayvalık crisis. These letters, which were full of information about Ayvalık, provided the link between the town and the large community of exiled Kydonians living in Hermoupolis. This was the privileged readership of *Ta Kydoniaka*.

84 If, as Harold Mah argues, the public is “an imagined rational space of disagreeing social groups” and amounts to the emergence of dialogical order, then the narrative style of *Ta Kydoniaka* (and the letters) imitates the trans-state public that was ‘under construction’ in the Aegean border zone. See H. Mah, ‘Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 72 (2000), 155.

tails.⁸⁵ The tone of the text also turns to tropes which were common in libels: for example, Bishop Anthimos and other office-holders are depicted in a negative light, their personality being sketched with denigrating metaphors, such as “clerical janissaries” (*Giannitzarous tou klerou*). Anthimos in particular is described as a “monster” and the personification of greed, or called “Süleyman Bey” (*Souleeman bees*), suggesting loss of Greekness.⁸⁶ Therefore, *Ta Kydoniaka*, as an anonymous anticlerical libel that condemns the *kotsabasedes*, participates in the important genealogy of Ottoman radicalism.

Reconfigurations in Petitioning

Let me now turn to the reconfigurations brought about by *Ta Kydoniaka*. This hybrid text is an exercise in the reconfiguration of the Ottoman political imagination. It rethinks dual governance through the deconstruction of Christian mediation. It does so by locating the *reaya* status in the context of the *hatt-ı şerif* and interpreting it from the viewpoint of radicalism, an ideological current that informed the historical consciousness of Greek-speaking *reaya* who had participated in the Greek Revolution.⁸⁷

The topos of this reconfiguration is the issue of the ‘accounts’ itself. ‘Accounting’ the tax burden and debt of the community was from the very beginning at the centre of the conflict that led to the revolt. The word ‘accounts’ thus became a key metaphor of the 1842 crisis and the chief vehicle of communicating this crisis to the various levels at which it was conducted. *Ta Kydoniaka* does not avoid the ‘accounts’ issue (as the pardon petition does) but directly confronts it in a political manner. It is particularly through thinking on the financial dealings of the notables with the Ottoman state and the people of Ayvalık that the anonymous author reconfigures the Tanzimat imagination of the political and conceptually restructures the terms of dual governance.

85 There are major stylistic affinities with letters by ‘K.’ in ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’ in the summer of 1842. It is likely that ‘K.’ and the author of *Ta Kydoniaka* are the same person.

86 Anthimos is described as “the most cruel and ferocious man on earth, he who is absolutely unscrupulous, the wolf in the guise of a sheep, the blood-thirsty beast, the rabid tiger, the scheming Devil, Lucifer, and Satan, in short, the one whose only human trait is his appearance, and who, had he their power and rank, he would have surpassed Nero and Phalaris in cruelty”; *Ta Kydoniaka*, 11. Also see similar characterisations in ‘Ephemeris ton aggelion’, No. 67, 19 June 1842. The Bishop, as Patriarch Anthimos VI, became one of the most popular targets of anticlerical libels (usually pamphlets) of the mid nineteenth century. See, for instance, the novel by S. I. Ps. and D. *Ho metamorphomenos diavolos: poiema dramatikon* [The devil in disguise: dramatic poem] (Athens 1842) which mocks Anthimos, and *Ho Anthimos St’ kai to Voulgariko Zetema* [Anthimos VI and the Bulgarian Question] (Odessa 1872) by an anonymous author who castigates his policies on the issue of the Bulgarian Exarchate.

87 On radical versions of liberalism and the reception of the French Revolution in the Hellenic context, see P. M. Kitromilides, *He Gallike Epanastase kai he notioanatolike Europe* [The French Revolution and south-eastern Europe] (Athens 2000 [2nd ed.]) and I. A. Tassopoulos, ‘Constitutionalism and the Ideological Conversion to National Unity under the Greek Constitution of 1864’, in A. Frangoudaki and C. Keyder (eds), *Ways to Modernity in Greece and Turkey: Encounters with Europe, 1850-1950* (London 2007), 9-25.

This reconceptualisation is effected in steps.

First, as we saw, *Ta Kydoniaka* is built around the notion of *pisto ragialiki*. Its dependence on this traditional pillar of sultanic authority certainly derives from the text's programmatic function as a petition in the Ottoman legal order. In contrast with an earlier communal petition, it does not refer to the *devleti* (state) but directly to the Sultan. The author recognises the legitimacy of sultanic authority (including its 'right' to impose the *charatzi*) and uses the consistency with which the *reaya* fulfil their tax obligations as a criterion of their political credibility. Yet, as this traditional notion is put in the liberal (constitutional) perspective,⁸⁸ the language of faith, historically structured around the notion of *time* (honour), seems to be surpassed and over-determined by the language of rights. The *reaya* as loyal subjects of the Sultan also have rights (*dikaïomata*): the right to *isotimia*, equal treatment by the law, and the right to justice.⁸⁹ These rights have been generously given to all non-Muslim subjects by the Sultan himself, protector of justice and the "rights of the poor", and derived from the "laws of the sacred *hatt-ı şerif*".⁹⁰ Further, these rights have been conferred on the *reaya* not as individuals but in their capacity as a political body, *laos* (the people).

Laos is presented as a collective subject, which in an anthropomorphic fashion has feelings (as much as it has rights). For example, 'he' is the subject of 'sufferings' that are inflicted upon 'him' by the doings of the local Christian rulers in the context of dual governance. Yet also, and most important, in a contradictory mixing of passive with active, *laos* has agency. The political mobilisation that resulted in the upturn of traditional authority structures by the 'party of the people' demonstrates their energetic involvement in the emergent Tanzimat scene. In some instances *laos* is semantically associated with the 'poor', in others it is treated as being equivalent to *koinoteta* (community), suggesting

88 The blend of liberal ideas with 'agonistic' perspectives became particularly prominent among the followers of the 'French' party in the Greek political scene in the early 1840s. French-style constitutionalism was also popular among the exiled Kydonians of Hermoupolis, who were followers of Ioannis Kolettis, the leader of the 'French' party.

89 Again, the timing of this interpretation is important. In the early 1840s the *hatt-ı şerif* and the sincerity and viability of the Sultan's promulgations were critically assessed by different political forces. In the Hellenic press, among the newspapers which were pursuing the cause of a Hellenic constitution and eventually prepared the ground for the 1843 Constitutional Revolution, the *hatt-ı şerif* was favourably received as an index of progress. For example, see 'Ephemeris ton aggelion', No. 2, 17 July 1840; 'Hellenikos tachydromos', No. 2, 5 January 1840. This positive attitude soon gave way to scepticism, as evidence for the maltreatment of the Christian subjects emerged from different parts of the Empire. For example, see 'Athena', No. 882, 10 February 1842. Scepticism eventually turned into open hostility once the Hellenic Kingdom successfully obtained its own constitutional charter. See 'Hermes', No. 244, 20 November 1843.

90 The *reaya* are not entitled to these rights because of their deeds, as, for example, their participation in the *Agonas* (Struggle for Independence). 'Agonistic' constitutionalism, that was so prominent among the Hellenic subjects who demanded proper and full consular protection, was evidently impossible to sustain within the Ottoman order.

therefore the unity of the political body of the ‘people’,⁹¹ a unity achieved in conceptual distinction from and opposition to the elders or notables. ‘Community’ should not, however, be confused with a fully formed corporate entity (a status achieved after the General Regulations in 1860-1862).⁹²

Second, the elders, classified under the heading of Chatzedes, are also treated as a collective subject that comprises the leaders of the different factions who in various times in the past administered the ‘community’ finances. *Ta Kydoniaka* draws upon the tradition of radical liberalism and its secularism in order to apply the old and very popular – among the Hellenic newspapers – motif of *antikotsabasismos*. The local notables, the *kocabaşıs*, are presented as an oligarchy that exercises a tyrannical rule⁹³ over the poor subjects using all means – including brutal force, treachery, or bribery – in order to stay in power when the terms for getting into office have radically changed. *Kotsabasismos* is also modified into *genitsarismos* in order to adjust it to the Ottoman context: the officials of the Christian *millet*, such as Bishop Anthimos, are called, as we have already mentioned, “clerical janissaries”, suggesting their place in the *ancien régime* and their reactive role against the moderniser Sultan.

On these grounds, the story of the mobilisation that arose around the issue of the ‘accounts’ is depicted as a process of political emancipation of the ‘people’ from oligarchic rule, a process that culminates in the emergence of the ‘party of the people’, its confrontation with the ‘party of the Chatzedes’, its domination in the council of 1841, and its persecution in 1842.

91 This should be interpreted as a response to the shock produced by the lack of correspondence between the elected ‘single-faction’ council and the multifactional *laos*. It is also connected with the emerging concept of *ethniko* (national) that suggests unity under the banners of the ‘nation’ and ‘national interest’ over factional fragmentation. This was a central ideological motif of the ‘French’ party and of the cognate press in the early 1840s.

92 The uncritical and anachronistic use of the concept of a diachronic, homogeneous, Christian, Greek *koinoteta* in the analysis of the *Rum milleti* still haunts the Greek historiography of nineteenth-century Anatolian societies. For a careful assessment see S. Petmezas, ‘Christian Communities in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Greece: Their Fiscal Functions’, in M. Greene (ed.), *Minorities in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton 2005), 71-127. Cf. B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols (New York 1982).

93 ‘Tyranny’, a term that figures in the sub-title of the book, as a core metaphor of *antikotsabasismos*, was not a novelty, but rather a standard feature of radical discourse since the time of *Hellenike Nomarchia* [Hellenic rule of law], a liberal polemical pamphlet published in 1806. In their turn, radical liberal uses of the term were also a reconfiguration of the traditional notions of *zulm/zouloumi* and *gadr* which were often employed by Ottoman subjects in castigating the unjust rule of the intermediary elites; Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*. Also see A. Anastasopoulos and E. Gara, ‘Othomanikes antilepseis peri egklematos kai timorias’ [Ottoman perceptions of crime and punishment], *Mnemon*, 21 (1999), 51-52. It is interesting, however, that in the mid nineteenth century this metaphor was also employed in a broader context. For instance, Manouel Gedeon much later describes the post-revolutionary scene at the Patriarchate as being occupied in struggles against “the appalling patriarchal tyranny” (*ten phoveran patriarchiken tyrannida*); Gedeon, *Kanonismos apopeirai*, 215.

Third, the notables are identified en masse as a single social category, at the debtor side vis-à-vis the ‘people’. This reconceptualisation is achieved through the anachronistic application of the language of debt in a reconfigured, politicised sense, which goes far beyond the historically predominant (administrative) logic of economic calculation (used by the followers of the Saltaioi faction). The first part of *Ta Kydoniaka* is devoted to a *defter*-type calculation of what the Chatzedes owe to the ‘people’. The author interprets a wide range of monetary dealings as a sort of outstanding ‘loans’, which the notables allegedly received from the *koinon*. These include (normal) gifts and bribes to high-standing officials (which were common in the *ancien régime*), the taxes from which families friendly to the notables were exempted, the private earnings from the illicit trading of the olive oil which was supposed to be sent to Istanbul (the so-called *rosoumati* [Ott. *rüsumat*])⁹⁴ at much higher prices than those prescribed by the government, the portion of the tithe (*dekate*), the land tax, which was allegedly ‘stolen’ in co-operation with the *voyvoda*, and, even, the unauthorised regulation of the monetary compensation for the return of the confiscated olive trees to their Christian owners.⁹⁵

This quite imaginative application of political logistics⁹⁶ concludes with the depiction of the notables, on the one hand, as “thieves of royal revenues” and, on the other, as being in a state of debt to the *koinoteta*. Since this ‘debt’ was neither acknowledged nor paid by the historical holders of communal office, the latter are accused of being mere embezzlers, “usurpers” (*katachrastes*) of public finances,⁹⁷ and enemies of the “common interest” (*koinon sympheron*). On these grounds the case for the “just” treatment of the “loyal *reaya*” is built.

Fourth, this is also a matter of ‘justice’: ordinary people, “the true, obedient *reaya*”, who are consistent in the payment of their tax obligations, are under persecution and find themselves accused of mutiny by this “oligarchic” tyranny that uses force and slander in order to impose its “unjust” rule. *Ta Kydoniaka* therefore defends the case for the submission of the ‘accounts’ to external inspection by the central authorities, though not by the Patriarchate but by government officials appointed by the Sultan. Through this move, the ‘people’ refer to a superior authority, which is imagined as acting on behalf of the ‘people’ in circumscribing the power of the intermediaries. The Sultan is asked to follow the example of the great “Kings of Enlightened Europe” and “promote justice” and the “rights of the poor”.

94 *Ta Kydoniaka*, 39, 41, 44.

95 Or other illegal uses of the earnings of the *koinon*, such as the re-negotiation of the communal debt for personal gain on the pretext of a poor crop.

96 As has already been mentioned, the author also provides an extremely detailed, practically ethnographic, description of the actual workings of the tax system, or an insider’s perspective of how the community’s finances were handled.

97 “They cheat and rob the King and, at the same time, they cause damage to the community” (*apatosi de kai kleptousi kai ten vasilieian kai sygchronos zemionousi kai to Koinon*), or “experienced arch-thieves of the public and royal revenues” (*kai ton demosion kai vasilikon prosodon protokleptas empeirous*); *Ta Kydoniaka*, 41, 14.

To sum up: *Ta Kydoniaka* is an exercise in the invention of political accountability. The anonymous author of 1842 through the use of a radical version of the language of constitutional rights subjected the 'communal' debt to a political logic of calculation (that logistically looked absurd and historically unfounded), thus transforming economic debt into political debt. The standard debt situation was thus reversed: those who had the undisputed authority to allocate to individuals their share of communal tax (*na logariazoun, na dekatizoun*) and put them into a debt situation were now being called upon to settle their own debt to the community. Through this reversal, those making the accounts were made accountable.

Petitioning in between States:

Exploring the Limits of Early Ottoman Constitutionalism

In this paper I have treated petitioning as a fundamental aspect of contentious politics. Petitions are not just a major ingredient of low-level politics; under specific conditions, such as factional strife in an era of expanding opportunities in communication, they become the engine of politicisation. The relevant material from Ayvalık in the early 1840s clearly shows how, through petitioning and letter-writing in the press, the political increased its grasp over traditional domains (e.g., the management of taxes),⁹⁸ thus turning them into contested terrain. Yet, in these extraordinary conditions and as it changed in its social configurations and its socio-political references, petitioning also transformed the content of the political.

What makes petitioning in the Ayvalık crisis particularly interesting is the wider framework in which it was conducted. I am referring to the Greek trans-state public that emerged on the contested, unregulated border zone during this period. This was a dialogic space that brought together arguments, ideas, metaphors and tropes from the formally and institutionally separate socio-political environments of Kingdom and Empire. In this respect, it reflected the flux of people and commodities in the wider region of the Aegean and western Anatolia.⁹⁹ Its basis was primarily linguistic – competence in Greek.

98 Taxation had been a locus of confrontation at the level of localities for a long time. However, the manner, rather than the object, of this politicisation was a novelty.

99 Mobility between these two regions was facilitated by a number of factors, including technological – such as the development of steam navigation and the gradual spread of print culture – and institutional ones – such as the inadequate policing of the (informal) border and the loose and highly contested legal framework governing inter-state relations because of the failure of the two states to agree on a Commercial Treaty that would fix the border and regulate their economic and political relations. In micro-social terms, mobility between the two territories was coupled with the great flexibility in low-level strategies of identification, particularly in the treatment of matters of nationality/national belonging, property, and taxation. In strictly macro-political terms, this state of flux was further intensified by constitutional pressures and moves towards the liberalisation of institutions (which eventually led to the promulgation of the *hatt-ı şerif* in 1839 and the Constitutional Revolution in September 1843). For an insightful description of some of these strategies see the report 'Peri ton en Kydoniais hellenon hype-

Its principal agents were the Greek-speaking literati from both sides of the Aegean who employed all available means – particularly the press – to communicate their arguments with great zeal and in all directions beyond and across state contexts to their Greek-speaking audiences. Its form was dialogic and confrontational. The exchange of information and arguments between newspapers provided the dialogic component. The war of letters and editorials added the confrontational dimension, thus bringing the Greek public into line with the factional and contentious politics that informed it.¹⁰⁰

The main point of the paper is that petitioning was refashioned as it was performed in the context of the trans-state public. Interactions between petitioning and letter-writing in the press were particularly important in this refashioning. The mode of petitioning changed from strictly bureaucratic to journalistic, thus taking full advantage of the possibilities offered by the expanding print culture and the press in order to overcome bureaucratic fixity and mould messages to audiences far beyond the standard bureaucratic recipients. Its form adopted greater variation reaching hybridity. And its content moved in novel directions.

From the above angle, I gave special attention to *Ta Kydoniaka*. This hybrid text is an extraordinary example of the transformations occurring in petitioning during this period and, particularly, of the imprint of the Greek trans-state public upon it. It is particularly an index of the in-betweenness of the moves that informed petitioning and of the capacity of publishing to provide bridges and open synthetic possibilities. Its hybrid form and its subsequent polysemy allowed *Ta Kydoniaka* to address multiple audiences, across state boundaries and levels – both *reaya* and Hellenes, local and diaspora Kydonians – and implicate in the realisation of this political project people living in different states (Ottoman, Hellenic) and functioning at various levels of governance, from high up (probably officials of the Porte and the Patriarchate) to the lower strata. In this regard, it represents an excellent instance of the flux of ideas that circulated among the trans-state Greek-speaking public.

However, the hybrid petition went a step further than letters to the press in the direction of political syncretism. It brought together ideas and concepts from both state contexts in a single politico-ideological framework that was creatively applied to dealing with an issue of local significance, that of the ‘accounts’. *Ta Kydoniaka* properly mixed – rather than juxtaposed, as often happened in letters to the press – the two state con-

koon’ [On the Hellenic subjects in Kydonies] that was sent by E. Valles, the special envoy of the consulate, to Theodoros Xenos, the Greek Consul in Izmir, on 7 December 1842; AYE, 1842, 45/1.

100 The Greek trans-state public was particularly fed with events which were generated by the contested boundary. Minor incidents of unrest in Ottoman territory, such as the ‘Kalymniaka’ of 1842, revolts, such as the ‘Kydoniaka’ of 1842, or, most important, revolutions, such as the Cretan one of 1841, provided the cultural raw materials for the construction of the public that crossed the boundary in both directions. They also increased the volume in the antagonistic trade in ideas, as new players – for instance, newspapers such as ‘Radamanthys’ – entered the dialogic field on the Hellenic side because of these events, in order to support the case of the Anatolian ‘Christian brothers’.

texts. While it formally addressed the Ottoman context – by adopting the perspective of the persecuted Kydonians, employing the language of *pisto ragialiki* and giving priority to Ottoman forms – it applied a modern content to the traditional form, a content that was borrowed from the constitutional debates taking place in the Hellenic press. As we saw, it used the logic of a radical version of liberalism, which was popular in the Hellenic Kingdom, in order to address the Ottoman problem of taxation. From this angle, it reconstructed the intermediaries as being accountable to the ‘people’. On the same basis, it adapted the traditional concept of ‘justice’/‘just’ (*dikaion*) to the modern, liberal notion of ‘rights’ (*dikaïoma*) (which was implicit in the *hatt-ı şerif* and so prominent in the Hellenic jural order). In other words, it gave new meaning to the idea of ‘justice’ by politicising it through a particular, Hellenic interpretation of the *hatt-ı şerif*. In this sense, it is an imaginative exploration of the limits of the early Tanzimat regime.

Ta Kydoniaka eventually turned into an experiment in the direction of elaborating an ideological framework ‘from below’, providing a more solid identity for the trans-state public to which it belonged. This ideological project was partial, incomplete, somehow ‘strange’ (since it combined French-born constitutional expectations with culturally distant Ottoman realities) and, as eventually became clear, transient (since the project of enlightened constitutional monarchy materialised not in the Ottoman realm but elsewhere, in Greece) – as transient as the book itself. However, as an aspect of the interstitial space of the border zone, *Ta Kydoniaka* was an important step towards the consolidation and reproduction of the trans-state Greek-speaking public which made it possible.

The paradox is that once it achieved its purpose – the upgrading of hybridity to a new ideological framework – the hybrid petition became redundant. As a reminder of the bitter conflict between Christians, it did not have a place in the upcoming order of things. Thus, it became marginalised in the very narrative to the emergence of which it had so decisively contributed. In the Empire, these early experiments of the Tanzimat did not last. The restoration of the *ancien régime* of dual governance and the promotion of Anthimos to the supreme office in the Christian *millet*, that of the Patriarch, just five years after the crisis cancelled any real prospect for changes in local government. In the Kingdom, on the other hand, the language of *pisto ragialiki* sounded like an instance of hubris against the ideals of the *Agon*, the Struggle for Independence. This could not be tolerated, particularly by those who became committed to the promotion of national ideals. The Constitutional Revolution of 1843 and the official adoption of the irredentist project rendered these *reaya*’s early constitutional fantasies redundant.

Once the two states increased their hold over the Greek public, *Ta Kydoniaka* was forced into the shadows of history: only a few copies of the book survived in public libraries, while its traces were gradually lost, as it was very rarely mentioned in the growing late nineteenth and early twentieth-century historiography of Ayvalık. After all, the 1842 crisis, as much as the wider period that starts in the 1830s and ends with the voting of the General Regulations in the early 1860s, seems to be a black hole in local historiography. This is hardly a surprise. What was later described as ‘intra-communal’ conflict was not compatible with the victorious myth of the nationally homogeneous and internally harmonious whole that deserves (and eventually gets) redemption. The hybridity for

which “the filthy book”, as *Ta Kydoniaka* was called by Manouel Gedeon,¹⁰¹ stood was matter out of place in the purist world that the victorious new canon of nationalist essentialism was creating in the Balkans. The book eventually became the victim of the very project to the success of which it had contributed.

APPENDIX

Petition 1

Arzuhal in Greek, sent to the Sultan, asking for the replacement of Baki Efendi by Ömer Ağa in the position of Ayvalık’s *voyvoda* (1253/1837)

Αναφερόμεθα το νυν προς το κραταιόν και υψηλόν δεβλέτι οι υποσιμειούμενοι πιστοί ραγιάδες κάτοικοι του Αϊβαλιού παρακαλούντες θερμώς να ρίψη όμμα [---] εις τας δεήσεις μας. ο μεγαλειότατος και ευσπλαχνικότατος ημών Άναξ, ου το κράτος είοι διαιωνίζον δι’ αιώνας, έχων ανέκαθεν την απαραδειγμάτιστον ευεργετικήν βούλησιν εις τους πιστούς και ευπειθείς υπηκόους του αυτοκρατορικού θρόνου του, επαγρουπνεί ώστε οι κατά τόπον διοικηταί να είναι σύμφωνοι με το πνεύμα του κραταιού δεβλετίου, το να ζουν οι πιστοί υπήκοοί του εν ανέσει και με όλην την έκτασιν του ραγιαδικού χαρακτήρος των χωρίς ποτέ να παραβιάζεται ούτε το δίκαιον των, ούτε η ησυχία των, ούτε η τιμή των. ο εις την πατρίδα ημών διοικών Βοϊβόντας παραμελήσας τα υψηλά χρέη τα οποία επεφορτίσθη από το κραταιόν δεβλέτι το να μας διοική φρονίμως, να μας νουθετή εις τα χρέη μας και να μας περιθάλλη εις τας ανάγκας μας, το εναντίον μετεχειρίσθι χαρακτίρα όχι διοικητού αλλά ανθρώπου φοριόζου, όστις [---] εις όλας τας πράξεις του χωρίς να παρατηρή ούτε το σφάλμα του πταίστου ούτε το δίκαιον του αθώου. πολλάκις τον επαρακαλέσαμεν και του επαραστήσαμεν ότι ο τοιούτος τρόπος της διοικήσεως του αντί να περιμαζεύει τους πιστούς ραγιάδες εις το κέντρον της πατρίδος μας και του ραγιαλικίου μας τους διασκορπίζει με τοιαύτας βίας και καταχρήσεις, αι οποίαι αφ’ ου γίνονται εκ μέρους του, παραχωρεί να γίνονται και από τους ανθρώπους του. εις το διάστημα της διατριβής του εις την πατρίδα μας, πράγμα ανήκουστον ανέκαθεν, ηκολούθησαν διάφοροι φόνοι αθώων ραγιάδων εις τους αγρούς των, τον επαρακαλέσαμεν να κάμη το χρέος του και να προστρέξη εις τα μέσα να μην ακολουθονώ άδικοι φόνοι. εις την παράκλησίν μας την ήκουσε με αδιαφορίαν, με μεγάλην μας επιμονήν του αναφέραμεν ότι εις τας λαμπράς και ενδόξους ημέρας του μεγαλειοτάτου άνακτος και εις όλους τους αιώνας της θεοστηρίκτου Οθωμανικής Βασιλείας η τιμή εθεωρήθη και θεωρήται Ιερά. αλλά με όλην [---] απερίφθη η αίτησίς μας. ταύτα πάντα παρατηρούντες ότι τρέχουν εις το αδιόρθωτον,

101 According to Gedeon, *Ta Kydoniaka* “vexes not only the [Bishop of] Ephesus, but all the bishops, ministers, etc.” (*den peirazei monon ton Ephesou, all’holous tous hagious, hypourgous klp*); M. Gedeon, *Patriarchikai ephemerides: eideseis ek tes hemeteras ekklesiastikes historias, 1500-1912* [Patriarchal journals: news from our ecclesiastical history, 1500-1912] (Athens 1936-1938), 422-423.

και βλέποντες ότι με τον τρόπον του αντί να περιμαζεύσει εις τους όσοι έμειναν εις την [---] πασχίζη εις τους εδώ να διασκορπίση, και φοβούμενοι μήπως εν καιρώ φανώμεν τουχημετλίδες διότι [ε---σαμεν], αναφερόμεθα εις την ευσπλαχνίαν του υψηλού δεβλετίου παρακαλούντες θερμώς να μας σταλή διοικητής φρόνιμος, δίκαιος, σώφρων, άξιος να αντιπροσωπεύση το κραταιόν δεβλέτι και να περιθάλη εις τους ραγιάδες, και τους [---]. θέλομεν δε είμεθα προς τον θεόν δια παντός [---] δια την πολυχρόνιον ζωήν του Μεγαλειοτάτου και ευσπλαγχνικοτάτου ημών Άνακτος.

Οι πιστοί και ευπηθείς ραγιάδες κάτοικοι του Αϊβαλιού

Followed by 30 signatures and the seal of the ‘community’.

Source: BOA, HH 26196

Petition 2

Arzuhal sent to the *Kapudan-ı derya* on 10/22 October 1841,
written in Greek and translated into Ottoman Turkish

Ba-irade-i seniye-i şahane Ayvalık kazasına memuren gönderilmiş olan mir-i alay Mustafa Beğîñ avdetiyle hâkpay-ı hazret-i kapudan-ı deryaya takdim olunmak üzere işbu mah-ı Teşrin-i evvelin onuncı günü tarihiyle müverrah memleket-i mezkûrede mukim metropolid vekili porotosingelos rahibiñ ve ehaliden dahi iki yüz altı nefer kesaniñ taraflarından mümza olarak memleket-i mezkûreniñ meclis âzası bulunan dokuz nefer kocabaşlarıñ imza ve mühürleriyle ve memleketiñ mühür-i resmiyle musaddak rumîü'l-ibare vürud eden bir kıt'a arz ve mahzarıñ tercümesidir.

Devletlü inayetlü ibretlü efendimiz hazretleri [---]-i asdıka ve reaya-yı hass-ı devlet-i âliyeden olan zirde muharrerü'l-esami kulları taraf-ı devletlerinden testir olınan buyruldı-ı samileri ehali-i kaza muvacehesinde kıraat olındıkda cümlemiz müteessir ve müteallim olarak hâkpay-ı âliyelerine zirde beyan olınan hususı arz ve ifadeye müsaraa ederiz şöyle ki ahz ve i'ta-yı vakaamızıñ muhasebatından dolayı rüesa-yı memleket ile ehali beynlerinde ba'z-ı gûna ihtilâfat ve mübayanet zuhûra gelüb bundan üç mah mukaddem asitane-i âliyeye üç nefer vekiller irsal ederek ve yedlerine bir kıt'a arz ve mahzar i'ta olınarak muhasebe-i mezkûreniñ bu tarafda rüyet olunmasıyçün taraf-ı devlet-i âliyeden bir memur da ve iki nefer kâtibiñ memleketimize irsal buyurulmasını hakpây-ı şahanedan istida etmiş idik. Merhum vekillerimiz el-haletü hazihi der-i saadetde bulunub beher hafta vaki olan mekâtibimizde maslahat-ı mezkûr kariben istidamız vechle tesviye olınacağını iş'ar etmededirler. Binaenaleyh zat-ı devletleriniñ min el-kadim fukara haklarında aşikâr olan merhamet ve inayetleri ve alel-husus bu esnada memleketimiziñ esbab-ı asayişiniñ istihsalı emrinde arzan buyurdıkları sa'y ve himmetlerine istinaden der-i saadetde bulunan Dimitri Macunî ve Anataş (*sic*) veled-i Manol ve Atanaş Betr be-namun üç nefer vekillerimize ilâve olunmak üzere bu defa dahi kazamızıñ üç aded mahallesini ehalisinden olarak asitane-i âliyeye irsal olınan İstilyano veled-i İstrati ve Yani Bi-

sa ve Yorgi Karita ve Yani İstravozina ve Nikola Acı Pandazi ve İstilyano Acı Tamirya (?) ve Kostandi Acı Petro ve Evangeli Çivğuli ve Terzi Hristaki ve Paraşkeva Yakumoğlu ve Dimitri Burnazo ve Nikola Orfaneli ve Ananosti Papaz oğlu ve Acı Dimitri Kalopoda ve Kuzino veled-i Yorgi namun on beş nefer reaya kulları-ki cem'an on sekiz nefere baliğ olur bunlar ile beraber hâkpay-ı şahaneden niyaz ve istida olunan bir memur ve iki nefer kâtibiñ bu tarafa i'zamına da ve mademki muhasebe-i mezkûreniñ edasında cümle ehali kullarının medhali olduğından ehali-i merkume dahi birtakım rencid[e] ve müsün ve [---] ve öksüz-i biçare makulesinden ibaret olarak kendüleri bi'n-nefs der-i saade-te azimet eylemeleri mümkün olamayacağı ecilden muhasebe-i mezkûreniñ Ayvalık kazasında rüyet olunmasına müsaade ve inayet buyurılmak babında emr ve ferman hazret-i menlehü'l-emriñdir.

Source: BOA, İrade Dahiliye 2370/3

Petition 3

Arzuhal sent to the *Kapudan-ı derya* on 20 October/1 November 1841,
written in Greek and translated into Ottoman Turkish

Ayvalık kazasına memur mir-i alay Mustafa Beğniñ avdetiyle vürud etmiş olan diğer fırkanın vekilleri bulunan sekiz nefer kesan taraflarından mümza olarak işbu mah-ı Teşrin-i evvelin yiğirminci günü tarihiyle müverrah hâkpay-ı hazret-i kapudan-ı deryaya takdim olunan rumû'l-ibare bir kıt'a arzuhalın tercümesidir.

İşbu elli yedi senesinin Martına gelinceye değin nizam ve asayiş-i memleketin vikaye-sine hayli zahmete muvaffak olmuş ise de tarih-i mezkûreden bertü ba'z-ı müfsid kimesneler bi'l-ittifak gûya bundan sonra her nev' vergüden muaf ve düyun-ı afîkden halâs olacaksınız yollu eracif-i [---] ile ehaliyi bi't-tahrik şimdiye değin memleketi ihtilâl suretinde de tutmakda ve bunlar ise kırk neferden ibaret olub bir mikdarı halkın bu vechle nasihleri ve diğeri dahi vekilleri sırasına girüb ve ehaliden ücret ahz ederek memleketin mühür-i resmisinin parçalarını beynlerinde taksim ve ba'zen birbirlerini yedlerinden cebren ahz etmekde ve bu suretle memleketin mu'teberleri bulunan kesanı gâh sebb ve tahfif (*sic*) ve gâh habs ve tazyik etmek olduklarından başka hanelerini dahi ikide bir basub canlarına varınca kasd olunmakda olduğu derkârdır. Bu fesadın sebep-i asliyesi muhasebelerinin rüyeti olub muhasebe-i mezkûruñ rüyetini va'd ve taahhüd ederek bed'en olunmuş ise de müfsidat-ı merkumun bu keyfiyetden dahi peşiman olarak muhasebe rüyet olunan hane [---] ve temhir de etmişlerdir. Ve bundan sonra muhassıl Mustafa Rüşdî Efendinin vürudinde be-tekrar muhasebe-i mezkûreniñ rüyetine bi'l-mübaşere her kimiñ zimmetine akçe geçmiş bulunur ise faiziyle beraber te'diye eylememizi deruhde etmiş deyü hususı Patrikhane tarafına arz ve inha eylemiş ise gene müfsidan-ı merkumun muhassıl-ı mumailiye derece-i itaatlarını izhar zımında habs olunan çend nefer-i mütehem kimesneleri habishaneden cebren ahz ve anların yerlerine mu'teberan-ı ehaliden bir tüccar-ı ermenî habse vaz'edüb habishanenin [---] üç gün kendüleri tevkif eylemişler-

dir. Binaenaleyh Ayvalık kazasının ahval-i haziresi ne merkezde idüğü balâda beyan olunan hususatdan ma'lûm olanları oldıkda muhasebe-i mezkûreniñ dahi hüsn-i nizam [---] üzere rüyeti evvel be-evvel memleketiñ nizam ve asayişiniñ iadesine ve mu'teberan-ı ehaliniñ emlâk ve canlarında te'min olınmalarına mütevakkıf idüğü bedihî ve aşikâr bir keyfiyet olduğından Ayvalık kazasında bu defa kıraat olunan buyruldi-i âlileri iktizasınca zirde mesturü'l-esami sekiz nefer kulları-ı hâkpay olanlarından memleketimiziñ nizam ve istirahatiniñ iadesini istidaya memur ve izam olındığımız ecilden saye-i merhamet-vaye-i hazret-i şahanede Ayvalık kazasınıñ dahi ve [---] olduğu ihtilâlden [---] memalik-i saire-i hazret-i mülûkâne misillü nizam ve asayiş tahtına idhal buyurulmak babında emr ve ferman hazret-i menlehü'l-emriñdir.

Source: BOA, İrade Dahiliye 2370/2

Petition 4

Anaphora, written in Greek, sent to the Secretary of Domestic Affairs on 2 June 1842

Αναφορά των ευρισκομαίνων υπηκόων Ελλήνων εις Κυδωνίας κατοικούντων κατά του ελληνικού υποπροξένου των Κυδωνιών Σπυρίδων Σημηριώτου περί αμελείας, αρνήσεως υπηρεσίας, αυθαίρετου φυλάκησις και αποφυλάκησις, προσβολής της τιμής του Ελληνικού Έθνους και των Ελληνικών δικαιωμάτων και καταπίεσης κ.τ.λ. (2/6/42)

Προς την επί των εσωτερικών Β' Γραμματείαν της επικρατείας

Οι ευσεβώς ταπεινώς υποφαινόμενοι υπήκοοι έλληνες, εις την αναφορά μας ταύτην αναφέρωμεν παράπονα εναντίον του ελληνικού υποπροξένου, προς την σεβαστήν Β. Γραμματείαν της επικρατείας, την οποίαν παρακαλούμε θερμώς να ακούση τα δίκαια παράποντα των υποφαινομαίνων υπηκόων ελλήνων με πολύν προσοχήν, και να στρέψει εν βλέμμα των ομμάτων της εκτός της επικρατείας και θέλει ακούσει πλήρη παράποντα και αδικείαςπραχθησομένας παρά του ιδίου. εις την σημερινήν περίστασιν των Κυδωνιών ενώθη εις τα πολιτικά, και ότι έλαβε μέρος με τους λεγομένους χατζήδες των Κυδωνιών, δια να ρήψουν το κόμμα των πτωχών καθώς και το έρηψαν και υπερήσχησε το κόμμα των πλουσίων, όπου και αυτός είναι ενωμένος μετ'αυτών και πολλοί έλληνες εκατατρέχθησαν ένεκα της διαβολής των υπηκόων οθωμανών, άλλος δε εραπίσθη εις τα πόδια με 500 ξυλιαίς, και άλλοι έλληνες εκατατρέχθη και είναι εις παράνομον κράτησιν και δεν συγχωρείται εις αυτούς να απέλθωσιν εις την οικίαν των μήτε με φύλακα, ως άλλοι φονείς ο Κοσ υποπροξένος δεν συγχωρούσι την άδειαν εις αυτούς, αλλ'ούτε έδειχνε την διαταγήν δυνάμει της οποίας οι έλληνες αυτοι εκρατούνταν, και ότι προβλέπει τιμώρησιν εις τοιαύτην περίστασιν από τον Νόμον επί παρανόμω κρατήσει, αρνούμενος το να δείξει την διαταγήν δυνάμει της οποίας υστερείται την προσωπικήν του ελευθερίαν ενώ ο Νόμος προβλέπει την ποινήν του, φαίνεται δεν θέλει να ηξεύρει τον ελληνικόν Νόμον, μμείται τας Τουρκικάς αρ-

χάς έχων πάντοτε το αυθαίρετον χωρίς να ακούσουν τον διαβαλλόμενον άντε κάτ τα λ.π. και ότι ο Κοσ υποπρόξενός μας καμμίαν διαφοράν δεν έχει από οθωμανός, και ότι προσβάλλει την ελληνικήν αξιοπρέπειαν, και όλον το ελληνικό έθνος, διότι καθ'ήμέραν πηγαίνει και συμβουλευήται από τους προύχοντας των Κυδωνιών και από τας τουρκικάς αρχάς οδηγούμενος από αυτών πάντοτε και ότι είναι κόμμα των, ότι αυτοί Σας βεβαιώμεν πράττει αυτός ότι τον ειπώσιν, και όχι ότι ο Νόμος και τα καθήκοντά του τον προτρέπουν να κάμη, περίπου του ενός μηνός ευρίσκεται εις Μοσχονήσια με την σύζυγόν του προς αλλαγήν του αέρα, και ότι κάθε εσπέρας απερνά και παίρνει μαζί του άνθρωπον τον οποίον εξήτησε άλλος έμπορος την προσωπικήν του κράτησιν και προκατέβαλε εις δρ. 90 εξαμήνον τροφής ως ο Νόμος ορίζει, και αυτός τον έκαμε ναύτην της Ελληνικής υποπρόξενικής λέμβου και φέρει μεθ'εαυτού του εις Μοσχονήσια και γυρίζει ελεύθερος, ποιος το συγχωρεί, και πώς να σιωπήση τας παρανόμους πράξεις του, έχων αίσθημα ελληνικόν και χαρακτήρ. Τοιούτου, ευαίσθητος έλλην δεν δύναται να βλέπη πλήρη αδικείας γινομένης παρά του ιδίου και μάλιστα λέγει ότι δεν γίνονται καθώς εις την Ελλάδα, διότι εδώ είναι Τουρκία. ποίος έλλην μεταξύ έλληνος έχων υπόθεσιν και έδωκε πέρας καλόν εις αυτήν, αν έχης να λαμβάνης τριακοσίας δρ. αυτός θα πάρει τας 150 και τέλος δεν δίδει ποτέ εις την υπόθεσιν τοιαύτας δίκας κάμει. αν έλλην μεταξύ οθωμανού έχων διαφοράν θα υπάγη αυτήν εις τον Μεχχεμί να κρίνη ο έλλην την διαφοράν του και όχι εις την Ελληνικήν πρεσβείαν, ενώ ο ελληνικός Νόμος διατάττει άλλως πως, ότι οι Έλληνες δεν παραδίδονται εις τας τουρκικάς αρχάς ως το άρθρον 1 και υπό της Ποιν. Δικονομίας, αυτός δε έλληνα τινά επαράδωσε εις την τουρκικήν αρχήν τον Τριαντάφυλλον Χατζητροπούνα ο οποίος εραπίσθη από 500 εις τα πόδια, ποία υπεράσπισις έκαμε εις αυτόν, αυτός δε όλως διόλου χατζής ως λέγουν, εδώ, και ότι σύρεται πάντοτε από τους προύχοντας των Κυδωνιών και από τον Άγιο Εφέσου και προσβάλλει τα ελληνικά συμφέροντα και τα προδίδει εις τας ενταύθα αρχάς τουρκικάς, δια να πιστοποιήσουν την καλήν του διαγωγήν και ακριβή εκπλήρωσιν των χρεών του, να γράψουν οι Βέηδες εις τον αυτού πρόξενον Κοιν. Κ. Βογορίδην, να συστήση εις το ελληνικόν έθνος την ακριβή εκπλήρωσιν των χρεών του, την τιμότητά του και την καλήν του διαγωγήν, εις το διάστημα της ζωής του απέρασε ησύχως και τιμίως, επειδή και εβοήθησε αυτούς πρότερον τας ενταύθα τουρκικάς αρχάς, αυτές δε βοηθούν τώρα, ανταμοίβεται η χάρις εις αυτόν, ένεκα των πολλών καταχρήσεων του έφθασαν εις τα ότα της Σεβαστής Κυβερνήσεώς μας η οποία θέλει ταχίνει την παραίτησιν αυτού και θέλει διατάξει την παύσιν του, και να φροντίση την αποστολήν άλλου το οποίον οι ευρισκόμενοι ενταύθα έλληνες θα ευγνωμονούν δια βίου, και ότι διορισθησόμενου άλλου ίσως δυνηθώσιν να απερατώσουν ταχέως τας υποθέσεις των και απέλθουν εις την ποθητήν τους Ελλάδα, από τους φέροντας Έλληνας εις Σύρον δια να κριθώσιν επί της ψευδούς Συκοφαντίας, καθώς και από άλλων ελλήνων και υπηκόων θέλετε ακούσει πράγματα τα οποία και αυτά τα βάρβαρα έθνοι δεν ήθελον πράξει τοιούτα ως ο υποπρόξενός μας έπραξε. φαίνεται εις το κρανίον του μέσα θα έχει όλους τους ελληνικούς Νόμους και δεν βασιίζεται εις τον νόμον του ελληνικού έθνους, ή να είπω καλλύτερον ότι αυτός έχει την θέλησιν του νόμον, αν τωόντι έλληνες και υπήκοοι οθωμανοί κινήσουν αγωγάς ένεκα τας παρανόμους πράξεις του επί ζωής του θέλει δικάζεται εις τα Δικαστήρια και ούτος

δεν θέλει ελευθερωθεί, τὰὐτὰ πάντα καθ' ὑποβάλομεν ὑπ' ὄψιν τῆς Σεβαστῆς Γραμματείας τῆς επικρατείας καὶ παρακαλῶμεν θερμῶς, οἱ ευσεβᾶστος ταπεινῶς υποφαινόμενοι νὰ ενεργίση ὅτι τὸ δίκαιον απαιτεῖται ἔνεκα τῶν καταχρήσεων του, καὶ νὰ μὴ δώσει πίστη εἰς ὅσα ὑπήκοοι οθωμανοὶ βεβαιώσουν περὶ τῆς ἀκριβείας ἐκπληρώσεως, ἐνῶ αὐτὸς εἶχε μέρος εἰς τὰ πράγματα τῶν Κυδωνιῶν ἐφόναζε ἕκαστον Ἕλληνα νὰ μὴ ἤθελε λάβει μέρος, καὶ ποίαν ἀνάγκη εἶχαν οἱ Ἕλληνες εἰς τὰ πράγματα τῶν Κυδωνιῶν, ἐνῶ γνωρίζουν ὅτι ὁ Νόμος τοὺς ἀπαγορεύει, ὁ Κοσὺς υποπρόξενος ἔχων μέρος καὶ κινούμενος ἀπὸ ἔχθραν, μίσος, πάθος, σκοπὸν Ἰδιοτελείας, καὶ χαριζόμενος καὶ συρόμενος πάντοτε ἀπὸ τὰς ἀρχὰς τῶν Κυδωνιῶν, τῶν προυχόντων δια νὰ υποστηρίξουν αὐτὸν εἰς ἐναντίαν περίστασι οσάκις ἤθελε κλονιστῆ ἀπὸ τὴν θέσιν του, ἐπρόδωσε τὰ ἐλληνικὰ Δικαιώματα, καὶ ψευδῶς ἀνήγγελε ὅτι οἱ Ἕλληνες ἤθελον συκόσουν ἐπανάστασιν ἐναντίον τῶν ἐνταύθα Τουρκικῶν ἀρχῶν καὶ ἔνεκα τῆς ἐπαγρυπνήσεώς του ἔλαβε τὰ δραστήρια μέτρα καὶ ἐφυλάκησε τρεῖς Ἕλληνας καὶ ἐμπόδισε τὸ κακὸν καὶ τῶνόντι ἄξιος υποπρόξενος καὶ δραστήριος εἰς τὰ χρέη του ὁ Θεὸς νὰ δίδῃ μακροχρόνιον ζωὴν καὶ ἀλλίμονον εἰς τοὺς ἐνταύθα κατοικούντες προσωρινῶς Ἕλληνες, οἱ ὁποῖοι περιμένουν ἀπὸ τοιοῦτον υπεράσπῃσιν καὶ ἀποπεράτωσιν τῶν υποθέσεων τοὺς, μένωμεν εὐέλπιδες ὅτι μία ἐκ τῶν πολλῶν Σας Σκέψεων θέλει εἶναι καὶ ἀποκατάστασις τῶν υποφαινομαίνων καὶ υποσημειούμεθα με τὸ ἀνήκον Σέβας. Ἐν Κυδωνίαις τὴν 2^α Ἰουνίου 1842

Followed by 22 signatures.

Source: AYE, 1842, 39/12-II/1

TABLE I
Petitions employed in the course of the Ayvalık crisis (1840-1843)

Source (archival or other)	Date – Type	Signed by	Addressed to H/L	Mediated by	Content	Published – Translation
- [Reference in Patriarchal Correspondence, Codex K, 287, 8 June 1841]	[1841]	A number of inhabitants	H (Patriarch)	–	A (To send the registers [<i>katasticha</i>] for inspection)	Unpublished
- [Reference in BOA, İrade Dahiliye 2370/3]	[Summer 1841]	A number of inhabitants (The ‘people’)	H (Porte)	Three <i>vekils</i> : D. Matzounis, Athanasios tou Manoli, Athanasios Petrou	A (To appoint an inspector of the accounts)	Unpublished
BOA, İrade Dahiliye 2370/3	1841 <i>Arz ve mahzar</i>	65 inhabitants, verified by nine <i>kocabaşıs</i> (The ‘people’)	L	–	R (To transfer the <i>kaza</i> of Ayvalık from the <i>sancak</i> of Biga to the <i>sancak</i> of Balıkesir)	Unpublished Translated from Greek into Ottoman Turkish
BOA, İrade Dahiliye 2270/4	9-21 September 1841 <i>Arzuhal</i>	A number of inhabitants (Saltaioi)	H (Porte)	–	A (To appoint ten temporary notables [<i>prokritoï</i>] and send envoy)	Unpublished Translated from Greek into Ottoman Turkish
BOA, İrade Dahiliye 2370/3	10-22 October 1841 <i>Arz ve mahzar</i>	Monk <i>protosyngelos</i> and 206 inhabitants, verified by nine <i>kocabaşıs</i> (The ‘people’)	L (<i>Kapudan Paşa</i>)	Mustafa Bey	A (To add another 15 representatives of the three <i>mahalles</i> . Includes members of the 1841 council)	Unpublished Translated from Greek into Ottoman Turkish

BOA, İrade Dahiliye 2370/3	10-22 October 1841 <i>Arz ve mahzar</i>	76 inhabitants, verified by nine <i>kocabaşıs</i> (The ‘people’)	L (<i>Kapudan Paşa</i>)	Mustafa Bey	A, P (To prohibit foreign protection for those who administered community finances and are property-holders in Ayvalık so that they may be tried [?])	Unpublished Translated from Greek into Ottoman Turkish
BOA, İrade Dahiliye 2370/2	20 October-1 November 1841 <i>Arzuhal</i>	Eight representatives of the ‘other’ party (Saltaioi)	L (<i>Kapudan Paşa</i>)	Mustafa Bey	O, A (To suppress the rebellion)	Unpublished Translated from Greek into Ottoman Turkish
[Reproduced in <i>Ta Kydoniaka</i> , ig-ist (= xiii-xvi)]	April-May 1842	“All the inhabitants of Kydonies” (<i>Holoi hoi katoikoi ton Kydonion</i>)	L (Şerif Ağa, Tevfik Bey)	–	A, J (To “acquit” the accused Kydonians as well as “save” them from the old <i>kotsabasedes</i>)	Published in <i>Ta Kydoniaka</i>
AYE, 1842, 39/12-II/1	2-14 June 1842	22 Hellenic subjects	L (Secretary of Domestic Affairs)	(A. Giannares)	P (To replace the Hellenic vice-consul in Kydonies and not give faith to his false claims)	Unpublished
AYE, 1842, 39/12-II/5	8-20 July 1842	Wife of Eustratios Karpandaros	L (Secretary of Foreign Affairs)	–	J (To show “mercy”)	Unpublished
[Reference in AYE, 1843, 39/12-I/8]	13-25 July 1842	D. ChatzeAthanasίου and “other citizens”	L (Th. Xenos, Hellenic Consul in Izmir)	–	–	Unpublished
<i>Ta Kydoniaka</i>	18 July 1842 Book	Anonymous	H (Sultan)	–	A, J, R	Published

[Reference in AYE, 1842, 39/12-II/4, 21 August 1842]	July-August 1842	Nikolaos Pathos	L (Secretary of Foreign Affairs)	–	P (Against Se-meriotes)	Unpublished
BOA, İrade MV 916/3	October-November 1842 <i>Arzuhal</i>	19 jailed inhabitants	–	–	O (To pardon)	Unpublished Translated from Greek into Ottoman Turkish
BOA, İrade MV 916/1	10-22 November 1842 <i>Sened</i>	59 inhabitants	L (İsmet Paşa)	–	O (Declaring submission, asking for pardon)	Unpublished Written in Greek
AYE, 1842, 39/12-II/9	20 November-2 December 1842	A. Andronikos	L (Secretary of Foreign Affairs)	–	J (To apply justice against vice-consul Se-meriotes)	Published as a letter to the King (dated 8 November) in 'Anexartetos', No. 22, 21 November 1842
AYE, 1842, 39/12-II/8	30 November-12 December 1842	26 Hellenic subjects	H (King)	–	P, T (Protection from maltreatment by the Ottoman governor of Kydonies and replacement of the incompetent vice-consul)	Published as a letter to the King in 'Anexartetos', No. 32, 30 January 1843
AYE, 1843, 39/12-I/4	2-14 January 1843	A. Giannares	H (King)	–	P (To replace the vice-consul in Kydonies because of his treacherous behaviour)	Unpublished
AYE, 1843, 39/12-II/6	19 April-1 May 1843	A. Giannares	H (King)	–	P (To replace the consular authorities in both Smyrna and Kydonies)	Published as a letter to the King in 'Anexartetos', No. 45, 29 April 1843

AYE, 1844, 39/12-I/1	7-19 No- vember 1843	70 signa- tures	L (Secretary of Foreign Affairs)	–	P (To replace the vice-consul in Kydonies be- cause of his co-operation with the Otto- man authorities and his failure to protect the Hellenic sub- jects)	Unpublished
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Source: []: not found in any archive.

Addressed to: H: highest (Sultan, or Patriarch, or King of the Hellenes), L: lower (e.g., *Kapudan Paşa*, or Secretary of Foreign or Domestic Affairs).

Content: A = accounts, J = justice, O = order, P = protection, R = other topics, T = against the Ottoman Empire.

PART THREE

CLOSER TO THE SEAT OF POWER

THE ŞEYH BEDREDDIN UPRISING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OTTOMAN CIVIL WAR OF 1402-1413

Dimitris KASTRITSIS*

SINCE HIS INVOLVEMENT IN AN UPRISING IN 1416 which resulted in his execution, the rebellious Ottoman religious scholar and Sufi Şeyh Bedreddin has never ceased to capture the imagination. This has especially been the case since the publication in 1936 of Nâzım Hikmet's epic poem, which made Bedreddin a symbol of the Left in Turkey.¹ Because he allegedly preached common ownership of property, Bedreddin has been presented as a proto-communist and compared to the Sassanian religious reformer Mazdak, while his universalistic religious views have earned him the name 'Hallaj of Rum'.² Yet the historical Bedreddin still remains elusive. Both the man and his revolt have stayed mostly in the domain of sacred history or political mythology, owing at least in part to the fact that Bedreddin's career happened to coincide with one of the darkest and most complex

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- 1 Nâzım Hikmet, *Simavne Kadısı oğlu Şeyh Bedreddin Destanı* (originally published 1936, re-published Ankara 1966). A recent, measured treatment for a Greek readership of both the historical problem of Bedreddin's revolt and its position in modern Turkish political culture is E. Kolovos, "'Tou Mpentrentin ta palikaria" sten othomanike kai ste sygchrone tourkike historia' ['Bedreddin's braves' in Ottoman and modern Turkish history], in K. Lappas, A. Anastasopoulos, and E. Kolovos (eds), *Mneme Penelopes Stathe: meletes historias kai philologias* [Memory of Pinelopi Stathi: studies of history and philology] (Heraklion 2010), 117-137.
- 2 K. Zhukov, 'Börklüce Mustafa, Was he Another Mazdak?', in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Syncrétismes et hérésies dans l'Orient seldjoukide et ottoman (XIV^e-XVIII^e siècle)* (Paris 2005), 119-127; M. Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée dans les Balkans ottomans. Vie du Cheikh Bedreddin le 'Hallâj des Turcs'* (Istanbul 1995). Balivet's is one of the main monographs on Bedreddin; others are M. Şerefeddin [Yaltkaya], *Simavne Kadıoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin* (Istanbul 1924, 1994); A. Gölpınarlı, *Simavna Kadıoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin* (Istanbul 1966); M. Yüksel, *Simavna Kadıoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin* (Istanbul 2002). Seminal articles include H. J. Kissling, 'Das Menâqybnâme Scheich Bedr ed-Dîn's, des Sohnes des Richters von Samâvna', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 100 (1950), 112-176; F. Babinger, 'Scheich Bedr ed-Dîn, der Sohn der Richters von Simâw', *Der Islam*, 11 (1921), 1-106. For a full bibliography see Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*. For an attempt to place Bedreddin in the wider context of Ottoman antinomian religious movements see A. Y. Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler* (Istanbul 1998), 136-202.

periods of early Ottoman history, that of the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-1413 (usually known as 'the Interregnum'). As the Civil War is finally beginning to enter the limelight of history, it is a good time to reassess Bedreddin's activity in the light of what is now known about the politics and culture of the time.³

The most important source on Bedreddin's career is undoubtedly the rhymed hagiography or book of exploits (*menakıbnâme*) by his grandson Halil b. İsmail, which is the only source covering Bedreddin's activities before the uprising in any detail.⁴ Thanks to the important monograph by Michel Balivet and a recent article by Erdem Çıpa, this text has been subjected to some serious critical analysis, in which it is treated as a source of the first order while taking into account its author's obvious bias.⁵ Intriguingly, Çıpa has shown that, despite Hâfız Halil's desire to exonerate his grandfather by absolving him of any intention to foment revolt in Rumelia, and by hiding his involvement in the parallel popular uprising in the Aydın region of Anatolia led by Bedreddin's disciples Börklüce Mustafa and Torlak Hu Kemal, the author of the *Menakıb* nevertheless reveals a great deal about Bedreddin's political connections and legitimising arguments. In fact, he believes that Hâfız Halil's account allows us to reconstruct Bedreddin's *huruc* (i.e., bid for power) and its underlying claims to political legitimacy.⁶

But did Şeyh Bedreddin and his followers really intend to overthrow the Ottoman dynasty, or should Hâfız Halil's emphasis on Bedreddin's supposed Seljuk ancestry be interpreted as just another element in the author's eulogy of his unjustly executed ancestor? While it is impossible to answer with any certainty, some insight on this and other important questions may be provided by taking a broader look at the social and political situation at the time of the Bedreddin uprising. The context in which it must be placed is twofold: that of the religious and intellectual currents of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, and that of the social and political situation during the civil war of 1402-1413, especially the two-and-a-half-year-long reign of Musa Çelebi. By looking at these two aspects of the historical moment at which Bedreddin's political activity took place, it may be possible at least to begin to address the larger question of how a man of the education and elite status of Bedreddin came to be involved in an uprising with such a strong popular base.

In fact, it is far from easy to understand what Musa's regime represented for Rume-
lia in the early fifteenth century. In his 1938 article 'De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de

3 On the Ottoman Civil War, see D. J. Kastritis, *The Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-1413* (Leiden and Boston 2007).

4 Halil bin İsmâil bin Şeyh Bedrüdîn Mahmûd, *Simavna Kadısoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin Manâkıbı*, eds A. Gölpınarlı and İ. Sungurbey (Istanbul 1967) (hereafter Hâfız Halil and *Menakıb*).

5 Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*; H. E. Çıpa, 'Contextualizing Şeyh Bedreddin: Notes on Halil b. İsmâ'il's *Menâkıb-ı Şeyh Bedreddin b. İsrâ'il*' (sic), in *Şinasi Tekin'in Anısına: Uygurlardan Osmanlıya* (Istanbul 2005), 285-295.

6 Çıpa, 'Contextualizing Şeyh Bedreddin', 285-286. The term *huruc* appears in the Ottoman chronicle of Mehmed Neşrî, *Kitâb-ı Cihan-nümâ. Neşrî Tarihi*, Vol. 2, eds F. R. Unat and M. A. Köymen (Ankara 1995), 543-547. The meaning of this term is discussed by C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley 1995), 118-119.

Constantinople', Paul Wittek spoke of Musa Çelebi's regime as "la Roumelie révolutionnaire" – however, the only justification he gives for calling Musa's government revolutionary is Bedreddin's participation in it, which somehow makes Musa guilty by association of the same proto-communist leanings attributed to Bedreddin's revolt.⁷ This leads to a rather circular argument, to say nothing of the anachronism of using the term 'revolutionary' to describe fifteenth-century Ottoman realities. In a review of Wittek's article, Colin Imber has correctly pointed out these weaknesses, but has gone to the other extreme by claiming that the only reason Musa appointed Bedreddin as his head military judge (*kadiasker*, *kazasker*) in 1411 was that he was a renowned jurist (*fakih*).⁸ In fact, as we will see, even the most cursory knowledge of Bedreddin's activities prior to 1411 suggests that there must have been more to the collaboration than the fact that Bedreddin was an important legal scholar. It is essential to reach at least a basic understanding of the historical context in which Bedreddin was operating prior to his service as *kazasker*, without which it is impossible to understand his connection with Musa's regime. Such an understanding can be reached by studying the account of Hâfız Halil in a critical manner. Let us turn, then, to the *Menakıb*.

Our source begins by describing at length Bedreddin's pedigree as the son of a raider (*gazi*) named İsrail and grandson of a certain Abdülaziz, Grand Vizier to the Seljuks of Rum. This man, we are told, was directly descended from the House of Seljuk, held the office of *şeyhülislam* (making him an *âlim*), and was also a disciple of Rûmî and Hüsam Çelebi (making him a Sufi).⁹ As we have already seen, by providing this pedigree, the author gives Bedreddin a political legitimacy lacking from most other protagonists of the early Ottoman conquest of Rumelia, including the Ottoman family itself.¹⁰ Of course he does not dare to say as much – what he does say is that the prominent frontier lords Hacı İlbegi and Gazi Ece were from the same extended family as Bedreddin, but were nothing more than "seeds of a son-in-law" (*gürgen tohumu*).¹¹ There can be little doubt that this expression would have reminded Hâfız Halil's readers of Timur's rather indirect connection to the family of Chingiz Khan – in the context of post-Mongol Central Asia, Timur was forced to legitimise his rule through a puppet khan from the Chingizid line, while also marrying a princess from the same family to obtain the title of imperial son-in-law (*güregen*).¹²

Should this emphasis on Bedreddin's ancestry be seen as an indication that his uprising aimed to overthrow the Ottoman dynasty and replace it with his own rule? An intrigu-

7 P. Wittek, 'De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople', *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 12 (1938), 22.

8 C. Imber, 'Paul Wittek's "De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople"', *OA*, 5 (1986), 291-304.

9 *Menakıb*, 5-7 (fol. 3b-4a).

10 Çıpa, 'Contextualizing Şeyh Bedreddin', 286-287.

11 *Menakıb*, 8 (fol. 4b). The genealogic information on the families of Bedreddin, Hacı İlbegi and Gazi Ece is fairly detailed. Two brothers and a nephew of Abdülaziz are mentioned, in addition to his son İsrail, Bedreddin's father. As for Hacı İlbegi and Gazi Ece, we are told that they are related to the Seljuks through "a daughter of a sister" (*kızkarındaşı kızındandır bular*).

12 B. F. Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge 1989), 14-15.

ing idea, but one that is very difficult to prove. Halil İnalçık has argued that by 1402 the Ottoman dynasty already held considerable prestige, as demonstrated by the inability of the rival emirates (*beyliks*) of Anatolia to take advantage of the Ottoman defeat at Ankara. According to İnalçık, at least part of this prestige came from the allegiance of many different segments of society, who relied on the continuation of Ottoman rule for confirmation of their privileges.¹³ This point is significant, and will be examined again at the end of this article, when we discuss Bedreddin's challenge to Mehmed I's rule in the Dobrudja. On the other hand, it is also worth bearing in mind the thesis of Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, according to which at least some of the frontier lords carrying out the early Ottoman conquests may have been acting independently. Specifically in the case of Hacı İlbegi, who like Şeyh Bedreddin appears to have claimed Seljuk ancestry, Beldiceanu has argued that his falling out with the Ottoman state-building project may be behind his near disappearance from the historical record.¹⁴ According to the theory, Hacı İlbegi's *damnatio memoriae* is behind the cult of the mysterious Seyyid Ali Sultan (a.k.a. Kızıl Deli), whose tomb near Didymoteicho (Dimetoka) is still venerated today by Bektashis as their holiest shrine in the Balkans. More research is needed on early Ottoman history and especially on the reigns of Bayezid I and Mehmed I before it becomes possible to evaluate the plausibility of a revolt in the early fifteenth century aimed at overthrowing the Ottoman dynasty. What can be said, however, is that, if Hâfız Halil's claims about Bedreddin's Seljuk descent are true, he would have had as good a claim as anyone living at the time.

Let us return to Bedreddin's biography. Our source describes in considerable detail Bedreddin's studies, first in Anatolia and then in Cairo, where he meets his spiritual mentor Hüseyin-i Ahlatî at the palace of the Mamluk Sultan Barkuk and is converted to Sufism.¹⁵ It is impossible to do justice here to this formative and extremely important phase

13 *EP*, s.v. 'Meḥemmed I' (H. İnalçık), 974, 975, 977: "... local begs, with their Tatar and Türkmen followers, had neither the prestige nor the legitimacy of an Ottoman prince", "Tīmūr's departure made the Anatolian dynasties realise that Ottoman power and supremacy were still a fact...", "perhaps equally important was the fact that the Ottoman military groups of *sipāhīs*, *yaya* and *müsellems*, and the *kapı-kulus*, as well as the peasantry, saw that the confirmation and legitimation of their status and rights in the land were dependent on the existence and functioning of the Ottoman sultan's centralist government, and we have to remember that the Ottoman survey [see *taḥrīr*] and *tīmār* system was fully developed and widely applied in this period (see İnalçık, *Arvanid*)".

14 I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'La vita de Seyyid 'Alī Sultān et la conquête de la Thrace par les Turcs', in D. Sinor (ed.), *Proceedings of the 27th International Congress of Orientalists, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 13th-19th August, 1967* (Wiesbaden 1971), 275-276. See also Eadem, 'Seyyid 'Alī Sultan d'après les registres ottomans: l'installation de l'Islam hétérodoxe en Thrace', in E. A. Zachariadou (ed.), *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule (1380-1699). Halcyon Days in Crete II: A Symposium Held in Rethymnon, 9-11 January 1994* (Rethymno 1996), 45-66; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 116.

15 For the most detailed treatment of Ahlatî available to date see E. Binbaş, 'Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī (ca. 770s-858/ca. 1370s-1454): Prophecy, Politics, and Historiography in Late Medieval Islamic History', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2009, 139-162. See also Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*, 49.

of Bedreddin's life, which is known in its basic outlines but still poorly understood. What is really needed is an extensive study of the religious-intellectual environment in which Bedreddin was operating, accompanied by his Rumî scholarly companions Müeyyed and Musa Çelebi (also known as Kadızade-i Rumî, not to be confused with the Ottoman prince of the same name). Needless to say, a proper study of Bedreddin as an intellectual is impossible without reading his many works, most of which are still only available in manuscript form. The goals of this article are more modest: to understand a little bit better the career of Şeyh Bedreddin in its historical context. For this purpose, what is needed is a brief sketch of the intellectual environment in which he found himself. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this environment was its geographical extent. For Bedreddin and his intellectual peers, it was normal to travel between Edirne and Cairo, which was at this time the main intellectual centre of the Islamic world, and from there north-east via Azerbaijan and Iran to Samarkand, where Timur was resettling scholars and craftsmen from all over the territories he conquered. Other important intellectual centres were Bursa, Iznik, Konya, Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem, Tabriz, and Ardabil. As we will see, it is certain that Bedreddin spent time in most, if not all of these.

Before discussing the better known events of Bedreddin's career, there is an aspect of his intellectual development that must be addressed, without which it is impossible to understand the unfolding of these events. Between his early studies in the Ottoman heartland and the decisive period in Cairo, Bedreddin and his companions studied in Konya under a certain Feyzullah, who taught them logic and astronomy. It is clear from Hâfız Halil's account that had this man not died after a year, they would have continued to study under him in Konya.¹⁶ Apparently what they learned there was so important that after Feyzullah's death, Kadızade Musa made what we would call today a career decision, leaving his companions and going to Samarkand to devote his life to astronomy – where he founded the famous school numbering among its students the Timurid prince Ulugh Beg, creator of the celebrated astronomical tables and observatory.

But we should bear in mind that, at this time, there was no separation between astronomy and astrology. Moreover, thanks to the studies of Balivet and especially Cornell Fleischer and his students, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is a strong connection to be drawn between Bedreddin and the gnostic movement known as Hurufism. Some of the main centres of Hurufism at this time were places that Bedreddin visited.¹⁷

16 *Menakıb*, 20-25 (fol. 9b-11b). Hâfız Halil begins by stating that Feyzullah was “a student of Taftazânî”, the famous authority of grammar, logic, law, and theology (v. 290), but eventually adds that it was “in his service” that Bedreddin and his companion Kadızade Musa, “the two seas of Rum, first saw the science of the stars” (*ilm-i nücum*, v. 320). Astronomy is also mentioned in the chapter heading preceding this part of the account.

17 C. H. Fleischer, ‘Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries’, in M. Farhad and S. Bağcı (eds), *Falnama: The Book of Omens* (Washington, D.C. 2009), 232-243. On Hurufism, a gnostic movement including but not limited to the ‘science of letters’, see *EP*², s.v. ‘Hurûfiyya’ (A. Bausani). The idea of a link between Bedreddin and Hurufism is not new; see Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 158, who emphasises the pantheistic aspect of both Bedreddin and Hurufism, and

We are only just beginning to understand the significance in the fifteenth century of divination and other 'occult' sciences, which are of course closely connected to astronomy, logic, mathematics, and the study of the numerical value of letters (*ilm al-huruf*). It is tantalising to speculate about how interest in such teachings might have brought people together across religious boundaries, as in the case of the famous Byzantine philosopher and reformer George Gemistos Plethon, who was allegedly exposed to the Aristotelian and 'Zoroastrian' teachings of the Jewish philosopher Elissaeus while at the Ottoman court around this time.¹⁸ While the exact nature of these connections remains to be demonstrated, especially where Plethon is concerned, the existence on Ottoman territory of gnostic circles inspired by Hurufism now appears nothing short of certain, as does Şeyh Bedreddin's participation in them.

Several connections must be noted when discussing Bedreddin's place in the international Hurufi network (the 'brothers of purity', *ihwan al-safa*). First, Balivet has pointed out that, according to Taşköprüzade, Bedreddin's teacher Feyzullah of Konya was a student of a certain Fazlullah, who may well have been none other than the founder of Hurufism Fazlullah of Astarabad, executed by Timur's son Miranshah near Nakhchivan in 1394.¹⁹ After moving to the east, Bedreddin's companion Kadızade Musa became acquainted with Sa'in al-Din Turka (d. 1437), with whom he studied under Sa'in al-Din's elder brother Sadr al-Din. The Turka were a family of qadis and religious scholars of Isfahan who were influenced by the thought of Ibn Arabi and had close connections to Hurufism.²⁰ Fleischer has demonstrated that both Sa'in al-Din Turka and another prominent Hurufi, Abdurrahman al-Bistamî of Antioch (c.1380-c.1455), frequented the same Rumi-Hanafi circles in Cairo as Bedreddin.²¹

argues that Gölpınarlı's rejection of the connection is only correct if one adopts a narrow definition of Hurufism limited to the 'science of letters'.

18 There is a lively debate in Byzantine studies about the truth of the allegation that Plethon studied with Elissaeus, which is based entirely on references by his enemy George Gennadios Scholarios, and who the shadowy Jewish teacher might have been and what his teachings represented. See especially P. Gardette, 'Pour en finir avec Pléthon et son maître juif Elisée', in Idem, *Etudes imagologiques et relations interconfessionnelles en zone Byzantino-Ottomane* (Istanbul 2007), 147-164, which contains many references. Gardette identifies Elissaeus with Elisha, a Jewish doctor in the Ottoman court, who was apparently of Iranian origin or had lived in Iran. He also shows that at this time Romaniot Jews, who were often polyglot, were well represented in learned circles from Iran to Italy, thus playing an important role in the transmission of ideas. Edirne in particular seems to have been an important intellectual centre in the late fourteenth century, and Gardette does not fail to point out that Bedreddin and Plethon were both there at that time.

19 Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*, 42. On Fazlullah of Astarabad, see *EP*², 'Hurüfiyya'.

20 *EP*³, s.v. 'Afdal al-Dīn Turka' (H. Eichner).

21 Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences', 232. On Bistamî, see also İ. Fazlıoğlu, 'İlk Dönem Osmanlı İlim ve Kültür Hayatında İhvânü's-safâ ve Abdurrahmân Bistâmî', *Divân*, 1/2 (1996), 229-240; Binbaş, 'Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alî Yazdî', 99-101. Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*, 43-45 and *passim*, has also described the existence of Rumi circles in Cairo, but with less reference to the Hurufi connection.

What is of fundamental importance for understanding the career of Bedreddin is that Abdurrahman al-Bistamî visited Edirne during the Ottoman Civil War and ended up spending the last part of his life in the Ottoman realm. While in Edirne, he enjoyed the patronage not only of Bedreddin (presumably during his period of seclusion, roughly 1404-1411), but also of Molla Fenârî, who is regarded as the first Ottoman *şeyhülislam* and whose father was supposedly a student of Sadreddin Konevî, the famous successor to Ibn Arabi.²² Also, Bistamî himself tells us that on his way there he spent time in Chios among “the learned and virtuous of the Christians”, tracing in perfect fashion Bedreddin’s own movements in 1404. Finally, he was forced to leave for Damascus and Cairo around the time of Bedreddin’s execution, but returned to Bursa and spent the rest of his life there.²³ All of this suggests a much closer link between Bedreddin and Hurufi circles than has thus far been acknowledged. It seems that these circles transcended religious boundaries, stretching from Iran and Central Asia to Byzantine and Latin Greece. Moreover, as we will see below, the Hurufis spread their teachings among Turkoman populations, which explains Bedreddin’s visits to Aleppo, the Dobrudja, and other areas where such populations were dense.

With these considerations in mind, let us return to the account of the *Menakıb*. We are told that after accepting Hüseyin-i Ahlatî as his teacher and spiritual guide (*mürşid*), Bedreddin was so immersed in mystical exercises and the attainment of ecstasy (*cezbe*) that his master became concerned about his health and advised him to travel in order to recover. He sent him to the east, and Bedreddin ended up in Tabriz.²⁴ The text contains specific details that allow us to date Bedreddin’s stay in the area with considerable precision: shortly after his arrival in Tabriz, the funerary procession of Timur’s son Sultan Muhammad (d. Şebîn Karahisar, 13 March 1403) came through the town on its way to Sultaniya, and Bedreddin followed it, returning later to Tabriz where he eventually met Timur. All this must therefore have taken place in the year beginning in spring of 1403.²⁵ In order to understand the real purpose behind Bedreddin’s trip, we must bear in mind that Azerbaijan was at the very centre of Hurufism. It was the place where only 20 years before Bedreddin’s visit, the movement’s founder Fazlullah had received the revelation of the hidden meaning of letters and prophecy.²⁶ It was not far from Nakhchivan, where, as we have seen, Fazlullah was executed by Miranshah only seven years before Bedreddin’s visit, making the place of his execution a pilgrimage site. Because of his execution of their leader, the Hurufis came to call Miranshah ‘Maranshah’ (meaning ‘king of the snakes’) – in this connection, it may be significant that, when referring to Anatolia while

22 *EP*, ‘Fenârî-zāde’ (J. R. Walsh).

23 Fleischer, ‘Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences’, 232. The information on Chios is from Fleischer, who cites an unpublished manuscript by Bistamî in which he describes his itinerary (ibid., 329 n. 7).

24 *Menakıb*, 56-65 (fol. 25a-28b).

25 For more detail on the dating of Bedreddin’s visit to Azerbaijan and his activities there see Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*, 50-52.

26 *EP*, ‘Hurûfiyya’.

Timur and his army were there, Hâfız Halil says that “at this time ... Rum was full of snakes and scorpions”.²⁷ Also in Azerbaijan was Ardabil, the centre of the Safavid order, whose leader Hoca Ali had received a visit from Timur in 1402.²⁸ Finally, and most importantly, this was the time when Fazlullah’s successor Ali al-A‘la was busy spreading Hurufi teachings among various groups in the lands of Rum, including the Bektashis, the tomb of whose founder Hacı Bektaş he visited in Kırşehir.²⁹

While in Tabriz, Bedreddin also met Timur, who, according to Hâfız Halil, was so impressed with Bedreddin’s performance in a debate with another legal scholar that he offered him the post of *seyhülislam*. However, Bedreddin did not wish to end up in Samarkand like so many other intellectuals of his time, but preferred instead to return to Egypt, where he witnessed the death of his teacher and succeeded him as his *halife*. Apparently this transition led to some controversy, attributed by Hâfız Halil to Bedreddin’s youth, which forced him to leave for western Anatolia after six months, probably in early 1404. Bedreddin’s long trip through Anatolia has been studied in detail by several historians, but never before in the context of the Ottoman Civil War which was raging there at the time. The years 1403-1405 were critical in the unfolding of the Civil War. After spending the winter of 1402-1403 in Aydın, Timur had departed for the East in spring of 1403, as we have already seen. But before withdrawing from Anatolia, he had intentionally left a power vacuum there by re-establishing the *beyliks* previously absorbed by Bayezid I, and recognising the (often conflicting) claims of several of Bayezid’s sons over what was left of Ottoman territory.

As a result, immediately upon Timur’s departure, war broke out between the two Ottoman princes Mehmed and İsa over possession of Bursa, which was still thought of at this time as the Ottoman capital.³⁰ In 1403, Mehmed was probably no more than 15 years old, but had managed with the assistance of his able Grand Vizier Bayezid Paşa (a *kul* apparently of Albanian origin) to reassert himself over various tribal elements in the Amasya-Tokat

27 *Menakıb*, 57 (fol. 25a): “Şol zamanı ki ... Rum idi pür mar ü pür gejdüm”. The same expression is repeated later, when describing Mehmed I’s vision of Bedreddin after he was executed (see below, p. 249).

28 Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*, 51. Balivet points out that “il y aura quelque rapport à établir par la suite entre Safavides, *Hurûfî* et Bedreddîn”. For a recent treatment with bibliography of the role of various religious movements in the development of the Safavids see D. Hermann, ‘Aspectos de la penetración del Shiismo en Irán durante los periodos Ilkhânî y Timurî. El éxito político de los movimientos Sarbedâr, Mar’ashî y Musha’sha’yân’, *Estudios de Asia y África*, 39/3 (2004), 673-709.

29 *EP*², ‘Hurûfiyya’.

30 Almost immediately after his victory at Ankara, Timur’s forces sacked Bursa. However, before this event, the Ottoman prince Emir Süleyman along with the Grand Vizier Çandarlı Ali Paşa and other top members of the administration were able to save the treasury and take it to Rumelia. It is from this time that Edirne begins to function as the Ottoman capital. However, during the Civil War this was not yet clear, and Bursa still held considerable prestige – after taking the city from İsa following the Battle of Ulubad (spring 1403), Mehmed held elaborate enthronement ceremonies there and adopted the title Sultan. See Kastritis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 97-100.

region, where he had been governor prior to the Timurid victory. At the Battle of Ulubad, Mehmed wrested Bursa from İsa, who fled to Constantinople but returned a month later to fight three more battles with Mehmed. While it is difficult to establish a chronology of these battles, it seems that İsa was out of the way by winter of 1403-1404, because by March of 1404 Bursa was in the hands of a third brother, Emir Süleyman.³¹

Süleyman was the most powerful of the Ottoman contenders at this time, as his territories included not only parts of Anatolia but all of Ottoman Rumelia, where Timur's armies had never set foot. In order to prevent the Ottomans' Christian enemies in Rumelia from uniting against him while he was busy in Anatolia, Süleyman had signed a treaty in early 1403 with Byzantium, Venice, and other Christian powers, in which he had made significant concessions in exchange for peace – but not without alienating the frontier lords and the raiders under their command, who relied on a perpetual state of warfare for their livelihood. It was these people, in addition to various Christian and Muslim states threatened by the Ottomans, who supported a fourth brother, Musa Çelebi, in his bid for power in Rumelia. Musa had grown up in the court of his brother Mehmed, who released him and sent him to Rumelia in order to create a diversion – with the assistance of the *beyliks* of Karaman and İsfendiyar, Wallachia, and probably also the Byzantine Emperor, Musa crossed the Black Sea from the port of Sinop to Dobrudja-Deliorman, apparently in 1409.³² The fact that this is the exact route followed by Bedreddin just a few years later is probably no coincidence – it seems that there was a longstanding alliance between İsfendiyar, who controlled the port of Sinop, and the ruler of Wallachia, who shared and contested the Dobrudja with the raiders.³³

Another piece of the Ottoman Civil War's extremely complex political puzzle was Cüneyd, the lord of Izmir (Smyrna), who was trying to assert his independence from the Ottomans in the Aydın region.³⁴ Much of what is known about this man and his activities comes from the chronicle of Doukas, who was especially interested in that region,

31 Ibid., 63-118.

32 Ibid., 129-134. The most important source on the Ottoman Civil War is an anonymous contemporary chronicle written in the court of Mehmed I, and preserved only in the later chronicles of Neşrî and Oxford Anonymous. See D. Kastritsis (ed. and trans.), *The Tales of Sultan Mehmed, Son of Bayezid Khan [Aḥvāl-i Sulṭān Meḥemmed bin Bāyezīd Ḥān]* (Cambridge, Mass. 2007 [actually published 2009]), 29-30, 74-76. Halil İnalçık, who was one of the first to identify the chronicle in question and emphasise its importance, has recently claimed that its author is Ahmedî, without providing any justification for this claim. See H. İnalçık, *Devlet-i 'Aliyye: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar-I* (Istanbul 2009), 97-101.

33 Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 50-59, 123-142. For the alliance between Mehmed and Germiyan that explains how Musa ended up in Mehmed's court see *ibid.*, 81-89. For the relations of the *voyvoda* of Wallachia Mircea with the *beyliks* of Anatolia, see M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, 'Les relations du prince de Valachie Mircea l'Ancien avec les émirs Seldjoukides d'Anatolie et leur candidat Musa au trône ottoman', *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6/10-11 (1968), 113-125.

34 For basic information and bibliography on Cüneyd see Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 49-50. See also A. Luttrell and E. A. Zachariadou, *Sources for Turkish History in the Hospitallers' Rhodian Archive, 1389-1422* (Athens 2008) (page numbers listed in index under 'Djunayd').

and therefore also provides valuable information on the revolt of Bedreddin's disciple Börklüce Mustafa (see below).³⁵ Like other rulers who were trying to preserve their independence in the aftermath of 1402, Cüneyd, whose father had been the Ottoman governor of Smyrna, was constantly transferring his allegiance from one to the other of the warring Ottoman princes, depending on how the Civil War appeared to be going. Thus, in his battles against Mehmed, İsa was supported by Cüneyd, among others. The reason Cüneyd is being singled out for mention here is that, as we will see, there is some connection between his activity and that of Şeyh Bedreddin.

After this brief overview of the Ottoman Civil War, let us return now to Şeyh Bedreddin, in order to see how his movements in Anatolia fit into the political landscape sketched above. When Bedreddin left Egypt and re-entered the lands of Rum via Syria in 1404, Süleyman Çelebi was already established in Bursa, and, from the perspective of Timur and his *beylik* vassals in Anatolia, posed the greatest threat of reviving Ottoman power in the area. In this connection, it is interesting to note that, according to Hâfız Halil, during his slow return to Rumelia, Bedreddin was a guest of several prominent anti-Ottoman actors: Karaman, Germiyan, and Cüneyd. According to the *Menakıb*, Cüneyd and the Karamanid ruler underwent a spiritual conversion and became Bedreddin's *mürids*, while the ruler of Germiyan merely showed him a great deal of respect. Halil also informs us that on his way from Egypt to Edirne, apart from these connections with the ruling elites of Anatolia, in certain areas Bedreddin was also welcomed by other social classes: a thousand Turkomans in Aleppo, who wanted to build him a dervish convent (*hankah*); the Christians of Chios led by their clergy, some of whom eventually converted to Islam; and a group of *torlaks* (a type of mendicant dervish) in the Kütahya-Domaniç area. This group, which might have included Torlak Hu Kemal, one of the instigators of the later revolt in Aydın, followed Bedreddin into Bursa, where they were welcomed by the local population.³⁶

What should we make of all these connections? As we have seen, some have suggested (based also on later Ottoman 'official' chroniclers such as Neşrî) that Bedreddin's association with Karaman, Germiyan, and Cüneyd should be interpreted as part of a political bid opposing him to the Ottoman dynasty itself.³⁷ Others have focused more on the religious dimension of his travels.³⁸ In fact, it is impossible to separate religion and politics in this historical context, as demonstrated by the later actions of Bedreddin and his associates. In any case, Bedreddin's service in Musa Çelebi's administration from 1411 onward suggests that we should not be too hasty to attribute an anti-Ottoman political

35 Doukas, *Istoria Turco-Bizantină (1341-1462)*, ed. V. Grecu (Bucharest 1958). The part on Cüneyd is in pages 115-161 (chapters 18:5-22:6). For the part on Börklüce's revolt see below.

36 *Menakıb*, 84-94 (fol. 36b-41a).

37 Çıpa, 'Contextualizing Şeyh Bedreddin', 290; Kolovos, "'Tou Mpentrentin ta palikaria'", 124-125.

38 Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*, 70-88. Balivet does not ignore the political dimension, but in general his work is more concerned with the place of Bedreddin's revolt in the religious history of the region.

agenda to him as early as 1404, if indeed at all. As far as his visits to Karaman, Germiyan, and Cüneyd are concerned, it was only natural that they would honour someone with Bedreddin's reputation as a master of many sciences, both manifest and esoteric (*zâhir – bâtin*), who had enjoyed the patronage of both the Mamluk Sultan Barkuk and Timur. Also, Bedreddin had connections in at least some of those places already dating from his earlier days as a student.³⁹ Finally, we must bear in mind the fact that, already at this time, Bedreddin seems to have attracted a wide following which included not only members of the elite, but also more popular elements. We will return to this point, since it is key to understanding the social dimension of his later political activity.

Returning to our source, it should be pointed out that, given our earlier discussion about the importance of Hurufi networks at this time, there is every reason to believe Halil's account of Bedreddin's homeward trip and the important connections which were then formed (or reinforced, in the case of already existing contacts). If anything, the author of the *Menakıb* underplays those connections in an effort to absolve his grandfather of any antinomian tendencies – but there is much to discover if one reads the account with the right questions in mind. For example, it is highly significant that Halil includes among those who accepted Bedreddin as their master in Aleppo the man who gave the *fetva* for the execution of the Turkoman Hurufi poet Nesimî (d. 1418).⁴⁰ His comment that “he had fallen in love with the Sheikh's learning, and submitted to his rule (*bey'at idüp*), becoming his servant (*kul*)” can of course be interpreted as evidence of Bedreddin's orthodoxy; but the mere mention of Nesimî's name would have evoked in a reader more sympathetic to Hurufism feelings of anger against the fanatical man who could have done such a thing (Nesimî was flayed alive) and wonder that even such an evil man could not resist the power of Bedreddin. In other words, Bedreddin succeeded where Nesimî failed. A similar interpretation can be made of Halil's account of the conversion of the ruler of Karaman – we are told that this man was an unbeliever (*mümkir-i hal*) who acted insolently (*cüret iderdi*) toward Sufis, but that he also recognised Bedreddin once he had met him and witnessed a dervish ceremony (*zîkr*) led by him.⁴¹

The general sense that one gets reading Hâfız Halil's account of Bedreddin's trip back to Edirne is of a triumphant return, during which everywhere he goes people submit to his authority. This authority is, of course, spiritual, but the use of the word *bey'at* is striking. This term (Ar. *bay'a*) normally denotes the ceremony of recognition of a Muslim ruler's political authority by those under him.⁴² Does the use of the word *bey'at* imply that

39 In the case of Konya, Hâfız Halil says as much; *Menakıb*, 85 (fol. 37a).

40 Ibid., 85 (fol. 37a): “ilmine âşık olubdı Şeyh'ün ol / Hazretine bey'at idüp oldu kul”. On Nesimî's life, see *EP*, s.v. ‘Neşimî, Seyyid ‘Imād al-Dīn, known as Nesimî’ (F. Babinger); *İA*, s.v. ‘Neşimî’ (A. Gölpınarlı).

41 *Menakıb*, 86-87 (fol. 37b-38a).

42 *EP*, s.v. ‘bay'a’ (E. Tyan). A good example of this from around the same time is given by the anonymous *Tales of Sultan Mehmed*, which describes the recognition of Mehmed I's rule by *si-pahis* after his enthronement in Bursa. See Kastritsis, *The Tales of Sultan Mehmed*, 18, 61 (folia Oxford Anonymous 70 verso, Neşri Codex Menzel 116). See also Idem, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 97-98.

Bedreddin was making a political claim? Not necessarily. Like many political terms used in a mystical context, the meaning could simply be metaphorical. Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly something messianic about the description of Bedreddin's travels, a strong sense of the universality of his message and its implications for the real world. This agrees with what is known about his teachings from the chronicle of Doukas, to which reference has already been made and we will now turn our attention.

As has already been mentioned, Doukas is our most important source on the Anatolian part of the uprising of 1416 and its ideological foundation.⁴³ The idea that this was proto-communist in nature, because it was based on common ownership of everything but women, comes almost entirely from Doukas. However, it should be emphasised that the chronicler does not mention Bedreddin by name, but rather his disciple Börklüce Mustafa, who led the revolt in Karaburun near Izmir in the province of Aydın. As he points out, this place (which he calls by its Greek name, Stylarion) is directly across from Chios. One of the main merits of Doukas's description is that it gives a better idea of the close connection between the coast of Asia Minor and the nearby islands (Samos is also mentioned), a connection that, as we have seen, is also evident in the itineraries of Şeyh Bedreddin and Abdurrahman al-Bistamî. An important point to bear in mind is that, when describing the background behind the revolt of Börklüce Mustafa, it is possible that the individual described as "a simple-minded Turkish peasant" (*tis ton Tourkon idiotes kai agroikos*) and a "false monk (or abbot)" (*pseudavvas*) and called by name Börklüce Mustafa (*Perkletzia Moustaphas*) may at least part of the time be Bedreddin himself, even if he does not appear by name. This would not be the first instance in which the Byzantine chronicler in question confused people and events taking place on Ottoman territory – it would appear that much of his information was based on oral testimony and hearsay, and was therefore subject to a certain degree of misinterpretation.⁴⁴ However, it is exactly its use of oral testimony that makes Doukas's chronicle an invaluable source. The chronicler was a Byzantine nobleman with family loyalties to the ruling dynasty of Aydın who worked also for the Genoese families ruling New Phokaia (Yeni Foça) and Lesbos, representing them in their negotiations with the Turks. It is clear that he knew Turkish and he seems to have had many informants, one of whom he mentions in connection with the revolt. Let us turn in more detail, then, to his account.

After locating the "simple-minded Turkish peasant" in Stylarion (Karaburun), Doukas describes his doctrine as follows:

He taught the Turks that they must own no property and decreed that, with the exception of women, everything should be held in common: food, clothing, yokes of

43 Doukas, *Istoria*, 149-153 (ch. 21:11-14). In translating into English certain passages, I have made extensive use of the translation of H. J. Magoulias, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks* (Detroit 1975) – however this is not always accurate, so I have sometimes chosen to make a new translation from the original.

44 For an example of such confusion in Doukas from around the same time see Kastritis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 91-92.

beasts, and fields. [He said] 'I shall have access to your house as though it were mine and you shall have access to my house as though it were yours, with the exception of the female members'.

He then goes on to state that, with this doctrine, the "Turkish peasant" in question deceived "all the peasants" (*agroikous*). He was also after the friendship of the Christians, preaching the doctrine that "anyone among the Turks who says that the Christians do not worship God is himself an unbeliever". In accordance with that doctrine, his followers treated the Christians they met with honour, while he sent his disciples across to Chios to make it known also to "the rulers and clergy of the Church". At this point, Doukas mentions one of his informants, "an old Cretan anchorite living on the island in the monastery called Troulloti". This man claimed to have received some of the Turkish preacher's disciples, whom he described as "wearing a single tunic, with shaved and uncovered heads, and their feet without sandals" – basically a description of the mendicant dervishes known as *torlak* or *kalender*.⁴⁵ These emissaries carried a message from "the pseudo-monk" that "I am a fellow ascetic who adores the same God you worship. This night I shall walk barefoot over the sea to be with you". Apparently the anchorite was impressed by the Turkish preacher, for he began to relate bizarre stories (*terata*) to Doukas about how when he was a monk on the island of Samos, the preacher would cross over every day and speak with him, thus "becoming my fellow ascetic".⁴⁶

After this brief but very important description of the doctrines of the Turkish preacher of Stylarion, the chronicler goes on to describe the revolt and its suppression by the Ottoman authorities. After two failed attempts by Ottoman governors (first the son of the Bulgarian king Šišman, whom Mehmed I had appointed governor of Aydın instead of Cüneyd, and who is killed by the rebels, then "the governor of Lydia, Ali Beg"), the Sultan sent his twelve-year-old son Murad accompanied by the Grand Vizier Bayezid Paşa "at the head of the Thracian army". After much bloodshed, "the false monk" (whom Doukas now finally begins to call by name Börklüce Mustafa) is finally arrested along with many of his followers. They are taken to Ephesus, where Mustafa is "interrogated and subjected to many tortures", but refuses to renounce his beliefs. He is therefore crucified and paraded around the city on a camel, while his followers who refuse to renounce his doctrines are slaughtered before his eyes, saying nothing else but "Dede Sultan eriş". The chronicler's inclusion of this phrase, which he translates "Lord Abbot, arrive" is striking, and is a testament to the overall authenticity of his account. The mode of execution is typical for a rebel at this time in the Islamic world, and does not need to be interpreted as an allusion to Mustafa's Christian sympathies – but neither can such an interpretation be ruled out altogether.⁴⁷

45 For a description see A. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200-1550* (Salt Lake City 1994), 65-67.

46 Doukas, *Istoria*, 149-150 (ch. 21:11).

47 For example, the supporters of the Mamluk pretender Baydara in 1293 were executed in precisely this manner, without any religious connotations. See R. Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1382* (Carbondale, IL 1986), 85. I thank my colleague Angus Stewart for this example.

Finally, Doukas provides certain further indications of the rebels' numbers and beliefs. When they ambush and massacre the son of Šišman and his forces in the narrow passages around Stýlarion, they number more than six thousand. Their victory makes them confident, so that "confirming their belief in the false monk and extolling him as one greater than a prophet, [they] set forth the doctrine that one must not cover the head with a hat, which they call a *zerkulah*, and that one must go through life wearing only a simple tunic and bareheaded, adhering to Christian beliefs rather than to Turkish". And the seriousness of the revolt is evident from Doukas's statement that after the execution of Mustafa, the armies of Prince Murad under the Grand Vizier Bayezid Paša "traversed Asia and Lydia, putting to death all the Turkish monks (*tourkokalogerous*) whom he met on the way who were still living in voluntary poverty".⁴⁸ All this creates the impression of a very serious revolt of a religious character with messianic overtones, led by mendicant dervishes, but involving also entire communities – Doukas relates that the Thracian forces of Bayezid Paša "mercilessly struck down everyone in sight, the old as well as infants, men, and women; in a word, they massacred everyone, regardless of age, as they advanced to the mountain defended by the dervishes".⁴⁹ Of course, the socio-economic aspect cannot be ruled out; Anatolia had suffered great famines following the Timurid invasion of 1402, which would probably have made the message of communal property preached by the dervishes particularly appealing to indigent peasants. However, the religious and messianic aspect was at least as important. In other words, it is clear here that we are dealing with a popular movement, but one inspired by the ideas of an intellectual elite, of which Bedreddin was a prominent member.

Unfortunately, much less is known about the details of the uprising involving Bedreddin himself in Dobrudja and Rumelia, which took place around the same time as that of Börklüce Mustafa in Aydın. However, given what has already been said about Bedreddin's peregrinations during the early part of the Ottoman Civil War and Börklüce Mustafa's revolt as described by Doukas, it is reasonable to assume that similar factors were in play there as in Aydın. The difference is that, in Rumelia, Bedreddin had an even longer history than in Aydın, both as a local son who had achieved fame as a scholar and Sufi, and as a member of the government under Musa Çelebi. Apart from the religious aspect, then, it is also important to understand the character of Musa's rule and Bedreddin's connection to it, since, as we will see, his tenure as Musa's *kazasker* played a crucial role in the revolt that took place just three years after Musa's death. Let us return to Hâfiz Halil and see how he describes Bedreddin's activities in Rumelia.

According to the *Menakıb*, after his visit to Bursa, where, as we have seen, he was welcomed by the local residents, Bedreddin finally made it to the Edirne area, where we are told that he had a great spiritual influence on the local population, including his own family. After spending some time there, he returned to Bursa and Aydın for a brief visit about which little is known, but which suggests that he was keeping up his connections

48 Doukas, *Istoria*, 151, 153 (chapters 21:12, 21:15). The translations are by Magoulías, *Decline and Fall*, 120-121.

49 Doukas, *Istoria*, 153 (ch. 21:14); Magoulías, *Decline and Fall*, 121.

(which presumably included Börklüce Mustafa and Torlak Hu Kemal). Then he returned to Edirne, where he spent seven years “in seclusion”.⁵⁰ It is interesting that this ‘seclusion’ coincides with a time when Emir Süleyman was at the height of his power, but mostly absent in Anatolia, where he was involved in a lengthy struggle with his brother Mehmed which had reached a stalemate.⁵¹ It is likely that, during this time, in addition to Abdurrahman al-Bistamî and other intellectuals, Bedreddin was also associating with various elements hostile to Süleyman’s rule.

When Musa arrived on the scene (almost certainly in 1409), the tide had already turned against Süleyman. While it is impossible to dwell here on every detail of Musa’s rise to power in Rumelia, which has been described elsewhere, it is important to remember that he was sent to Rumelia by his brother Mehmed, with the assistance of the emirs İsfendiyar and Karaman, as well as Mircea of Wallachia and probably also Manuel Palaiologos.⁵² Once in Dobrudja-Deliorman, Aşıkpaşazade tells us he was supported by “all the *tovica* and timariots of Rumelia”.⁵³ According to Halil İnalcık, the *tovica* “were officers of the *aķındjıs*, raiders on the frontiers, who enjoyed *tīmārs* as ordinary *sipāhīs* and in many respects ... were treated as *tīmār*-holding *sipāhīs*”, while Beatrice Manz has written about the Timurid equivalent that “the *tovachīs* were troop inspectors, who had as their task the supervision of the numbers, condition and equipment of the army, along with conscription for campaigns and the transmission of orders from the sovereign to the soldiers. This office existed with very similar functions in other nomad polities”.⁵⁴ It is most striking that, according to Hâfız Halil, during his revolt Bedreddin was supported by the very same *tovica* in the same area, after crossing the Black Sea in the same manner as Musa Çelebi.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Halil tells us that, upon his arrival in Wallachia, he was supported by a man named Azeb Beg, “who had escaped when Mehmed found his way to Musa” (i.e., overthrew and killed him). This very same Azeb Beg is mentioned by Aşıkpaşazade and the Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles as Musa’s flagbearer (*mir-i âlem*).⁵⁶ Of course, Hâfız Halil presents Bedreddin’s arrival there as an accident: forced to escape from house arrest in Iznik by Sultan Mehmed’s refusal to let him visit Egypt and perform the Hajj, Bedreddin wanted to go to Central Asia, but was persuaded instead to go to the Crimea; after leaving the port of Sinop with that destination, hostile Frankish ships forced him and his companions to land in Wallachia instead.⁵⁷

50 *Menakıb*, 95 (fol. 41b).

51 Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 118-129.

52 Musa’s crossing to Rumelia and rise to power there is described in *ibid.*, 129-158.

53 Aşıkpaşazade, *Die altosmanische Chronik des Aşıkpaşazade*, ed. F. Giese (Leipzig 1929), 73.

54 H. İnalcık, ‘Notes on N. Beldiceanu’s Translation of the *Ḳanūnnāme*, fonds turc ancien 39, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris’, *Der Islam*, 43 (1967), 139-157; Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, 173.

55 *Menakıb*, 111 (fol. 48a).

56 *Ibid.*, 110 (fol. 47b); Aşıkpaşazade, *Chronik*, 74; F. Giese (ed.), *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken* (Breslau 1922), 49; Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 164.

57 *Menakıb*, 102-106 (fol. 44a-46a).

So what are we to make of all this? Without going into the question of whether Bedreddin did or did not intend to go to Dobrudja, which is of course impossible to ascertain, it is reasonable to assume that his arrival there would have been seen by timariots and other individuals who had enjoyed privileges under Musa's regime as a revival of that regime and of their privileges. But even though it is true that Bedreddin had served in Musa's regime as his *kazasker*, while he held that post, he was nonetheless acting in the name of an Ottoman prince. This brings us back to the problem with which this article began, namely, that of whether Bedreddin's revolt intended to overthrow the Ottoman dynasty itself. At this point, we must bear in mind that his revolt coincided with the revival of the Ottoman Civil War under the Ottoman prince Mustafa, known in Ottoman chronicles as 'the False' (*Düzme*). The simultaneity of the two revolts, which has been demonstrated by Michel Balivet in an important article, is striking – Balivet does not go as far as to say that the two were related, but there is every reason to think that they probably were.⁵⁸ It can thus be argued quite convincingly, then, that rather than an effort to overthrow the Ottoman dynasty itself, Bedreddin's revolt should instead be seen as a failed attempt to revive the regime of Musa Çelebi under another Ottoman prince, Mustafa. After the reunification of the Ottoman realm under Mehmed I, an attempt on the part of those threatened by this event (Byzantium, the *beyliks*, various elements loyal to the previous regime) to undermine him by making use of another pretender is entirely in agreement with what is already known of the politics of the time. In this light, it is highly significant that Bedreddin and Mustafa both crossed the Black Sea from Sinop to Dobrudja around the same moment, and that in doing so they were both helped by Musa's former allies, İsfendiyar of Kastamonu and Mircea of Wallachia. Moreover, after arriving in Dobrudja, they found themselves conveniently close to the new governor of Nicopolis, who was none other than Cüneyd of Izmir, transported there by Mehmed I in 1415.⁵⁹ Finally, Byzantium's support of Mustafa is well known, and if the Ottoman prince was acting in unison with Şeyh Bedreddin, it is necessary to consider that Bedreddin, too, might have enjoyed Byzantine support.

While the politics and alliances described above are not at all surprising in the context of the Ottoman Civil War, which in 1416 was not yet entirely over, they do not in any way negate the religious or ideological dimension of Bedreddin's revolt, which must still be addressed on its own terms. Furthermore, to say that Bedreddin and his allies intended to revive the regime of Musa Çelebi simply begs the question of what that regime represented in the first place. Musa has been seen as a great foe of the Christians, who tried to take back the territories ceded by Süleyman to Byzantium, and Serbian, Byzantine, and Ottoman sources alike present his reign as a reign of terror during which oaths

58 M. Balivet, 'Un épisode méconnu de la campagne de Mehmed 1^{er} en Macédoine: L'apparition de Serrès (1416/819 H.)', *Turcica*, 18 (1986), 137-146. On *Düzme* Mustafa, see also *EP*, s.v. 'Muṣṭafā Çelebi, Düzme' (C. Heywood), who states: "The activities of Muṣṭafā in 819/1416 are inextricably bound up with the simultaneous revolt against Meḥemmed I led by *shaykh* Bedr el-Dīn"; *EP*, 'Meḥemmed I'; Kastritis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 2-3, 82-83.

59 Doukas, *Istoria*, 149 (ch. 21:10).

were betrayed, Serbian townsmen were massacred and transported against their will, and powerful *uc begleri* were forced to flee to Anatolia or even feign blindness to escape his purges.⁶⁰ How can one explain the affinity of such a man to the saintly Şeyh Bedreddin, who supposedly wanted to unite Christians and Muslims in a society based on shared wealth? Clearly, the usual categories of Christian versus Muslim, or even centralising versus anti-centralising forces in the early Ottoman state, are inadequate to describe the situation with which we are dealing. According to one strand in the Ottoman chronicles, Musa was popular with janissaries and timariots (who supposedly represent centralisation), but also with raiders (who supposedly embody the resistance against this centralisation). Conversely, with his policies he somehow managed to alienate both the powerful frontier lords (*uc begleri*), who supposedly represent the frontier mentality opposed to centralisation, and the likes of Çandarlı İbrahim Paşa, whose family is supposedly the very definition of centralisation in early Ottoman history.

Perhaps it is best to view Musa's reign as an effort to revive the centralist imperial vision of Bayezid I while eliminating the middle man, namely the urban and rural elites, both Christian and Muslim. At this point in Ottoman history, these might be said to include not only the pre-Ottoman Balkan ruling classes, but also *uc begleri* such as Evrenos. It is hard not to see at least part of the motivation for such policies, or indeed for the political bid of Bedreddin himself, as coming 'from the bottom up'. In other words, lower and middle ranks of society unable to accept the existing social order seem to have rallied around religious and intellectual figures like Bedreddin, or rival princes, who were in turn eager to associate themselves with the intellectuals because of their popular support. Of course, this suggests that there is a social message at least implicit in the teachings of such intellectuals; which is hardly in doubt, given Bedreddin's intellectual connections and what is now known of the challenge the ideas of mystic-millenarian Sufi thinkers were posing to the rule of Timurid princes at precisely this time.⁶¹

What is clear, in any case, is that the same messianic-apocalyptic character is present in Şeyh Bedreddin, his disciple Börklüce Mustafa, and even the Ottoman prince Musa. This is evident in the accounts of Doukas, who, as we have already seen, relates stories of Börklüce walking on water and rising from the dead. It is also present in Hâfız Halil, who calls Bedreddin's master Hüseyin-i Ahlatî (and therefore by extension also his *halife* Bedreddin) the *kutb-ı zaman* (Axis of the Age), and who presents Mehmed I as coming down with an epileptic fit upon seeing a vision of the unjustly executed Bedreddin. Finally, it can be found in Mehmed I's court poet Abdülvasi Çelebi, who, when describing the conflict between his patron and Musa Çelebi, feels the need to state repeatedly that it was Mehmed, rather than Musa, who was the Mahdi (Messiah).⁶² In this connection, it might be worth noting the legend reported by Evliya Çelebi, supposedly from the mouth

60 For a detailed discussion based on primary sources see Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 159-187.

61 Binbaş, 'Şaraf al-Dîn 'Alî Yazdî', 310 and *passim*.

62 *Menakıb*, 41 (fol. 18b), 134-136 (fol. 57b-58b); Balivet, 'Un épisode méconnu', 142. For Abdülvasi Çelebi see Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 217-218, 221-222, 229.

of Sultan Mehmed IV himself, according to which the real prince Mustafa lived out his life in seclusion as a dervish in Thrace, and is identical with the eponymous founder of the Bektashi lodge of Nefes Baba near the baths of Traianoupolis in modern Greece.⁶³ This is rather similar to the case of Hacı İlbegi and Kızıl Deli, which has already been discussed above.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the present article has made at least a modest contribution toward placing the career and revolt of Şeyh Bedreddin in its broader historical context. As we have seen, it is not possible to study the Bedreddin revolt as a purely social, political, or religious phenomenon, because it was all three at once. In order to understand the significance of the actions of Bedreddin and his followers, we must bear in mind the social, economic, and political instability caused by Timur's Anatolian campaign of 1402-1403 and the Ottoman Civil War that followed it. Equally important, however, were the intellectual currents of the time, especially Hurufism, whose eschatological and universalistic teachings were well suited to the apocalyptic landscape in which they found root. As has been pointed out many times before, Bedreddin's teachings and revolt should be seen as the tail end of the larger post-Mongol period in the lands of Rum, which had produced the equally severe Babaî revolt of 1240, but also the likes of Rumî and Ibn Arabî, to whose mystical teachings Bedreddin and his contemporaries were so deeply indebted. These developments did not end with Bedreddin – on the contrary, the 1444 Hurufi uprisings in Edirne and the reported influence of the sect on the young Mehmed II demonstrate that the intellectual climate there did not change in the least after his execution.⁶⁴ Neither did the influence of Bedreddin himself diminish, but it survived him through his legend and his books. These books must be studied in detail and in context before it is possible to do justice to the man who was much more than a mere rebel, but above all a major intellectual of his time.

63 S. A. Kahraman, Y. Dağlı, and R. Dankoff (eds), *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, Vol. 8 (Istanbul 2003), 35.

64 H. İnalcık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar* (Ankara 1954), 37; F. Babinger, 'Von Amurath zu Amurath. Vor- und Nachspiel der Schlacht bei Varna <1444>', *Oriens*, 3 (1950), 247.

WHO GETS TO WRITE HISTORY?

CONTEMPORARY TEXTS ON THE REGICIDE OF OSMAN II AND THEIR IMPACT ON OTTOMAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Baki TEZCAN*

WHILE COMMENTING ON THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE HISTORY textbooks which were being produced by the Turkish Historical Society for the high schools of the young republic, Mustafa Kemal noted that “writing history is as important as making it”.¹ Taking this advice to heart, the historians of the Turkish Republic re-wrote Ottoman history with a view to bringing it into line with the needs of a secular nation-state, such as an emphasis on national identities, blaming the invented category of Islamic reactionaries for the ‘backwardness’ of the later Ottomans, and downplaying the cosmopolitan nature of the Ottoman ruling class. The legacy of Osman II was one of the topics that witnessed extensive revisions. The prevalent seventeenth-century representation of Osman II as an incompetent ruler whose dethronement was well justified was turned on its head, creating a precursor of Mustafa Kemal in the person of this young sultan. The janissaries and the jurists, the legitimacy of whose actions was mostly recognized in seventeenth-century sources, were turned into the main culprits of Ottoman decline.²

Some of the major seventeenth-century sources on the deposition and regicide of Osman II were analyzed by Gabriel Piterberg, who demonstrated that the account by Hüseyin Tuği, a former janissary, was the ultimate source for the representation of the events by Kâtib Çelebi (and hence Naima, who often follows the former in his chronicle), while an alternative account by Peçevî ended up having much less impact on seventeenth-century historiography.³ Not unlike in the twentieth century, history came to be written by those who had just made it: the janissaries who deposed Osman II also produced their own version of the events for posterity. One might say that, as members of an elite infantry corps, the janissaries do not represent the ‘bottom’ of Ottoman society. But

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1 Cited by U. İğdemir, *Yılların İçinden* (Ankara 1976), 26.

2 See B. Tezcan, ‘The 1622 Military Rebellion in Istanbul: A Historiographical Journey’, *IJTS*, 8 (2002), 25-43; for an updated Turkish translation see “‘Genç’ Osman Neden Tahttan İndirildi? Osmanlı Tarihyazımında Bir Yolculuk’ (trans. D. Berktaş), in J. Hathaway (ed.), *Osmanlı’da İsyân ve Ayaklanma* (Istanbul 2010), 43-78.

3 G. Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley 2003).

in the early seventeenth century, the janissary corps was turning into a socio-political corporation the membership of which included many lower middle and middle-class craftsmen and merchants. Thus theirs was an initiative ‘from the bottom up’ that not only succeeded, but even managed to control the way in which it was going to be remembered – especially after it was challenged.

Hüseyin Tuğî produced multiple narratives in sequence within the course of the year that followed the regicide of Osman II in 1622. While he was not unequivocal in supporting his comrades in the earlier versions, Tuğî changed his tone and re-wrote his chronicle after the beginning of the Abaza rebellion in Anatolia, the declared aim of which was to take revenge on the members of the central army corps for the murder of Osman II.⁴ In this later version, Tuğî portrayed the janissaries as most attentive to the life of Osman II after he was deposed, while he placed all the moral and political burden of the regicide on the shoulders of Davud Paşa, the Grand Vizier and brother-in-law of Mustafa I, who had just replaced Osman II.⁵ The voice of the victors, then, was not inscribed into the historiography until they came to be challenged by others.

In this study, I would like to continue thinking about the relationship between history and historiography in the context of the regicide of Osman II, as the number of texts produced in its aftermath provides one with a rich historiographical laboratory. Among these texts, Tuğî’s chronicle was not the only one that was sympathetic to the rebels or critical of Osman II and his circle of advisers. And yet, it was his that succeeded in ‘writing history’. By comparing Tuğî’s work with other contemporary chronicles, one might get closer to the answer of the question of who gets to write history.

The first such text that I would like to draw attention to is Mehmed Halisi’s *Beşaretnâme*, or the ‘Book of [announcement of] the Good News’.⁶ Halisi was a book-keeper for the expenditures of the imperial larder (*kılar*). He is known to have written at

4 For the rebellion of Abaza Mehmed Paşa see Idem, ‘The Alleged Rebellion of Abaza Mehmed Paşa: Historiography and the Ottoman State in the Seventeenth Century’, *IJTS*, 8 (2002), 13–24.

5 B. Tezcan, ‘The History of a “Primary Source”: The Making of Tûghî’s Chronicle on the Deposition of Osman II’, *BSOAS*, 72 (2009), 41–62.

6 This work seems to have escaped the attention of historians who worked on the early seventeenth century. J. von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, Vol. 10 (Pest 1835), 692, refers to the work in question as a history of the reign of Mustafa II (1695–1703). The only known extant copy of the text is in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, mixt. 21; see G. Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der kaiserlich-königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, Vol. 2 (Vienna 1865), 259–260, No. 1052. Franz Babinger refers to the work in question in his *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig 1927), 159, No. 135, and corrects Hammer-Purgstall’s mistake by stating that the work is on the reign of Mustafa I, and most probably, on his second reign (1622–1623). Yet none of these descriptions identifies correctly the name of the work, which is stated by the author within the text (fol. 168b, lines 7, 10–11). The explanatory title given to the work by its anonymous copyist, ‘Sultan Osmandan sonra olan Sultan Mustafa Hanın tarihidir’ (it is the history of Sultan Mustafa Khan who is after Sultan Osman), seems to have led the work to be called *Tarih-i Sultan Mustafa*. *Beşaretnâme* was apparently transcribed in modern Turkish letters by Şelâle Bilgin and Halid Gülşen in their respective senior theses at Istanbul University. I have seen the

least one other work, the *Zafername* (the Book of Victory), which is about Osman II's military expedition against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1621.⁷ Right after composing a work to praise Osman II, Halisi witnessed his deposition and the enthronement of Mustafa I. He did not waste time and wrote a new work to praise the new ruler. In the latter work, Halisi did not have a problem with presenting his former patron in a negative light. While one may see him as an especially fickle author, another way of looking at him may be to suggest that he was consistent insofar as he was praising the reigning emperors. His relatively frequent references to the incumbent superintendent of the residential part of the palace, the *dariüssaade ağası*, in both of his works – Süleyman Ağa in the *Zafername* and İsmail Ağa in the *Beşaretname* – suggest that he may have been a court propagandist of sorts, working under the supervision of the superintendent of the imperial residence.⁸ As is the case with other historiographical works produced at the Ottoman court in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries,⁹ Halisi's works do not seem to have circulated much. With the exception of Kâtib Çelebi's use of his *Zafername*, Halisi remained unnoticed in Ottoman historiography. There is only a single copy of his *Beşaretname*, which does not seem to have been utilized by any Ottoman historian, at least in the seventeenth century. It appears that the Ottoman reading public was not interested in plain court propaganda, especially when it was as obvious as it was in the work of Halisi, who took the practice of literary borrowing to new heights when he praised Osman II by copying a section from the *Hümayunname* written in honor of Süleyman by Alâeddin Ali Çelebi (d. 1543) some 80 years earlier.¹⁰

The second piece I would like to discuss is entitled the 'Chronogram Book', or *Tarihname*. Since the *Tarihname* is a rather obscure work on which there are no publications, except in Serbo-Croatian, an introduction is in order.¹¹ Its author is Ağa Dede, a small-

former: Ş. Bilgin, 'Kilârî Mehmed Halife: Bişâret-nâme-i Sultan Mustafa Han – I (Viyan, National Bibliothek, mxt. 21, 153b–175a)', senior thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1981.

7 Y. Yücel, 'Yeni Bulunan II. Osman Adına Yazılmış Bir "Zafer-nâme"', *Belleten*, 43 (1979), 313–364; Idem (facs. ed.), *Osmanlı Devlet Düzenine Ait Metinler VI: II. Osman Adına Yazılmış Zafer-nâme* (Ankara 1983).

8 See B. Tezcan, 'Zafer-nâme Müellifi Hâlisî'nin Bilinmeyen Bir Eseri Münâsebetiyle', *OA*, 19 (1999), 83–98; Idem, 'The Multiple Faces of the One: The Invocation Section of Ottoman Literary Introductions as a Locus for the Central Argument of the Text', *Middle Eastern Literatures*, 12 (2009), 30–35.

9 Idem, 'The Politics of Early Modern Ottoman Historiography', in V. H. Aksan and D. Goffman (eds), *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge 2007), 171–180.

10 The *Hümayunname*, or the 'Imperial Book', is a Turkish translation of the famous collection of fables of Indian origin *Panchatantra*, known as *Kalila wa dimna* in the Islamic tradition. The section that Halisi 'borrowed' is the one in which Alâeddin Ali Çelebi is praising Süleyman; see the Appendix of this paper, and also *TDVİA*, s.v. 'Alâeddin Ali Çelebi' (Ö. F. Akün).

11 I should take a moment here to express my gratitude to those men and women who, under the leadership of the late Andreas Tietze, spent a lot of time and energy in publishing the *Turkologischer Anzeiger*, without which I could never have been aware of this text, parts of which were published in Serbo-Croatian translation by O. A. Sokolović, 'Pjesnik Aga-dede iz Dobor-grada o svome zavičaju i pogibiji Osmama II: O jednom autografu Gazijine biblioteke' [The poet Aga

town imam/preacher/Sufi/schoolteacher from northern Bosnia. He claims that his ancestors had been janissaries since the time of Mehmed II, but the first name he provides is that of his grandfather, a certain Muhyiddin bin İlyas, who was apparently stationed at the fortress of Bögürdelen, modern Šabac in Serbia. In the late 1530s, upon Hüseyin Bey's conquest of Dobor, which is today in the Republika Srpska, that is, the Serbian-controlled part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Muhyiddin was moved there; at that time, Ağa Dede's father, Yusuf Ağa, was only seven years old. While many of Muhyiddin's companions moved back to Bögürdelen, he remained in Dobor as he got into bee-raising there. His son, Yusuf Ağa, spent his life there as well, eventually serving as the warden of the fortress of Dobor, and died in 1019/1610. Ağa Dede was born in Dobor and taught children there. He and his father were followers of a Sufi sheikh called Hasan Efendi who had settled in Požega, probably the one in modern Croatia. He inherited his father's "ağalık", which probably refers to the position of warden in the fortress. After a year and a half, he sold this position and established a family trust with the proceeds as he states:

*Satub ağalığı akçeye bozdum – atamun ruhu için vakfı düzdüm
Meşrut itdiüm evlâdına tilâvet – okumak Yasini ayet be-ayet.*¹²

After selling his inherited position, Ağa Dede became the local imam and preacher of the nearby town of Jakeš. His good relations with officials, such as the finance director of Bosnia, secured him a supplementary salary and his son the position of the caller to prayer, or muezzin. Although he lost this position after seven years, Ağa Dede remained in the circle of influential local officials. One such official commissioned him to re-write an old copy of the *Camasbname*, most probably the Turkish version in verse (c.1430) by Abdi (or a later re-working of it), which is a set of stories in the center of which stands Jamasb, who is supposed to be the son of Daniel from the Old Testament.¹³ Ağa Dede completed his work by revising the text and making some additions of his own. At the end, he wanted to write its *tarih* in the sense of a chronogram, but he realized that a lot had happened in that year as he states:

*Lâzım geldi anun tarihin yazmak – ne zamanda yazulmuş anı anmak
Fikir eyledüm durdum meğer o hinde – çok tarih yazulacak var o yılda.*¹⁴

Dede from the town of Dobor, about his homeland and Osman II's assassination: about one autograph from Gazi's Library], *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke*, 1 (1972), 5-34; to my colleague Nenad Filipović, who translated Sokolović's translation into English for me – as we were under the impression that the manuscript in question, which was supposed to be at the Gazi Husrev Beg Library, would be inaccessible for researchers in the aftermath of the war that destroyed so many things in Bosnia; and to the Director of the Gazi Husrev Beg Library, Dr Mustafa Jahić, who identified the manuscript for me as Gazi Husrev-begova Biblioteka, R-9724, fols 10a-27b (17-52), and provided a digital copy recently. The following biographical details are from the same manuscript, 20-34.

12 Ağa Dede, *Tarihname*, Gazi Husrev-begova Biblioteka, R-9724, 27.

13 *TDVİA*, s.v. 'Câmasbnâme' (M. Erkan).

14 Ağa Dede, *Tarihname*, 34.

Thus Ağa Dede wrote his *Tarihname*, which ended up being a chronicle of the hijri year 1031, focusing on the deposition and regicide of Osman II, and the enthronement of Mustafa I and its immediate aftermath. The only extant copy of the work immediately follows Ağa Dede's *Camasbname* – as it should – in the same manuscript, which is unfortunately missing several pages.

Ağa Dede seems to have been very well informed about the events that took place in Istanbul in May 1622.¹⁵ He starts his account with a short background, reminding the readers that, after the death of Mehmed III in 1603, his son Ahmed succeeded him and established a 'cage' for his younger brother Mustafa – Ağa Dede uses the word *kafes*, which is one of the earlier, if not the earliest, literary uses of the word to refer to the apartments in which the Ottoman princes were kept after the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹⁶ Although Mustafa was enthroned after the death of Ahmed, a small group of men brought about his deposition, and the succession of Osman II in his place. "The young Sultan for whom the world was too small (*taze idi, sigmaz idi cihana*)" was looking for an excuse for a military expedition. The Cossack attacks provided him with this excuse, and, despite widespread opposition, Osman II decided to lead an imperial campaign against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The rest of Ağa Dede's account follows the course of events from Osman II's decision to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca with a view to raising a new army on the way, which may be dated to January 1622, all the way up to the grand vizierate of Mere Hüseyin Paşa in June. Most likely, he was writing his *Tarihname* within the two months that followed the deposition, for he refers to Mere Hüseyin Paşa as the incumbent grand vizier. Although Mere was going to occupy this position for a second time in 1623, that is 1032 *hicrî*, this could probably not be mentioned in a work about 1031 *hicrî*. As for Mere's first grand vizierate, it was between June 13 and July 9, 1622. So we may assume that Ağa Dede was writing in Bosnia in the early summer of 1622 about an event that took place in late May – Osman II was deposed on May 19 and killed the next day. Taking this short time interval into account, Ağa Dede's command of the details is striking. There are certain points at which his facts are slightly different than those provided by Tuğî, such as some names on the list of people who the rebels demanded should be executed. And yet, there are also points at which Ağa Dede provides a detail that is missing in Tuğî's account, such as the name of the *sipahi* who took Prince Mustafa out of his apartment. Mostly, however, his account agrees with other accounts of the event. The way in which he interprets the event politically is also quite similar to that of those who saw the deposition as legitimate. For instance, the claim that Osman II was changing the Ottoman 'laws', that is, *kanuns*, is right there as it is to be found in Tuğî's later account as well. Thus, Ağa Dede makes Mustafa tell Osman when they were brought together in the mosque of the janissary barracks:

*Al-i Osman kanunların devirdin – gayrı kanunları kurdun çevirdin.*¹⁷

¹⁵ The following is based on *ibid.*, 34–52.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

Despite its contemporaneousness and relative precision in detail, however, Ağa Dede's account never makes it into history writing. There is not a single Ottoman historian of the seventeenth century who cites him; the additional facts found only in his account are not to be seen in later chronicles. Is this surprising? No; whether we like it or not, a small town in Ottoman Bosnia was peripheral to mainstream Ottoman historiographical production. In order to write the kind of history that would be read by other historians who would produce widely read histories, one had to be closer to the center. That is not to say that Ağa Dede's work is unimportant; on the contrary, it is a treasure for the study of intellectual life in the small towns of the Ottoman provinces. But its obscurity within Ottoman historiography underlines the fact that Ottoman history writing was mostly happening in the center.

The relative obscurity of provincial historiographical production within mainstream Ottoman historiography, however, does not imply that every work produced in the center would be read and cited. The court propaganda that *Beşaretnâme* provides a telling example. But there are also two more texts that illustrate the same point from different angles. One of them belongs to a prominent member of the scholarly nobility, and the other may be coming from related circles. Let me start with the latter.

This short chronicle of the deposition and regicide of Osman II is anonymous and untitled. Just like a certain version of Tuğî's corpus of texts, which is copied at the end of a particular recension of the chronicle of Hasanbegzade, a seventeenth-century Ottoman statesman and chronicler, this text, too, is preceded by a proper chronicle, the *Nuhbetü't-Tevarih ve'l-Ahbar* by Mehmed bin Mehmed (d. 1640), who was known under such epithets as Edirnevî, Rumî, and Mûderris. Edirnevî's work covers the period up to the end of the reign of Ahmed I; so a copier must have thought that a text about the deposition of Osman II could form a proper appendix to it – incidentally, the particular recension of Hasanbegzade's chronicle to which the pseudo-Tuğî text is appended also ends at the end of the reign of Ahmed I.¹⁸

Although my first impression was that this was an independent text, very much like Tuğî's, it may well be a segment of a larger work, as it starts without a proper introduction and ends without a formal closure. Its prose is much more ornate than the texts mentioned so far, except for the *Beşaretnâme*. It has a large number of idioms, Qur'anic and other references, and verses in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish interspersed within the prose, suggesting an authorship in the scholarly or secretarial profession. While it has several details not found in other texts about the deposition, what is perhaps truly unique about it is the long section about the death of Osman II with which the text ends.

18 See Dār al-Kutub al-Qawmiyya (Cairo), 212 m. ta'rīkh turkī, Vol. 2, fols 237b-247b – the following summary comes from these 11 folios with which the volume ends; for the Hasanbegzade manuscripts in question see Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ms. H.O. 19 and H.O. 65; Ragıp Paşa Kütüphanesi 987; Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi 3134; and Dār al-Kutub al-Qawmiyya, 168 ta'rīkh turkī Tal'at; for an analysis of the Tuğî texts to be found in these five manuscripts see Tezcan, 'The History of a "Primary Source"', 48-49.

Most chronicles mention the execution of Osman II briefly, whereas this one has more than three pages devoted to the subject, which do not really add much to what we know in terms of facts, but make Osman II ponder death, question the meaning of worldly power, think about the transitory nature of this world, and accept the divine will. Whereas all the earlier chronicles were mainly concerned with celebrating the enthronement of Mustafa I, which in a way justified the death of Osman II, this one remains focused on the regicide. And this may be the precise reason why it did not come to write Ottoman history in the seventeenth century. Although this text provides additional details about the rebellion and the regicide, these details did not make it into seventeenth-century Ottoman historiography, which came to be dominated by the view that could be summarized as follows: the deposition was legitimate, while the regicide was not, although at the end of the day no one could change God's will. This text does not necessarily challenge this view, yet it forces its readers to remain focused on the death of the young Sultan. The tight focus on Osman II suggests that this text might be coming out of a work that was originally intended to celebrate his reign, perhaps the lost prose *şehname* of Kemaleddin Taşköprüzade, which is mentioned by Atâî – even though Kemaleddin died nine months before Osman II, a literary inheritor could have taken Kemaleddin's work and completed it, finishing it with the regicide of the Sultan.¹⁹ This theory could also help explain how the text remained in obscurity: no one was interested in celebrating Osman II after his death.

The last text that I would like to discuss is a short chronicle by Bostanzade Yahya.²⁰ Yahya comes from a family that belongs to what one may call the academic and judicial aristocracy. His grandfather, father, uncle, elder brother, and he himself held important posts in the academic and judicial hierarchies.²¹ His narrative is an eyewitness account

19 Nev'îzâde Atâî, *Hadaiku'l-Hakaik fî Tekmileti's-Şakaik* (Istanbul 1268/1851-1852) [reprinted with indices in A. Özcan (ed.), *Şakaik-ı Nu'maniye ve Zeyilleri*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 1989)], 642. Abdurrahman Hibri, *Defter-i Ahbar*, Veliyüddin 2418, seems to have had access to this text or a common source he shared with its anonymous author.

20 Bostanzade Yahya (d. 1639), [*Vak'a-ı Sultan Osman Han*], Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, Revan – 1305; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Halet Efendi – 611; Bibliothèque nationale de France, suppl. turc – 1142. The text is critically edited, based on the two manuscripts in Istanbul, by B. Yazıcı, 'Bostan-zâde Yahyâ Efendi ve Vak'a-i Sultan Osman Han Adlı Eseri', unpublished senior thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1958-1959. There is also a modern Turkish rendering by O. Ş. Gökyay, 'II. Sultan Osman'ın Şehadeti', in E. Güngör *et alii* (eds), *Atsız Armağanı* (Istanbul 1976), 187-256.

21 For a biography of the author see Şeyhî Mehmed Efendi (d. 1145/1732-1733), *Vakayii'l-Fudalâ*, Beyazıt Library, Veliyüddin Efendi – 2361-2362; facsimile edition with an index by Özcan (ed.), *Şakaik-ı Nu'maniye*, Vol. 3 (Istanbul 1989), 45-46. His grandfather was Bostan Mustafa (d. 1570), son of a merchant from Tire, *kazasker* of Anatolia and Rumelia during the reign of Süleyman; Nev'îzâde Atâî, *Hadaiku'l-Hakaik*, 129-132. His father was Bostanzade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1598), twice *şeyhülislam* during the reigns of Murad III and Mehmed III; *ibid.*, 410-413. His uncle was Mustafa (d. 1014/1605-1606), once military judge of Anatolia and twice of Rumelia during the reign of Mehmed III; *ibid.*, 506-507. His elder brother was Bostanzade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1035/1625-1626), twice *kazasker* of Anatolia, and twice of Rumelia, during the reigns of Ahmed I, Mustafa I (second reign), and Murad IV; *ibid.*, 697-698; for

that comes from an insider, as he was in the middle of the events on the day Osman II was deposed and then remained quite close to centers of power, eventually becoming chief justice of the Asian provinces during the second reign of Mustafa I. Interestingly, however, his work had no influence on the historiography of the regicide. Although his account has reached us in at least three manuscript copies, suggesting a wider circle of readership than the texts mentioned above (except that of Tuğî), Kâtib Çelebi, the foremost bibliophile and polymath of the seventeenth century, does not seem to have been aware of it. One wonders, of course, how such a significant eyewitness account of the regicide by such a powerful member of the Ottoman scholarly profession could be ignored. I would like to suggest that this neglect may have to do with what distinguishes Bostanzade Yahya's account.

In terms of relating the course of events on the day of the deposition, that is, Thursday, May 19, 1622,²² Bostanzade differs from Tuğî over a significant point. According to Tuğî, the soldiers submitted their demands to the *ulema* who were supposed to see the Sultan and get a response from him. But since no response ever came, the soldiers moved on, entered the palace, freed Prince Mustafa from his apartment, and recognized him as their Sultan. This representation of the course of the rebellion portrays Osman II as quite unresponsive to the demands of the rebels. Bostanzade's narrative, however, complicates this picture, as it includes a short account of how the Sultan suggested that all the men whose execution was demanded by the rebels be dismissed from their positions and exiled – except for Süleyman Ağa, the chief black eunuch.²³ Osman II, then, was actually listening to the rebels and ready to negotiate. Thus, there was no sufficient reason to attempt to find Prince Mustafa in order to enthrone him, at least not yet. This small detail undermines the legitimacy of the enthronement of Mustafa by the rebels.

Another significant difference between Bostanzade and Tuğî is in their approach to the respective roles of divine and human wills in the course of the events. Tuğî keeps emphasizing the power of divine will and how unavoidable fate is, which are narrative features that are repeated by Kâtib Çelebi and Naima as well.²⁴ While Bostanzade has a few similar statements as well, what is more common in his account are expressions of frustration at the incompetence of the men who advised Osman II that day. Had there been a competent vizier or senior jurist, or had they listened to the opinions of those jurists – like himself – who did not have an active appointment at the time, things would have been very different, the deposition and the regicide could have been avoided.²⁵

another brother see *ibid.*, 449; for later members of the family see Şeyhî in Özcan (ed.), *Şakaik-ı Nu'maniye*, Vol. 3, 275-276, 321-322, 388-389, 431-432. He himself was *kazasker* of Anatolia during the second reign of Mustafa I, and *kazasker* of Rumelia during the reign of Murad IV.

22 For a summary of the events see B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York 2010), 163-175.

23 Compare Hüseyin Tuğî, [*Hikâyet-i Sultan Osman Han*], İzzettin Koyunoğlu Kütüphanesi (Konya), 13316, fols 9b-10a; Bostanzade, [*Vak'a*], Revan – 1305, fol. 23.

24 Tezcan, 'The History of a "Primary Source"', 51-55, 60-61.

25 See, for instance, Bostanzade, [*Vak'a*], Revan – 1305, fols 5a, 5b-8b, 12b, 14b-16a, 19a, 20b-21a, 26, 32b.

Finally, Bostanzade also differs from Tuġi in his recognition of the responsibility of the janissaries for the execution of Osman II. For Tuġi, this responsibility is solely that of Davud Paşa.²⁶ For Bostanzade, however, the janissaries are simply trying to unload their responsibility for the events on to the shoulders of Davud Paşa in order to escape the blame for the regicide.²⁷ In short, Bostanzade presents a serious challenge to Tuġi's portrayal of the rebellion that casts it as a series of events caused mainly by divine will for the most significant consequences of which the soldiers did not have a direct responsibility.

Perhaps, then, the absence of Bostanzade's narrative as a source in seventeenth-century Ottoman historiography may be related to the fact that it presented a complication for the way in which the deposition and regicide came to be represented. Rather than lifting the collective responsibility of the *kuls* for the regicide or reminding his readers that the deposition and the regicide were simply unavoidable, Bostanzade seems to have chosen to complicate the picture.

And yet, history writing tends to favor simpler explanations, especially if the issue in hand is a controversial one. One could then tentatively state that those who narrate the perspective of the victors (in this case, the janissaries) against unsuccessful challengers (in this case, Abaza) in a way that makes the course of events unavoidable (the way Tuġi did) get to write history in the long term, while others who might also be allies of the victors but either sound too much like blunt propaganda (like Halisi did), live too far away from centers of power (as did Ağa Dede), or somewhat complicate the picture (as did the anonymous author and Bostanzade) get to be forgotten.

As for the implications of this tentative conclusion in the context of 'political initiatives from the bottom up', it seems that such initiatives are not any different from others in rewriting history to suit their political needs. In relation to the power of the sultan, his court, and his higher ranking administrators and generals, the janissaries represent the 'bottom' of Ottoman political structures. As mentioned above, even though the janissaries are usually considered to be the elite fighting force of the Ottoman army, in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they were becoming a political corporation that gradually came to represent the lower middle and middle-class craftsmen and merchants in the Empire.²⁸ As such, the deposition and the regicide that they staged in 1622 were truly a political initiative 'from the bottom up'. And yet they managed to control the historiographical representation of their actions as evidenced by the hegemony that the account of Tuġi, a retired janissary himself, came to establish on the memory of Osman II's deposition and regicide.

26 Tezcan, 'The History of a "Primary Source"', 58-61.

27 I am revising my earlier statement on this particular point; compare Idem, 'The 1622 Military Rebellion', 30, with Bostanzade, [*Vak'a*], Revan – 1305, fol. 45b.

28 Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 198-213.

APPENDIX

*Zafername*²⁹

[p. 13] Ma'delet-i bahiresi bir
mertebededir ki, çeng-i peleng, damen-i
post-ı (ahu)dan el almış ve dendan-ı gürg,
gelû-yı gûsfendile kan yalaşmışdır
[...]. Ve nefhat-ı şemayil-i adl-şamiliyle
dimâg-ı etraf-ı âlem muattar, ve lem'ât-ı
afitab-ı bezl-kâmiliyle dide-i esnaf-ı beni
Âdem münevverdür. Ve mi'mar-ı adlîyle
maksure-i rub'-ı meskûn ma'mur ve tîr-i
kahriyle cevr-i mezalim çarsu-yı heft-
kişverden durdur.

Beyt:

Yok zamanında yetim anun meger dürr-i
Aden
yokdur eyyamında hunin dil meger
müşk-i Hote(n).

[p. 14] Ve bir padişah-ı dindar u din-
perverdür ki damen-i nefes-i mukaddesi,
denes-i kebayir ve sagayirden mu'arra,
ve meşreb-i akidet-i pakı, hâşâk-ı âra-yı
bâtıladan mutahhar ve müberradur. Ve
şecaatte ana Rüstem dimek sitemdür ki,
Rüstem anun kemer-beste kemter
bendesidür, ve Tahmas u Sam ve İlkas u
Behram kemter bendesinün efgendesidür
[...]. Azametde Cem dimek galatdur ki
seng-i kahriyle (niçe) Cemlerün cam-ı
vücudın şikest itmişdür ve semahatda
Hatem dimek hatadur ki dest-ı bezliyle
niçe Hatemün defterin tayy idüp sit u
sada-yı cudın pest itmişdür.

(Beyt:)

Dergeh-i âlem-penahı Kâbe-i emn u
aman

[p. 15] südde-i eyvan-sarayı kible-i halk-ı
cihan.

*Hümayunname*³⁰

Ma'delet-i bahiresi bir mertebededir ki,
çeng-i peleng, damen-i post-ı ahudan el
almışdır. Dendan-ı gürg, gelû-yı
gûsfendile kan yalaşmışdır.³¹
Nefhat-ı şimal-i adl-şamiliyle dimag-ı
etraf-ı âlem muattardır. Lem'ât-ı afitab-ı
bezl-kâmiliyle dide-i esnaf-ı beni Âdem
münevverdür. Mi'mar-ı adlîyle maksure-
i rub'-ı meskûn ma'murdur. Şeşper-i
kahriyle cevr ü sitem çarsu-yı heft-
kişverden durdur.³²

Beyt: Yok zamanında yetim anun meger
dürr-i Aden
yokdur eyyamında hunin dil meger
müşk-i Hoten.³³

Bir şehinşah-ı dindar u din-perverdür ki,
damen-i nefes-i mukaddesi, denes-i
keba'irden belki saga'irden mutahhar-
dur. Ve meşreb-i akidet-i pakı, hâşâk-ı
âra-ı bâtıladan mu'arradur. Ve ...
müberradur.³⁴

Şecaatte ana Rüstem dimek sitemdür ki
Rüstem anun kemer-beste kemter
bendesidür. Ve Tahmas u Sam u Behram
u Ankas (?) kemter bendesinün
efgendesidür. Azametde Cem dimek
galatdur ki seng-i kahriyle niçe
Cemlerün cam-ı vücudın şikest itmişdür.
Sahavetde Hatem dimek hatadur ki dest-
i bezliyle niçe Hatemün defterin tayy
idüb sit u sada-yı cudın pest itmişdür.³⁵

Beyt:

Dergeh-i âlem-penahı Kâbe-i emn u
aman

südde-i divan-sarayı kible-i halk-ı cihan.³⁶

29 Yücel (ed.), *Zafer-nâme*, 13-19. My inter-
ventions in the text are shown in parenthe-
ses. An empty parenthesis is inserted when
I have erased a suffix. "[...]" indicates a
skipped part in verse.

30 Ali bin Salih, *Hümayunname* (Bulak
1254/1838) [B].

31 B, 11, lines 11-13.

32 B, 11, lines 19-21.

33 B, 11, lines 23-24.

34 B, 10, line 29; 11, line 1.

35 B, 11, lines 26-30.

36 B, 10, lines 23-24.

Ve hazarda kıbab-ı saray(-)ı meymunı habab-ı sipihr-i âbgüne hemser, ve (seferde) küngüre-i hiyam-ı hümayunı eyvan-ı gerduna beraber belki andan berterdür. Ve dide-i gerdun-gerdan, şaşaa-ı çetr-i asuman-sayinden hire u hayran, ve cirm-i afitab-ı direhşan, reşk-i saye-i sayeban-ı felek-fersayından sayeveş hâka yeksandur. Ve mah-ı müstenir-i kubbe-i müstedir(), hargâh-ı felek-tedvir-i mihr-i tenvir(in)den iktibas-ı nur ider. Ve hayme-i gerdun, saye-i çetr-i hümayunı ile lâf-ı irtifa ursa da'va-yı zûr ider [...]. Zer-i tamam-ayar ta nam-ı mübarekin cebînine yazmadı, teb-ı [p. 16] t(a)b-ı pute-i güdazdan halâs olmadı. Ve dirhem u dinar ta lakab-ı şerifini sikke-i kabule kazmadı, şikence-i pence-i zarrabdan necat u menas bulmadı [...; p. 17] Ve kandil-i zer-nigâr-ı mihr u mah, kâse-i meş'al-i çiragıdır ki, leyl u nehar anda yanan küffar u füccarun yüregi yağıdır. Ve rayet-i nusret-ay(e)tî, nihâl-ı servdür ki, meyan-ı bustan-ı gazada hun-ı a'da ile perveriş bulmuşdur. Ve sancak-ı zafer-bayrakı, şah-ı güldür ki, gülzar-ı kârzarda nesim-i fethle küşade olmuşdur [...]. Ve sinan-ı nize-i can-sitanından revan olan kan, nikab-ı gülğün-çehre-i nev-arus-ı gazadır. Ve gubar-ı süm-i semend-i cihangerd-âlem-neverdi, kühlü'l-cevahir-i hur-i ayn olsa sezadur. Ve bim-i tig-i sezab renginden İfrenç ü Lih bir rencdedür ki, şerbet-i hanzal-ı meraret-i [p. 18] şimşir-i âb-tasvir u ateş-te'sirinden gayrıyla; ve vehm-i gürz-i kûh-ı Elborz-peykerinden Sürh-Ser bir derd-i serdedür ki, şarab-ı zehr-âb-ı tig-i nilüferinden gayrıyla şifa mutasavver degildür.

Hazarda kıbab-ı saray-ı meymunı habab-ı sipihr-i âbgüne hemserdür. Seferde küngüre-i hiyam-ı hümayunı eyvan-ı gerduna beraber belki andan berterdür. Dide-i gerdun-gerdan şaşaa-ı çetr-i asuman-sayinden hire u hayrandur. Ve cirm-i afitab-ı direhşan, reşk-i saye-i sayeban-ı felek-fersayından sayeveş hâka yeksandur. Mah-ı müstenir-i kubbe-i müstedir, hargâh-ı felek-tedvir-i mihr-i tenvirinden iktibas-ı nur ider. Ve hayme-i gerdun-gerdan, paye-i rif'at-saye-i çetr-i hümayunıyla lâf-ı irtifa ursa da'va-yı zûr ider. Zer-i tamam-ayar ta nam-ı mübarekin cebînine yazmadı, teb-ı tab-ı pute-i güdazdan halâs olmadı. Ve dirhem u dinar ta lakab-ı şerifini sikke-i kabule kazmadı, şikence-i pençe-i kâzdan necat bulmadı. Kandil-i zer-nigâr-ı mihr u mah, kâse-i meş'al-i çiragıdır ki, leyl u nehar anda yanan küffar-ı füccarun yüregi yağıdır. Rayet-i nusret-ayeti, nihâl-ı servdür ki, meyan-ı bustan-ı gazada hun-ı a'da ile perveriş bulmuşdur. Sancak-ı zafer-mencukı, şah-ı güldür ki, gülzar-ı kârzarda nesim-i feth ü firuz ile küşade olmuşdur. Sinan-ı nize-i can-sitanından revan olan kan, gaze-i çehre-i nev-arus-ı gazadır. Ve gubar-ı süm-i semend-i cihangerd-âlem-neverdi, kühlü'l-cevahir-i dide-i hur-i ayn olsa sezadur. Bim-i tig-i sezab renginden Efrenc bir rencdedür ki, şerbet-i hanzal-ı meraret-i şimşir-i âb-tasvir u ateş-te'sirinden gayrıyla deva müyesser degildür. Ve vehm-i gürz-i Elborz-peykerinden Sürh-Ser bir derd-i serdedür ki, şarab-ı zehr-âb-ı tig-i nilüferinden gayrıyla şifa mutasavver degildür.³⁷

37 B, 12, lines 7-22.

(Beyt:)

Lutf u kahrı hane-i peymane-i rızk (u)
ecel afv u haşmı maye-i sermaye-i sud u
ziyan.

Ve nar-ı şimşir-i ateşbarı, diyar-ı
düşman-ı hâksara ateş urmuştur. Ve
sarsar-ı sinan-ı kahrı, hirmen-i hayat-ı
a'da-yı bed-girdarı bada virmişdür. Ve
tig-i rahşan-ı berf-nişanından, can-ı
gerdenkeşan-ı İran u Horasan hayran u
hirasandur [...]. Ve aşub-ı tub-ı gerdun-
kûb-ı saika-nişanından, diyar-ı derya-bar
ve kılâ u hisar-ı Lih u İfrenc-i hâksar [p.
19] viran ve hâka yeksandur...

Beyt:

Lutf u kahrı hane-i peymane-i rızk u ecel
afv u haşmı maye-i sermaye-i sud u
ziyan.³⁸

Bâd-ı şimşir-i âbdarı, diyar-ı can-
düşman-ı hâksara ateş urmuştur. Ateş-i
sinan-ı tabdarı, hirmen-i hayat-ı a'da-yı
bed-girdarı bad-ı fenaya virmişdür. ...
Asib-i tig-i rahşan-ı berk-fişanından,
can-ı gerden-keşan-ı İran u Horasan
hayran u hirasandur. Aşub-ı tob-ı
gerdun-kûb-ı saika-nişanından, diyar-ı
derya-bar ve kılâ u hisar-ı Efrenc-i
hâksar viran ve hâka yeksandur.³⁹

38 B, 10, lines 25-26.

39 B, 12, lines 23-29.

THE KADIZADELİ MOVEMENT AS A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHENOMENON: THE RISE OF A ‘MERCANTILE ETHIC’?

Marinos SARIYANNIS*

THE HISTORY OF IDEAS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE is still at a very preliminary stage; few scholars have examined broader intellectual movements beyond individual thinkers, and these studies usually focus on Ottoman political thought proper. Moreover, establishing relations between ideological currents and socio-economic or political developments in the course of history remains a *desideratum*, apart from Ahmet Yaşar Ocak’s ground-breaking studies of sixteenth-century religious movements as a vehicle for political opposition.¹ In this paper I propose to study the well-known ‘fundamentalism’ that arose throughout the seventeenth century in the light of the emergence of new mercantile strata in the same period; I will try to suggest that this current served the new classes in their struggle for political power, showing that it played an active role in the political factionalism that dominated the mid seventeenth-century Istanbul power field.

The Kadızadelis: Historical Outline and State of Research

This paper will focus on the fundamentalist movement known as ‘the followers of Kadızade’ or the Kadızadelis, a movement which, as is well known, dominated the political and ideological scene of the Ottoman Empire throughout the seventeenth century. The main characteristics of its ideology were opposition to any innovation (*bid’at*), as opposed to the way of life in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and especially a violent struggle against the dervish brotherhoods, and more specifically the Halvetis. The forerunner of the movement was Birgivî Mehmed b. Pir Ali (1522-1573), an eminent theo-

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1 See, for instance, A. Y. Ocak, ‘Les réactions socio-religieuses contre l’idéologie officielle ottomane et la question de *zendeqa ve ilhâd* (hérésie et athéisme) au XVI^e siècle’, *Turcica*, 21-23 (1991), 71-82; Idem, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15.-17. Yüzyıllar)* (Istanbul 1998).

logian who had reacted against Ebussuud's interpretation of the Sharia and whose books were widely read by both the people and the *ulema*. The preacher Kadızade Mehmed b. Mustafa (1582-1635) turned Birgivi's teachings into an activist movement; his vehement preaching from the Ayasofya Mosque against dervishes led to his famous enmity with the prominent Halveti sheikh Abdülmecid Sivasî (d. 1639).² Murad IV did not adopt the Kadızadeli programme against the Sufis and had close relations with Sivasî as well; however, it seems that he used Kadızade's ideas and popularity in order to promote his own measures for public order and the enhancement of the state power.³ The ban on tobacco and the closing down of coffee-houses by Murad were theoretically based on these ideas.⁴ Kadızade himself became close to the Sultan, so that he often functioned as a mediator; for instance, the notables of Kayseri asked for his assistance in 1629/1630,⁵ while he played a similar role during the unsuccessful *sipahi* mutiny of 1632.⁶ One must not overlook the preachers' competition for well-paid posts in high-class mosques as an underlying factor for the rise of the Kadızadeli movement; both Kadızade and Sivasî, as well as other protagonists of the debate, preached in mosques.⁷

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- 2 M. Zilfi, 'The Kadizadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 45/4 (1986), 251-269; Eadem, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis 1988), 129-181; S. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Volume I: *Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808* (Cambridge 1976), 206-207. For primary sources see Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 1287/1870-1871), 155, 182-183; Idem, *Mizanü'l-Hak fi İhtiyari'l-Ahak* (Istanbul 1306/1888-1889), 125-129, 130-133; P. Ricaut, *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire, Containing the Maxims of the Turkish Polity ... in Three Books* (London 1686), 243-244, 247. Kâtib Çelebi had been himself a disciple of Kadızade's (*Mizanü'l-Hak*, 130), but maintains a neutral attitude towards the debate with the Halvetis, arguing that no one can really impose on the people changes in their age-old beliefs and practices. On Birgivi, cf. *TDVİA*, s.v. 'Birgivi' (E. Yüksel).
 - 3 Zilfi, 'Kadizadelis', 256-258.
 - 4 Mustafa Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, Vol. 6 (Istanbul 1282/1865-1866), 231 (and Silâhdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, *Silâhdar Tarihi*, ed. Ahmed Refik, Vol. 1 [Istanbul 1928], 58), cites a poem of the Kadızadeli's opponents: "It is none of your business to interfere with people's doings / or does tobacco bring doomsday, oh preacher?" ("halkı men eylemeden sana ne girer ne çıkar / vaizâ yoksa duhan ile kıyamet mi kopar"). On Naima's text, cf. now M. İpşirli (ed.), *Naîmâ Mustafa Efendi: Târih-i Na'imâ (Ravzatü'l-Hüseyn fi Hulâsati Ahbârî'l-Hâfikayn)*, 4 vols (Ankara 2007), who gives in parentheses the slightly different pagination of another six-volume edition (H. 1280).
 - 5 Naima, *Tarih*, 3:46-47.
 - 6 Ibid., 3:91.
 - 7 This is the point made by Zilfi, 'Kadizadelis'. Cf. also A. Saraçgil, 'Generi voluttuari e ragion di stato: politiche repressive del consumo di vino, caffè e tabacco nell'Impero Ottomano nei secc. XVI e XVII', *Turcica*, 28 (1996), 176ff.; Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:155, 182-183; Idem, *Mizanü'l-Hak*, 125ff.; Naima, *Tarih*, 6:228ff. Both Kâtib Çelebi and Naima argue that the conflict had arisen because of Kadızade and Sivasî's personal ambitions ("tahsil-i şöhret ü şân için").

A second Kadızadeli wave, which seems to have been the most popular and massive one, made its appearance under the leadership of Üstüvanî Mehmed (d. 1661).⁸ In the turmoil of the years after the deposition of İbrahim and during the first years of Mehmed IV's reign, the Kadızadeli attracted large masses of the Istanbul populace, targeting what they perceived as the corruption of society and the state due to irreligious innovations and especially the dervish orders, mainly the Halvetis. Persecution of *tekkes* characterised this period; some measures were imposed during the grand vizierate of Melek Ahmed Paşa (1650-1651), who closed down the Halveti *tekke* in Demirkapı.⁹ In 1653, the Kadızadeli managed to have any criticism of Birgivi's main work, the *Tarikat*, forbidden.¹⁰ This second efflorescence of the movement was put to an end, just in its heyday of popular support, by the Grand Vizier Mehmed Köprülü (1656-1661). One of the first acts of this famous statesman was to suppress the Kadızadeli movement, which he perceived as a threat to public order and state power.¹¹ Üstüvanî, together with several of his followers, was exiled; however, other leaders of the movement remained active. We know that later (1658) many preachers supported Abaza Hasan Paşa, arguing that he would be a better grand vizier than Köprülü.¹²

Finally, during the grand vizierates of Mehmed Köprülü's son Fazıl Ahmed (1661-1676) and his successors, the Kadızadeli movement had its third major wave of influence, under the preacher Mehmed b. Bistam Vanî Efendi (d. 1685). Here again, as in Murad IV's time, influence was due to the personal relations of this Kadızadeli leader, rather than mass participation. Vanî Efendi was very close to Fazıl Ahmed and his successors and succeeded in implementing part of the Kadızadeli programme. He managed to ban taverns and dervish congregations, while in 1666 the ban came to include the ritual dances (*sema*) of the dervishes, and especially the Mevlevis.¹³ It seems that this time fundamentalist ideas influenced the state apparatus more deeply; the 'classical' Ottoman legal synthesis, which balanced holy and secular law, tilted toward the former, while regulations based on customary law were abolished. According to eminent scholars, such as Gilles Veinstein, some major changes in the landholding and taxation system, as expressed in various *kanunnames* of the 1670s, should be partly or wholly attributed to the Kadızadeli influence.¹⁴ However, after the failure of the Vienna campaign (1683),

8 Zilfi, 'Kadızadeli', 258ff.

9 Ibid., 259; Naima, *Tarih*, 5:56.

10 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:383; Naima, *Tarih*, 5:267-272; Zilfi, 'Kadızadeli', 261-263; Eadem, *The Politics of Piety*, 145-146.

11 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:235-236; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:57-59; Zilfi, 'Kadızadeli', 262.

12 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:351.

13 The Mevlevis described this prohibition with the chronogram *yesağ-ı bed* (bad prohibition); A. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik* (Istanbul 1983), 167.

14 U. Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, ed. V. L. Ménage (Oxford 1973), 152-157; J. Hathaway, 'The Grand Vizier and the False Messiah: The Sabbatai Sevi Controversy and the Ottoman Reform in Egypt', *JAOS*, 117 (1997), 665-671; G. Veinstein, 'On the *Çiftlik* Debate', in Ç. Keyder and F. Tabak (eds), *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East* (Albany 1991), 40; Idem, 'Les règlements fiscaux ottomans de Crète', in A. Anasta-

which had been incited by him, Vanî Efendi was exiled and the 'fundamentalist' movement waned.¹⁵ Nonetheless, various reforms instituted later on, such as the tripartite *cizye* system (1691), continued to be legitimised in terms of a return to the foundations of the holy law.¹⁶

It is strange that such an important historical movement as the Kadızadeli has been studied so little by Ottomanists. While Ottoman historians themselves have devoted special chapters to the phenomenon, twentieth-century scholars have almost entirely neglected this issue. Eminent historians such as Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı or Halil İnalcık devoted some pages to the Kadızadeli,¹⁷ but no special study appeared till Ahmet Yaşar Ocak's seminal article back in the early 1980s.¹⁸ Two Ph.D. dissertations written in the same decade were never published.¹⁹ The basic study of the movement was written by Madeline Zilfi, in her classic article on 'Discordant Revivalism' (1986) and

sopoulos (ed.), *The Eastern Mediterranean under Ottoman Rule: Crete, 1645-1840. Halcyon Days in Crete VI: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 13-15 January 2006* (Rethymno 2008), 3-16. On a 'collateral damage' of Vanî's ideas, cf. also M. Sariyannis, 'Aspects of "Neomartyrdom": Religious Contacts, "Blasphemy" and "Calumny" in 17th Century Istanbul', *ArchOtt*, 23 (2005/2006), 249-262, esp. 253.

- 15 Zilfi, 'Kadızadeli', 263-265; Eadem, *The Politics of Piety*, 147ff.; Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevîlik*, 166-168; Naima, *Tarih*, 6:239-240. However, in 1686 the conflict "between the Kadızadeli and the sheikhs (*tekye şeyhleri*)" was revived in an assembly of *ulema* and sheikhs, while a little later Vanî's son-in-law, Mustafa Efendi, preached against dervishes, causing the reaction of various *ulema* and officials; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 2:243-244. Even in the 1770s, when nobody spoke of them in Istanbul, there was a Kadızadeli movement in Saraybosna (Sarajevo); see K. Filan, 'Life in Sarajevo in the 18th Century (According to Mulla Mustafa's *Mecmua*)', in V. Costantini and M. Koller (eds), *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community: Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faruqi* (Leiden and Boston 2008), 335-337.
- 16 See Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 2:559; Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa, *Zübde-i Vekayiât. Tahlil ve Metin (1066-1116/1656-1704)*, ed. A. Özcan (Ankara 1995), 387; Raşid Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 1282/1865), 148. Cf. M. Kiel, 'Remarks on the Administration of the Poll Tax (*Cizye*) in the Ottoman Balkans and Value of Poll Tax Registers (*Cizye Defterleri*) for Demographic Research', *EB*, 1990/4, 84; L. T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden 1996), 82-83; Sariyannis, 'Notes on the Ottoman Poll-Tax Reforms of the Late Seventeenth Century: The Case of Crete', *JESHO*, 54 (2011), 39-64.
- 17 Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevîlik*, 166-168; H. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, trans. N. Itzkowitz and C. Imber (London 1973), 183-185; İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. 3, Part 1 (Ankara 1951), 363-374. It is striking that neither *Eİ²* nor *İA* contains any entry on the Kadızadeli proper. In contrast, *TDVİA* has an article by S. Çavuşoğlu, which summarises the current state of research.
- 18 A. Y. Ocak, 'XVII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Dinde Tasfiye (Puritanizm) Teşebbüslerine Bir Bakış: Kadızâdeliler Hareketi', *Türk Kültürü Araştırmaları*, 17-21/1-2 (1979-1983), 208-225.
- 19 N. Öztürk, 'Islamic Orthodoxy among the Ottomans in the Seventeenth Century with Special Reference to the Qâdı-zâde Movement', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1981; S. Çavuşoğlu, 'The Kadızâdeli Movement: An Attempt of Şerî'at-Minded Reform in the Ottoman Empire', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1990.

later in her book on the Ottoman *ulema*.²⁰ Since then, a few more scholars have dealt with the movement, such as Dina Le Gall or Derin Terzioğlu.²¹

However, all these studies analyse mainly the Kadızadeli movement as an intellectual phenomenon, examining it strictly from the point of view of the history of ideas, the history of Sufism, or the *ulema* institution. Zilfi went a step further by defining it as a field of conflict between low-rank and high-rank *ulema*. In her interpretation, low-rank preachers used the fundamentalist ideas against higher-ranking *ulema* in the fierce struggle for well-paid posts in central Istanbul mosques. Nevertheless, the Kadızadeli phenomenon cries out for a wider social and political interpretation. Historians such as Naima have explicitly described its social base, while the economic and political conditions of the era make it improbable that its followers were not concerned with such preoccupations. In this paper, I will focus on the second period of the Kadızadeli movement, that of c.1650-1656, which was clearly marked by more or less massive popular support for it. My working hypothesis will be that the political factionalism of that time, expressed at two levels at least, that of the palace and that of Istanbul society, had its sides in the Kadızadeli-Halveti conflict as well.²²

Economical, Social, and Political Conditions in the Mid Seventeenth Century: An Outline

This period was extremely tumultuous for the Ottoman state. After Murad IV's death in 1640, İbrahim's (1640-1648) reign, and especially its later period, was characterised by excessive spending and the dominance of bribery in public offices; İbrahim himself was considered a madman. However, the situation in the capital was relatively calm till 1648, when a revolt by both janissaries and *sipahis* of Istanbul, supported by the *ulema* as well, resulted in İbrahim's fall and subsequent execution. He was succeeded by his seven-year-old son Mehmed IV, supervised by İbrahim and Murad's mother (*büyük valide*), the famous Kösem Mahpeyker.²³ Soon after, the *sipahis* mutinied in Istanbul, only to be harsh-

20 Zilfi, 'Kadizadelis'; Eadem, *The Politics of Piety*.

21 See Hathaway, 'The Grand Vizier and the False Messiah'; D. Le Gall, 'Kadızadeli, Nakşben-dis and Intra-Sufi Diatribe in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul', *TSAJ*, 28/1-2 (2004), 1-28; C. Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff of Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels Without A Cause?', *IJTS*, 13/1-2 (2007), 113-134; D. Terzioğlu, 'Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyâzî-ı Mısırî (1618-1694)', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1999, 195ff.; Eadem, 'Islamic Puritanism in Service of the Empire: The Kadızadeli Movement Revisited', unpublished paper presented at the 'Ottoman and Atlantic Empires in the Early Modern World' conference held in Istanbul, 19-21 October 2005.

22 I have hinted to this hypothesis in my "'Mob", "Scamps" and Rebels in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: Some Remarks on Ottoman Social Vocabulary', *IJTS*, 11/1-2 (2005), 11. Terzioğlu, 'Sufi and Dissident', 203-204, has observed that the Kadızadeli conflict "reflected in part the intense factional strife in this period"; the link has also been noted by M. Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford 2008), 69.

23 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:327-330; Naima, *Tarih*, 4:301-330. On Kösem's formidable career, see L. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New

ly suppressed by the janissaries.²⁴ The strife between *sipahis* and janissaries continued with Gürcü Nebi revolting in the East and marching to Istanbul, demanding the deposition of the *şeyhülislam* who had permitted the massacre of the rebels.²⁵ Gürcü Nebi's defeat had as a result that the janissary aghas, led by a triumvirate composed of Bektaş Ağa, Kara Çavuş and *kul kethüdası* Mustafa Ağa (Çelebi Kethüda Beğ), ended in dominating both economic and political life in the capital.²⁶

This "Janissary junta", so named by İnalcık,²⁷ lasted three years. Of course, economic and social problems were intensified; in 1649, residents of Istanbul and Galata were obliged to pay an extraordinary tax (*avarız*) in order for the state to manage to disburse the *sipahis*' salaries.²⁸ Various measures were imposed (such as the devaluation of the coinage or a 50% taxation of the *timars* [*bedel-i timar*]²⁹), but problems were increased by the domination of trade by the aghas and their wholesale support by Kösem Sultan and the viziers she was promoting. A further cause of the tradesmen's displeasure was an order by the Grand Vizier for the registering of all the residents of Istanbul, obviously to be taxed, in August 1651.³⁰ A few days later, the 'people of the market' staged a massive protest against Grand Vizier Melek Ahmed Paşa. On the initiative of the guild officials (*yiğitbaşı ve ihtiyarları*), shops were closed and a crowd of tradesmen and artisans pressed the *şeyhülislam* to interfere in their favour. They forced him, almost, to lead them to the imperial palace, where they asked for the dismissal of the Grand Vizier and the execution of the janissary aghas.³¹ Only the first demand was granted. However, soon a

York and Oxford 1993), 105ff., 236ff., 248-252, and *passim*; B. Tezcan, 'The Debut of Kösem Sultan's Political Career', *Turcica*, 40 (2008), 347-359.

24 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:332-338; Naima, *Tarih*, 4:351-372; Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi. Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304 Yazmasının Transkripsiyonu-Dizini*. 1. Kitap: *İstanbul*, ed. O. Ş. Gökay (Istanbul 1996), 117, 119. Throughout this paper I use this edition of Evliya (10 vols, eds S. A. Kahraman, Y. Dağlı, R. Dankoff *et alii*, Istanbul 1996-2007).

25 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:343-344; Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi*, 3:47ff.; Ricaut, *Present State*, 21ff.

26 Naima, *Tarih*, 4:382-383. Cf. Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi*, 1:117; Ricaut, *Present State*, 22.

27 İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 98.

28 Naima, *Tarih*, 4:455.

29 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:358-359; Naima, *Tarih*, 5:8. The same historians observe that this measure was a further burden for the *reaya*. Cf. also R. Mantran, 'L'Etat ottoman au XVII^e siècle: stabilisation ou déclin?', in Idem (ed.), *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman* (Paris 1989), 237-238.

30 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:373; Kara Çelebi-zâde Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ravzatü'l-Ebrâr Zeyli (Tah-lil ve Metin)*, ed. N. Kaya (Ankara 2003), 70 ("vezîr-i a'zam umûmen İstanbul mahallât-ı sükkânını tahrîre mübaşeret edüp"); cf. *ibid.*, 226.

31 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:373-375; Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ravzatü'l-Ebrâr Zeyli*, 67-73; Naima, *Tarih*, 5:97-106; Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi*, 1:115 and 3:164-167 (= R. Dankoff [trans. and commentary], *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman: Melek Ahmed Pasha (1588-1662), as Portrayed in Evliya Çelebi's Book of Travels (Seyahat-name)*, with a historical introduction by R. Murphey [New York 1991], 77-88); V. Tchentsova, 'Le coup d'état constantinopolitain de 1651 d'après la lettre d'un métropolitain grec au tsar russe Alexis Michailovich', *Turcica*, 32 (2000), 399; E. Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul* (Leiden and

re-arrangement of factions in the palace itself would bring the fall of Kösem Sultan, who was murdered on the incitement of Turhan, mother of Mehmed IV (September 1651). Kösem's fall brought about the fall and death of the janissary aghas, who had been constantly and reciprocally supporting her.³²

In order to cope with the growing financial problems, the Grand Vizier Tarhoncu Ahmed Paşa (1652-1653) tried some harsh measures: he forced well-to-do officials and subjects to contribute to the treasury, restricted state expenditure, confiscated large estates, and farmed out former *timars*, taxed mills but also townspeople (starting from Istanbul; the reaction of the inhabitants of Üsküdar called off this plan³³); finally, he tried to regulate prices.³⁴ Eventually he made so many enemies that he was dismissed and executed in 1653.³⁵ His successor, İbşir Paşa, presented himself as a champion of the *sipahis*, who had not forgotten their massacre by the janissaries in 1648; however, he finally fell victim to an organised reaction by both military corps in 1655.³⁶ In 1656, *sipahis* and janissaries rebelled again, and succeeded in having the harem aghas executed; their bodies were hanged from a plane tree.³⁷ For about two months, till their arrest and execution, the town was under the power of several *sipahi* officers (*meydan ağaları*).³⁸

Finally, Turhan was forced to name as Grand Vizier (1656-1661) the aged pasha Mehmed Köprülü, who managed to obtain almost absolute powers in order to restore the Empire, which faced lethal dangers on all fronts. As seen above, Köprülü suppressed the Kadizadeli movement, which he perceived as a grave threat for public order. He also was successful in suppressing a rebellion of the *sipahis*,³⁹ who had also some support, accord-

Boston 2004), 213-233. On Melek Ahmed Paşa's relations with the aghas, cf. *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, 3:167, and Ricaut, *Present State*, 23 ("a slave to the lusts of the Janizaries").

32 Naima, *Tarih*, 5:107-116; Tchentsova, 'Le coup d'état', 400ff. According to L. V. Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, ed. N. Itzkowitz (New York 1972), 15, this event constitutes the final failure of the janissaries to claim total power.

33 It was planned that this tax (one or two *guruş* for each household [*menzîl*]) would begin from Üsküdar, to be then extended to Galata, Eyüp, and Istanbul. However, the inhabitants of Üsküdar, in an insofar unstudied action, rebelled ("Üsküdar halkı gulüvv-i 'âm edüp"), and eventually the plans were not implemented for fear of massive protests ("hücum-ı âm"); Naima, *Tarih*, 5:252-253.

34 Ibid., 5:225-229, 252-255.

35 Ibid., 5:283ff. Cf. also Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, I:205-206.

36 See Naima, *Tarih*, 6:4-103 for a detailed description of İbşir Paşa's vizierate and fall. Silâhdar, İszade, and Evliya Çelebi are much more concise. See Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:4-11; Z. Yılmaz (ed.), *İsâ-zâde Târîhi (Metin ve Tahlîl)* (Istanbul 1996), 17-19; *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, 1:116.

37 The revolt was thus named the 'event of the plane tree' (*vak'a-yı çınar*, or *vak'a-yı vakvakiye*); Naima, *Tarih*, 6:144-155; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:26-30; Yılmaz (ed.), *İsâ-zâde Târîhi*, 22-27; J. de Thevenot, *Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant...*, Vol. 1 (Paris 1665), 147-155; Mantran, 'L'Etat ottoman au XVII^e siècle', 237ff.

38 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:169-177; Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ravzatü'l-Ebrâr Zeyli*, 254ff.; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:39-41.

39 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:250-257; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:64-67.

ing to the Ottoman chroniclers, from the “commoners” (*avam-ı nâsı*) and “evil-doers and base people from every class” (*her taifeden eşkıya vu erazil*).⁴⁰ Finally, Köprülü confronted with success Abaza Hasan Paşa’s rebellion in Anatolia.⁴¹ By these moves, but also by his considerable successes against the Venetians, he became so powerful that, on his death, he was succeeded by his own son, Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed Paşa (1661-1676), which was an unprecedented phenomenon in Ottoman politics.⁴²

A few more words about the economic condition of Istanbul tradesmen are in order here. As seen above, economic problems intensified in the early years of Mehmed IV’s reign, especially during the ‘sultanate of the aghas’. At the beginning of 1651, the taxes imposed on artisans were so heavy that their crying reached the heavens, states Naima.⁴³ And he goes on: “Although the Aghas [Kudde Kethüda and Bektaş Beğ] had already raided all the sources of profit belonging to the state, they were still unsated, but coveted even the poor morsels of the needy. They even dared to interfere with the regime of guaranteed market prices (*narh*) ... They imposed these goods on the shopkeepers of Istanbul at a price three times their natural value, and refused to allow anyone outside their narrow circle to participate in this profitable trade.” The answer to the complaints of the populace was that “This is a city for the rich, not for the poor; if you can’t bear the expense, go back to your homes in the provinces (*taşralarda*) and content yourselves with cracked wheat and porridge.” It was also said that “a pack of country yokels abandoned their fields and came to enjoy the delights of the city (*bir alay Etrâk çiftlerin bozup gelüp böyle nazenin şehirde zevk idiüp*)”.⁴⁴ According to an almost contemporaneous Armenian source (Er-emya Çelebi Kömürcüyan, 1637-1695), “they [i.e., Kara Çavuş, *kul kethüdası* Mustafa Ağa, etc.] were not satisfied with silver, gold, and gifts from all sides, but they began to place imposts of linen and cotton on the guildsmen – from the vizier, whose order it was. Finally they imposed base money on the guildsmen, demanding one gold piece for 120 aspers”.⁴⁵ In this context, it comes as no surprise that the ‘people of the market’ revolted

40 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:252; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:64-65. On such terms and their content in the Ottoman sources, see Sariyannis, “Mob”, “Scamps” and Rebels’.

41 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:341-352, 370-394; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:132-139, 144-157. According to Naima, *Tarih*, 6:348, the rebels even asked for an autonomous state in Anatolia.

42 Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:219, 221. See *ibid.*, 1:225-226 for a gloomy biography of Köprülü Mehmed Paşa (on the other hand, the same author praises Fazıl Ahmed, in *ibid.*, 1:658-659). Defterdar, *Zübde-i Vekayiât*, 4, 6, is more positive in his appraisal of the old vizier. Greek sources also stress the contrast between the two viziers’ personalities; see, for instance, K. N. Sathas, *Mesaionike vivliotheke* [Medieval library], Vol. 3 (Venice 1872), 9. A popular legend recorded in 1675 about Mehmed Köprülü’s tomb (saying that incoming rain would be of some use in hell) shows how vivid the memory of the vizier’s harsh measures remained; see G. Wheler, *A Journey into Greece in Company of Dr. Spon of Lyon...* (London 1682), 183. On Turhan’s choosing of Köprülü, see also Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 256-257.

43 Naima, *Tarih*, 5:48 (“hususen ehl-i hirefe haddan ziyade salgunlar salınup fukaranın feryadı asmana çıkdı”).

44 *Ibid.*, 5:96-97 (translated by Dankoff, *The Intimate Life*, 28-29). Cf. also Naima, *Tarih*, 5:137, 139, 151; Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:373.

45 Quoted in Dankoff, *The Intimate Life*, 13.

in 1651 against the aghas and their protector, Melek Ahmed Paşa. Of course, lower strata of the population were also hit by the financial crisis. We read in Naima, for instance, that the *defterdar* Sarı Ali Efendi (d. 1657) became unpopular because he cut the stipends (*vazife*) given to the ‘reciters of prayers’ (*duagûyan*); these stipends were the only means of sustenance (*rızık*) of many descendants of the Prophet, sheikhs, *ulema*, and poor people (*sadat-ı müstehakkîn ü meşaih-i uzletgezîn ü ulema-yı din ü fukara-yı sabirîn*).⁴⁶

The Social Base of the Kadızadelis and their Alliances

Madeline Zilfi has studied in detail the alliances of both the Kadızadelis and their dervish opponents in the high classes of the *ulema* hierarchy, explaining the debate in terms of social mobility and differentiation between high-rank and low-rank *ulema*. The Halvetis had on their side various high-rank *ulema*; in fact, the *şeyhülislam*s of the era (Zekeriyazade Yahya and Bahaî Mehmed during the reigns of Murad IV and Mehmed IV, respectively) supported them and tried to restrain the Kadızadeli influence. When in 1651 Üstüvanî organised attacks against *tekkes*, the *şeyhülislam*’s reaction was decisive in keeping them under control.⁴⁷ At this level, notes Zilfi, the Kadızadeli-Sufi debate was in part a schism in the religious establishment, with the less well-paid and less prominent preachers confronting the higher strata of the *ulema*.⁴⁸ Here we should perhaps note that after the final fall of the Kadızadelis, at the end of the seventeenth century, the Halvetis still maintained their influence among the higher *ulema*; for instance, the all-powerful *şeyhülislam* of Mustafa II, the infamous Feyzullah Efendi, was a prominent member of the Halveti order. At the same time, prominent Halvetis participated in the 1703 revolt against Feyzullah.⁴⁹ However, what happened in the lower strata of society concerning the Kadızadeli debate remains unexplored. We know that the Halvetis were a very popular dervish order throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;⁵⁰ the massive participation of crowds in the funeral of the former *şeyhülislam* Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi (d. 1645), an opponent of the Kadızadelis, is indicative of the popular support of the Sufi side.⁵¹

46 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:307ff.

47 Ibid., 5:56-59.

48 Zilfi, ‘Kadızadelis’, 252. On the social differentiation of the *ulema* and the role it played in these conflicts, cf. S. Faroqhi, ‘Social Mobility among the Ottoman ‘*Ulemâ* in the Late Sixteenth Century’, *IJMES*, 4 (1973), 204-218. See also G. Baer, ‘Popular Revolt in Ottoman Cairo’, *Der Islam*, 54 (1977), 242, on the alliances between lower-rank *ulema* and rebellious crowds in eighteenth-century Cairo.

49 R. A. Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics* (Leiden 1984), 35 (but cf. also Le Gall, ‘Kadızadelis, Nakşbandis and Intra-Sufi Diatribe’, 16-17, on Feyzullah’s both Kadızadeli and Naqshbandi connections).

50 See N. Clayer, *Mystiques, état & société. Les Halvetis dans l’aire balkanique de la fin du XV^e siècle à nos jours* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1994); Eadem, ‘La Khalwatiyya (Khalvetiye)’, in A. Popovic and G. Veinstein (eds), *Les voies d’Allah. Les ordres mystiques dans le monde musulman des origines à aujourd’hui* (Paris 1996), 484-491.

51 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:231-232; Naima, *Tarih*, 4:62. On Zekeriyazade’s biography, cf. B.

On the other hand, the second wave of the Kadızadeli movement was also marked by massive popular support. This evolution from an intellectual struggle in the higher strata of the elite into straightforward political activism was based on the obligation for “commanding right and forbidding wrong” (*emr-i ma’ruf ve nehy-i münker*), a central notion in Kadızade’s preaching, but also in sixteenth-century political criticism (in Selânikî’s work, for instance).⁵² Although almost all the sources we have are rather hostile, as they were written mostly after the Kadızadeli’s final defeat, one can discern precise information concerning their actual social base. Naima’s description of their suppression by Köprülü Mehmed Paşa just after his appointment as Grand Vizier, in 1656, is telling. At this time, the Kadızadeli under Üstüvanî Mehmed were preparing to launch a general attack not only against dervish lodges, but also every innovation. They decided to destroy all *tekkes*, to force – by threatening them with death – all dervishes (*rast geldikleri saçlı ve tacı dervişan fukarasına*) into a renewal of faith, and to march to the Sultan himself, in order to ask for the banning of every innovation (*bid’at*). From among the Kadızadeli, students (*suhte*) were armed with knives and cudgels; however, the bulk of the crowd seems to have been craftsmen and merchants: “the craftsmen and profiteers (*muhtekir ve mera’i-i suki ve ehl-i hiref kısmından*) Hacı Mandal and Faki Döngel armed their middlemen, apprentices and servants, the Cossack hetman fools (*matrabazları şagerdleri ve köleleri olan hotman-ı Kazak kakımları*)”.⁵³ As the armed crowd was marching towards the Fatih Mosque, where Üstüvanî was a preacher, Köprülü Mehmed summoned a council of high-rank *ulema* and arrested the leaders of the movement, exiling them to Cyprus.⁵⁴

Elsewhere, Naima describes even more explicitly the social base of the Kadızadeli, although with an obviously hostile attitude. He states that most of the common people (*avam-ı nâsdan ekseri*) supported the movement, as the issues it had posed were discussed everywhere. He claims that, while most dervish sheikhs were truly indifferent to material goods, the Kadızadeli, who in theory preached asceticism and abstinence, fascinated mostly “wicked usurers, stock-piling profiteers, and untrustworthy people of the market” (*murabahacı habisleri ve muhtekir navluncular ve ehl-i suktan mera’i kallaşları*), who

Kellner-Heinkele (ed.), *Devhatü l-Meşâyih. Einleitung und Edition*, Vol. 2 (Stuttgart 2005), 81-85; Terzioğlu, ‘Sufi and Dissident’, 229-230.

52 Cf. Kâtib Çelebi, *Mizani’l-Hak*, 91-96; Zilfi, ‘Kadızadeli’, 255; Eadem, *The Politics of Piety*, 137ff.; M. Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge 2000), esp. 316ff.

53 These names (meaning respectively ‘latch, door bar’ and ‘medlar’ [the fruit]) must be fictitious; cf. similar uses of such names in *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, 1:223; Y. Yücel (ed.), *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtına Dair Kaynaklar* (Ankara 1988), 93, 111, 118 (although B. Tezcan, ‘The “Kânûnnâme of Mehmed II”: A Different Perspective’, in K. Çiçek [ed.-in-chief], *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation. Volume 3: Philosophy, Science and Institutions* [Ankara 2000], 664-665 n. 54, identifies the names mentioned with real personalities). Terzioğlu, ‘Sufi and Dissident’, 205, translates the passage as “pedlars of medlar”.

54 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:235-236; cf. Zilfi, ‘Kadızadeli’, 262; Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 146-147. Terzioğlu, ‘Sufi and Dissident’, 205, rightly points out Rycout’s mentioning of “Russians and other sort of Renegado Christians” in connection to Naima’s “Cossacks”. Cf. below, n. 57.

saw in ascetic abstinence and piety a fraudulent way to make profit (*zühhd ve tekva suretinden görünmeği dünya tahsiline dam-ı tezvîr edüb*) and used their supporters among the elite, pashas and *kadis*, in order to gain control of waqfs and other estates, while they also “would enter into agreements with rich people” (*hileler öğredüp ol-makule maldar kim-seleri kavla alup*) in order to make dubious transactions. Moreover, Naima mentions students (*suhte*) among the Kadızadeli supporters, while the movement also gained support in the palace court and among the imperial guards (*bostancı*). According to the expression of a contemporary *ulema*, the Kadızadeli movement resembled a tree; one branch was the imperial guards (*bostancı, baltacı*) and its roots were the whole of the market people (*âmme-yi ehl-i suka*). At least one of Üstüvanî’s famous supporters was, again according to Naima, Uşşakîoğlu Macuncu Hamza, obviously a merchant and “one of the wealthiest people of the time” (*mütemevvil-i cihan*).⁵⁵ Moreover, Üstüvanî is said to have attracted his supporters in the palace because his lessons were “a suitable means for acquiring wealth” (*kimi dersin okuyub tahsil-i dünyaya münasib vesiledir deyü ihtilat ve itihad edüb*).⁵⁶ Paul Rycaut (1629-1700), who lived in Istanbul in the early 1660s, speaks of merchant Kadızadelis as well: “The Sect of Kadızadeli ... is of a melancholy and Stoical temper ... These are for the most part Tradesmen, whose sedentary life affords opportunity and nutriment to a melancholy, and distempered fancy”.⁵⁷ Other historians, however, namely, Vecihî Hasan Efendi (d. 1670) and Fındıklılı Silâhdar Mehmed Ağa (1658-1726/1727), only mention “commoners” (*avam-ı nâsdan ekseri*).⁵⁸ It seems to me, however, that Naima’s description, which I think is quite reliable, points to support by middle or even upper mercantile strata, rather than “common folk, petty tradesmen of every sort and the urban labor force, marginally affiliated to the shops and marketplaces” (Zilfi);⁵⁹

55 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:232-234, 240. On Macuncu Hamza and other followers of Üstüvanî in the palace, *ibid.*, 5:55; cf. Öztürk, ‘Islamic Orthodoxy’, 234, 252; Çavuşoğlu, ‘The Kadizâdeli Movement’, 125. Naima’s former passages belong to himself, and not to his known sources; see Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, 106-110, 131. Naima also mentions some obscure people (*kâğıd emini* Hüseyin, Zihgirci Süleyman, Arab Abdurrahman, and others) who inflamed the controversy by exaggerating calumnies from the one camp to the other; Naima, *Tarih*, 5:55 (cf. Öztürk, ‘Islamic Orthodoxy’, 237; Çavuşoğlu, ‘The Kadizâdeli Movement’, 125-126).

56 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:233. This could just mean that he had the right connections in order to distribute posts and stipends. Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, 108, renders the passage as follows: “representatives of all these corps [palace halberdiers, gardeners, and gatemens] frequented the ulemas’ lectures, and it came to be said that such and such a man had made his fortune ‘in class’”.

57 Ricaut, *Present State*, 247 (he seems to confuse their practices with the dervish *zîkr*, however). Elsewhere he describes them as “Russians and other sort of Renegado Christians” (*ibid.*, 244). Cf. above, n. 54.

58 B. Atsız, *Das osmanische Reich um die Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts. Nach den Chroniken des Vecihi (1637-1660) und des Mehmed Halifa (1633-1660)* (Munich 1977), fol. 70r; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:58. Mehmed Halife, for his part, does not mention the Kadızadelis at all (see Atsız, *Das osmanische Reich*).

59 Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 140; cf. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 184 (“they found most of their support among the poor medrese students and humble tradesmen”); J. E. Mandaville, ‘Usurious Piety: The Cash-Waqf Controversy in the Ottoman Empire’, *IJMES*, 10 (1979), 289-

I would argue that the latter were used as a fighting force by the merchants, being their servants or apprentices. A similar picture, though focusing on lower strata of the market, emerges from the description of the 1651 revolt by Evliya: “a pack of jackals and grocers and hoarders, saddlers and silk mercers and linen drapers, camel drivers and porters. They aren’t about to risk their lives. Not one can go without his Ismehan or his Ümmehan...”⁶⁰ In fact, some references show the common folk of Istanbul rallying around the Halvetis as well (I will revert below to this issue). The Kadızadelis seem to have maintained some of their social base later on; according to Terzioğlu, during the ‘third wave’ of the movement’s influence, its leader Vanî Efendi had strong “mercantile connections”.⁶¹

Now, as seen above, in the early 1650s, considered as the time span of the ‘second wave’ of the Kadızadeli movement, the dominant political conflicts were: on the one hand, the palace factions of Turhan v. Kösem Sultan; on the other, the ‘junta’ of the janissary aghas (1648-1651) v. the ‘people of the market’, who were severely hit by the economic crisis and the interference of the aghas in trade, as described above.⁶² Kösem’s faction was

308 and particularly 307 (“right wing street rabble”). Elsewhere, Zilfi (*The Politics of Piety*, 189) calls the Kadızadeli crowds “often little more than raging mobs” and notes rightly, I believe, that they “were always a small minority within the population[; t]heir strength lay in a strident offensive rather than in numbers”. Yi, *Guild Dynamics*, 38 n. 86, follows Çavuşoğlu’s conclusion that “we cannot draw a direct connection between the movement and the social strata of tradesmen”, although she is almost the only scholar to note Naima’s report on merchant followers of the movement (ibid., 38 n. 87 and 230 n. 247; cf. also Terzioğlu, ‘Sufi and Dissident’, 202-203). I cannot agree with Çavuşoğlu’s conclusion that “Naima describes [the Kadızadelis’] followers as jobless, idle and brawling people” (‘The Kadızâdeli Movement’, 33).

60 *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, 3:165 (translated by Dankoff, *The Intimate Life*, 82-83). The original goes: “bir alay çakkal u bakkal ve muhtekir sarraç ve gazzâz ve bezzâz ve cemmâl u hammâl kavimlerdir”. Similar descriptions of other mutinying crowds lack any such references to profiteers or high-status merchants; see, for instance, Sariyannis, “‘Mob’, ‘Scamps’ and Rebels”, 11-14.

61 Terzioğlu is currently undertaking relevant research (personal communication, 26 February 2008; cf. Terzioğlu, ‘Sufi and Dissident’, 344). Vanî’s attacks against non-Muslim minorities and foreign powers might have risen from the latter’s ongoing dominance in Ottoman trade; cf. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 152. This anti-Frankish dimension of the movement could offer an intriguing line of thought and a further argument for the ‘free-trade’ connotations of the Kadızadeli ‘third wave’.

62 The janissaries seem to have risen as allies of the guilds throughout the eighteenth century; see R. W. Olson, ‘The Esnaf and the Patrona Halil Rebellion of 1730: A Realignment in Ottoman Politics?’, *JESHO*, 17 (1974), 329-344; Idem, ‘Jews, Janissaries, Esnaf and the Revolt of 1740 in Istanbul: Social Upheaval and Political Realignment in the Ottoman Empire’, *JESHO*, 20 (1977), 185-207; S. Faroqi, ‘Crisis and Change, 1590-1699’, in H. İnalcık with D. Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge 1994), 593-595; B. McGowan, ‘The Age of the Ayans, 1699-1812’, in ibid., 640; D. Quataert, ‘Janissaries, Artisans and the Question of Ottoman Decline, 1730-1826’, in Idem, *Workers, Peasants and Economic Change in the Ottoman Empire, 1730-1914* (Istanbul 1993), 197-203. On the other hand, janissaries had started entering the guilds at least from the beginning of the seventeenth century; Yi, *Guild Dynamics*, 132-143. However, as Kafadar notes, “the esnafization of the Janissaries in Istanbul took place not at the level of the guilds but at that of the “lumpenesnaf”...”;

relying on the aghas' power, while Turhan's final victory in 1651 also marked their fall. The links of the Kadızadelis with the 'people of the market' were clearly shown above; it remains to see whether this alliance had more intense connections with all the political and economic conflicts of the time. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate any reference to straightforward involvement of the Kadızadelis in the 1651 revolt; however, there are some interesting indications that point to a link between the two movements. Another description of the protestors of 1651 by Evliya, for instance, presents striking similarities with his own descriptions of individual Kadızadelis: "... a group of the protestors, which included the guild elders, the pious *şeyhs*, the *seyyids* with their kohl-shaded eyes, their toothpicks in their turbans, and their prayer-beads in their hands, and also some crass-spoken and dull-minded rowdies" (*bir alay ihtiyârları ve dindâr meşâyihleri ve mükehhâl gözli, başı misvâklı, eli tesbihli sâdâtları ve acı sözlü söz anlamaz bî-dâdları*).⁶³ Even if this is only Evliya's formulaic technique, the fact that he describes Kadızadelis and revolting artisans in the same way shows that in his mind he was associating them. Also of some significance may be Evliya's reference to the words that an emissary of Melek Ahmed Paşa cried to the 1651 rebels: "Why have you gathered for this sedition? Didn't Kadi-zade preach every Friday from the pulpit of this very Aya Sofya, and wasn't that the reason the coffeehouses were closed and public gatherings were forbidden?"⁶⁴ If he really meant to influence the rebellious tradesmen, he should have taken into account that they respected Kadızade and his ideas. Paul Rycha, for his part, seems to imply that the Kadızadelis abhorred especially the janissaries, due to their allegiance to the Bektashi order.⁶⁵

moreover, "relations between the rebels and the guilds were never free of tension because of the issue of lumpenness and because, after all, prolonged upheaval is bad for business" (Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', 125). An early example of a janissary shopkeeper, in whose defence the janissaries manage the dismissal of the judge of Istanbul, was recorded in 1657; see Naima, *Tarih*, 6:270, 307; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 1:74-75; Yılmaz (ed.), *İsâ-zâde Târîhi*, 106, and cf. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 92-93; R. Murphey, 'Forms of Differentiation and Expression of Individuality in Ottoman Society', *Turcica*, 34 (2002), 141.

63 Dankoff, *The Intimate Life*, 81; Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi*, 3:164. Cf., for instance, similar descriptions of Kadızadelis in Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi*, 1:286 ("bir alay bıyığı traş, başı misvâklı ve gözleri sürmeli tâ'ife-i Kâdızâde'lidir"), 3:50 ("gözü sürmeli ve başı misvâklı, eli mercân tesbihli Kadızâde tarîkinden geçinür şahıs"). The strange appearance of the Kadızadelis ("aceb kuş kıyâfetli Kadızâdeler") is also hinted at by a late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth-century anonymous author: H. Develi (ed.), *XVIII. Yüzyıl İstanbul Hayatına Dair Risâle-i Garîbe* (Istanbul 2001), 20; cf. also S. Salgırlı, 'Manners and Identity in Late Seventeenth Century Istanbul', unpublished M.A. thesis, Sabancı University, 2003, 33. The fact that the Kadızadelis shaved their moustache is also pointed out in Naima, *Tarih*, 6:237.

64 Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi*, 3:166 (translated by Dankoff, *The Intimate Life*, 85). Just before the revolt, the Kadızadelis were assembling in the house of *koz bekçisi* Potur Hüseyin, who had been driven away from the janissary corps ("ocakdan matrud"); Naima, *Tarih*, 5:57.

65 Rycha, *Present State*, 284: "... this Order [the Bektashi] is the most abhorred in the World by the Kadızadeli, because that Bectash left it to the free will of his Disciples, either to observe the constant hours of prayer, or not; by which great liberty and licentiousness is entred amongst the Janizaries".

It is interesting to note here that the *şeyhülislam* Karaçelebizade Abdülaziz Efendi, who, according to Evliya, incited the merchant protestors of 1651,⁶⁶ seems to have been supported by the Kadızadelis in order to take the place of his predecessor and their opponent, Bahaî Efendi, in May 1651, a few months before the *ehl-i suk* incident in August.⁶⁷ The story as told by Naima is illuminating for the complexity of alliances in this era of turmoil: Abdülaziz Efendi was trying hard to gain the friendship of Bektaş Ağa; however, the latter was inclined towards Bahaî Efendi. Finally, Bahaî's *fetva* about tobacco made Bektaş Ağa "and the other tasteless men who did not smoke" turn against him. Moreover, Bahaî refused to comply with the aghas' interference in state affairs. When the latter decided to remove him and propose Abdülaziz Efendi, Kösem stated that he was her enemy (*bilahare Valide Sultan hazretlerinden Aziz bizim katilimiz ve düşmen-i devletimizdir deyü cevap gelüb*),⁶⁸ but finally the aghas' proposal was accepted. Although Naima implies in other parts of his work as well that he was friendly to the aghas,⁶⁹ Abdülaziz himself describes the 1651 revolt somewhat favourably in his chronicle, making a clear distinction between those who originally began the protest and "various base people who did not know what the cause of the assembly was" (*içlerinde ecnâs-ı muhtelife olup bâis-i cem'iyet ne idüğüün bilmez erâzil olmagın*).⁷⁰ His Kadızadeli sympathies may be traced in his calling "evil innovation" (*bid'at-ı seyyi'e*) the unjust new taxes, which were imposed on tradesmen and were "obstructing the movement of merchants" (*bu bid'at-ı seyyi'e-i ihdası amed-şüid-i tüccâr insidâdına ba'is olur*),⁷¹ as well as in his obsession against Ebu Said Efendi (an ally of the Halvetis)⁷² and, of course, Bahaî Efendi, whom he blames explicitly for the use of tobacco and drugs.⁷³ On the other hand, he seems to disregard totally the Kadızadelis and Üstüvanî; when talking of Köprülü Mehmed Paşa's elevation to the grand vizierate, he does not mention at all his confrontation with Üstüvanî, although he insists that Köprülü "utterly disturbed the line of promotion" in the *ulema* hierarchy and that he "did not make a single arrangement beneficial for religion or the state".⁷⁴

66 Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi*, 3:164 (= Dankoff, *The Intimate Life*, 82).

67 This seems to be implied by Naima, *Tarih*, 5:56, 62ff. On his biography, see İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. 3, Part 2 (Ankara 1954), 470-472; Kellner-Heinkele (ed.), *Devhatü l-Meşâyih*, 2:101-103. The biographer Mustakimzade (ibid., 2:103) describes him as a "zealot" ("ta'assub-meşreb"), a word usually linked with the Kadızadelis; on the contrary, his opponent Bahaî is called "dervish-minded" ("sufi-meşreb") (ibid., 2:101).

68 On the enmity between Abdülaziz Efendi and Kösem, cf. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 247-248, 251-252. On his enmity against Bahaî Efendi, as well as the aghas' role in the latter's removal, cf. Kellner-Heinkele (ed.), *Devhatü l-Meşâyih*, 2:99.

69 Naima, *Tarih*, 5:144-145.

70 Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ravzatü'l-Ebrâr Zeyli*, 67ff.

71 Ibid., 68, 184-185.

72 See, for instance, ibid., 97, 114, 116-117, 122, 195, 204.

73 Ibid., 165ff.

74 Ibid., 288-289. His complaints must be linked with the fact that he did not manage to get the much-desired post of *şeyhülislam* again. A similar example of a high-ranking *ulema*'s ambiguous stance against the Kadızadelis is Murad IV's *şeyhülislam* Yahya Efendi; see Le Gall, 'Kadızadeli, Nakşbendis and Intra-Sufi Diatribe', 18-19.

If the tradesmen's revolt in 1651 was linked somehow to the Kadızadeli milieu, the former's opponents, i.e., the aghas dominating Istanbul politics at the time, seem to have taken the side of the dervish fraternities. Here the evidence is more concrete and the connection safer. Although there are references to janissary followers of Üstüvanî,⁷⁵ it is clear that the janissary aghas were close to the Halveti order, i.e., the main ideological opponents of the Kadızadelis. The most prominent agha, Bektaş Ağa, although depicted by Abdülaziz Efendi and Naima as an enemy of smoking, represented himself as a Sufi and a disciple of Sivasî.⁷⁶ Another member of the 'junta' triumvirate, *kul kethüdası* Çelebi Kethüda Beğ, was also a follower of the Halveti sheikh Ömer Efendi and actively helped the Sufi side, forcing the Grand Vizier to annul the order which permitted the Kadızadelis to demolish dervish lodges (1651).⁷⁷ In addition, the aghas' protector Kösem Sultan was very generous towards the Halvetis and had built Sivasî's tomb.⁷⁸ Later on, on the contrary, her opponent Turhan seems to have been favourable towards Üstüvanî's preaching, with the result that after Kösem's death and for four years, until the fall of the harem aghas, in 1656, the Kadızadelis virtually dominated palace politics.⁷⁹ According to a late seventeenth-century chronicle, *Risale-i Kürt Hatib*, it was Turhan together with Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Paşa who insisted on bringing Vanî Efendi to the palace, which means that she continued to support the Kadızadeli preachers even after the suppression of the movement in 1656.⁸⁰ More generally, Cemal Kafadar has described the Kadızadeli movement as a reaction against "the new urban reality", a reality which promoted the sociability of the "Janissary-affiliated social class".⁸¹

It seems, then, that at least for the early 1650s we can establish a general pattern of conflicts and alliances in the way that I have pointed out above: at the palace level, Kösem's v. Turhan's faction; at the level of the power conflict in the streets of Istanbul, janissary aghas v. merchants and other tradesmen; finally, at the ideological level, Halveti followers v. Kadızadelis.

75 Naima, *Tarih*, 5:55-56. Cf. also R. Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Leiden and Boston 2004), 70-71; Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', 126.

76 Naima, *Tarih*, 5:139 ("Sivasî şeyhden biatlı olmağla ehl-i tasavvufa âmmiyane taklid ederdi"). See also below, n. 95, for his Bayrami/Hamzevi connections. According to Ricaut, *Present State*, 249, the aghas were devout Bektashis; probably he was misled by the term *taife-i bektâşîyan*, which signifies the janissaries (cf. also Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', 126).

77 Naima, *Tarih*, 5:57.

78 Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 3/1:358-359 n. 2; Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 139; Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 210. Cf. also J. von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, Vol. 5 (Budapest 1829), 547, on other benefactions of Kösem to Halveti lodges.

79 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:233 ("Üstüvanî Efendi'nin mu'takad-i âmme-i nâs olduğu darü's-saade ağası-na ve anlardan Valide Sultan hazretlerine ifade olunub"), 234; cf. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 3/1:371-372.

80 I wish to thank Cemal Kafadar, who is currently preparing this valuable text for publication and kindly shared this information with me. Cf. also E. Afyoncu, 'Osmanlı Siyasî Tarihinin Ana Kaynakları: Kronikler', *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, 1/2 (2003), 143-144; Terzioğlu, 'Sufi and Dissident', 131 and n. 111.

81 Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', 120-122.

Kösem	Turhan
Janissary aghas	Merchants and artisans
Halvetis	Kadıızadelis

Some Cautionary Remarks

Obviously, the situation actually was much more complicated than this simple, bilateral model would suggest. For one thing, one must take into account the long-standing conflict between janissaries and *kapıkulu sipahis*, a conflict which culminated, as seen above, with the janissary suppression of a *sipahi* rebellion in 1648 and the short-lived *sipahi* dictatorship in Istanbul after the ‘event of the plane tree’ in 1656. The relations between the two groups were fluctuating, even passing from conflict to joint mutinies after the middle of the century (1655, 1656, 1687-1688).⁸² An analysis of the role of the *sipahis* in Istanbul politics would be very useful and thought-provoking, but for reasons of space it cannot be undertaken here. Suffice it to note the difference between the ‘rebellion practice’ of the janissaries and the *sipahis* when ruling the imperial capital. While, as we saw above, the janissary aghas tried to dominate Istanbul economic life by regulating prices, imposing monopolies, and investing in commercial enterprises, the *sipahi meydan ağaları* in 1656 roamed in groups of 50 or 60 pillaging houses and stores, while also trying to establish a client network based on occasional favours.⁸³ This observation would imply that, unlike the ‘mercantile’ attitude of the janissaries, who by then knew the opportunities presented by controlling the city trade, the *sipahis* had more of a ‘robber’ or at least military mentality concerning their rule. At any rate, the relationship of the *kapıkulu sipahis* with the Kadıızadeli movement and palace politics remains to be explored; they surely have to enter the equation, but one still wonders how.

Secondly, such schematic models obviously have to be moderated by emphasis on the existence of multiple factions, segments, and alliances across their bilateral patterns. Let us recall the story related above about Karaçelebizade Abdülaziz Efendi, a Kadıızadeli sympathiser and personal enemy of their chief *ulema* opponent Bahaî Efendi, as well as of Kösem, but with shifting alliances with the aghas; also, Bahaî’s conflict with the aghas. There also are some references to Kadıızadeli preachers who had friendly relations with the janissary ‘junta’. A certain Deli Şeyh was “relying on the aghas” (*ocak ağalarına müstenid olmağla*), while Şeyh Veli Efendi, a preacher in the Fatih Mosque, is described as “a counsellor of the aghas” (*ocak ağalarının müsteşarı*).⁸⁴ This Veli Efendi seems to

82 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:84-85 (with an interesting description of a common meeting of the two groups), 146-147; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 2:301-349.

83 Naima, *Tarih*, 6:170 (“nâdanlar ol süfehanın kapularına mülâzemetle başlayup ... peşkeş ile gelüp ... malların aldıkları âdemin işi elbette suret bulsun deyü”). Compare the situation during the rule of rebel *sipahis* and janissaries in the winter of 1687-1688; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 2:302 (client networks) and 299, 311, 335 (pillage).

84 Naima, *Tarih*, 5:55, 59. We cannot preclude the possibility that these two preachers were the same person, which can be explained by some scribe having confused the letters *vav* and *dal*; Naima’s mentioning of Deli Şeyh without any introduction or explanation reinforces this hypothesis.

have been a prominent person in the palace; he was summoned by the aghas in 1651 (just before their fall), together with the *şeyhülislam* and other high-ranking *ulema*, while in May 1655, when the janissaries asked for Grand Vizier İbşir Paşa's removal and execution, the Sultan sent to them Veli Efendi, because he had friendly relations with everyone, including "wealthy merchants" (*müitemevvilan-ı tüccar*) and janissaries. For this reason, the *ulema* called him mockingly Veli Ağa.⁸⁵ These facts may appear contradictory in relation to the pattern of alliances that I propose (although the mention of wealthy merchants favours my hypothesis). But in reality they may only show that the political situation was not straightforwardly 'bilateral'; people often changed sides, on the basis of personal motivations or opportunistic considerations. Strictly bilateral models, at any rate, usually fail to take into account the complexities of social, political and personal relationships in history.⁸⁶ After all, a recent study by Dina Le Gall showed that prominent Kadızadeli preachers had their own Sufi connections as well, mainly among the Naqshbandis.⁸⁷

Moreover, the question of the social base of the Halvetis is puzzling in this context. We saw that the Halvetis also enjoyed massive support among the populace of Istanbul, and sources like the diary of the Sünbülü (a branch of the Halvetis) dervish Seyyid Hasan (1620-1688; the diary covers the years 1661 to 1665) show merchants and artisans from various occupations, but also numerous low-to-mid-level members of the military, affiliated to the order.⁸⁸ The situation becomes even more complicated if we consider the case of the Bayrami order (after 1561 known also as Hamzevi), a branch of the Melami, whose followers mainly belonged to the lower merchant and artisan class within the guilds.⁸⁹ A prerequisite of the order was that every member should earn his own living (*kedd-i yemin*), while its organisation and ritual had similarities with those of the tradesmen's guilds.⁹⁰

85 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2:372; Naima, *Tarih*, 6:93.

86 As Abou-El-Haj puts it (*The 1703 Rebellion*, 1), in defining the *Edirne vak'ası*, we have to do with "a struggle between coalitions of factions drawn from various groups – a struggle between composites"; on a different bilateral model, see J. Hathaway, 'Bilateral Factionalism in the Ottoman Provinces', in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003* (Rethymno 2005), 31-38.

87 Le Gall, 'Kadızadeli, Nakşbandis and Intra-Sufi Diatribe'; on the various dervish fraternities in relation to the Kadızadeli, see also Terzioğlu, 'Sufi and Dissident', 234ff.

88 C. Kafadar, 'Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature', *SI*, 69 (1989), 121-150, esp. 142; Idem, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', 126; O. Ş. Gökyay, 'Sohbetnâme', *Tarih ve Toplum*, 3 (1985), 128-136, esp. 133. It is interesting to note that Seyyid Hasan also notes his visit to Köprülü Mehmed Paşa's tomb with a group of his brethren (Kafadar, 'Self and Others', 145), not surprisingly since the deceased statesman had virtually saved the dervishes from Üstüvani's massive and final pogrom in 1656. Seyyid Hasan had also personal relations with Melek Ahmed Paşa, the protagonist of the 1651 incident; Gökyay, 'Sohbetnâme', 131.

89 This applies mostly (but not only) to the first half of the sixteenth century, under the leadership of Oğlan Şeyh İsmail-i Maşûkî (Çelebi Şeyh, d. 1538). See İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 191-193; Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 258-268, 274-290; C. Imber, 'The Malâmatiyya in the Ottoman Empire', in Idem, *Studies in Ottoman History and Law* (Istanbul 1996), 145-152 (= *ET*², s.v. 'Malâmatiyya. In Ottoman Turkey').

90 Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 257-258. See also S. F. Ülgener, *Dünü ve Bugünü İle Zihni-*

The Bayrami sheikh İdris-i Muhtefî or Şeyh Aliyy-i Rumî (d. 1615), a merchant himself, lived in various towns under different names, and could not be arrested (though wanted as heretical), till his death.⁹¹ Now, there are some indications that the Halvetis had also opened a second front against the Bayramis (Hamzevis). Sivasî Efendi, Kadızade's great enemy, together with another Halveti sheikh, Ömer Efendi, had publicly accused İdris-i Muhtefî of heresy and atheism (*ilhad ve zendeka*),⁹² while one of Vanî Efendi's greatest opponents, Niyazî-i Mısırî (1618-1694), closely related to the Halvetis, vehemently attacked the Hamzevis, i.e., the Bayramis: "I could be anything, an ignoramus, a sinner, a mischief-maker, an imbecile, a donkey, a dog, a cat, or a pig, but God forbid that I should be a Hamzevi".⁹³ Furthermore, in the rebellion of 1656 against the harem aghas, supporters of the Kadızadelis, the Bayrami sheikh Himmet Efendi hid in his house a certain Abro (or should we read Ebru?) Çelebi, for whose arrest the revolting janissaries and *sipahis* had managed to get a sultanic order.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, in other instances the Hamzevis/Bayramis appear associated with the janissary aghas;⁹⁵ according to Halil İnalcık, moreover, the Bayramis expressed the popular hostility against merchants and the capitalist mentality in general.⁹⁶ After all, the bilateral conflict of the Halvetis v. fundamentalist ideas in

yet ve Din. İslam, Tasavvuf ve Çözülme Devri İktisat Ahlâkı (Istanbul 1981), 80-87; M. Kara, 'Melâmetiye', *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 43/1-4 (1987), 586ff.

- 91 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 1:373; Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 310-313; Imber, 'Malâmatiyya', 149-150. It is noteworthy that the Halveti dervish Enfî Hasan Hulûs Çelebi, a great admirer of Niyazî-i Mısırî, includes in his work a biography of İdris; M. Tatcı and M. Yıldız (eds), *Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî: "Tezkiretü'l-Müteahhirîn". XVI.-XVIII. Asırlarda İstanbul Velîleri ve Delileri* (Istanbul 2007), 161-164.
- 92 Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 1:373; Imber, 'Malâmatiyya', 149-150. Ömer Efendi (d. 1624) had been the spiritual guide of no less a person than Kadızade himself, before the latter rejected Sufism (Zilfi, 'Kadızadelis', 252).
- 93 H. Çeçen (ed.), *Niyazî-i Mısırî'nin Hatıraları* (Istanbul 2006), 79 (also 40, 42-43, 85 and *pas-sim*); cf. Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 304. Niyazî launches violent attacks to contemporaneous sultans, calling them Jews and Hamzevis, and even stating that the sultanate would be better belonging to the Tatar Muslims (Niyazî had close relations with Selim Giray of Crimea); Çeçen (ed.), *Niyazî-i Mısırî'nin Hatıraları*, 99-100, 115, 142-143 (cf. also his saying to his oppressors: "I showed you two ordeals by God, and now you show me an order by the Sultan!"; *ibid.*, 78). However, we should note that one of Niyazî's disciples, Abdal Çelebi, was a merchant himself (and a rich one, since he founded a lodge for his spiritual guide in 1669); *ibid.*, 20. On Niyazî and his diary, see Terzioğlu, 'Sufi and Dissident'; Eadem, 'Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyâzî-i Mısırî (1618-94)', *SI*, 94 (2002), 139-165.
- 94 Yilmazer (ed.), *İsâ-zâde Târîhi*, 26. On the possibility of an 'alliance' between the Bayramis and the Kadızadelis, cf. also Terzioğlu, 'Sufi and Dissident', 236-243.
- 95 In 1651, a Hamzevi dervish hid Bektaş Ağa, suspected also of being a Hamzevi himself although a disciple of Sivasî Efendi as well (Naima, *Tarih*, 5:135, 139). See also Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 304-305, on the relations of the Melami/Hamzevi sheikh Sütçü (Lebenî) Beşir Ağa (executed in 1661/1662, during the vizierate of Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed Paşa) with the aghas, as well as on the infiltration of the janissary corps with his ideas in general.
- 96 H. İnalcık, 'Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire', *The Journal of Economic History*, 19 (1969), 104; reprinted in Idem, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organization and Economy. Collected Studies* (London 1978).

general was even more blurred before the emergence of Kadızade Efendi, especially in the provinces. The example of Münîrî Belgradî (1551 or 1552-c.1620), a Halveti sheikh of Belgrade who wrote a study on guilds in the *futuwwa* tradition, but also against dancing, coffee, wine, opium, and tobacco, illustrates this point.⁹⁷ It is interesting to note here that when he wrote to the Sufi leaders of Istanbul against music and dancing, it was a Bayrami sheikh, Hüseyin Lamekânî, who rebutted his charges.⁹⁸

A further cautionary remark concerns the relations of the Kadızadelis with the state apparatus. I have tried to show that Melek Ahmed Paşa, as a Grand Vizier, was on the opposite side from the Kadızadelis, being a supporter of the janissary aghas against the 'people of the market'; the disdainful attitude of his protégé Evliya Çelebi against the Kadızadelis is telling. However, his grand vizierate (1650-1651) has been described by Zilfi as a period of Kadızadeli success, as the Halveti lodge at Demirkapı was destroyed in 1651 under pressure from Üstüvanî. Nonetheless, one should note that, as in the case of *şeyhülislam* Bahaî Efendi, Kadızadeli activism was intimidating enough to extort measures that they wanted even from officials who were not sympathetic to the movement. After all, right after the destruction of the *tekke* at Demirkapı, the Kadızadelis attacked another Halveti lodge, only to be faced down by the Sufis' own protectors, including armed janissaries under the *samsuncubaşı* Ömer Ağa, himself a disciple of the sheikh of the lodge. In the end, the order granted by Melek Ahmed Paşa was annulled under pressure from a prominent member of the janissary 'junta', as seen above.⁹⁹ On the other hand, such measures could be interpreted as concessions in the ideological field, in order to keep intact the balance of power in the socio-economic one. Zilfi observes that the Kadızadelis "were at least temporarily useful in creating the proper climate for rooting out religious fraud ... As the *Şeyhülislam* Minkarizade Yahya (d. 1678) responded to those who questioned his appointing known Kadızadelis to office, one did not have to agree with the Kadızadelis in order to make use of their fear-inspiring presence".¹⁰⁰

One cannot be sure to what degree the Kadızadeli movement of 1650-1656 constituted a 'bottom-up' initiative. For all we know, the market revolt of 1651 certainly did; insofar we can establish the connection with the 'fundamentalists', it was an allegiance parallel to an ideological current. The attacks on dervish lodges in that and the following years were of course a popular action, carried out by the Istanbul 'rabble'. However, it is clear

97 A. Fotić, 'Belgrade: A Muslim and Non-Muslim Cultural Centre (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)', in Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites*, 59-60; N. Clayer, 'Münîrî Belgradî. Un représentant de la 'ilmiyye dans la région de Belgrade, fin XVI^e-début XVII^e siècle', in S. Praetor and C. K. Neumann (eds), *Frauen, Bilder und Gelehrte. Studien zu Gesellschaft und Künsten im osmanischen Reich = Arts, Women and Scholars: Studies in Ottoman Society and Culture. Festschrift Hans Georg Majer* (Istanbul 2002), 549-568. However, according to Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 295, Münîrî Belgradî was a Melami dervish.

98 Le Gall, 'Kadızadelis, Nakşbendis and Intra-Sufi Diatribe', 18; Clayer, 'Münîrî Belgradî', 559-562.

99 Naima, *Tarih*, 5:56-57; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 3/1:368-369; Zilfi, 'Kadızadelis', 259; Eadem, *The Politics of Piety*, 142.

100 Ibid., 189-190.

that all the major leaders of the movement were popular in the palace as well and belonged to high-class political factions. Üstüvanî Efendi, as we have seen above, was very influential in harem circles, especially after Kösem's fall. Do we have then to do with a 'top-down' movement, which used a certain popular support in order to promote the interests of individual preachers and *ulema*? And, in this case, was the janissary-Halveti side the real 'bottom-up' action, occasionally gaining the upper hand and anticipating the broader janissary-guilds alliance of the years to come? For one thing, 'profiteers and usurers', the motive force behind Kadızadeli activism, cannot easily be described as a 'bottom' stratum. It is sure, on the other hand, that the Kadızadeli exerted considerable pressure against the government, especially during the two or three years of the janissary aghas' power and the grand vizierate of Melek Ahmed Paşa.

At any rate, 'bottom-up' reactions constitute another 'bilateral' notion of history; class conflicts are often more complicated and subtle than this term would imply. We cannot decide whether 'the people' of Istanbul were more inclined towards the Kadızadeli or the Halvetis; both sides had considerable popular support. We should examine both intellectual currents and socio-economic conflicts in the *longue durée*, if we are to arrive at such a decision. Unfortunately, the structure of the Istanbul population still remains far from being analysed exhaustively: who exactly constituted the often-mentioned 'rabble'? What was the role of the guilds in popular movements throughout the seventeenth century? Moreover, how was class differentiation inside the guilds themselves expressed politically? To what degree did dervish fraternities, such as the Halvetis or the Bayramis/Hamzevis, transcend social classes? What was the role of the non-Muslim population in Istanbul politics?¹⁰¹ Such questions require a much more detailed and painstaking study. Indeed, a distinction between 'merchants' and 'artisans' must be kept in mind; 'merchants' seem to constitute the motive power behind the Kadızadeli mob, while 'artisans' were the bulk of the crowd revolting in 1651.¹⁰² It is not easy to discern whether and when these two different strata were acting in common or clashed.

The Mercantile Classes and Fundamentalist Ideas: Some Considerations

It is hard to arrive at a conclusion on the basis of these poor and sometimes contradictory data. However, some questions do arise and may lead to interesting, albeit tentative, hypotheses. The pattern described above connects the Kadızadeli movement to the merchants' and artisans' reaction against the janissary aghas' interference in Istanbul eco-

101 I have touched upon the issue of the participation of 'infidels' in seventeenth-century revolts elsewhere; see Sariyannis, "'Mob", "Scamps" and Rebels', 14; cf. Idem, "'Neglected Trades": Glimpses into the 17th Century Istanbul Underworld', *Turcica*, 38 (2006), 162. On all those questions, see also the pioneering work by Yi, *Guild Dynamics*, *passim*; cf. also Eadem, 'Artisans' Networks and Revolt in Late Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: An Examination of the Istanbul Artisans' Rebellion of 1688', in E. Gara, M. E. Kabadayı, and C. K. Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faruqi* (Istanbul 2011), 105-126.

102 I owe this observation to a hint by Suraiya Faruqi.

monic life in the early 1650s. The Kadızadelis may have thus provided an ideological platform for the Istanbul merchants in their struggle for a more active role in politics. The merchants seem to have chosen the Kadızadeli ideas in order to promote their interests politically, as the fundamentalists were the chief ideological enemy of their opponents' mentors and spiritual guides. Now, the question is whether they did so just because their opponents, Kösem's janissary aghas, had already chosen the Sufi side. An alternative option for the historian is the tempting hypothesis that there was a more permanent connection of the merchants with 'fundamentalist' ideas.

The question could be posed in more general terms as follows: did fundamentalist ideas play the role of 'mercantile ethics' in the way the 'Protestant ethic' did in contemporary Europe? This would bring Ottoman ideological currents very close to European ones, namely, the Calvinist and Puritan movement in seventeenth-century England. Various scholars have suggested a similarity between socio-economic developments in Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century, focusing, *inter alia*, on the emergence of urban commercial classes who find themselves in an increased position of strength.¹⁰³ The evolution of Protestant ideas in the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century has been interpreted in the context of these emerging mercantile strata, who found in Max Weber's famous 'Protestant ethic' a suitable legitimisation of their aims and interests.

I am not the first to propose a similarity between the Kadızadelis and their European contemporaries. In a book review published electronically in 2006, Gottfried Hagen suggested that the Kadızadeli movement could be fruitfully compared to the English Puritans, in order to enhance the interesting symmetries observed in seventeenth-century England, China, and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰⁴ As Kafadar notes,¹⁰⁵

103 See, for instance, J. Fletcher, 'Integrative History: Parallels and Interconnections in the Early Modern Period, 1500-1800', *JTS*, 9 (1985), 37-57, esp. 50 (cf. also 52); H. Berktaş and S. Faroqhi (eds), *New Approaches to State and Peasant in Ottoman History* (London 1992); R. A. Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Albany 1991). Wholesalers who supplied meat to the capital seem to have particularly prospered in this period; Faroqhi, 'Crisis and Change', 496-499. The same applies to usurers and moneylenders financing the tax-farming system (with their importance growing towards the eighteenth century); McGowan, 'The Age of the *Ayans*', 705. On the growth of commercial life in Istanbul from the mid seventeenth century onwards, cf. R. Murphey, 'The Growth in Istanbul's Commercial Capacity, 1700-1765: The Role of New Commercial Construction and Renovation in Urban Renewal', *ActOrHung*, 61/1-2 (2008), 147-155.

104 G. Hagen, 'Osman II and the Cultural History of Ottoman Historiography', H-Net book review of G. Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (<http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=8331153159749>). Hagen states that the Kadızadelis have "already been compared to the Puritans", citing Ocak's article (Ocak, 'Kadızâdeliler Hareketi'). However, Ocak uses the term 'Puritanism' only as a translation of *dinde tasfiye*, i.e., religious purism. On Max Weber's thesis and Islam, cf. the interesting but inadequate observations of B. S. Turner, 'Islam, Capitalism and Weber's Theses', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 25/2 (1974), 230-243.

105 Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', 121. However, I think that on p. 122 Kafadar mis-

... one should beware the ... tendency to dump the Kadizadeli movement into the dustbin of “reaction” or to attribute to it an unreasoned, innate conservatism. In its puritanical sensibility and opposition to the reading of the Kur’an in return for monetary rewards endowed for the expiation of one’s sins there are parallels to the Reformation. Its less-than-warm attitude to price controls and to the unproductive vakıf-related jobs (of the readers of Kur’anic verses) could be interpreted as “economic rationalism”, while its rigorously literal legalism could be seen to embody some “legal rationalism” that questioned the preponderant use of vague and subjective criteria such as *istihsan* and *örf*.

Of course, the comparison is not as simple as it sounds; for one thing, a cardinal point in the Protestant ethic was the high evaluation of profit, as a fair reward for man’s godly labour. In the Muslim case, on the contrary, the Kadızadelis’ mentor, Birgivi Mehmed, had written about “the corruptness of human transactions that are undertaken for the sake of the vicious thing, coined money” (*derahim-i mazrubenin ihtilâli ecliyçün muamelat-ı nâs fesadında*) and taken sides in the debate on cash waqfs (*vakf al-nukud*) against Ebussuud.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, we can find here an *argumentum ex silentio* for our case, since neither the attack upon “coined money” (*derahim-i mazrube*) nor the cash-waqf controversy, directly touching upon the legitimacy of usury and interest-taking, ever appeared among the issues that the Kadızadelis put forward.¹⁰⁷ Nor did the fundamentalist leaders ever speak against usury (*riba*), although it was prohibited in the Qur’an.¹⁰⁸ In his-

interprets Naima’s text, when he regards the Kadızadeli Ebu Ahmedoğlu as an exponent of “a quasi-mercantilistic turn of mind among the Ottomans”. In the text, Ebu Ahmedoğlu scorns Zülfikar Ağa, who defends the virtues of cabbage before the Indian ambassador; see the text translated by B. Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire* (Norman 1963), 170-172, and cf. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 118-119. Kafadar had pointed to the market’s support to the Kadızadelis already in his ‘The New Visibility of Sufism in Turkish Studies and Cultural Life’, in R. Lifchez (ed.), *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey* (Berkeley and Oxford 1992), 308.

106 Kâtib Çelebi, *Mizanü’l-Hak*, 122, 124; Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 145; Çavuşoğlu, ‘The Kadızâdeli Movement’, 55-59 (who also notes that, according to Birgivi, “commercial transactions such as *mudârebe* and *mu’âmele*” were also unfit for a pious act). On the ‘cash-waqf controversy’, see Mandaville, ‘Usurious Piety’ (esp. 304-306 for Birgivi’s attitude); C. Imber, *Ebu’su’ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Edinburgh 1997), 144ff. Even in the mid sixteenth century, when this controversy arose, the Halveti Şeyh Bali Efendi took sides with Ebussuud, anticipating thus the Halveti opposition to the Kadızadelis during the next century (Mandaville, ‘Usurious Piety’, 301-304).

107 On these issues, see Kâtib Çelebi, *Mizanü’l-Hak*; Naima, *Tarih*, 6:229-230; Öztürk, ‘Islamic Orthodoxy’, 306ff.; Çavuşoğlu, ‘The Kadızâdeli Movement’, 183ff.; Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 136. Çavuşoğlu, ‘The Kadızâdeli Movement’, 57, notices the absence of any such mention in the sources, but does not comment on it.

108 Birgivi had also spoken vehemently against usury: “Most of the waqf administrators are ignorant and don’t recognize the pictures of usury in the Book; they make profit with loans and sale. Any loan from which profit is made is usurious. Some of them lead a dissolute life, taking interest without even going through the motions of using legally permissible devices to do so.

tory sometimes ‘the sound of silence’ is as loud as explicit references, and those problems that the Kadızadelis never referred to may matter as much as those that they did refer to. It seems as though the Kadızadeli theorists picked out very carefully from Birgivî’s work whatever issue did not conflict with big merchants, profiteers and usurers, who, as we have seen, constituted the backbone of the movement. It is to be noted that the *şeyhülislam* Çatalcalı Ali Efendi (1674-1686), a follower, as it seems, of Vanî Efendi and a supporter of the ‘fundamentalist’ interpretations of the law, not only defended in his *fetvas* cash waqfs using money interest, but also condemned whoever spoke against this practice. This particular *fetva* goes as follows:¹⁰⁹

If a self-styled wisecrack in a community claims that the foundations money is *haram*; those contributing to it in the form of donations are worthy of hell; the *ribh* thus obtained is also *haram* and forbids the faithful to stand behind the imam in the mosque, thus causing desertion in all mosques in that city as well as rift and commotion amongst that city’s population, what is to be done to such a man within the bounds of the *shari’a*? Answer: He is reprimanded, severely chided and pressure is brought to bear upon him. In case he is not redeemed then he is goaled (*sic*) until he dissociates himself from such ideas and statements.

Even if Ali Efendi was not a Kadızadeli *stricto sensu*,¹¹⁰ the *fetva* shows that there were indeed people in the late seventeenth century who followed Birgivî’s ideas strictly, which renders all the more striking the fact that *riba* was never touched upon by the Kadızadeli preachers.

A very interesting text, studied recently by Jan Schmidt, may show the complexity of the issue.¹¹¹ Written by the mufti of Larende, Hamza Efendi, in 1678, i.e., just at the beginning of the ‘third wave’ of the Kadızadelis, it concerns rules for commercial transactions laid out for pious merchants who wished to avoid usury and other sins. Hamza

They make waqf of usury and the forbidden, pure and simple, giving it to the administrators who consume the usury. They are in the same position as someone struck mad and frenzied by the devil...” (quoted in Mandaville, ‘Usurious Piety’, 306). Vanî Efendi had been charged with taking interest or encouraging it; see Terzioğlu, ‘Sufi and Dissident’, 343. A description of an individual Kadızadeli as a “usurer” (*ribâ-hor*) by Evliya Çelebi fits well in this context, although it might also be some formulaic convention; R. Dankoff (ed.), *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis: The Relevant Section of the Seyahatname* (Leiden 1990), 294.

109 Quoted in N. Çağatay, ‘*Ribâ* and Interest Concept and Banking in the Ottoman Empire’, *SI*, 32 (1970), 64.

110 On his ‘fundamentalist’ influences, cf. G. Art, *Şeyhülislâm Fetvalarında Kadın ve Cinsellik* (Istanbul 1996). According to Terzioğlu, ‘Sufi and Dissident’, 231, Ali Efendi “acted in consort with, rather than under the pressure of, Vani”, although “not necessarily because [he himself] shared Vani’s convictions”; moreover, we do not know whether this particular *fetva* was issued before or after the latter’s removal and end of direct influence.

111 J. Schmidt, ‘Hamza Efendi’s Treatise on Buying and Selling of 1678’, *Oriente Moderno*, XXV (LXXXVI) n.s. (2006) [special issue: *The Ottomans and Trade*, eds E. Boyar and K. Fleet], 181-186.

Efendi quotes explicitly Birgivî Efendi, but none of the prominent authors of the movement, such as Kadızade or Üstüvanî. Hamza Efendi gives a detailed account of transactions which are considered legal, with several sub-cases or conditions. His account of usury, to which he devotes an entire chapter, is quite enlightening. After depicting the eternal punishment of whoever commits usury, Hamza Efendi proceeds thus, in the words of Jan Schmidt (underlining is mine):

Usury is defined here as the dishonest use of added or detracted value in a transaction, for instance in using adulterated coins or bartering goods of uneven quality or repaying a loan with an added sum (unless that sum be declared to be a gift by the debtor) or giving a loan for an indefinite period of time. Tricks to obtain interest (*hile-i şeriye*), for instance through a double contract of sale, should be avoided.

Not having seen the original nor a transcription, I cannot be sure whether the wording renders exactly what seems to me to be a subtle opening of legal ‘windows’ for dealing in loans with interest. At any rate, Hamza Efendi’s treatise does not seem to have been popular, and was forgotten together with its provincial author. Until we run into other similar texts, if any, we may not reach any safe conclusions. But, in any case, another interesting point in the treatise is the distinction between merchant and tradesman: “merchants should always keep in mind that the bazaar is essentially a place of evil, as are the tradesmen there”.

However, this is not only a matter of explicitly stated values and attitudes; Paul Rychaüt had attributed, as seen above, the merchants’ support to the Kadızadelis to the “sedentary life” of tradesmen, which “affords opportunity and nutriment to a melancholy, and dis-tempered fancy”.¹¹² A rigid and austere way of life, as that proposed by the Kadızadelis, fits well into the ideals of a merchant class, thirsty for profit and ready to renounce pleasures, such as the coffee-house or public entertainment, in order to pursue financial gain. On the other hand, Sufi ideas often promote poverty and total trust to God, based on the conception that everyone’s daily sustenance (*rızık*) is ordained by God. The great al-Ghazali (d. 1111), respected by the orthodox and mystics alike, had declared that economic activity as a merchant or official was incompatible with being a true Sufi.¹¹³ The Halveti Seyyid Hasan’s way of life, for instance, as described in his diary, full of friendly gatherings and visits, certainly does not favour such a quest for gain and profit. The social base of the Halvetis seems to cover the lower strata of the artisans and petty tradesmen, organised in their traditional guilds (another part of the followers would consist also of members of the administrative and military elite, just as the Kadızadelis also had influence on the palace guards). If the guilds, with their conservative and traditionalist concept of time and their narrow gain perspective, were always welcoming hedonistic and ‘idle’ ways of life,¹¹⁴ the aspiring merchants, struggling to shake off the control of the guilds,

¹¹² Rychaüt, *Present State*, 247.

¹¹³ Quoted in K. Kreiser, ‘The Dervish Living’, in Lifchez (ed.), *The Dervish Lodge*, 53.

¹¹⁴ In this context, the argument that coffee-houses kept people away from work is telling; see, for instance, Kâtib Çelebi, *Mizanü’l-Hak*, 54; İbrahim Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevi*, Vol. 1 (İstan-

would probably choose what seems to us today a 'fundamentalist' attitude of strict morals and rigid organisation of time (although these two sides seem to have co-operated in the 1651 revolt, perhaps in an early phase of their relationship).¹¹⁵ A cautionary remark here is that merchants ought also to favour a spirit of luxury, which would promote consumption; however, one could observe that the same happened with the ascetic Protestant ethic, which did not prevent trade flourishing in contemporaneous Western Europe. Moreover, by adopting such an austere ethic, the merchant strata could be targeting not only the 'idle' life of the traditional guilds, but also the exhibition of wealth by the members of the administrative elite, who were in this period intensely antagonising them.¹¹⁶ As far as this last argument is concerned, we should not overlook the fact that non-elite newcomers to 'big profit' were also accused of exhibition of wealth beyond their rank and status.¹¹⁷ Ottoman sources also accused the Kadızadelis of hypocrisy, citing various examples of individual followers of the movement who were in fact anything but ascetics.¹¹⁸

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- bul 1283/1866-1867), 363-365. Cf. also Saraçgil, 'Generi voluttuari'; R. S. Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Washington 1988).
- 115 On the struggle of the guilds to keep the merchants under control, cf. İnalçık, 'Capital Formation', 104-106; Faroqhi, 'Crisis and Change', 587; Yi, *Guild Dynamics*, 57ff. Kâtib Çelebi, *Mizanü'l-Hak*, 32-33, seems to reflect Kadızadeli criticisms of the degeneration of Sufism into a way of making one's living. For a similar criticism cf. Sâfi, *Hasbîhâl-i Sâfi*, ed. H. D. Batislam (Istanbul 2003), 144-146, 165-166; E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vol. 3 (London 1904), 214-218 (and cf. F. İz, *Eski Türk Edebiyatında Nazım. XIII. Yüzyıldan XIX. Yüzyıl Ortasına Kadar Yazmalardan Seçilmiş Metinler*, Vol. I, Part I [Istanbul 1966], 117-119); Nâbî, *Hayriyye*, ed. İ. Pala (Istanbul 1989), 134ff.
- 116 On the involvement of the elite in commercial activities and the controversies that arose, see İ. M. Kunt, 'Derviş Mehmed Paşa, Vezir and Entrepreneur: A Study in Ottoman Political-Economic Theory and Practice', *Turcica*, 9 (1977), 197-214; Idem, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650* (New York 1983), 92; Faroqhi, 'Crisis and Change', 547ff.; I. Togan, 'Ottoman History by Inner Asian Norms', in Berktaş and Faroqhi (eds), *New Approaches to State and Peasant*, 201. 'Consumption studies' may contribute a lot to this *problématique*; see D. Quataert (ed.), *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922: An Introduction* (New York 2000), and esp. (in this context) Chapter 4: A. Salzmann, 'The Age of Tulips: Confluence and Conflict in Early Modern Consumer Culture (1550-1730)', 83-106.
- 117 See, for instance, Naima, *Tarih*, 5:185, who states that after Murad IV's reign many commoners ("avam tarihinde ekseriyâ") became rich and imitated officials and viziers. See also *ibid.*, 1:32; Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhisü'l-Beyân fî Kavânin-i Âl-i Osmân*, ed. S. İlgi (Ankara 1998), 105; R. Murphey, 'The Veliyyuddin Telhis: Notes on the Sources and Interrelations between Koçi Bey and Contemporary Writers of Advice to Kings', *Belleten*, 43/171 (1979), 547-571, particularly 560 and n. 15.
- 118 See, for instance, Naima, *Tarih*, 6:238-240 (summarised in Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, 109). On the other hand, the 'dual ethics', allegedly expounded by some Kadızadelis, seem to have been a standard feature of Ottoman morality, based on the dichotomy between private and public life. See W. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Seattle and London 1985), 109ff.; Sariyannis, "'Mob", "Scamps" and Rebels', 9; Idem, 'Law and Morality in Ottoman Society: The Case of Narcotic Substances', in E. Kolovos, P. Kotzageorgis, S. Laiou, and M. Sariyannis (eds), *The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, the Greek Lands:*

Further analysis of this hypothesis would require a close examination of not only seventeenth and eighteenth-century political treatises, but also moralist texts. Unfortunately, so far only elite-orientated moral treatises are easily available for study, and I am not aware of ‘mercantile-minded’ texts of this kind, apart from Hamza Efendi’s work mentioned above.¹¹⁹ However, a brief comparison between two didactic poems might suggest that during the next one and a half centuries a ‘mercantile’ ethic had infiltrated traditional Muslim morality. In his famous *Hayriyye*, written in 1701/1702, the poet Nabi (c.1642-1712) expresses in general the traditional values of the Ottoman elite. He mentions trade and usury scornfully (*taşrada eylemege kesb-i ğinâ / ya ticâret ya zirâat ya ribâ*), while praising the Sufi notion of man’s allocated sustenance (*rızık*). As far as the proper use of time is concerned, he cites the well-known motto “time is to be captured” (*dem ğanîmet*), and more generally reproduces the view that time is a good that must not be spent in vain. However, he does not speak of work but of study and charity, exactly the way we would expect of an elite author writing for an elite audience. In this context, Nabi is rather favourable towards backgammon and chess-playing, as he cites symbolic interpretations of these games.¹²⁰ About a century later, the eighteenth-century moralist Sünbülzade Vehbi (c.1719-1809) wrote an imitation of Nabi’s work, the *Lutfiyye*. There he appears much more adamant than his predecessor against chess and other ‘idle occupations’, to which he adds fashions such as gardening or keeping birds; moreover, he proceeds as to give advice on regulating one’s expenses according to one’s resources. Besides, Vehbi writes against coffee and tobacco (while Nabi refers only to intoxicants), thus reflecting a ‘fundamentalist’ ascetic morality that brings to mind our Kadızadelis.¹²¹ Such changes may

Toward a Social and Economic History. Studies in Honor of John C. Alexander (Istanbul 2007), 307-321, esp. 320-321. Strangely enough, the rationale that these Kadızadelis are said to use (some people are better fitted to use hedonistic models of leisure than others) is also used by Kâtib Çelebi, *Mizanü'l-Hak*, 26ff. (and cf. *ibid.*, 115). It can be found even in prominent Sufi works: Mevlâna Celaleddin Rumî wrote that “whatever is pleasant is prohibited, in order not to be widespread among the common people; wine, harp, love of beauty or dance, all are permitted for the elect and prohibited for the common” (“her çiz ki on hoşest nehyest mudâm / tâ mîneşevd delîl-i in merdum-i âm / verne mey u çeng u sûret-i hûb u semâ’ / ber hâs helâllest u ber âm harâm”; quoted in Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevîlik*, 78).

119 Elite political texts clearly disapprove of the emerging mercantile strata; see R. Abou Hadj, ‘The Ottoman Nasihatname as a Discourse over “Morality”’, in A. Temimi (ed.), *Mélanges Professeur Robert Mantran* (Zaghouan 1988), 17-30.

120 Nâbî, *Hayriyye*, 73, 85, 190ff. Kâtib Çelebi contrasts also knowledge, not working, with idleness: O. Ş. Gökyay, *Kâtib Çelebi’den Seçmeler* (Istanbul 1997 [2nd ed.]), 393, 403. On Nabi, cf. *EP*, s.v. ‘Nâbî, Yûsuf’ (E. G. Ambros); see also M. Sariyannis, ‘Ottoman Critics of Society and State, Fifteenth to Early Eighteenth Centuries: Toward a Corpus for the Study of Ottoman Political Thought’, *ArchOtt*, 25 (2008), 127-150, esp. 145-147.

121 Vehbî, *Lutfiyye*, ed. S. A. Beyzadeoğlu (Istanbul 1994), 64-65, 160, 162, and *passim*; Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, 4:254-255. An interesting similarity: just as the Kadızadelis were considered famous hypocrites, Vehbi was a formidable debauchee and wrote an interesting pornographic poem, the *Şevk-engîz*. See *ibid.*, 4:247-248, 252-253; J. Schmidt, ‘Sünbülzâde Vehbî’s *Şevk-Engîz*: An Ottoman Pornographic Poem’, *Turcica*, 25 (1993), 9-37.

be traced in other kinds of writings as well. In the mid eighteenth century, for instance, the Ottoman diplomat Ahmed Resmî Efendi observed that the hedonistic and lazy life of the Viennese nobility prevented Austria from organising its defence against enemies.¹²²

The hypothesis that I suggest could also shed a new light on the debate about the changes in landholding regulations during the 1670s. It will be recalled that Gilles Veinstein has suggested 'intellectual' motivations, attributing the changes to Vanî Efendi's influence on Fazıl Ahmed Paşa's milieu, while Molly Greene and others discern more 'pragmatic' thoughts behind the new system.¹²³ If, however, we established a connection between the new, 'early capitalist', mentality emerging in Ottoman trade and statesmanship, on the one hand, and the rigid demand for a return to early Islamic values, on the other, both interpretations would apply to different sides of the same change. One of Greene's main objections to Veinstein's view is that there is no evidence that the Kadızadeli theorists ever took up the issue of landownership.¹²⁴ However, Kadızadeli-minded statesmen could use the 'fundamentalist' ethics in promoting 'free-trade' measures no matter whether these ethics really applied to the point, just like their Puritan counterparts' commercial behaviour was judged Christian-like, no matter whether Protestant ethics proposed specific ways of economic practice. In a similar way, in 1691, the Grand Vizier Fazıl Mustafa Paşa (among other measures inspired by Islamic Law, but also fitted to the Empire's needs, such as the tripartite *cizye* system) abolished the system of officially fixed prices (*narh*), under the pretext that they were not prescribed in the Sharia (*ahvâl-i narh kitâblarda musarrah değildir. Herkese lâzım olan me'kûlât ü meşrûbât ve melbûsât her ne ise bâyi'den rızâlarıyle iştirâ eylesünler*). The indignation shown in Defterdar Mehmed Paşa's (d. 1717) account of this event barely conceals the fact that those who profited from this measure, which did not last for long under the pressure of the guilds (*şehirli ta'ifesi*) and the *ulema*, were profiteering merchants, newcomers to the traditional guild system (*manav muhtekiri ve bakkâl kefereleri*), that is, roughly the same strata described above as the main expounders of fundamentalist ideas.¹²⁵ It seems, then, that changes and reforms promoting the interests of such strata kept having ideological recourse to the Kadızadeli programme.

122 V. H. Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace: Ahmed Resmi Efendi, 1700-1783* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1995), 61.

123 For Veinstein's view see above, n. 14; for its critique see M. Greene, 'An Islamic Experiment? Ottoman Land Policy on Crete', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 11 (1996), 60-78. Cf. also E. Kolovos, 'Beyond "Classical" Ottoman Defterology: A Preliminary Assessment of the *Tahrir* Registers of 1670/71 Concerning Crete and the Aegean Islands', in Kolovos *et alii* (eds), *The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, the Greek Lands*, 201-235; E. Kermeli, 'Caught In Between Faith and Cash: The Ottoman Land System of Crete, 1645-1670', in Anastasopoulos (ed.), *The Eastern Mediterranean under Ottoman Rule*, 17-48.

124 Cf. Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Critics', 148 and n. 88.

125 Defterdar, *Zübde-i Vekayiât*, 387-389; Silâhdar, *Tarih*, 2:566; Raşid, *Tarih*, 2:148-149; cf. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, I:221-222; Faroqhi, 'Crisis and Change', 546. Such descriptions of *nouveaux riches* as ignorant peasants or immigrants were common as early as the end of the sixteenth century; see, for instance, A. Tietze (ed.), *Mustafâ 'Âlî's Counsel for Sultans of 1581*, Vol. 1 (Vienna 1979), 58 ('her manav hîle vü firîb iderek / gendüyi ehl-i mâl u milket ide').

THE ANATOMY OF A REBELLIOUS SOCIAL GROUP: THE *YAMAKS* OF THE BOSPORUS AT THE MARGINS OF OTTOMAN SOCIETY

Aysel YILDIZ*

AN UPRISING BREAKS OUT AMONG A CERTAIN GROUP of insurgents, and then grows in scope and number with the arrival of newcomers. The core consists of a few people; however, it is this initial group of rebels who come to assume the leadership of the upheaval. These are the most active rebels, the ones who hold the initiative. It is generally accepted that the May 1807 uprising which eventually led to the dethronement of Selim III (the so-called Kabakçı Mustafa Upheaval) was a military uprising initiated by the *yamaks*¹ of the fortresses situated along the Rumelian and Anatolian coasts of the Bosphorus, acting on behalf of the janissaries. In its discussion of the May 1807 Rebellion, a contemporary American newspaper claimed that the “masses took no part at all; so that we attribute this catastrophe to some chiefs or parties yet unknown to the Janissaries”.² During the revolt, it was the soldiers, or the *yamaks*, from the fortresses along the Bosphorus who played the pivotal role. Thus, although we label the May 1807 incident as a janissary uprising for the sake of simplicity, the *yamaks* were not janissaries in the real sense, and they were mostly newcomers from various parts of the Empire. Therefore, it is reasonable to raise doubts as to whether they represented the janissary class per se. Moreover, the janissaries were not the instigators and joined the rebellious *yamaks* only at their invitation on the third day of the uprising. Neither the janissaries nor other military groups rallied to their cause immediately after the uprising. Indeed, the event turned into a full-fledged janissary uprising only a few days after the rebellion. While the janissaries were not active from the very outset of the movement, the *yamaks*, on the other hand, remained its protagonists. Consequently, if we are to present an analysis of the May 1807 uprising, they are the first group to be studied.

Conventional historiography offers very limited information about the worldview and identities of the *yamaks* except for their unruliness, disobedience, and excess. Special academic or popular interest in this military group is rather limited, unless they are

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1 For a discussion of the meaning of the term *yamak* see below, p. 294ff.

2 *Portland Gazette and Maine Advertiser*, X/21 (7 September 1807), 2.

referred to within the context of the May 1807 uprising. Moreover, despite the very poor nature of available data, most historians blame and label the insurgents from the fortresses as ‘degenerate’ and ignorant riff-raff, representing the ill-famed janissaries of the period. Late Ottoman and certain Republican historians, such as Refik and Koçu, depict the May 1807 Rebellion as a wicked adventure of the notorious *yamaks*. The greedy and corrupt rebels/*yamaks* belonged to the lowest strata of society and were guilty of pursuing their own selfish ends rather than the ‘national’ interests. For Koçu, rather than a military unit in the real sense of the word, the *yamaks* were “a group of rabble (*ayak takımı*) and rowdy (*baldırı çıplak*) people”.³ The basic problem with such a comment is very simple. We know almost nothing about the socio-cultural identities of the *yamaks* in general, and the rebels in particular. Therefore, before going into the details of the incidents in which they were involved and their aims in instigating a rebellion, it is necessary to explore who these people were. The main purpose of this essay is to reconstruct their identity, an attempt which may also prove helpful in understanding their role in the May 1807 Rebellion. Although it does not constitute the focus of this paper, some comparison will also be made with the ‘revolutionary band’ of the 1730 uprising of Patrona Halil in terms of leadership, challenge to the sultanic order, and excesses committed by the rebels.

Yamaks and the Forts

Following the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), five forts (*Kıla‘-ı Hamse*) were constructed along the Bosphorus against the rising Russian threat. The names of these fortresses were Kilyos/Bağdadçık, Garipçe, Rumeli Feneri, Anadolu Feneri, and Poyraz Limanı.⁴ This project of fortification along the Bosphorus was mostly undertaken by French military officers. For instance, the forts of Garipçe, on the European side, and Poyraz Limanı, on the Asian side, were built under the supervision of the famous Baron de Tott in 1773, and were improved in 1778 by Toussaint Petit de Saint-Tropez.⁵ Two batteries, Karataş Altı, close to Büyük Liman, and Filburnu, on the Anatolian side, were erected in 1785 by Monnier de Courtois and Lafitte Clavé.⁶ The Russian threat caused a further increase in the number of the fortresses in later years. In 1788, their num-

3 Ahmed Refik [Altınay], *Kabakçı Mustafa* (Istanbul 1912-1913), 4, 12, 20, 307; R. E. Koçu, *Kabakçı Mustafa: Bir Serserinin Romanlaştırılmış Hayatı* (Istanbul 2001 [2nd ed.]), 61, 89, 96, 108. Koçu describes the *yamaks* as follows: “kara cahil, gayetle mutaassıp, inatçı, kavgacı, hepsi korsan tohumundan yetişmiş, korsan aşkı ve muhabbetiyle tavlانیp terbiye almışlardı” (They were utterly ignorant, quite fanatical and obstinate people, who were all of a pirate race and bred with attachment to and love for banditry) (*ibid.*, 42).

4 İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, ‘Kaynarca Muahedesinde Sonraki Durum İcabı Karadeniz Boğazının Tahkimi’, *Belleten*, XLIV/175 (1980), 514.

5 F. Hitzel, ‘Le rôle des militaires français à Constantinople (1784-1798)’, unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, Paris IV-Sorbonne, 1987, 79. This work provides a good sketch of the fortifications undertaken by the French engineers around the Black Sea region.

6 *Ibid.*, 81.

ber reached seven (hence called *Kıla'-ı Seb'a*) with the addition of Liman-ı Kebir and Revancık/İrva. The fortresses finally became nine in number (hence referred to as *Kıla'-ı Tis'a*) during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1787-1792. The newly constructed batteries were the Telli Burun Tabya/Telli Dalyan⁷ and Yuşa Burnu or Macar Tabya.⁸ They were built by Monnier de Courtois in 1795. Courtois and Clavé also contributed to the improvement of the forts of Anadolu Feneri and Rumeli Feneri, the former in 1785 and the latter in 1794. The forts of Anadolu and Rumeli Kavaks, on the other hand, were erected in 1783 by Toussaint.⁹

Most of the fortresses along the Bosphorus were constructed in the 1780s. Therefore, the presence of soldiers at these fortresses dates to only a few decades before the 1807 uprising. Indeed, the initial recruitment is dated 17 October 1782, and concerns falconers (*doğancı, çakırcı*) recruited from Thrace, Oczakov (Özi), Sivas, Adana, Maraş, and some other places. Of the 215 recruits, 204 were stationed at the four forts, while the remaining eleven were based at Revancık. It is also indicated that these soldiers were assigned fiefs (*timar*).¹⁰ However, this was not a professional force suitable for the defence of such strategically important places.¹¹ Consequently, the falconers were sent back to their places of origin in 1785.¹² The vacant places were filled by more professional soldiers with a rigid hierarchical system. A *dizdar*,¹³ *kethüda*,¹⁴ chief artilleryman and armourer (*cebe-*

7 This battalion was located on the Rumelian shore of the Bosphorus. It is also known as Telli Tabya.

8 Servi Burnu, Çakal Burnu, Kireçburnu, Balta Limanı, a new one around Köy Başı, another at Nakkaş, and a last one in front of Bayka Palas were constructed later; Uzunçarşılı, 'Karadeniz Boğazının Tahkimi', 516.

9 Hitzel, 'Le rôle des militaires français', 81.

10 BOA, Divan Defteri (1193-1272), Tahvil No. 30, p. 9 (28 Cemaziyelevvel 1199/8 April 1785); TSMA, E. 4078/3 (9 Zilkade 1207/18 June 1793); Uzunçarşılı, 'Karadeniz Boğazının Tahkimi', 514; A. Yıldız, 'Vaka-yı Selimiyye or The Selimiyye Incident: A Study of the May 1807 Rebellion', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Sabancı University, 2008, 336-337 and n. 1409.

11 Vasıf states that "mukaddema mustahfiz namıyla tayin olunan şahinci ve çakırcı neferatının emr-i muharedede kema-yenbagi iktidarları olmadığı lede'l-tecrübe malum olduğundan cümlesi ihrac" (Since experience proved that the companies of falconers and hawkers, who had previously been recruited as defenders, failed to be duly effective in defence affairs, they were all discharged); Ahmed Vasıf Efendi, *Mehasinü'l-Asar ve Hakaikü'l-Ahbar*, ed. M. İlğürel (Ankara 1994), 214.

12 BOA, Divan Defteri (1193-1272), Tahvil No. 30, p. 9. The imperial decree does not provide the exact reason for the change in the system, but indicates that it was necessary for them to return to their original places of service. Uzunçarşılı also discusses the above-mentioned change. Nevertheless, he does not refer to the above document, but to the one in the Archives of the Topkapı Palace Museum (TSMA, E. 4078/3). Both documents provide identical details, since the one in the Topkapı contains a copy of the one in the Tahvil as an appendix.

13 *Dizdar* was the senior officer of a fortress. For the functions of the *dizdar* see E. Ş. Batmaz, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Döneminde Anadolu'da Kalelerin İdari ve Askeri Fonksiyonları (1550-1750)', unpublished M.A. thesis, Ankara University, 1989, 51-54.

14 *Kethüda* was the subordinate of a *dizdar*; *ibid.*, 54-56.

haneci) assumed the commandship of each fortress.¹⁵ Vasıf informs us that during the period under study, according to a *defter* submitted to Grand Admiral Gazi Hasan Paşa, 37 soldiers were posted to each of Anadolu Feneri, Rumeli Feneri, and Revancık. In fact, 37 soldiers and 34 artillerymen were stationed in each fort in 1785.¹⁶ Thus, a total of 355 assumed the defence of the five forts.¹⁷

The term *yamak* generally refers to locally recruited garrison troops. During the eighteenth century it began to acquire not only the meaning of auxiliaries, but also “apprentices, veterans and/or pensioners of the janissary corps”.¹⁸ Though it was used for almost all of the soldiers stationed at the forts of the Bosphorus, not all of them fell into this category. According to an undated document, the administration of the Nine Forts was entrusted to the Naval Arsenal (*Tersane-i Âmire*) and a superintendent (*nazır*) was appointed by the Arsenal for their supervision. It is further indicated that the battalions of Kireçburnu, Karaburun, Papaz Burnu, and Kılburnu were under the control of the Bosphorus superintendent and manned by *yamaks*.¹⁹ At the time of the rebellion, the forts of Macar/Yuşa Burnu Tabya, Anadolu and Rumeli Kavak, and Telli Dalyan Tabya were under the control of the *bostancıbaşı* and manned by imperial gardeners (*bostancı*).²⁰ As far as their participation in the rebellion is concerned, it seems that there was not a great difference between *yamaks* and *bostancı*s. A document indicates that the *yamaks*, gardeners, and janissaries at the fortresses collaborated and then revolted.²¹

Available archival material strongly suggests that the basic reason behind the uprising was the stationing of *Nizam-ı Cedid* soldiers at these fortresses, particularly those under the supervision of the *bostancıbaşı*. The unrest started among the soldiers of İrva (Revancık), Anadolu Feneri, and Garipçe. According to a report, some soldiers from the above-mentioned forts rushed to Anadolu Kavak and then Macar (Yuşa Tabya) on

15 BOA, Divan Defteri (1193-1272), Tahvil No. 30, p. 9; Vasıf, *Mehasinü'l-Asar*, 215; C. Tukin, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Devrinde Boğazlar Meselesi* (İstanbul 1943), 61-62; Uzunçarşılı, ‘Karadeniz Boğazının Tahkimi’, 514. For the regulations introduced by the *Nizam-ı Cedid* reform programme see K. Beydilli and İ. Şahin, *Mahmud Raif Efendi ve Nizam-ı Cedid’e Dair Eseri* (Ankara 2001), 79-81. For general information on the functions of the commanders and soldiers who manned fortresses in different parts of the Empire see M. L. Stein, *Osmanlı Kaleleri: Avrupa’da Hudut Boyları*, trans. G. Çağalı Güven (İstanbul 2007), 56-95; Batmaz, ‘Anadolu’da Kalelerin İdari ve Askeri Fonksiyonları’, 51-64.

16 Vasıf, *Mehasinü'l-Asar*, 214.

17 These fortresses were: Rumeli Feneri, Anadolu Feneri, Garipçe, Poyraz Limanı, and Kilyos. Vasıf does not provide an exact number for the so-called ‘gardeners’ (*bostancı*) in the Anadolu and Rumeli Kavaks, but underlines that an order was sent for an increase in their numbers. For further details see *ibid.*, 214.

18 V. Aksan, ‘Mutiny and the Eighteenth Century Ottoman Army’, in Eadem, *Ottomans and Europeans: Contacts and Conflicts* (İstanbul 2004), 241. According to Uzunçarşılı, the term ‘yamak’ also covered the janissaries serving at the frontier forts; İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilâtından Kapukulu Ocakları. I. Acemi Ocağı ve Yeniçeri Ocağı* (Ankara 1988), 328 n. 3.

19 TSMA, E. 10718 (undated; catalogue date: nineteenth century).

20 Beydilli and Şahin, *Mahmud Raif Efendi*, 81; BOA, HAT 57791 (undated, reign of Selim III).

21 TSMA, E. 1479 (undated).

Sunday night (16 Rebiyülevvel 1222/24 May 1807), i.e., the night before the uprising. The visitors interrogated their comrades as to whether *Nizâm-ı Cedid* uniforms had been brought to their forts.²² Since the available material does not allow us to ascertain whether there was a forced attempt to make them wear *Nizâm-ı Cedid* uniforms and if the clothing was really sent to the forts, we should dwell on the existence of the *Nizâm-ı Cedid* soldiers at the forts. Furthermore, an archival source leaves no doubt that a group of *Nizâm-ı Cedid* soldiers was stationed at the forts about two months before the uprising.²³ Four hundred infantrymen were brought from Anatolia, temporarily stationed at Levend Çiftlik and sent to the Bosphorus to be settled at Rumeli Kavak and Yuşa Tabya, two forts which were under the supervision of the *bostancıbaşı*.²⁴ The increasing concentration of *Nizâm-ı Cedid* soldiers at these forts upon the initiative of the Porte and the Sultan must have created a very uneasy atmosphere, which easily erupted into a rebellion.

After the May uprising, the power and prestige of the *yamaks* increased to a great extent. The execution of Kabakçı Mustafa on 13 July 1808, however, signals the end of the *yamaks*' hegemony in the fortresses. Uzun Hacı Ali Ağa, the *ayan* of Pınarhisar, was secretly ordered by the Grand Vizier and Alemdar Mustafa Paşa, the *ayan* of Rusçuk and protagonist in the deposition of Mustafa IV, to execute Kabakçı Mustafa, who was at that time employed as the Bosphorus superintendent. Ali Ağa carried out a surprise attack on the house of Kabakçı Mustafa with his men and executed him. But then the *yamaks* attacked Ali Ağa in order to avenge the death of their leader. The forces of Ali Ağa sought refuge in the fortress of Rumeli Feneri and a fight started between the two groups and lasted for several days. Most of the *yamaks* were murdered during these turbulent days, and Uzun Hacı Ali Ağa was appointed as the new Bosphorus superintendent.

New soldiers were sent to replace the old *yamaks* who were murdered during the clashes or banished to various places. Under pressure, some fugitive *yamaks* had fled to the Dardanelles after the execution of Kabakçı. However, since they caused further problems there, the Porte expelled them from the city on 9 Cemaziyelâhir 1223/2 August 1808, while, during the reign of Mahmud II, some of these *yamaks* were sent to İbrail (modern-day Braila in Romania). Those unwilling to serve at İbrail were allowed to return home.²⁵ Moreover, they were forced to make another choice in the 1820s. The ones who did not agree to join the newly established army, called 'The Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad' (*Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*), of Mahmud II were allowed to go home. Consequently, 300 or 400 *yamaks* decided to return home, but most of them died in a maritime accident.²⁶

22 For more details see Yıldız, 'The Selimiyye Incident', 332-333. See also BOA, HAT 123/5064 (17 Rebiyülevvel 1222/25 May 1807).

23 BOA, C.AS. 37875 (1 Muharrem 1222/11 March 1807). See also Yıldız, 'The Selimiyye Incident', 346-352.

24 For a detailed account concerning this matter see *ibid.*, 332-333.

25 *Ibid.*, 557-558. See also BOA, Mühimme Defteri No. 227, p. 88 (evasıt-ı Cemaziyelâhir 1223/4-13 August 1808).

26 G. Yıldız, 'Osmanlı Kara Ordusunda Yeniden Yapılanma ve Sosyo-Politik Etkileri (1826-1839)', Ph.D. dissertation, Marmara University, 2008, 20. Yıldız's dissertation has been pub-

It seems that, following the abolition of the janissary army in 1826, the soldiers manning the fortresses were mostly recruited from *intra muros* Istanbul and regions close to it, such as Üsküdar. In order to consolidate the defence of the forts, the ones on the Anatolian side were manned by residents of the Anatolian side, and those on the opposite side by residents of the European side.²⁷

Identities of the Yamaks

We do not have exact information concerning the number of soldiers who manned the fortresses and also when they were stationed there. Archival material indicates that their number varied according to the year. As may be seen in Table I, the fortresses along the Bosphorus accommodated around 1,500 soldiers in 1807, including the commanders and other functionaries in the fortresses.²⁸ Unfortunately, it is very difficult to determine whether all of these soldiers were involved in the uprising; there is no way of distinguishing the ones who participated in the rebellion. Still, studying the identities of these soldiers will be useful for a better understanding of a military group as well as discovering the reasons why an uproar started among them.

As was previously discussed, some fortresses were initially manned by the falconers recruited from Thrace and Anatolia. Unfortunately, there is limited information concerning the recruitment strategies of the soldiers who manned the fortresses from then on. It seems that they were mostly drawn from the locals on a voluntary basis, rather than by force.²⁹ An important archival source in this regard is the muster rolls (*yoklama defters*). These records provide valuable information concerning the total number of soldiers at each fort, commanders, the places of origin, salaries, and finally the age and physical appearance of the soldiers serving in the fortresses.

lished as *Neferin Adı Yok: Zorunlu Askerliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti'nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum, 1826-1839* (Istanbul 2009).

27 Uzunçarşılı, 'Karadeniz Boğazının Tahkimi', 530.

28 Unfortunately, it has proved impossible to find a register which covers all of the Bosphorus fortresses. As may be observed from Table I, there are two detailed but incomplete lists for the year 1807. In the first one, dated 15 May, the total number of men is 910; BOA, D.BKL. 548/32734. The second one, dated 9 September, informs us that the Bosphorus fortresses accommodated 1,683 soldiers; BOA, C.AS. 16564. Another document, again dated 15 May 1807, asserts that 500 new soldiers were employed in the fortresses. Even though it does not give a list of the distribution of soldiers to each fort, it states that with the addition of the new recruits the total number of soldiers in the fortresses reached 1,500; BOA, D.BKL. 548.A/32735.

29 Aksan, 'Mutiny', 242.

NAME OF THE FORTRESS	YEARS						
	1785	16 June 1793	1796- 1797	1799	15 May 1807	9 September 1807	1822
Kilyos/ Bağdadçık		79	185		205	248	155
Revancık	71	51	80		98	126	100
Rumeli Feneri	71	60	159		165	186	204
Anadolu Feneri	71	60	113		139	178	159
Garipçe	71	81	161		187	191	224
Poyraz Limanı	71	79	178			361	209
Liman-ı Kebir		24	65		116	184	175
Yuşa Burnu/ Macar Tabya		30		57			
Telli Dalyan		31		38			
Anadolu Kavak				72			
Rumeli Kavak				61			
Kireçburnu							
Kılburnu						103	
TOTAL	355	495	941	228	910 ³⁰	1683 ³¹	1531 ³²

Table I: The number of soldiers at the Black Sea fortresses³³

30 This includes 35 commanders and other functionaries.

31 The grand total also includes 106 soldiers in Papaz Burnu. There is a discrepancy between the given total of men provided in the document and the actual sum. Namely, while the total is given as 1,953, including the masters of artillery, it is in fact 1,847. The total number of soldiers is 1,683, not 1,769 as stated in the document; the number of masters of artillery is 164, not 184. The reason for these discrepancies is not clear to me, as there is no other problem in the document apart from the above-mentioned confusion. The commanders and other functionaries are stated separately: 98 functionaries and 45 commanders were based at the fortresses. Unfortunately, I have not previously noticed this mistake, and have given the total of soldiers in the fortresses as 1,953 in Yıldız, 'The Selimiye Incident', 457.

32 It includes Karaburun with 50 and Filburnu with 90 soldiers, Elmas Tabya with 40, and Papaz Burnu with 125 soldiers.

33 Sources: Vasıf, *Mehasinü'l-Asar*, 214-215; TSMA, E. 4078/1 (1207/1793), E. 4078/3 (7 Zilkade 1207/16 June 1793), E. 4078/4 (undated), E. 4078/5 (undated), E. 10718 (undated); BOA, C.AS. 49480 (27 Safer 1211/1 September 1796), C.AS. 5451 (23 Safer 1211/28 August 1796), C.AS. 36690 (27 Muharrem 1208/4 September 1793), D.BŞM. 6803 (15 Rebiyülevvel 1214/17 August 1799, 2 Ramazan 1214/28 January 1800), C.AS. 16564 (6 Receb 1222/9 September 1807), D.BKL. 548/32734 (7 Rebiyülevvel 1222/15 May 1807), Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale A) 518/91 (1210/1795-1796), and Divan Defteri (1193-1272), Tahvil No. 30, p. 9 (28 Cemaziyelevvel 1199/8 April 1785); Uzunçarşılı, 'Karadeniz Boğazının Tahkimi', 529-530 (for 1822). Some sources include the commanders and other functionaries.

Places of Origin and Ages

Luckily, a roll call (*yoklama*) of the soldiers at the fortresses was performed a short time before the uprising.³⁴ The relevant *defter* is dated 7 Rebiyülevvel 1222/15 May 1807.³⁵ Since the uprising started on 17 Rebiyülevvel 1222/25 May 1807, the roll call was carried out ten days earlier, and may have been the last *yoklama* before the rebellion. Therefore, it deserves a closer examination, as it reveals some important points concerning the regions and cities which were the places of origin of the 910 soldiers who were recorded in the *defter* under study.³⁶ As the place-names reveal, of the 910 soldiers, 427 were from the Southern Caucasus region, and thus make almost one half of the total number (47%). The second region in this respect is the Black Sea region with 132 soldiers, or 14.5% of the total. The third is the Marmara region, accounting for 129 soldiers, or 14.2%. The people from these three regions together amount to 75.7% of the total number of soldiers recorded in the *defter*. The least represented region, on the other hand, is the Mediterranean region, with one soldier, or 0.1% of the total.

CITY	NAME OF THE FORTRESS											
	Kilyos/ Bağdadçık		Poyraz Limanı		Büyük Liman		Rumeli Feneri		Garipçe		Revancık	
	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%
Ahıska	109	53.2			51	43.9	83	50.3	73	39	40	40.8
Istanbul	49	23.9			6	5.2	18	10.9	8	4.3	18	18.4
Trabzon	1	0.5			30	25.9	11	6.7	3	1.6	13	13.3
Erzurum	7	3.4			20	17.2	5	3	13	7	2	2
Tokat	1	0.5			–	0	1	0.6	–	0	–	0
Other	38	18.5			9	7.8	47	28.5	90	48.1	25	25.5
TOTAL	205	100			116	100	165	100	187	100	98	100
	Rumeli Kavak		Anadolu Kavak		Yuşa		Anadolu Feneri		Telli Dalyan		TOTAL	
	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%
Ahıska							71	51.1			427	47
Istanbul							25	18			124	13.6
Trabzon							7	5			65	7.1
Erzurum							11	7.9			58	6.4
Tokat							–	0			2	0.2
Other							25	18			234	25.7
TOTAL							139	100			910	100

Table II: The distribution of soldiers by city³⁷

³⁴ It is almost impossible to ascertain the exact intervals at which *yoklamas* were carried out. However, Vasıf, *Mehasinü'l-Asar*, 215, mentions an imperial order whereby it was ordered that they be performed once every two weeks.

³⁵ BOA, D.BKL. 548/32734. See also BOA, D.BKL. 548.A/32735 (7 Rebiyülevvel 1222/15 May 1807).

³⁶ Unfortunately, some fortresses are not covered. Those included in the *defter* are Kilyos/Bağdadçık, Büyük Liman, Rumeli Feneri, Garipçe, Revancık, and Anadolu Feneri.

³⁷ Source: BOA, D.BKL. 548/32734 (7 Rebiyülevvel 1222/15 May 1807).

As may be observed in Table II, almost all of the soldiers from the Southern Caucasus are recorded as hailing from Ahıska (Akhalsikhe or Lomsia, in modern Georgia). This city provides practically half of all the recruits: 53.2% of those of Kilyos (109 out of 205 soldiers); 51.1% of those of Anadolu Feneri (71 out of 139 soldiers); 50.3% of the recruits of Rumeli Feneri (83 out of 165 soldiers). In the other fortresses, too, the city is strongly represented: in Revancık and Büyük Liman/Liman-ı Kebir, it reaches 40.8% and 43.9%, respectively, while at Garipçe it amounts to 39%. The reason for such a strong representation of those from Ahıska may be attributed to the history of the region. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Georgia was suffering from internal problems, particularly struggles for the throne, which were also aggravated by the imminent Russian threat. Taking advantage of the internal dissensions, the Russians annexed the Georgian Kingdom in 1801.³⁸ This marks the beginning of Russian expansion in the region in the nineteenth century, as gradually several cities/kingdoms in the region succumbed to Russia. In 1807, the Russians attacked Ahıska. Although they suffered a defeat, such assaults must have caused migrations from the city, which was captured by the Russians in 1828.³⁹ Thus, pressure at home may have sent the youngsters to Istanbul.

CITY	NAME OF THE FORTRESS											
	Kilyos/ Bağdadçık		Poyraz Limani		Büyük Liman		Rumeli Feneri		Garipçe		Revancık	
	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%
Trabzon	1	0.7			30	22.7	11	8.3	3	2.3	13	9.9
Tokat	1	0.8			–	0	1	0.7	–	0	–	0
Bolu	–	0			–	0	1	0.8	16	12.2	–	0
Kastamonu	–	0			–	0	2	1.5	1	0.8	–	0
Bartın	1	0.7			–	0	–	0	–	0	3	2.3
Other	1	0.8			4	3	12	9.1	9	6.8	3	2.3
TOTAL	4	3			34	25.7	27	20.4	29	22.1	19	14.5
	Rumeli Kavak		Anadolu Kavak		Yuşa		Anadolu Feneri		Telli Dalyan		TOTAL	
	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%
Trabzon							7	5.3			65	49.2
Tokat							–	0			2	1.5
Bolu							–	0			17	13
Kastamonu							1	0.7			4	3
Bartın							7	5.3			11	8.3
Other							4	3			33	25
TOTAL							19	14.3			132	100

Table III: The distribution of soldiers from the Black Sea region⁴⁰

38 H. Çapraz, 'Gürcistan'da Rus İdaresinin Yerleşmesi, 1800-1850', *Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları*, 1/1 (2006), 68.

39 Y. Zeyrek, *Ahıska Bölgesi ve Ahıska Türkleri* (Ankara 2001), 16-18.

40 Source: BOA, D.BKL. 548/32734.

Istanbul came second in rank among the cities that provided the highest number of recruits. As we have previously remarked, the Marmara region covered 14.2% of the total number of soldiers. Within this region, Istanbul provided the bulk of the recruits with 13.6% of the total number of soldiers in 1807. It seems that youngsters in the vicinity of a certain fortress sought employment in it. For instance, 45, or 22%, of the recruits of the fortress of Kilyos are recorded to be locals. Likewise, six residents of Garipçe were serving at this fortress, while 35 people are recorded to be from Fener. Even though it is not stated whether it was Anadolu or Rumeli Feneri, it seems that 15 men (9.1%) who were recorded in Rumeli Feneri were from that district, and the remaining ones were from Anadolu Feneri.

Istanbul is followed by Trabzon, which represents 7.1% of the all the soldiers and 49.2% of those from the Black Sea region. Juchereau de Saint-Denys argues that most of the *yamaks* were Laz and Albanians in origin, and a considerable number of them were brought from Trabzon.⁴¹ However, the overall representation of this city is quite low in comparison to Ahıska and challenges the view that most *yamaks* were from Trabzon. As can be seen in Table III, Trabzon is first among the cities of the Black Sea region; Bolu comes second (13%), followed by Bartın (8.3%).

There are some other *yoklama defters* which belong to earlier years. For 1806, we have not come across a register covering all the forts or soldiers under study. For instance, a *defter* of that year records 94 soldiers from the fortresses of Kilyos/Bağdadçık, Poyraz Limanı, Büyük Liman, Rumeli Feneri, Garipçe, and Anadolu Feneri.⁴² In this one as well, Ahıska represents 30.9% of the total with 29 soldiers. Another *defter*, of 68 soldiers, demonstrates that 17.6% of them were from Ahıska. No other city reaches this number.⁴³ A register belonging to the year 1214/1799-1800 reveals that, of the 194 soldiers, 24.2% were from Ahıska, which was followed by Trabzon with 9.3%.⁴⁴ Another one includes 843 soldiers, 319 of whom were again from Ahıska (37.8%) and 89 from Trabzon (10.6%).⁴⁵ Unfortunately, not all of the *yoklama defters* are dated. Still, the details they present are of crucial importance. Conclusions drawn from the data provided by these *defters* are parallel to those for the year 1807. The overwhelming dominance of Ahıska can still be observed. According to another undated document, the city provided a total percentage of 40.8%. It was followed by the city of Bar (Antivari, in modern Montenegro) with 10.5%, Istanbul⁴⁶ with 6.8%, and Trabzon with 6.9%.⁴⁷ Even though

41 A. Juchereau de Saint-Denys, *Révolutions de Constantinople en 1807 et 1808, précédées d'observations générales sur l'état actuel de l'Empire ottoman*, Vol. II (Paris 1819), 108.

42 BOA, C.AS. 27791 (1221/1806).

43 BOA, C.AS. 29975 (15 Rebiyülâhır 1221/2 July 1806). The places of origin of 36 soldiers are not stated (53%) and 16 soldiers are recorded as having left their posts (24%).

44 BOA, D.BŞM. 6803 (15 Rebiyülevvel 1214/17 August 1799, 2 Ramazan 1214/28 January 1800).

45 BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale A) 4814 (undated).

46 Istanbul: 10 soldiers (2.1%); Kavak: 8 (1.7%); Fener 14 (3%).

47 BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale B) 4975 (undated).

we have had the chance to observe that most of the *yamaks* were from Ahıska, we have not been equally fortunate in detecting the same dominance for the rebels mentioned in the sources. If we rely on the nicknames of the active insurgents, only a certain Memiş was from Ahıska.⁴⁸

The same registers are also helpful in determining the age profile of the soldiers in question. A study of an undated *defter* reveals that the largest group among the *yamaks*, 213 men, or 43% of the total, fall within the age range of 21 to 30 years. It should be noted that this range applies to all the fortresses. The second largest age group is 31-40 with 22.7%. The average age of a total of 494 soldiers is 34.1. This average is more or less consistent for most of the fortresses.⁴⁹ There are also certain interesting and unique cases identified in the same *defter*. Youngsters within the age category of 0-10 years amount to six people in total (1.2%). Such cases either confirm abuse or indicate the presence of a kind of pension for the sons and servants of certain people. As may be seen in Table IV, there were 32 persons within the age range of 51-60, and five men were above 60. Three were 70 years old, another was 90, while another soldier is stated to be 100 years of age. One of these seventy-year-old soldiers was a commander, the *kethüda* of Rumeli Feneri. On the other hand, no special office is indicated for the other old people: either they continued to serve in their posts, or they were simply officially shown to be doing so, without really serving in the forts. It is even possible that they were not alive any more, and that someone else was collecting their salaries through the trick of keeping their names on the rolls, a point which brings us to a related matter which is discussed immediately below.

48 F. Ç. Derin, 'Tüfengçibaşı Arif Efendi Tarihçesi', *Belleten*, XXXVIII/151 (1974), 388.

49 The relevant figures are as follows: 32.3 for Telli Dalyan, 35.7 for Macar Tabya, 31.8 for Liman-ı Kebir, 31.6 for Poyraz Limanı, 35.3 for Garipçe, 35.2 for Anadolu Feneri, 36.1 for Rumeli Feneri, 31.9 for Revancık, and 34.9 for Kilyos.

NAME OF THE FORTRESS	NUMBER OF SOLDIERS	AGE											
		0-10		11-20		21-30		31-40		41-50		51-60	
		M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%
Kilyos/ Bağdadçık	78	1	1.3	4	5.1	40	51.3	14	17.9	11	14.1	2	2.6
Revancık	51	–	0	2	3.9	28	54.9	14	27.5	3	5.9	1	2.0
Rumeli Feneri	60	1	1.7	4	6.7	21	35.0	18	30.0	6	10.0	4	6.7
Anadolu Feneri	59	–	0	3	5.1	24	40.7	17	28.8	3	5.1	7	11.9
Garipçe	82	–	0	5	6.1	38	46.3	13	15.9	11	13.4	7	8.5
Poyraz Limanı	79	1	1.3	7	8.9	35	44.3	25	31.6	3	3.8	2	2.5
Liman-1 Kebir	24	–	0	1	4.2	13	54.2	2	8.3	2	8.3	1	4.2
Yuşa Burnu/ Macar Tabya	30	2	6.7	3	10.0	6	20.0	5	16.7	1	3.3	5	16.7
Telli Dalyan Tabyası	31	1	3.2	4	12.9	8	25.8	4	12.9	2	6.5	3	9.7
TOTAL	494	6	1.2	33	6.7	213	43.1	112	22.7	42	8.5	32	6.5

NAME OF THE FORTRESS	NUMBER OF SOLDIERS	AGE									
		61-70		71-80		81-90		91-100		Not stated	
		M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%
Kilyos/ Bağdadçık	78	1	1.3	–	0	–	0	1	1.3	4	5.1
Revancık	51	–	0	–	0	–	0	–	0	3	5.9
Rumeli Feneri	60	1	1.7	–	0	–	0	–	0	5	8.3
Anadolu Feneri	59	1	1.7	–	0	–	0	–	0	4	6.8
Garipçe	82	–	0	–	0	–	0	–	0	8	9.8
Poyraz Limanı	79	–	0	–	0	1	1.3	–	0	5	6.3
Liman-1 Kebir	24	–	0	–	0	–	0	–	0	5	20.8
Yuşa Burnu/ Macar Tabya	30	–	0	–	0	–	0	–	0	8	26.7
Telli Dalyan Tabyası	31	–	0	–	0	–	0	–	0	9	29.0
TOTAL	494	3	0.6	–	0	1	0.2	1	0.2	51	10.3

Table IV: Age distribution of the soldiers at the Black Sea fortresses⁵⁰

50 Source: BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale B) 4975 (undated).

Economic Profile

Court registers provide the details of a probate estate belonging to el-Hac Ebu Bekir Ağa bin Mehmed, the *dizdar* of the Garipçe fortress.⁵¹ Bekir Ağa bequeathed an estate worth 955 *guruş* and 7 *paras*. His total wealth amounted to 1,240 *guruş* and 7 *paras*, but court expenses of 285 *guruş* were deducted from it. Without doubt, it was not an inconsiderable value for a probate estate during this period. His debts, however, amounted to 1,291.5 *guruş*. Eventually, the debts were settled at 991.5 *guruş*, since his wealth did not suffice to cover the full amount.⁵²

Bekir Ağa owned a garden worth 39 *guruş* in the vicinity of the Garipçe fortress. Apart from that, he did not have any other real estate.⁵³ It seems that purchasing real estate in the vicinity of the fortresses was a practice preferred by the commanders and senior officers of the fortresses. It further seems that the commanders of most fortresses lived in residences close to their posts. For instance, Halil Haseki, the master (*usta*) of Anadolu and Rumeli Kavaks, who was murdered during the upheaval of 1807, owned a seashore residence in the vicinity of Macar Tabya and a garden nearby.⁵⁴ Ketencioğlu Ahmed, serving as a *dizdar* before the uprising, possessed a house situated around Rumeli Kavak.⁵⁵ Close by it were the residences belonging to the master of Rumeli Kavak, as well as the imam and the *topçubaşı*.⁵⁶ Kabakçı Mustafa Ağa bin Hüseyin, the famous rebel chief, purchased a house around the Fener district sometime after the rebellion, at a cost of 320 *guruş*. Its former owner was İnce Mehmed Bey, a former commander of the Straits (*boğaz muhafızı*). It was a kiosk situated within a vineyard of 8 *dönüms*.⁵⁷ These people were commanders serving at the fortresses. On the other hand, an ordinary *yamak* purchasing a house is a relatively rare occurrence. For instance, Ali bin Mehmed, a *yamak* from the Kilyos fortress, purchased a house worth 500 *guruş* and several shops in the district of Hınzır Deresi.⁵⁸ The Bostancıbaşı *defter* belonging to the year 1815 men-

51 He is the person who replaced Hacı Ali Ağa in Garipçe. Bekir Ağa was serving as the *kethüda*, and after the banishment of Ali Ağa he was promoted to this post. For Hacı Ali Ağa see below, pp. 304, 311.

52 İstanbul Şer'iyye Sicilleri, Galata Mahkemesi, No. 581, pp. 402-403 (29 Muharrem 1221/18 April 1806).

53 Some other items were clothes (116.5 *guruş*), kitchen utensils (239 *guruş*) and bedroom goods (213 *guruş*). Books were valued at 117 *guruş*, while the value of weapons was set at 59.5 *guruş*. See İstanbul Şer'iyye Sicilleri, Galata Mahkemesi, No. 581, pp. 402-403.

54 C. Kayra and E. Üyepazarcı (eds), *İkinci Mahmud'un İstanbul'u: Bostancıbaşı Sicilleri* (İstanbul 1992), 90, 141.

55 Ibid., 139.

56 Ibid.

57 İstanbul Şer'iyye Sicilleri, Galata Mahkemesi, No. 583, p. 35 (20 Şaban 1222/23 October 1807). For a transcribed version of the same document see Yıldız, 'The Selimiyye Incident', 898.

58 İstanbul Şer'iyye Sicilleri, Galata Mahkemesi, No. 579, p. 45 (7 Şaban 1221/20 October 1806). It was a two-storey building; the upper floor contained a room (*bir bab oda*), and the lower one contained a stable, a grocery, a barbershop and a storehouse, a small bakery. The whole build-

tions a stable in the vicinity of the gardeners' corps (*bostancı ocağı*) of Büyükdere which belonged to Topçu Mehmed, apparently an artilleryman from Telli Tabya.⁵⁹

It is clear that some *yamaks* owned houses and vineyards around the forts. Drawing on Tüfengçibaşı Arif Efendi, Mert Sunar supports this view.⁶⁰ According to Koçu, too, almost all soldiers owned houses, vineyards, gardens, and lived with their families around the fortresses.⁶¹ As we noted above, some *yamaks* were sent to İbrail during the reign of Mahmud II. According to the relevant imperial edict, these banished *yamaks* were allowed to sell their estates (*emlâk*) before leaving their posts. This point does not give any clue as to whether they all owned houses or gardens, but suggests that at least some owned property.⁶²

Likewise, with the available sources, it is very difficult to be sure about their involvement in trade. One soldier from Telli Tabya bears the title of *sandıkçı* (chest-maker), which suggests but does not prove that he was really a chest-maker.⁶³ This is a rare example and most of the soldiers are cited with their regions of origin. On the other hand, one document provides important details in this regard. It states that the soldiers of Garipçe "extracted root-woods and burnt coal in the pasturage of the Fener village" (*Fener karyesi merasında kök ihraç ve kömür hark*), but most of them were involved in pottery and jar-making.⁶⁴ These soldiers were expected to be present at the fortresses and not to engage in non-military occupations. Indeed, while enumerating the abuses of Hacı Ali Ağa, the *dizdar* of Garipçe, the supervisor of the Nine Forts complained that Hacı Ali encouraged the soldiers to be involved in certain works or crafts. Consequently, such an act was forbidden and Hacı Ali was banished.⁶⁵ Even though not allowed by the centre, it is clear that some of the *yamaks* were involved in crafts and trade to earn extra money. Even in a petition submitted to the centre, requesting an increase in the salaries of the *dizdars*, it is stated that their income was insufficient, and as commanders they were not able to make extra money in non-military activities as the soldiers did.⁶⁶

Turning back to the issue of poverty, not all *yamaks* were as lucky as *yamak* Ali bin Mehmed, and most of them were quite impoverished. Indeed, poverty seems to have pre-

ing is described as a *şerbethane* (tavern), and it is stated that Ali bought only one half of the building from a non-Muslim named Dimitraki veled-i Todori.

59 Kayra and Üyepazarcı (eds), *İkinci Mahmud'un İstanbul'u*, 135.

60 His source of information is Tüfengçibaşı (Derin, 'Tüfengçibaşı Arif Efendi', 384): "Behey canım sizin bu yerlerde alaka-ı külliye ve bağ ve bostanınız olup..." (O my good fellow, you are greatly involved in these places and have gardens as well as orchards around).

61 Koçu, *Kabakçı Mustafa*, 43. Unfortunately, Koçu does not indicate his source of information. Apparently, this was an impression he got from the contemporary sources. In fact, he writes in such a way as to convince the reader that they were living at ease around the fortresses and there was no need for these soldiers to revolt.

62 BOA, Mühimme Defteri No. 227, p. 88 (evsât-ı Cemaziyelâhîr 1223/4-13 August 1808).

63 TSMA, E. 613 (undated).

64 BOA, A.DVN.KLB. 155/5 (12 Rebiyülâhîr 1210/26 October 1795).

65 Ibid.

66 BOA, C.AS. 49501 (1220/1806).

vailed among the soldiers of the forts. A report, for instance, indicates that some soldiers serving at the forts around the Bosphorus were so poor that they did not even leave enough money to cover the expenses of bathing and swathing their corpses (*tefîn ve techiz*). Consequently, friends of the deceased soldiers collected money among themselves to cover the burial expenses of their comrades. Sympathising with the grief of the soldiers, as the document underlines, Selim III decided to send a certain amount of money to the forts under the name of reserve fund (*ihtiyat akçesi*). It is also stated that the money was sent with the purpose of preventing the escalation of resentment and reaction among the soldiers against the centre. It was sent to the fortresses and delivered to the *dizdars*. In case of need, as the relevant documents states, it was to be used for the above-mentioned purpose. Not surprisingly, the *dizdars* were warned not to waste the money.⁶⁷

Thus, because of the extreme poverty of some soldiers employed at the fortresses around the Bosphorus, a cash waqf was established in 1208/1793-1794, on the initiative of the centre and with the purpose of covering the burial expenses of the poor *yamaks*. The original amount that the Sultan endowed for that purpose was 1,800 *guruş*. It seems that, rather than establishing a common pool for all, each fortress was expected to establish its own minor endowment fund.⁶⁸ In addition to Selim III, Osman, the *kethüda* of Kilyos, and a certain Mande başı Numan also donated, for the same purpose, money as *orta akçesi* (common fund) to the fund belonging to the fortress. One year later, the amount endowed by the Sultan amounted to 3,642.5 *guruş*. Approximately ten years later, 5,969 *guruş* was accumulated by the same endowment. An account of the endowment covering the years 1803 to 1806 indicates that 326 *guruş* was spent for the burial expenses of 13 soldiers, and 250 *guruş* was delivered to the commander of the *yamaks* dispatched to Ahyolu (modern day Pomorie in Bulgaria).⁶⁹

Keeping in mind the upheaval of 1807 and the dethronement of Selim III due to the reaction of the *yamaks*, a cash waqf established by the initiative and contribution of Selim III for the benefit of the *yamaks* sounds a strange combination. But it also proves the extreme poverty of some soldiers who had no money even to cover their own burial expenses. Without disregarding the possibility of different wealth levels among the *yamaks*, it may be illuminating to ask whether there was a correlation between the existence of such poor *yamaks* and their wages. The wages of the soldiers and commanders serving at the Seven Forts were paid from the poll tax (*cizye*) of Istanbul, Edirne, Filibe (Plovdiv), Manastır (Bitola), and Yenişehir (Larissa) as *ocaklık*.⁷⁰ The soldiers received a

67 BOA, C.AS. 4034 (20 Cemaziyelâhîr 1218/7 October 1803); BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale B) 4971 (27 Muharrem 1218/19 May 1803-Safer 1221/April-May 1806).

68 According to BOA, C.AS. 4034, Rumeli Feneri, Bağdadıcık, Poyraz Limanı and Garipçe were given 250 *guruş*, Liman-ı Kebir, Telli Dalyan, Yuşa and Revancık 150, and Anadolu Feneri 200.

69 BOA, C.AS. 4034; BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale B) 4971.

70 BOA, C.AS. 40352 (27 Receb 1204/12 April 1790); BOA, MAD 22891, p. 116 (1222/1807); BOA, MAD 10253 (29 Şaban 1222/1 November 1807); BOA, C.AS. 3497 (24 Muharrem 1216/ 6 June 1801); BOA, C.AS. 4018 (3 Zilkade 1204/15 July 1790). To give an example, according to BOA, C.AS. 5881 (2 Rebiyülâhîr 1208/7 November 1793), the total amount of the

daily payment called *yevmiye*, which varied according to year, and usually also from one fortress to another. For instance, except for the soldiers of Yuşa Burnu, Telli Tabya, and Bağdadçık, all the soldiers received a daily wage of 40 *akçes* in 1203/1788-1789.⁷¹ In 1211/1796-1797, a soldier in Kilyos received 46 *akçes*, while those in Anadolu and Rumeli Feneri, Revancık, Garipçe, Poyraz Limanı, and Liman-ı Kebir were paid 56 *akçes*.⁷² The payments tended to increase rather slowly. In the year of the uprising, the above amount was increased to 60 *akçes* for the *yamaks* of Rumeli Feneri, Garipçe, Liman-ı Kebir, and Anadolu Feneri, while at Kilyos the daily wage rose from 46 to 50 *akçes*.⁷³

Therefore, a short time before the uprising, there had been a slight increase of 4 *akçes* in the wages of the *yamaks*. Even after this increase, the wages seem to have been very low, in comparison with the living standards and wages of the early nineteenth century. In their valuable study of real wages in the Ottoman Empire from the fifteenth to the early twentieth century, Özmucur and Pamuk conclude that inflation hit the Empire in the seventeenth century and prices increased 17-fold. This increase continued from the mid eighteenth to the mid nineteenth centuries, and the Empire suffered from higher inflation when prices increased 25-fold.⁷⁴ According to the authors, the period from 1769 to 1843 was characterised by most rapid rates of inflation and debasement and by rising real wages.⁷⁵ The period under study in this paper exactly corresponds to the second wave characterised by high inflation, thus implying hard times for the *yamaks*.

On the other hand, one of the highest paid military positions was holding a *serturnaî* pension, a high rank of a junior officer.⁷⁶ A *serturnaî* pensioner earned a daily wage of 120 *akçes*. This was the basic reason why some rebel chiefs preferred to be appointed to this position. Immediately after the rebellion, its leaders were asked whether they had any request (a new post or money). Kabakçı Mustafa was appointed as the Bosphorus superintendent with the above rank. Arnabud Ali was also appointed to the rank of *serturnaî tekaüdlük*. Memiş was provided with a pension of *haseki tekaüdlük* with a daily wage of 120 *akçes*.⁷⁷

Apart from poverty, it seems that financial abuse was another chronic problem for the soldiers of the Black Sea fortresses. Such economic phenomena may have not only stim-

wages of the soldiers and commanders of the Nine Forts was 86,553 *guruş*. Out of this amount, 8,772 *guruş* was paid from the *cizye* of Istanbul, 30,000 *guruş* from the *cizye* of Edirne, 15,000 *guruş* from the *cizye* of Gelibolu, 12,780.5 *guruş* from the *cizye* of Filibe, 10,000 *guruş* from the *cizye* of Manastır, and 1,000 *guruş* from the *cizye* of Yenişehir.

71 BOA, A.E. 2533 (27 Rebiyülâhır 1203/25 January 1789); TSMA, E. 4078/1 (1207/1793); TSMA, E. 4078/3 (9 Zilkade 1207/18 June 1793); TSMA, E. 4078/4 (undated).

72 BOA, C.AS. 49480 (27 Safer 1211/1 September 1796).

73 BOA, D.BKL. 548/32734 (7 Rebiyülevvel 1222/15 May 1807).

74 S. Özmucur and Ş. Pamuk, 'Real Wages and Standards of Living in the Ottoman Empire, 1489-1914', *The Journal of Economic History*, 62/2 (2002), 300.

75 Ibid., 318.

76 M. M. Sunar, 'Cauldron of Dissent: A Study of the Janissary Corps, 1807-1826', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Binghamton University, 2006, 65.

77 Derin, 'Tüfengçibaşı Arif Efendi', 408-409; Yıldız, 'The Selimiyye Incident', 456.

ulated their potential to react, but also created a sense of being the victims of injustice. During the May 1807 Rebellion, for instance, 11 statesmen were included in the execution list of the rebels, and most of them were murdered during the rebellion. As shall be seen in some examples below, the resentment and hostility towards the accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of these functionaries are frequently expressed in contemporary sources. As was the case in the janissary army, basic abuses occurred in the possession of the pay tickets (*esame*) of the soldiers. These pay tickets either passed into the hands of undeserving people or were sometimes directly used up by a commander. As far as the Bosphorus fortresses are concerned, it seems that the key figures instrumental in the abuses were the *dizdars*. Payments of the soldiers were made every three months upon the writ (*arz*) of the *dizdars*. A request and petition reporting the number of soldiers was sent to the centre, including the number of the deceased and fugitives. Since the wages were dispatched to the forts in accordance with the reports of the commanders, manipulating some figures automatically provided them with the chance to embezzle a certain amount of money. For that purpose, it would simply be enough to neglect to inform the centre about the exact number of deaths and fugitives. Indeed, a document indicates that, as the time approached for the payment of the salaries (*mevacib*), the pay tickets of the deceased and fugitive soldiers were kept by the *dizdars* without the knowledge of the Porte, and were either sold to other people or a certain percentage was demanded by the *dizdars*.⁷⁸ Absenteeism from the city and lack of regular *yoklamas* must have opened a window of opportunity for abuses to the *dizdars* as well as some other senior officers.

Ineffective and short-term solutions were introduced to prevent abuses in the forts. For instance, Vasif mentions an imperial decree with instructions for the administration of the forts. According to the order, supervision of the fortresses was entrusted to the Grand Admirals, and in case of their absence, to the directors of the Naval Arsenal (*tersane emini*). It was stipulated that either the Grand Admiral or the director were to visit the forts, conduct roll calls and inspect the order at every fortress.⁷⁹ In 1204/1790-1791, the Bosphorus superintendent was also charged with the control and supervision of the *dizdars*.⁸⁰ However, it seems that not only the *dizdars* but also the superintendents themselves were involved in such abuses. For instance, Mehmed Ağa, the superintendent of the Seven Forts, failed to inform the centre about the dead and fugitive soldiers, and kept their diplomas of appointment (*berat*). Consequently, he embezzled the extra payments until the time he was replaced. More specifically, he embezzled the salaries of 25 soldiers (out of a total of 990), or an amount of 1,370 *akçes*.⁸¹

78 BOA, C.AS. 4018 (3 Zilkade 1204/15 July 1790).

79 Vasif, *Mehasinü'l-Asar*, 215. The order was issued on Rebiyülevvel 1199/January-February 1785.

80 The relevant document explains the reason why the *dizdars* were chosen instead of the *nazırs*. It is stated that, since the *nazırs* mostly resided in the city, they were less likely to have access to information regarding the number of soldiers and their attendance; BOA, C.AS. 4018.

81 BOA, C.AS. 49480 (27 Safer 1211/1 September 1796). This is a report concerning the abuses of Mehmed Ağa, and attached is a *yoklama* which provides a summary list of the number

A serious consequence of such abuses was confusion in the identity of the actual person holding the pay ticket and the legal identity of the soldiers. In order to solve this problem, it was decided to give the soldiers certificates “with blank spaces for full names to be filled in” (*ismi açık*), which also described the physical appearance of the holders.⁸² The above-mentioned confusion was also the main reason behind the decision to include the physical description of soldiers in pay rolls. In fact, the *yoklama*s were intended to eliminate such confusion and uncover the abuses; therefore, they were inspections both for the soldiers and commanders.

A *yoklama defter* was composed of several parts, according to the number of the fortresses under scrutiny. In each section, under the heading of the name of the fortress, the names of soldiers are listed one by one. A little above the names, each soldier is marked as either present (*mevcud*) or absent (*nâmevcud*). Furthermore, the daily payment and official duty, father’s name and place of origin of each soldier are usually recorded.⁸³ As noted above, some *defter*s also provide age and physical appearance.⁸⁴ The *yoklama* of 1208/1793 is of particular importance, since it provides some details in terms of the procedures for a roll call. Abdullah Efendi, the scribe of the treasurer of Derviş Paşa, was charged with this task upon an imperial decree. As far as it is understood from the related archival materials, Abdullah Efendi did two different things. After obtaining a copy of the names of the old soldiers (*neferat-ı atik*), he first checked out each and every soldier at the fortresses and paid the wages of those present. This procedure helped him discover which soldiers were present and which absent. It also served as a check on whether the names on the muster-roll tickets matched the ones at the fortress. As a result, it was found out that 34 soldiers were not present. On the other hand, 494 certificates were prepared and delivered to the newly recruited soldiers.⁸⁵

The *yoklama* undertaken by Abdullah Efendi revealed two different forms of abuses. The first is reporting the absentees as present and illegally transferring pay tickets either to the children or servants of some *dizdars*, as well as to preachers (*hatib*) and imams serving in the fortresses. Without doubt, it provided a good income for the sons and it also made it possible to finance the servants without extra burden for a senior officer in a fortress. If we rely on the *yoklama* of 1208/1793, for instance, there were 34 people who

of soldiers and their *yevmiyes* in the fortresses of Kilyos, Revancık, Rumeli Feneri, Anadolu Feneri, Garipçe, Poyraz Limanı, and Liman-ı Kebir. See also BOA, C.AS. 5451 (23 Safer 1211/28 August 1796).

82 Ibid.

83 BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale A) 4814 (undated); BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale A) 4815 (undated); BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale A) 4821 (undated); BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale B) 4975 (undated). A typical entry is as follows: “Süleyman Hüseyin; Ahışa; yevmiye 40; mevcut tahminen otuz beş yaşında”.

84 For instance, BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale A) 4821 provides physical details: “Yunus Mehmed, Trabzon, odabaşı; yevmiye 60; orta boylu, kara kaşlı, kumral sakallı”. If there is a replacement, the appearances of both soldiers are described.

85 BOA, C.AS. 5881 (2 Rebiyülâhır 1208/7 November 1793). These records were kept in the Büyük Kale Kalemî.

illegally benefited from the pay tickets of the soldiers, including the sons of certain functionaries and also those illegally replacing the ones who had left their duties.

The second kind of abuse is also illustrated by some interesting examples in these registers, and concerns certain figures who were obviously either too young or too old to serve at a fortress or to perform any kind of military duty. The *yoklama* of 1208/1793 revealed that there were four or five-year-old sons of the *dizdars* who pretended to be serving at the fortresses.⁸⁶ According to the undated register which was discussed above (Table IV), a six-year-old son of the chief artilleryman of the fortress of Anadolu Feneri had a pay ticket which was worth a daily payment of 50 *akçes*, while at Poyraz Limanı the *dizdar* was able to issue pay tickets for his nine, fifteen, and twenty-year-old sons. There also was the grandson of a *dizdar*, aged six, but the youngest person is a five-year-old son of the *dizdar* of the fortress of Kilyos. *Kethüdas* also seem to have benefited from this practice; the register contains two cases of sons of *kethüdas*. Overall, in the 0-10 age group there were six people, while in the age category of 11-20 there were 33, corresponding to 1.2% and 6.7% of the total, respectively. As for the elderly group, as we noted above, five people over 60 were employed at the fortresses, and there was even one aged 100.⁸⁷ Neither the pay ticket of the five-year-old son of the *dizdar* of Kilyos nor the others were cancelled.

Apart from the children, the servants of the senior officers seem to have benefited from the pay tickets. Since apparently there was not a common rule applying to such cases, it is difficult to understand if they were legal. They may have been illegal in theory, but valid in practice. While such a practice was allowed in one fortress, it might not have been allowed in another. For instance, even within the same register, it is possible to identify twelve cases of this kind, but only two of them were dismissed as the servants of *dizdars*. Four of them were the servants of the Bosphorus superintendent.⁸⁸ Another group whose certificates were not taken back was the imams.⁸⁹ Seven imams were entitled to *yevmiyes* at the fortresses. Again, it is difficult to find out whether this was a legitimate practice. As may be recalled, the report of 1793 indicates that the muster-roll tickets of 34 people were nullified on the grounds that “they did not deserve the *esames* of imams, preachers, and *dizdars*”.⁹⁰ Therefore, it is very probable that most of the above cases were illegal. On the other hand, what is certain is that boatmen were not allowed to have certificates. Even though they were present during the time of the pay roll, eight people were dismissed for being boatmen.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale B) 4975 (undated). The entry for the five-year-old son of the *dizdar* reads: “Mustafa bin Mehmed; yevmiye 40; mevcud. Dizdarın oğlu olub tahminen beş yaşında” (ibid., 2).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ There was a mosque in each fortress; TSMA, E. 4078/6 (undated).

⁹⁰ BOA, C.AS. 5881 (2 Rebiyülâhır 1208/7 November 1793).

⁹¹ BOA, Kamil Kepeci (Büyük Kale B) 4975.

Discipline and Obedience

The major problem concerning the soldiers apparently was poor discipline and disobedience. Contemporary sources support our claim. A report dated 27 Cemaziyelevvel 1206/22 January 1792, sent to the centre, relates a disorder in the fortress of Rumeli Kavak. According to the document, soldiers and commanders of the fortress were in constant conflict and quarrel with each other.⁹² Ten days earlier, a soldier named Hasan was shot and wounded. An inspector was dispatched to the fortress to investigate the incident. The report prepared by the inspector underlines that the soldiers never obeyed their commanders. Four names were cited as the most notorious people causing trouble for the commanders and as the main source of unrest in the fort. About 50 or 60 soldiers accused these four soldiers of being the main source of disobedience to the superiors. Though the document does not provide further details concerning the identity of the person who wounded the aforementioned Hasan and the reason for the offence, it cites the names of those whom the other soldiers denounced. The head of this smaller group was İmam Hâfız Mustafa, apparently an imam and a *hâfız* (one who learns the Qur'an by heart), and the others were Çakıcıoğlu Kethüda Mustafa, Pireçol Hüseyin, and Kara İbrahim. The titles 'kethüda', 'hâfız', and 'imam' raise suspicion that these two persons were among the seniors of the Rumeli Kavak fortress.⁹³ Consequently, the band of İmam Hâfız Mustafa was imprisoned in the dungeon of the fortress and banished to Bozcaada (Tenedos) a little later.⁹⁴

In general, we do not know much about the relationship between the soldiers and their commanders. However, it may be instructive to note that the first person who fell victim to the rebellious *yamaks* in 1807 was Halil Ağa, the master of the Kavak. On the other hand, Hüseyin Ağa, the commander of Yuşa Tabya, was saved by his own soldiers. He was on the spot when Halil Haseki was murdered, and we owe him the very first report concerning the incidents which started the uprising. Following the rebellion, he was appointed as the commander of Telli Dalyan, Yuşa Tabya, and Kireçburnu.⁹⁵

If we now return to the report of 1792, we have already noted that at least two members of the notorious band must have been senior officers. Therefore, it seems that undisciplined acts did not always stem from the soldiers. Some of the commanders themselves seem to have been the main source of disorder in the forts, apparently provoking the soldiers to engage in aggression rather than preventing it. An undated document provides some important details in this regard. In it, a certain individual tries to convince his correspondent that there would be no security and stability in the 14 fortresses unless the

92 BOA, C.AS. 9082.

93 In most of the fortresses an imam (with a daily payment of 40 *akçes*), a muezzin (with a daily payment of 15 *akçes*), and a *kayyum* (with a daily payment of 15 *akçes*) served. At Yuşa and Telli Tabya only an imam was employed (with a daily payment of 20 *akçes*) and there was no other functionary. Apparently, most of the imams were also employed as *hatibs* (preachers). See TSMA, E. 4078/6 (undated).

94 BOA, C.AS. 9082 (27 Cemaziyelevvel 1206/22 January 1792).

95 BOA, HAT 53271 (15 Cemaziyelevvel 1222/21 July 1807).

yamaks included in the list were dismissed.⁹⁶ From the names and titles of the *yamaks* in the list, we can strongly suggest that one of them was an artilleryman, that is, an officer ranking third in command, another one an imam. The archival material proves that even *dizdars*, the highest-ranking officers, might be involved in unruly acts. On 25 Safer 1211/30 August 1796, Ahmed, the *dizdar*, Mustafa, the *kethüda*, and İbrahim, the chief artilleryman, were exiled to the fortress of Varna “on grounds of their audacity in acting in defiance of the sublime approval”.⁹⁷ This obscure expression does not indicate the exact nature of the problem caused by these figures. Fortunately, the case of el-Hac Ali Ağa, the *dizdar* of Garipçe, provides certain clues regarding the kind of acts and problems caused by fortress commanders. According to the relevant documents, Ali Ağa not only permitted the *yamaks* under his command to raid the vicinity, but also encouraged and incited them to forceful acquisition (*cebren zabt*) of the fields which were owned and cultivated (*ziraat*) by the non-Muslim residents of the Fener district.⁹⁸ The same source goes on to state that the villagers were not even able to come to the vicinity of Fener because of the constant fear and pressure of the *yamaks*. Moreover, the *yamaks* did not obey the prohibition on wandering armed in the city. Similar orders continued to be issued in later periods. For instance, according to an archival source belonging to a later date, the soldiers wandered around Büyükdere and Sarıyer disturbing some non-Muslim women there, while it is also stated that they gathered in coffee-houses in large groups of fifty or more.⁹⁹ As noted above, because of the encouragement of their commander Ali Ağa, the *yamaks* of Garipçe did not heed the prohibitions on bearing arms in the city, and freely wandered around Büyükdere and other ‘inappropriate’ places in disguise (*tebdil-i heyet*), continually oppressing innocent people. Moreover, the *dizdar* hid and refused to hand over the guilty soldiers demanded by the centre for punishment, and was also accused of engaging in disorderly acts driven by the ambition to pinch more pennies from the baker who brought bread to the fortress. Ali was reported to the centre by his senior Mehmed, the superintendent of the *Kıla’-ı Tis’a*. Consequently, he was banished to the fortress of Varna in order to prevent the epidemic spread of a ‘rebellious mood’ to other forts.¹⁰⁰

96 TSMA, E. 613 (undated).

97 BOA, A.DVN.KLB. 157/37; report of İsmail, the *nazır* of the Nine Forts (*Kıla’-ı Tis’a*). This document has another historical importance. It mentions a certain Ahmed, the *dizdar* of Rumeli Kavak. As may be recalled, Ketencioğlu Ahmed accompanied Uzun Hacı Ali Ağa, the *ayan* of Pınarhisar, who came to Rumeli Feneri to execute Kabakçı Mustafa (19 Cemaziyelevvel 1223/13 July 1808). Ketencioğlu Ahmed was murdered by the *yamaks* during the ensuing fight between the *yamaks* and the men of Ali Ağa. According to one source, Ahmed was a former *dizdar* of the Fener fortress; TSMA, E. 8751 (undated; catalogue date: 1223/1808). For the execution of Kabakçı Mustafa and the murder of Ketencioğlu see Yıldız, ‘The Selimiyye Incident’, 547-558.

98 BOA, A.DVN.KLB. 155/5 (12 Rebiyülâhır 1210/26 October 1795); BOA, A.DVN.KLB. 154/7 (6 Muharrem 1210/23 July 1795).

99 BOA, HAT 46058 (29 Zilhicce 1235/7 October 1820); BOA, HAT 46046 (23 Şaban 1233/28 June 1818).

100 BOA, A.DVN.KLB. 155/5; BOA, A.DVN.KLB. 154/7. Bekir Ağa, the *kethüda*, was appointed as the new *dizdar*.

Among the undisciplined and unruly acts mentioned above, the most important one apparently was the seizure of some fields from the non-Muslims.

It is striking that there are certain clues suggesting that the soldiers cultivated the fields they seized from the non-Muslim residents of the Fener district. This point also hints at the semi-professional character of the soldiers at the forts. Furthermore, it seems that local ties were still more powerful than professional and military ties, which may also have increased the possibility of band or group formation at the Black Sea forts – and apparently at others as well. It seems that one of the basic reasons behind this problem stemmed from the fact that the *yamaks* were mostly people with local ties and their priorities about whom to obey were different from those of a professional soldier in the real sense. The importance of local ties is evident in the case of Kazgancı Mustafa Ağa, the *mütevelli* (director) of the 25th regiment. He was from Trabzon and, besides the substantial wealth he amassed thanks to the copper craft, an important source of his power was related to his authority over the soldiers from the Black Sea region. As may be recalled, some of them were later sent to İbrail fortress; again, this fortress was chosen because its commander and soldiers were fellow-countrymen.¹⁰¹ As to their identity, it is difficult to understand whether the *yamaks* really considered themselves as janissaries. A contemporary source argues that they did feel themselves as janissaries and pretended to be janissaries.¹⁰² At least, they seem to have had a group solidarity, which gave them a great advantage when they rebelled and made them powerful enough to oppose any kind of oppression or pressure.

Incidents in which the Yamaks were Involved

25 May 1807 is the most important day in the history of the forts around the Bosphorus. Within a week from that day, their personnel became the most active and dominant historical agents in the Ottoman Empire, effecting a change on the throne and annihilating the top ruling elite of the Selimian era. They were well aware of this fact and returned to the forts cheerfully singing and crying that “Our fame has spread all over the world” (*yedi krala namımız gitti*).¹⁰³ As far as the *yamaks* of the Bosphorus are concerned, the May Rebellion was apparently the first collective action involving the bulk of the *yamaks*. Apart from this important incident, however, it is possible to observe some other incidents they had been involved in. For the sake of simplicity, these instances can be categorised as follows:

- a. Revolts: As far as Istanbul and the *yamaks* of the Bosphorus are concerned, the only example is that of May 1807. Sometime before that, however, they seem to have had problems with the “Pasha” of the Bosphorus.¹⁰⁴

101 BOA, Mühimme Defteri No. 227, p. 88 (evasıt-ı Cemaziyelâhîr 1223/4-13 August 1808).

102 Ebubekir Efendi – Ubeydullah Kuşmani, *Asiler ve Gaziler. Kabakçı Mustafa Risalesi*, ed. A. Danacı Yıldız (Istanbul 2007), 112.

103 Yıldız, ‘The Selimiyye Incident’, 491.

104 Ibid., 333.

- b. Attacks on foreigners: There are several examples which show that the *yamaks* displayed ambiguous and sometimes even hostile attitudes towards foreigners, particularly ambassadors. They either insulted or physically attacked two ambassadors at least. The first victim was Sebastiani, the famous French ambassador.¹⁰⁵ According to the relevant document, the culprit was a soldier from Kireçburnu Tabya.¹⁰⁶ It seems that such acts continued after the rebellion as well. Wandering in armed groups around Büyükdere, they molested women, especially foreign ones (*Frenk avretleri*). They made noise in front of the residence of the Russian envoy, were drunk and armed. When the envoy and the janissary commander tried to warn them, the former was shot at and a janissary was wounded.¹⁰⁷ This incident created a minor diplomatic crisis between the Russian ambassador and the Porte.¹⁰⁸ It is difficult to draw conclusions on the basis of a few incidents, but it seems that the *yamaks* felt some kind of hatred towards foreigners. Though not pronounced in the related sources, we have reason to suspect that such acts were also motivated by religious concerns.
- c. Incidents initiated by religious motives: In the incidents of this category, religious concern is more evident. For instance, the *yamaks* of Rumeli Feneri rushed into a church in the village, recited the *ezan*, and announced that it was thus converted into a mosque.¹⁰⁹ When this naive act reached the ears of the *şeyhülislam*, he issued a *fetva*, declaring that reciting the *ezan* in a church did not immediately or necessarily convert it into a mosque.¹¹⁰ As stressed above, it seems that the residents of the villages around the fortresses, particularly the non-Muslims, suffered from the physical and economic abuses of the soldiers.
- d. Disturbance of daily life: The most famous example is the Beşiktaş incident (September 1808). After getting drunk in the taverns of Beşiktaş, the soldiers wandered around the quarter molesting some women. This incident turned into a serious problem when they were noticed by the Sultan himself, who ordered immediate imprisonment and execution of the culprits. After a fight with the imperial gardeners who chased them, about 23 people were executed.¹¹¹
- e. Involvement in the dismissal and appointment of governmental officials: This kind of interference by the *yamaks* became possible thanks to the power and prestige that they gained during the reign of Mustafa IV (1807-1808). After the 1807 Rebellion, they turned into a pressure group. The paralysing of the bureaucratic system because of the uprising also facilitated their involvement. They were more or less instrumen-

105 Ibid., 574-575. Sebastiani served as the French ambassador in 1806-1807.

106 BOA, HAT 1359/53424 (undated, catalogue date: 1222/1807-1808); Yıldız, 'The Selimiyye Incident', 574.

107 BOA, HAT 46058 (29 Zilhicce 1235/7 October 1820).

108 BOA, HAT 46047 (23 Şaban 1233/28 June 1818).

109 Yıldız, 'The Selimiyye Incident', 553-555.

110 BOA, HAT 1354/52898 (undated).

111 For further details see Yıldız, 'The Selimiyye Incident', 519-525.

tal in the appointment and dismissal of two *şeyhülislams* and two *sekbanbaşıs* (that is, the deputy-general of the janissary *ağa*).¹¹²

- f. Şanizade cites a final kind of problem caused by the *yamaks*. More specifically, he mentions a fight between the *yamaks* and Croats in 1821. The author does not explain the cause of the fight between the two groups. However, it seems that having to share the same space and resources with the Croats, whose number increased around the Bosphorus, may have been the main reason. Thanks to their overwhelming numbers and the help of the newcomers, it was the Croats who prevailed, and killed and wounded several *yamaks*. The comrades of the murdered *yamaks*, on the other hand, began to search for and attack the Croats around the region.¹¹³

The May Rebellion

So far we have discussed the identity of the *yamaks*, but it is now time to question their role in terms of historical agency. Conventional historiography blames and condemns the *yamaks* as a riff-raff and unruly group of people, and mostly denies them the possibility of political initiative.¹¹⁴ This is an observation which implies that the *yamaks* did not have any potential of this kind and attained success only with the help of and collaboration with some other segments of society. This supposition can also be considered as denying the bottom-up initiative in social movements. Indeed, most sources do not attribute a king-making power to the *yamaks* of the Bosphorus. They are usually depicted as being part of a plot, particularly thanks to the efforts of Musa Paşa, the *kaymakam* of the period, and *şeyhülislam* Şerifzade Mehmed Ataulah Efendi. The ensuing Tanzimat era witnessed massive top-down reform policies initiated by the Ottoman elite; according to the intelligentsia of the period, popular movements were the main obstacles to modernisation attempts.¹¹⁵ Yet, we should not forget the sheer historical fact that the *yamaks* entered the scene of 1807 as king-makers, and were the first and primary actors in an upheaval which claimed the throne of a sultan. In that regard, it becomes important to study the worldview, leadership, and prospects of the *yamaks* who sowed the seed of the uprising.

Despite the above-mentioned denial of political initiative and accusations of being a rabble (*ayak takımı*), it is still observable that some historians almost jealously admitted the capacity of the rebel chiefs to represent the common people. For the late Ottoman and early Republican historians, it was an unconscious acceptance and source of frustration that Kabakçı Mustafa was more capable of communicating with and leading

112 For details see *ibid.*, 492-519.

113 Şânî-zâde Mehmed 'Atâ'ullah Efendi, *Şânî-zâde Târîhi [Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)]*, Vol. II, ed. Z. Yılmaz (Istanbul 2008), 1054-1055.

114 Among the contemporaneous sources, Ubeydullah Kuşmanî in particular plays with this idea most frequently and tries to convince his readers using the same propaganda over and over again.

115 For a survey of historiographical arguments, debates and theories see Yıldız, 'The Selimiyye Incident', Chapter 1.

commoners than the intellectuals. Ahmed Refik, author of a monograph on the rebellion, once argues that Kabakçı Mustafa, the rebel chief, represented the “public will” (*arzu-yu milli*).¹¹⁶ An ordinary reader gets not only a negative, but also a ‘heroic’ representation of Kabakçı Mustafa, who was talented enough to reach the masses and seduce them into following him.¹¹⁷ Yet, most sources refer to the rebels and their chiefs as brigands and corrupt people. At the basic level, this may be true and valid for all of the rebels and their chiefs. However, one crucial matter is to comprehend that leading a rebellion is not an easy task and only those under the leadership of charismatic figures are successful. Only those leaders with charisma, a right cause, and a talent for convincing the people attain success. Of course, in order to convince the people, the potential leader has to prove that he has enough power to realise his aims and must have a good number of comrades. This aspect of an uprising is very evident at the very initial phase of the 1730 uprising, which led to the deposition of Ahmed III. During the first night of that uproar, most of those who had joined the rebels ran away, and only the initial cadre remained. To begin with, they also wanted to leave Et Meydanı (the Meat Square), their meeting place, fearing punishment and, more important, losing faith in the success of the rebellion. Eventually, they remained at the square only upon the insistence and persuasion of Patrona Halil, the famous chief of the 1730 uprising.¹¹⁸ Thanks to his conviction and management, the ‘rebel company’ of Patrona Halil overcame the initial obstacle and their success was sealed by their being joined by the armourers, artillerymen, and later the janissaries.¹¹⁹ The success of the ‘company’ of Kabakçı Mustafa and his *yamaks*, on the other hand, was sealed with the decision of the artillerymen to join their cause.

No name is mentioned as leader during the first day of the uproar of 1807. A nucleus of leaders, however, crystallised during the second day of the uprising. During that day, we for the first time hear the name of Kabakçı Mustafa, who assumed the leadership of this rebellious movement. We do not know the exact role of Kabakçı Mustafa, but it seems that he was the one who headed the rebels, provided contacts with the centre and the statesmen, and also kept the peace with the support of his friends. On the other hand,

116 Ahmed Refik, *Kabakçı Mustafa*, 94.

117 Ibid., 4. This tendency is also observable in the writings of Juchereau de Saint-Denys, who depicts Kabakçı Mustafa as if a figure from the French Revolution.

118 F. R. Unat (ed.), *1730 Patrona İhtilâli Hakkında Bir Eser: Abdi Tarihi* (Ankara 1943), 31: “Vakt-i magribe karib Et Meydanından gayri beşer onar firar ederek vakt-i işâyâ dek ancak mezbur zorbalardan meydanda yirmi kadar ıpsız kalup ... Zorba eşkiyaları çünkü bu ahvali gördüler, yanlarında cem’ olan perişan olub ve odalardan bir nefer âdem semtlerine gelmeyip demdeste kaldılar ... Patrona Halil Beşe ... anda hazır olan eşkiyalara azim pend ü nasayih edüb mürde canlarına hayat verüb istihkam ve kuvvet verdi” (Close to the time of sunset, the ruffians began to desert the Meat Square in groups of five or ten, thus there remained only about 20 vagrants at the square ... When the rapacious bandits saw the situation, they were left destitute, as their associates became wretched and not a single man from the barracks came alongside them ... Giving them great advice and counsel, and vivifying their inanimate souls, Patrona Halil Beşe cheered up and inspired the bandits present).

119 Ibid., 32.

it seems that the general leadership consisted of about 20 persons. Apparently four of them were the most active and powerful ones, namely, Kabakçı Mustafa, Arnabud Ali, Bayburdî Süleyman, and Memiş.¹²⁰ For their part, the leaders of 1730 seem to have been about 30 in number, 11 of whom were apparently the most active ones. Still, decision-making was probably restricted to a few people.¹²¹ Seven of the chiefs of 1807 are mentioned in a document, known as the Legal Document (*Hüccet-i Şeriyye*), which will be discussed below. Without doubt, the most famous one is Kabakçı Mustafa. He is referred to in the document as “Bende Mustafa, Ağa-yı Boğaz-ı Bahr-ı Siyah” (Mustafa the Servant, Ağa of the Black Sea Strait), signifying his appointment as the superintendent of the Bosphorus. Even though this is not mentioned in this record, Kabakçı Mustafa was from the Rumeli Feneri fortress. Regarding participation of fortresses, only one other person, a certain Osman, is mentioned together with his fortress, namely, Kal’a-ı Büyük Liman (Liman-ı Kebir). The document also provides the name of a certain Ali who is recorded as the commander (*dizdar*) of Kılburnu.¹²²

According to a newspaper, Kabakçı Mustafa was of Albanian origin.¹²³ Likewise, there are certain allusions that he was not as poor or rootless as he is represented. For instance, İsmail Ağa, a former Bosphorus superintendent, it is indicated, was a relative of Kabakçı Mustafa.¹²⁴ If true, this may explain how Mustafa was employed at the forts. Moreover, one source puts forward that he was also a relative of the cook of Mustafa Reşid Efendi, one of the leading figures of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* reforms.¹²⁵ As for the above-mentioned Bayburdî Süleyman, he was the nephew of a certain Kürd Süleyman Kapudan.¹²⁶ Süleyman was granted the captainship of a frigate a short while after the uprising.

After the rebellion, Kabakçı Mustafa is addressed as *ağa* thanks to holding the office of the Bosphorus superintendent. But it is interesting to note that he is sometimes referred to as *el-hac* (pilgrim),¹²⁷ but most commonly as a *seyyid*, a title granted to the descendants of the Prophet.¹²⁸ There is no way to prove whether this was an authentic title or he adopted it in order to signal the rise in his socio-economic status.

120 Yıldız, ‘The Selimiyye Incident’, 456.

121 Unat (ed.), *Abdi Tarihi*, 29-30. According to Abdi, the decision-makers were Patrona Halil, Muslı, Çınar Ahmed, Ali Usta, and Kara Yılan.

122 For an edited version of the document see K. Beydilli, ‘Kabakçı İsyanı Akabinde Hazırlanan Hüccet-i Şeriyye’, *Türk Kültür İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 4 (2000), 33-48.

123 *New-England Palladium*; ‘Insurrection at Constantinople’ (Constantinople, May 31), 30/19 (4 September 1808), 1. For the dominance of Albanians among the active rebels see R. W. Olson, ‘Jews, Janissaries, Esnaf and the Revolt of 1740 in Istanbul: Social Upheaval and Political Realignment in the Ottoman Empire’, *JESHO*, 20 (1977), 197.

124 Ahmed Asım Efendi, *Tarih-i Asım*, Vol. II (Istanbul 1876), 2.

125 Yıldız, ‘The Selimiyye Incident’, 633.

126 Ebubekir Efendi, *Fezleke*, 13b; Ebubekir Efendi – Ubeydullah Kuşmani, *Asiler ve Gaziler*, 115.

127 BOA, MAD 9726, p. 72 (29 Zilkade 1224/5 January 1810).

128 İstanbul Şeriyye Sicilleri, Galata Mahkemesi, No. 583, p. 35 (20 Şaban 1222/23 October 1807); BOA, C.DH. 2774 (undated).

There were lesser known figures as well. Apart from the names of the famous Kabakçı Mustafa, Bayburdî Süleyman, and Memiş, we have very limited information concerning the identities of the other rebels or the *yamaks*. Even though Kabakçı Mustafa and his friends are known to have been the leaders, the rebellion in fact started among the soldiers of Macar Tabya. There was a figure, namely, Abdülkerim, from Macar Tabya, who probably was as powerful as Kabakçı Mustafa. Historian Asım describes him in the following words: “The chief instigator of the soldiers of the Macar fortress” (*Macar kal’ası neferatının sergerde-i füccarı*).¹²⁹ Interestingly enough, we do not hear the name of Abdülkerim during the rebellion, and Kabakçı seems to have assumed the leadership. On the other hand, it seems that the power and excesses of Abdülkerim and other soldiers from Macar Tabya increased during the aftermath of the May 1807 uprising. It is even possible to come across some incidents in which they were involved. The most serious one was known as the Çardak Incident (May 1808). The soldiers were disobedient to Hüseyin Ağa, the *dizdar* of Macar Tabya, and disturbing other people. The *dizdar* informed the centre about the problem, and, upon the order of Sekbanbaşı Kahveci Mustafa Ağa, those accused were sent to Istanbul. The imprisoning of four unruly soldiers from the Kavaks triggered chaos in the city. In order to prevent the imprisonment of their comrades, Abdülkerim and others fired cannons. With their efforts ending in failure, they followed the small group to the capital.¹³⁰ When those captured and the other soldiers sought refuge at Çardak Kolluk, Abdülkerim and his comrades demanded the release of their friends. However, the janissaries refused to surrender them. This incident caused a complex series of events, which constitute the Çardak Incident, finally ending with the forced dismissal of Sekbanbaşı Mustafa Ağa.¹³¹ In order to capture and punish the soldiers from the fortresses, Kabakçı Mustafa Ağa was delegated.¹³² A contemporary author provides an important detail in this regard. The author mentions a fight between the *yamaks* of “Boğaz Kal’ası” and “Bahr-ı Siyah Kal’ası”, sometime after the Çardak Incident. The *yamaks* of Boğaz blamed the other group for being notorious and the source of all evils. They, the author states, believed that they were considered notorious by the centre because of the unruly behaviour of the latter. This dispute led to open conflict during which some *yamaks* from Macar Tabya were killed.¹³³ Although it is difficult to prove with the available information, there seems to have been a rivalry between Kabakçı Mustafa and Abdülkerim, and it may be reasonable to imagine that this tension had started before the rebellion and continued during its course. It seems that Kabakçı

129 Ahmed Asım Efendi, *Tarih-i Asım*, II:86.

130 Kethüda Said Efendi, *Tarih-i Vaka-yı Selim-i Salis*, Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi, Veliyüddin Efendi, No. 3367, p. 110. According to Ahmed Asım Efendi, *Tarih-i Asım*, II:86, the imprisoned soldiers were two in number.

131 The role of the *yasakçıs* of the 56th regiment and their commander, *başyasakçı* Ahıskavî Hasan Ağa, and Mahmud Tayyar Paşa should be mentioned here. For more details see Yıldız, ‘The Selimiyye Incident’, 526-532; Ahmed Asım Efendi, *Tarih-i Asım*, II:86-87. According to Asım, Hasan Ağa was a fellow countryman of the *yamaks*.

132 Ahmed Asım Efendi, *Tarih-i Asım*, II:86.

133 K. Beydilli (ed.), *Osmanlı Devleti’nde İmamlar ve Bir İmanın Günlüğü* (Istanbul 2001), 180.

gained the upper hand, and assumed the leadership during the rebellion. Apparently, Abdülkerim was murdered by Kabakçı Mustafa after the former's involvement in the Çardak Incident in 1808.

The problems stemming from Macar Tabya were not restricted to the acts of Abdülkerim and his men. Hüseyin Ağa, the *dizdar*, was apparently involved in some unruly actions as well. A report about him declares that he did not heed orders (*adem-i itaat*) and was involved in brigandage (*şekavet*) with his men. Consequently, an imperial order, addressing *serturnaî* [Kabakçı] Mustafa Ağa, demanded Hüseyin Ağa's punishment.¹³⁴ Yet, a group of soldiers from the same fortress, apparently the men of Hüseyin Ağa, seems to have caused problems again. According to the relevant document, they were dismissed and were subsequently scattered around.¹³⁵ The problems that the Macar Tabyalıls caused made Mustafa IV forbid the recruitment of more soldiers at Macar Tabya, and angrily state that "Their acts have been a great scandal for our corps as well as the Sublime State. From now on, it is virtually a religious duty for you to be cautious".¹³⁶

Thus, two figures from two different fortresses come forth as important protagonists of the rebellion and its aftermath. The one, Abdülkerim, was from Macar Tabya where the uproar first started. The other, Kabakçı Mustafa, was from the Rumeli fortress. Following the uprising, Kabakçı Mustafa served as a state official, while Abdülkerim represented the rebellious *yamaks*.

So far we have discussed the identity of the *yamaks* in terms of places of origin, age, and economic profile, and also the incidents in which they were involved. Apart from these issues, their behaviour and demands during various phases of their uprisings may also provide clues concerning their attitudes. To begin with behaviour, two issues are particularly important, namely, their insistence on or even obsession with maintaining order during a rebellion and the great efforts to prevent plunder. These two aims were successfully realised thanks to the strict hierarchy and obedience among the rebels, including the *yamaks*. In the light of their unruliness, loose obedience, and all the later discourse about their identity as riff-raff, this aspect of the *yamaks* is really interesting and worth studying. A basic difference between the uprising of 1807 and that of 1730 is that the rebel chiefs of 1730 were less careful in preventing plunder and guaranteeing the performance of religious duties. When the revolt of 1730 broke out, the *ezan* was not recited and religious duties were not performed on the initiative of the rebels. Furthermore, the population of Istanbul suffered from the plundering of the rebels of 1730.¹³⁷

134 BOA, Mühimme Defteri No. 226, pp. 116-117 (evahir-i Rebiyülevvel 1223/17-26 May 1808).

According to the order, it was the soldiers and commanders of other fortresses who complained about Hüseyin Ağa, and thus were instrumental in his dismissal. Sarıyerli İbrahim, a *haseki*, was appointed commander after his dismissal and punishment.

135 BOA, Mühimme Defteri No. 226, p. 130.

136 BOA, HAT 1365/53992 (undated; catalogue date: 1222/1807-1808): "Anların etdikleri ocağımıza gerek devlet-i aliyeye azim rezalet oldu. Bundan böyle dikkat etmek üzerinize farz gibidir".

137 Unat (ed.), *Abdi Tarihi*, 35-36. According to Abdi, the plunder took place not because of the uncontrolled acts of the common rebels, but on the initiative of the rebel chiefs themselves.

A look at the demands of the rebels of 1807 from the centre suggests that the *yamaks* may have had some kind of agenda, even if they were abused by some groups or individuals. The first of these demands was the surrender of a number of high officials of the time. They also demanded the abolition of the *Nizam-ı Cedid*. The final one was the deposition of Selim III. As usual in most Ottoman rebellions, the insurgents prepared an execution list and delivered it to the centre. It is also important to observe the rebels' insistence that the functionaries on the execution list should be delivered to them alive so that they could execute them themselves. Those captured by the rebels were dragged into the Meat Square. Apart from serving as exemplary punishment for the rest, the ritual of executing at the Square should also be considered as a practice demonstrating the power of the rebels to the Sultan and the populace. It gave a message that they – the rebels, including the *yamaks* – had the power and potential to punish the statesmen who allegedly had been abusing their power and prestige to oppress the people instead of serving them.

The issues discussed above direct our attention to the way in which the *yamaks* perceived the rebellion. How did they justify the uprising in the eyes of their contemporaries, but, more important, for themselves? Contemporaneous chronicles provide various clues about this issue. Two significant incidents occurred during the revolt, implying socio-economic tension which exacerbated the rebels' hatred towards the ruling elite. In the first incident, Şeyhülislam Ataullah Efendi and a rebel leader had a conversation. The leader asked the *şeyhülislam* "For whom did God create millet?", to which the latter replied "For birds". The next question was "What about corn?"; and the reply was "For animals". Finally, the rebel leader asked "And wheat?"; to which the *şeyhülislam* answered that wheat was created "for humans". Upon this reply, the rebel leader took out a loaf of bread of very poor quality, crying that the poor had to eat this bread which was not even made of corn or barley. Next, he took out a loaf of white bread eaten by the rich, complaining that Muslims were unfortunately obliged to eat the poor-quality bread. According to the rebel leader, the *şeyhülislam* and the *ulema* in general were guilty of not protecting the rights of the poor; instead, they issued *fetvas* in line with what the rulers instructed, "because they are *efendis*". In the end, the rebel leader exclaimed that the poor starved to death.¹³⁸ Note that the rebel leader sees himself as a member of the common people or as their representative. He believes that, since the poor were victims of oppression and injustice, the *ulema* were responsible for correcting injustice. Yet, the rebels ended up with a very brutal and radical solution, which was to eliminate the unjust rulers.

It is Cevdet Paşa who mentions the second incident. It takes place on Thursday, the fourth day of the rebellion, between the members of the *ulema* invited to the Meat Square and the rebels. During the meeting, Kabakçı Mustafa takes out a watch saying that "Our Sultan is just like this watch. While its mainspring once wound properly, so many bugs from the outside penetrated in, thus obstructing and halting its winding". According to Cevdet Paşa, by these words Kabakçı Mustafa implied that the Sultan was innocent and

138 The example is mentioned in G. Oğulukyan, *Georg Oğulukyan'ın Ruznamesi. 1806-1810 İsyancıları: III. Selim, IV. Mustafa, II. Mahmud ve Alemdar Mustafa Paşa*, ed. and trans. H. D. Andreasyan (Istanbul 1972), 7.

the aim of the rebels was the elimination of the guilty statesmen.¹³⁹ However, it also is important to underline the dual implication. First of all, if we think that the “bugs” who paralysed the system were the insurgents, the words of Kabakçı may be understood as an acknowledgement that the rebels had the power to paralyse the functioning system. Or, if the corrupt statesmen were the “bugs”, it means that Kabakçı Mustafa and his friends were trying to mend it.

The targets of the rebellion may also provide some clues about the concerns of the rebels. It is very clear that their initial or primary target was the abolition of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* (the New Order) and the *İrad-ı Cedid* (the New Fund). The *Nizam-ı Cedid* was abolished on the fourth day of the rebellion. However, the events ended only the next day with the dethronement of Selim III. Therefore, the main target of the insurgents seems to have been something more than the abolition of the New Order. Drawing upon the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi affiliations of most of the statesmen murdered in the course of the uprising, Butrus Abu-Manneh invites us to observe a socio-religious class conflict between the upper echelons of society with Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi connections and the lower layers with Bektashi affiliations. In other words, this means that the class conflict between the two layers of society was fed by the teachings of these two religious orders. Furthermore, he argues that the rebellion did not end after the abolition of the *Nizam-ı Cedid*, since the ultimate aim of the rebels was eliminating the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi elite.¹⁴⁰ Unfortunately, as far as reflected in the contemporary sources, there does not seem to be a consciousness on the part of the rebels that their fight was against the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order. Moreover, there were some statesmen who were not affiliated with the Mujaddidis.

In a similar way, Niyazi Berkes underlines the connection between the Bektashis and the janissaries, and argues that the Bektashi creed became an anti-state political ideology.¹⁴¹ Available clues do not allow us to reach clear-cut answers regarding these points. There is no specific Bektashi connection of the rebels, apart from some accusations to this effect by some authors such as Ubeydullah Kuşmanî.

Even if we are not able to determine the ideological background of the fight between the two groups, it is clear that during the uprising there was, among the rebels, a deep-seated hatred towards the ruling elite. As noted above, the insurgents prepared an execution list and demanded from the state the surrender of those whose names appeared on it. Thus, very important high-ranking officials were put to death very brutally by the rebels.¹⁴² Thanks to the contemporary accounts, it is possible to delineate a general im-

139 Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol. VIII (Istanbul 1309/1891 [2nd ed.]), 171: “Padişahımız işte bu saat gibidir. Daima çarhı yoluyla dönerken haricden bir nice böcekler girüb önüne haciz ve deveranına mani olmuştur”.

140 B. Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826-1876)* (Istanbul 2001), 9.

141 N. Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, with a new introduction by F. Ahmad (London 1998), 374.

142 For further details see Yıldız, ‘The Selimiyye Incident’, 392-410.

age of the ruling elite in the eyes of the rebels as well as the common people. It seems that the victims, namely, the so-called *Nizam-ı Cedid* elite, were considered as irrational and superstitious people. The most interesting example narrated almost in all sources is the case of the sale of life. More specifically, this incident refers to a legal document by which Yusuf Ağa, the *kethüda* of the Valide Sultan, purchased certain years of life from another person.¹⁴³ Contemporaneous authors are also of great help in tracing how common people behaved. For instance, during the uprising, the insurgents dragged Hacı İbrahim Efendi, a former director of the *İrad-ı Cedid* and the Minister of the Navy, to the Meat Square, mocking him “Stand up! Hacı İbrahim Efendi is passing”¹⁴⁴ and then handing him a paper which read: “I beg you, Sire! Please display your grace and take my petition into consideration”. Moreover, the insurgents who captured İbrahim Efendi cut off one of his fingers, saying that “with this finger of his, he has destroyed the homes of the poor”, and threw it into the janissary cauldron.¹⁴⁵ After his death, someone took out his liver, saying: “He destroyed my family and made my liver suffer anguish. So, I shall bake and eat his liver”.¹⁴⁶ It would be easily recognised that their complaints were usually aimed at oppression and haughtiness by the ruling elite. Nevertheless, the statesmen murdered during the uprising were also blamed for wearing ostentatious clothes and keeping a large retinue. There is also a certain degree of social alienation, as suggested in the texts. According to Asım, the ruling elite of the Selimian period was very concerned with renewal, imitating Westerners both in how they behaved and where they lived.¹⁴⁷ One source claims that one of the victims of the uprising, Mahmud Raif Efendi, the former *reisülküttab*, was murdered by a rebel who cried “In the name and through God, I do not kill a Musulman, but Mahmud the Englishman”.¹⁴⁸ Some strange-looking objects were discovered on some victims and the *şeyhülislam* had a hard time explaining to the rebels that they were not crosses, an anecdote demonstrating the great extent of alienation between the insurgents and the elite.

All these examples remind us of Şerif Mardin’s “tacit social contract”, which could simply be explained as a ‘contract’ defining mutual expectations between the rulers and the ruled. In this context, social hostility developed against the Sultan or the ruling elite, who were seen as not respecting certain rights and privileges, such as the janissaries’ privileges (e.g., not wearing *Nizam-ı Cedid* uniforms, participating in the Friday ceremony), immunity from oppression, or a smoothly-functioning provisioning system. In this respect, the bread incident above points to the widened economic gap between the rulers and the ruled and to the significance of oppression. Even Asım, in his capacity as an offi-

143 Ibid., 718.

144 Câbî Ömer Efendi, *Câbî Tarihi (Tarih-i Selim-i Salis ve Mahmud-ı Sani)*, Vol. I, ed. M. A. Beyhan (Ankara 2003), 412.

145 Oğulokyan, *Georg Oğulokyan’ın Ruznamesi*, 13.

146 F. Ç. Derin, ‘Yayla İmamı Risalesi’, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, 27 (1973), 228.

147 Ahmed Asım Efendi, *Tarih-i Asım*, II:10.

148 *The Times*, 7115 (3 August 1808), 3.

cial historian, confirms the existence of hatred towards the statesmen among the masses, resulting from economic and social oppression. For this reason, during their march towards the Meat Square, the main insurgent group encouraged one another by reminding themselves that their aim was the abolition of the *Nizam-ı Cedid*, the correcting of religion, and the elimination of the tyrannical elite.

The insurgents of the May 1807 uprising demanded either the execution or appointment of specific persons or groups of people, but never proceeded to making appointments themselves. In contrast, in 1730, Patrona Halil and his comrades not only demanded the execution of several statesmen, but also dismissed and appointed certain senior officials on their own initiative. For instance, in the course of the uprising, the rebels appointed a new judge.¹⁴⁹ What is interesting is that the rebels hastened to appoint almost all high-ranking officers of the janissary army, including the *ağa* of the janissaries, the *sersekbaban*, a *kul kethüdası*, a *başyazıcı*, a *cebecibaşı*, and some other senior officers.¹⁵⁰ It seems that the new appointees were mostly people of obscure origin and had little experience in the duties they were charged with. This became a common practice among the rebels of 1730 until the accession of Mahmud I to the throne. After the rebellion, forced appointments or dismissals under the pressure of the rebels continued, such as the appointment of a non-Muslim butcher, who served at the Meat Square, as the *hospodar* of Moldavia. Upon the insistence of Patrona Halil, the Crimean Khan was also deposed and replaced with a new one.¹⁵¹ Such acts by the rebels cannot be explained only within the framework of revenge. When a group of rebels appoint a janissary *ağa* or change the Crimean Khan or even appoint an ordinary butcher as a *hospodar*, we should be able to see a serious challenge to the state and sultanic authority. On the other hand, we may dismiss these incidents as the acts of a group of notorious rebels who got out of control thanks to the power and prestige that they gained following the uprising. However, the mockery of the existing system and the readiness to play the role of the sultan are not so easy to disregard. If allowed, Patrona Halil and his comrades seem to have been ready to share some sultanic power.¹⁵²

The most serious act and success of the rebels of 1807 was securing a document, signed personally by the Sultan, which promised immunity to all involved in the uprising. Even though some papers of amnesty had been previously issued, the signature of Mustafa IV makes the document in question unique in Ottoman history. What seems clear is the fact that the rebels thought that they corrected a mistake. This is the basic idea in this document, which, as noted above, is called the Legal Document, or *Hüccet-i Şer'iyye*. It was signed a short time after the accession of Mustafa IV (31 May 1807) between the rebels and the leading statesmen. The document can be divided in three sections, namely, the main text, the signatures of leading officials, and an imperial decree

149 Unat (ed.), *Abdi Tarihi*, 34.

150 Ibid., 36-37, 45.

151 Ibid., 52.

152 We should add that apparently Patrona Halil and his comrades did not make any serious investigation, but rather appointed a certain person as soon as they saw him favouring their cause.

issued by Mustafa IV. The main part denounces the *Nizam-ı Cedid* as a major innovation (*bid'at*) and treats the *İrad-ı Cedid* as a source of oppression and all wrongdoing. The document also blames the Selimian elite for pursuing its self-interest and oppressing the poor. After some other accusations, it points out that the ruling elite had alienated itself from the rest of society, antagonising the “glorious janissary army”. As a result, the janissaries and their commanders collaborated with the elite and the *ulema*, sincerely guided by the aim of rectifying the world (*ıslah-ı alem*), and broke their allegiance to Selim III.

The document uses no such terms as rebellion or uprising whatsoever. With reference to the rebellion, only the term ‘kıyam’ (mutiny) is used once. The Legal Document defines the incident as an uprising against the oppression of the elite, the rebels’ intention being to correct the wrongdoings. So it officially declares that the members of the rebellious group would not be held responsible and given any punishment for their actions. On the other hand, the document also states that janissaries as the ‘men of sword’ exceeded their limits while correcting a mistake. What happened lay beyond their authority, a mistake which would be forgiven only once. The document guaranteed that the military class would not intervene in any issue in the future. As clearly put in the document, the reaction of the military class against a *bid'at* was tolerated only for this particular case, but any future ‘corrections’ would not be ignored. It is unfortunate that the document did not specify possible future actions to be taken in the event of fresh innovations occurring. Nevertheless, this point is explained in another document, with reference to the Legal Document, which stated that it was the *ulema*, not the military class, who would be responsible for such matters.¹⁵³

As previously noted, the Legal Document, as a result of a bargaining process, is interesting and unique, as it resembles a covenant concluded between the ruler and the rebels. In simple terms, Mustafa IV pardoned the insurgents for their actions, while they promised not to get involved in issues exceeding their scope of authority. In this covenant, the Sultan appears as the weaker party, since he should not have been an official party to such an agreement. On the other hand, another point which needs to be emphasised is that, contrary to some assertions, the Legal Document did not prepare the ground for further janissary interventions, but prevented, at least in principle, any future military involvement in politics.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this essay was to identify the dynamics which empowered a group of young and poor people to take the initiative ‘from the bottom up’ and provoke a change on the Ottoman throne. Further, preliminary research into their identity has revealed some important results. Our findings strongly suggest that, in the Bosphorus fortresses, there was a concentration of young people in their thirties from various cities, with almost half of them coming from Ahıska. Such a concentration may have increased

153 TSMA, E. 9198 (17 Cemaziyevvel 1222/23 July 1807); Yıldız, ‘The Selimiyye Incident’, 469.

group solidarity among the *yamaks* in the name of being fellow countrymen. They also seem to have preserved their local ties and relatively low professionalisation while in the forts, and also to have enjoyed a relative freedom from the intervention of the centre. In this respect, being away from *intra muros* Istanbul increased the chances of the rebels of becoming organised before the intervention of the centre. Furthermore, as a military group the *yamaks* were armed, which gave them the advantage of using violence in order to either protect themselves or realise their aims.

Low wages and economic abuses may have given rise to resentment as well as reaction towards the centre. As may be recalled, the Porte decided to establish a cash waqf with the money endowed by the Sultan himself with a view to covering the burial expenses of poor soldiers. This suggests that reducing extreme poverty and also reaction to the centre were existing concerns. Poor pay may also have driven these soldiers to other ways of earning their livelihood, such as cultivating the fields around the fortresses. As underlined above, it seems that the residents of the villages around the fortresses, particularly the non-Muslims, suffered from physical and economic oppression by the soldiers.

The rebels of May 1807 considered themselves as a group of people reacting to oppression and injustices committed by corrupt statesmen. There is no sign that they were envisioning an alternative system of government, such as the “*cumhur cemiyeti*” (people’s association) of Çalık Ahmed, a janissary rebel of the 1703 uprising, the so-called ‘Edirne Event’ (*Edirne Vak’ası*).¹⁵⁴ In their case, they were not trying to change the existing system, but considered themselves an integral part of it and found in themselves the right to correct the mistakes in the system. However, it should be remembered that only one year later, in 1808, rebels participating in the Alemdar Incident cited the names of other persons and families as alternatives to the ruling dynasty.¹⁵⁵

154 C. Kafadar, ‘Janissaries and Other Riffraff of Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels without a Cause?’, *IJTS*, 13/1 & 2 (2007), 133. According to Kafadar, Çalık Ahmed had most probably a “Janissary oligarchy in mind”, similar to the North African regencies.

155 Following this incident, Mahmud II executed his dethroned brother Mustafa (IV). Evidently, Mahmud II’s purpose was to prevent his re-accession to the throne and to secure his own rule. When the rebels, who had surrounded the palace, demanding the reinstatement of Mustafa, heard of his death, they suggested that Esma Sultan, the Crimean Khan, or the Mevlevi sheikh in Konya could rule. For a study of alternative families to the Ottoman dynasty see F. Emeçen, ‘Osmanlı Hanedanına Alternatif Arayışlar Üzerine Bazı Örnekler ve Mülâhazalar’, *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6 (2001), 63-76.

PART FOUR

CONTRIBUTING A ‘TOP-DOWN’ PERSPECTIVE

CONTROLLING BORDERS AND WORKMEN,
ALL IN ONE FELL SWOOP:
REPAIRS TO THE OTTOMAN FORTRESS OF HOTIN (1716)

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IN DEALING WITH OTTOMAN MIGRATIONS, today's historian will soon find that this phenomenon looks vastly different when regarded from differing viewpoints: in the government's perspective, the sultans' subjects were to stay put on their farms and villages and pay their taxes. By contrast, 'on the ground' there were people, such as nomads and the much smaller numbers of wandering Sinti and Roma, who made their livelihoods through migration. Such people were continuously on the move, but always subject to a degree of official suspicion.

Ottoman administrators of the eighteenth century encouraged nomads to change over to farming, although the more systematic settlement projects of the late 1600s had on the whole been failures.¹ But in the 1700s the most obvious worry of the central government in connection with migration was not the movement of Anatolian nomads, but rather the tendency of its Balkan and Anatolian subjects, usually peasants or townsmen, to migrate to Istanbul. After all, ordinary people might benefit from the strict control that the administration exercised over the prices of everyday goods, and the inhabitants did not need to worry about the supply of grain, at least as long as the Black Sea remained an Ottoman lake, in other words, until the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-1774. These factors must have made the city attractive to migrants, especially young unattached men who found it difficult to take over a farm or enter a guild; after all, the latter increasingly hesitated to admit people who were not the sons of masters.

In the eighteenth century, migration to Istanbul and the government's policies designed to counteract these movements form a major topic of what we might call 'Ottoman domestic politics'.² However, it is difficult to discern the motivations and initia-

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1 C. Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Aşiretleri İskân Teşebbüsü (1691-1696)* (Istanbul 1963). See also R. Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle 2009), 53-83.

2 S. Faroqhi, 'Migration into Eighteenth Century "Greater Istanbul" as Reflected in the Kadi Registers of Eyüp', *Turcica*, 30 (1998), 163-183, and Eadem, 'Migrationen in staatlicher Regie: Osmanische Handwerker des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts beim Ortswechsel nach Istanbul', in K. Schulz (ed.), *Handwerk in Europa. Vom Spätmittelalter bis zur frühen Neuzeit* (Munich 1999),

tives of ordinary subjects given a military and bureaucratic system whose documentation all but exclusively focused on the concerns of the administration. Often we know more about the government's attempt to foil migration than about the moves and motivations of the migrants; to deal with the latter, we have to resort to indirect evidence, which satisfies our curiosity only within certain limits.

In the present case we will focus on a project that involved the removal of young single men from the city, in many cases for good. As we will see, the Ottoman officials identified many of these men as 'Arnavud' (Albanians), a term that seems to have characterised them as recent migrants; however, since we know very little about social cohesion and identity within Istanbul's 'Arnavud' community, we do not know when a man ceased to be regarded as a migrant and became a bona fide resident of Istanbul. Sultanic law prescribed – depending on circumstances – a period of 10-20 years after which migrants could no longer be returned to their home communities. But given the almost obsessive concern of the Ottoman administration with reducing the 'surplus' population of Istanbul, we cannot be sure that these limits were always respected.

Especially when it came to sending young men to a construction project far away from the capital, such enterprises in the minds of officialdom doubtless could function as a means of emptying the city of young, usually single, men of migrant background, who might become involved in political upheavals or even revolts. This issue was to become an even more serious concern in the mid 1700s, after a rebellion in which soldiers, supported to some extent by local artisans and commanded by an Albanian irregular, murdered the Grand Vizier and forced Sultan Ahmed III to abdicate (1730).³ But the 'independent' migration especially of Albanians to Istanbul had been a long-term concern ever since the late 1500s, and it appears *en filigrane* behind the action that we will analyse here.⁴

The Building Project

Our concern will be with an important northern fortification, namely Hotin, today located in Ukraine. From the Ottoman point of view, the place had a chequered history: in the early 1620s, Osman II (r. 1618-1622) had campaigned but failed to take the fortress; and this negative experience may have caused him to attempt to set up an army corps to rival the janissaries, an undertaking that ended with his deposition and murder.⁵ But in

277-296 (an English version has been published in S. Faroqhi, *Stories of Ottoman Men and Women: Establishing Status, Establishing Control* [Istanbul 2002]).

3 M. Aktepe, *Patrona İsyanı (1730)* (Istanbul 1958), 131.

4 Even in the late 1500s, Ottoman officials had had serious reservations about Albanians seeking work in Istanbul; S. Faroqhi, *Towns and Townsmen of Ottoman Anatolia: Trade, Crafts and Food Production in an Urban Setting, 1520-1650* (Cambridge 1984), 271. Cf. N. Ergin, 'Bathing Business in Istanbul: A Case Study of the Çemberlitaş Hamamı in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Eadem (ed.), *Bathing Culture of Anatolian Civilizations: Architecture, History, and Imagination* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole 2011), 142-168.

5 On Osman II and his policies, compare the new work of B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge 2010).

1673 Hotin did fall into the hands first of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687) and then of the King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Ottomans returned in force in 1676, when the Grand Vizier Fazıl Ahmed Paşa had the place fortified; but during the years which followed Hotin came to form part of the territory of the princes of Moldavia. In 1711, the Ottomans once again took direct control, but there was another interruption in 1713 when the armies of Tsar Peter I of Russia briefly occupied the castle. After this last interlude, in 1716 the Ottoman government once again revamped the fortifications, perhaps with the involvement of French engineers: probably this enterprise resulted in the outer wall, four gates, two public baths, two large mosques, and a covered market whose remains are still visible today (Ill. 1).⁶ But before the reconstruction, Hotin was probably a run-down place, as was true of many other military and civilian structures after decades of Balkan warfare.



III. 1: Remains of the fortress of Hotin

6 Very informative articles on 'Hotin/Khotin' can be found in *TDVİA* (D. Kołodziejczyk), *İA* (A. Decei), and *EP* (C. Heywood). In addition, the Türk Tarih Kurumu is preparing a work of reference on Ottoman structures outside of Turkey; for this project Bozkurt Ersoy (Ege Üniversitesi, İzmir) has investigated Hotin. He has kindly supplied the photograph of the fortress; I am very grateful for his help.

An officer of the Ottoman garrison, who wrote in the mid 1700s, produced a detailed description of the fortress as it was at that time; an abridged translation into German was published by O. M. F. von Schlechta Wssehrd, 'Walachei, Moldau, Bessarabien, die Krim und Asow usw', *Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 40 (1862), 550, 562-568.

We do not know exactly what work on which buildings the authorities had scheduled for Hotin in 1716; for the *keşif defteri* that must have described the project in detail and also contained an estimate of costs has not yet emerged in the Ottoman archives. However, since 399 artisans involved in the building trades apparently were drafted in Istanbul alone, the project was probably of some importance: it certainly included the construction/reconstruction of the fortress bath along with its water conduits and the paving of certain surfaces either within or outside the fortress walls. In addition, this project may have involved the construction of the outer walls that archaeologists have labelled as 'Turkish'. Certain rooms used by the officers or perhaps the local mosque were even to receive painted decoration, for there were two painters/designers (*nakkas*) among the draftees that the Sultan's officials decided to send to Hotin. In addition, the architects in charge may well have recruited a large contingent of less qualified workmen on site, but on these people we do not possess any information.

A small register recording this enterprise is dated to Cemaziyevvel 1128/April-May 1716; it covers an early stage in the construction process, namely the recruitment of building artisans in Istanbul.⁷ Our text documents a session in the presence of the *kadı* of Galata, who had moved his court to Arnavutköy on the Bosphorus; in this record the *kadı*'s scribes document the official handing over of the artisans' travel expenses (*harcirah*) and the three months' pay in advance that the authorities previously had promised to these men. However, the relevant sums of money seem to have passed through the hands of a few foremen organising this case of official and enforced labour migration; and, moreover, the wages paid to different categories of builders may have been quite different, so that we do not know how much hard cash each workman received at the end of the day. But on an average the official monthly wage amounted to 1,215 *akçes*; this sum was equivalent to slightly more than 10 *guruş*, the standard coin in use at that time. Compared to the wages paid to builders in Istanbul, this payment was fairly generous, as in 1716 unskilled construction labourers in this city received 711 *akçes* per month and skilled masters 1,032 *akçes*, assuming that they worked for 30 days a month, which presumably was not the case. Unfortunately, we do not know what prices were like in Hotin and what extras the workmen might have needed, given the colder climate.⁸ As for the standard travel expenses, they amounted to 1,227 *akçes* per person, which roughly corresponded to one month's pay.

In order to ensure that the money actually reached the draftees and did not end up in the money-belts of the foremen under the heading of some 'administrative overhead' or other, the court session took place in Arnavutköy on the Bosphorus, where some of the artisans probably lived. Admittedly we cannot prove this assumption, as the name 'Arnavutköy' does not occur among the different places of artisan residence mentioned in our lists. But it is likely that some of the people recorded as 'Arnavud' without further precision did in fact live in this place, for otherwise it would not have made any sense for the

7 BOA, Maliyeden Müdevver (MAD) 1619.

8 Ş. Pamuk, *İstanbul ve Diğer Kentlerde 500 Yıllık Fiyatlar ve Ücretler, 1469-1998* (Ankara 2000), 71.

kadı of Galata to make a lengthy trip up the Bosphorus. Be that as it may: after an official verification, at least some of the workers soon to depart for Hotin testified in front of the judge that everything was in good order.

In the proceedings documented, the incumbent Chief Architect (*sermimaran-ı hassa*), Mehmed Ağa b. Abdurrahman, confronted Hasan Ağa, a servitor of the then commander of Hotin, Damad Mehmed Paşa, and requested that he confirm the receipt of 16,177.5 *guruş* of travel money and advance pay. At the end of the register there was a document issued by this same Chief Architect Mehmed testifying that the 16,177.5 *guruş* in question corresponded to the total of the sums, previously calculated in *akçes*, which the draftees had received. Nine ships were ready to depart for Hotin; but our text does not tell us when and where exactly the men were to embark. Unfortunately, the register has suffered quite severe damage in the top and bottom sections of every single page, which at times makes interpretation rather difficult.

Identifying Persons: From Slaves to Labourers

Perhaps the full extent of the Hotin restoration project will emerge through archaeological research.⁹ However, our document is of interest not so much because of the information it provides about the building, but rather because of the light that it sheds on the manner in which the Ottoman administration of the 1700s recruited artisans to serve on official projects in fairly remote provinces. This issue has been extensively studied where the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are concerned, but we know rather little about recruitment procedures during later periods.¹⁰ And, as previously noted, we have virtually no information about how the artisans affected reacted to the government's decision: presumably some of them took flight and thus 'voted with their feet', but our document does not provide any information on this aspect of the matter.

However, there is another side to the recruitment issue which to date has not much concerned Ottomanist historians of the pre-Tanzimat period, namely the manner in which the authorities tried to keep track of the people whom they had drafted. On the other hand, this issue is currently a serious concern for historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both Ottomanist and Europeanist. Recent studies of the modernisation of the Ottoman administration during the Tanzimat period (beginning in 1839) and afterwards have shown that similarly to their French, Russian, Habsburg, Prussian – and later German – counterparts, the sultans' bureaucrats were also in the business of keeping track of at least those Istanbul residents who happened to live in the reigns of Selim III (1789-1807) and Mahmud II (1808-1839).¹¹ This undertaking certainly was

9 Or else there may be publications already available that I have missed in languages that I do not read, such as Ukrainian or Russian.

10 Ö. L. Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami ve İmareti İnşaatı (1550-1557)*, 2 vols (Ankara 1972, 1979); G. Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York and Cambridge, Mass. 1991), 232-233.

11 C. Kırılı, 'A Profile of the Labor Force in Early Nineteenth-Century Istanbul', *International La-*

not confined to the gathering of statistics; for officialdom aimed at limiting the movements of the Empire's inhabitants to the purposes that their 'rulers and betters' considered necessary.

Nor were all measures of control recent inventions: western and central European officialdom already in the later Middle Ages had developed techniques for identifying at least those people who were 'wanted' for one reason or another. The paperwork that they produced sometimes included rudimentary descriptions of physical appearances.¹² In the same vein, Ottoman officials did not await the mid nineteenth century before they started to identify people "by their names and appearances" (*isim ve resimleriyle*), as the authors of many documents in the sixteenth-century chancery registers (*mühimme*) liked to put it. Quite often local officials received orders to report various refractory characters in this manner. But so far we have not located any actual documents from this period containing detailed descriptions of individuals who had incurred the wrath of the Sultan or his servitors; and thus in all likelihood the practice existed, but was not very widespread.

Certainly the sets of documents issued in the 1500s, 1600s, or 1700s did not contain any sketches, although at first glance, the term *resim* might give us such an impression. Presumably in most cases when the administration wanted specific people to work on a sultanic building project or provide luxury goods for the palace, the local *kadı* received a list of the relevant names.¹³ As only the members of some prominent households used family names in the 1600s or 1700s, the judges in charge of the recruitment process sometimes must have had a hard time telling apart the various 'Mehmed son of Ahmed' and 'Kosta son of Nikola'. After all, it was the responsibility of these officials to ensure that the right persons arrived in Istanbul. Probably the *kadıs* relied on the testimony of witnesses as to the identities of the people involved, as was common practice in ordinary court cases. However, we cannot preclude the possibility that a judge newly appointed to his position and/or unpopular in the place where he served was sometimes deceived and sent the wrong persons. In such cases his superiors in the capital were usually more than ready to assume that the unfortunate *kadı* had accepted a bribe. In some cases this accusation may have well been true; but possibilities of genuine error were numerous as well.

Furthermore, how was the *kadı* to ensure that the people that he had selected really made it to their destinations? In some cases the central administration had the men that it

bor and Working Class History, 60 (2001), 125-140; B. Başaran, 'Remaking the Gate of Felicity: Policing, Social Control, and Migration in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century, 1789-1793', 2 vols, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2006.

12 V. Groebner, *Der Schein der Person: Steckbrief, Ausweis und Kontrolle im Europa des Mittelalters* (Munich 2004); J.-P. Gutton, *Etablir l'identité. L'identification des Français du Moyen Âge à nos jours* (Lyon 2010). This paper also owes a good deal to discussions with Fatmanur Sarmastı, who has defended an M.A. thesis at Boğaziçi University on Ottoman internal passports in the nineteenth century.

13 Ahmed Refik [Altınay] (ed.), *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicrîde İstanbul Hayatı (1495-1591)* (Istanbul 1988 [reprint]), 133, has published a sultanic command ordering some masters in the craft of carpet manufacture to relocate from Cairo to Istanbul; officials clearly had picked these particular men because they were known as especially competent.

had requested conveyed to their new workplaces under guard; but in other instances the craftsmen apparently made their own way to the site where the Sultan's bureaucrats had seen fit to send them.¹⁴ When the Süleymaniye complex was under construction, artisans ordered to relocate to the Ottoman capital sometimes appear in the relevant documents with their personal names; but in other cases officials only wrote down the number of masons or carpenters as well as the names of the people in charge of bringing the artisans to the construction site. In such a case it was obviously the job of the latter, sometimes known as *mu'temed*, to identify the men in question. When non-Muslims were at issue, the officials in charge sometimes took away the receipts proving that the men recruited had paid their poll-tax (*cizye*) for the current year: presumably the draftees would not risk having to pay twice over. Clearly, once they arrived at their destinations, some scribe checked the men against whatever list was in his hands and, in some cases at least, he must have arranged for replacements when people had died or become incapacitated en route.¹⁵ If the office-holder in charge had even a rudimentary idea of the physical characteristics of the men arriving at the work-place, his task must have been easier, although the margin of error remained significant.

Therefore, by the 1700s at least some registers of draftees contained simple 'verbal portraits' of the artisans whom the authorities had seen fit to send off. As models for their descriptions the officials could use the relatively numerous 'wanted' notifications concerning escaped slaves which we can find in certain *kadı* registers of the early and mid sixteenth century, now conveniently available in the partially published registers of Üsküdar.¹⁶ In these texts, we do not normally find the names of the slaves at issue; and if names do occur, they refer to people who already had accepted Islam. By way of contrast, the *kadı*'s scribes always tried to indicate the ethnicity of the fugitive. Yet, we do not really know how officials found out whether a given man was a 'Rus' (Ukrainian/Russian) or a 'Macar' (Hungarian). The latter question must have been difficult to answer especially if the slave delivered to the court spoke no Turkish or Arabic.¹⁷ It is therefore prudent to allow for a margin of error; but still we can say with some confidence that when it came to escaped slaves, ethnicity as perceived by the scribes was a more important marker of identity than personal names.

14 Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, 2:2.

15 See *ibid.*, 2:3, for a brief list of Bursa workmen excused because the official in charge thought that they were unsuitable for the Süleymaniye construction site.

16 See, for example, K. Yıldız and R. Ahıskalı (eds), *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Üsküdar Mahkemesi 9 Numaralı Sicil (H. 940-942/M. 1534-1536)* (Istanbul 2010); R. Günelan, M. Akman and F. Sarıcaoglu (eds), *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Üsküdar Mahkemesi 26 Numaralı Sicil (H. 970-971/M. 1562-1563)* (Istanbul 2010). See also Y. J. Seng, 'Fugitives and Factotums: Slaves in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul', *JESHO*, 39 (1996), 136-169; Eadem, 'A Liminal State: Slavery in Sixteenth-Century Istanbul', in S. E. Marmon (ed.), *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East* (Princeton 1999), 24-43.

17 Arabic must have become relevant in the case of Africans, who often had spent time in Egypt or other North African provinces before arriving in Anatolia or Istanbul – typically the Africans all entered the record as 'Arab'.

In addition, people show up in these records as tall, short, or of medium build, the colour of the eyes appears frequently, as well as the configuration of the eyebrows, which might be knitted or set well apart. Physical defects such as lameness or a damaged hand also often entered the *kadı*'s registers. However, at least the scribes of Üsküdar were mostly interested in the clothes which the escaped men were wearing; thus, we may well attempt to re-construct the 'wardrobe' of lower-class males from the lists contained in these sixteenth-century registers.

A much more detailed form of personal description can be found in the registers entitled 'Evlad-ı kefer-i re'âyâ-yı Rumeli' of which only a few sample pages are currently available in print.¹⁸ The boys and young men appearing in one early seventeenth-century document were on their way to join the Sultan's army as candidate janissaries (*acemi oğlan/gilman-ı acemiyan*); the records contain both their birth names and those that they adopted after Islamisation, a rare example of an Ottoman bureaucrat detailing the non-Muslim antecedents of his fellow-Muslims. Even more remarkably, the names of the young men's mothers also appeared, and this peculiar practice extended even to the Muslim Bosnians who, as an exception to the rule that candidate janissaries must be rural Christians, regularly sent their sons to join the janissary corps. Evidently many recruits only had a rough idea of their ages, and the officials who entered this important information prefaced the relevant figures by the note "approximately" (*tahminen*). More or less precise information on ages is not found in other listings of people who had to leave their homes in order to serve the Ottoman rulers on construction sites or military campaigns. But – who knows? – perhaps one fine day the *devşirme* record of the architect Sinan will turn up in the treasure-house of the Istanbul archives!

Furthermore, the descriptions referred to the heights of these youngsters, which might be substantial or else medium; only when some *devşirme* registers have been published in full will we know whether the authorities avoided drafting young men smaller than average. In addition, the bureaucrats in charge of the recording process took down the colour of the boys' eyes and eyebrows, and also noted whether the latter were joined together or else set wide apart. However, most suitable for purposes of identification were the scars and skin blemishes that, if the published pages are at all representative, most of these people seem to have possessed. After all, they must have lived rough lives as shepherds and farm-hands, and already by late adolescence their bodies evidently showed traces of the hardships that most of them probably had suffered.

To sum it all up: as a working hypothesis for the present study I would suggest that in the 1500s systematic attempts at physical description involved mainly escaped slaves

18 S. Öztürk, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Siyakat Yazısı ve Tarihî Gelişimi* (Istanbul 1996), 349-351. The documents are dated to 1010/1601-1602. I thank Gilles Veinstein for directing me to this publication.

It is noteworthy that the draftees whose names we find in the pages published by Öztürk were all adolescents, between fourteen and eighteen years of age. If this was the normal pattern, evidently the administration had no interest in boys young enough to 'forget their homes and parents', as historians of a previous generation have sometimes suggested.

and people ‘wanted’ for transgressions that we would regard as political in the broader sense of the term. In addition, candidate janissaries attracted special attention, perhaps because, unlike fugitive slaves, they had families to fall back on if they wanted to escape. By the early 1700s, a larger and perhaps more self-confident bureaucracy did attempt to describe the facial features of a much more extensive group of people, for the early eighteenth-century officials concerned with the workmen sent to Hotin tried to describe the faces of all the people involved, as we will see. However, they showed absolutely no interest in the clothes worn by the men whom they recorded. Presumably the draftees normally possessed a change of clothes, while escaped slaves did not. We may speculate whether the administration regarded the status of *devşirme* recruits and drafted labourers as ‘slave-like’, but clear evidence for this assumption is missing.

The Social Organisation of the Draftee Building Workers

How did the officials compiling the register of 1716 designate the workers whom they had drafted? On the one hand, they used expressions denoting individual crafts, such as carpenters or stonecutters. But when referring to these men in the collective, they favoured the term *amele* (worker); we can hypothesise that apart from some men described as *usta* (master) and perhaps a few others, the people drafted for the Hotin project did not count as highly-skilled specialists. Among the exceptions proving the rule, the title of *usta* distinguished certain diggers of sewers and/or mine shafts for explosives (*lağımçı*), a maker of screws and/or boring equipment (*burgucu*), a few blacksmiths, one of the *hamam*-builders, and also the two glaziers.

<i>Neccar</i> (car- penter)	<i>Hamamcı</i> (plumber)	<i>Kiřfeki</i> <i>madenci</i> (quarry worker)	<i>Tař</i> <i>kırıcı</i> (breaker of stones)	<i>Camcı</i> (glazier)	<i>Suyolcu</i> (builder of water con- duits)	<i>Nakkař</i> (painter, design- er)	<i>Bıçkıcı</i> (saw- yer)	<i>Lağımçı</i> (shaft- digger)
25	10	25	50	2	5	2	2	50
<i>Kireç</i> <i>yakıcı</i> (lime- burner)	<i>Testereci</i> (artisan using a saw or handsaw)	<i>Burgucu</i> (maker of screws)	<i>Tař</i> <i>yontucu</i> (stone- cutter)	<i>Kaldırımçı</i> (layer of pave- ments)	<i>Demirci</i> (black- smith)	<i>Duvarcı</i> (mason)	<i>Sıvacı</i> (plas- terer)	Total
40	1	1	20	5	9	150	2	399

Table I: Istanbul artisans to be sent to Hotin

As Table I shows, the vast majority of the workmen dealt in one way or another with the construction of walls: 38 per cent of the draftees were masons, who could count on the assistance of 135 workmen preparing the stones and lime that they would need. Thus, the labourers who obtained stone from the quarries, broke it up, and cut it into usable pieces, along with the lime-burners, made up another 34 per cent. As for the *lağımçı*s, it is hard to specify their duties exactly; for, quite prosaically, these 40 men could have worked on the sewers of the fortress, but they could also have served as a military reserve, to help

in the construction of counter-mines if ever an enemy besieged Hotin. Be that as it may, at 13 per cent of the total, the share of the *lağmcıs* was substantial. The carpenters provided the scaffolding and perhaps also constructed the ceilings, while 15 specialist bath-builders and conduit-makers were in charge of building or restoring the *hamams*.

Apart from documenting the payment of wages and travel grants, our text also records the people who guaranteed both the workmen – presumably their appearance on the worksite – and the appropriate use of the money paid out. Unfortunately, some of the most interesting details have disappeared because of the damage that the register has suffered. Even so, the identities of the witnesses and guarantors whose names are legible do repay analysis. We will begin with the witnesses to the proceedings in the *kadı*'s court in Arnavutköy. As we have seen, this session concerned the payment of wages and travel money by the Chief Architect to the man in charge of conveying the workers to Hotin; but at least some of the draftees were present and received their money in person. The witnesses include a certain Ahmed Çelebi, described as the assistant head of the guild of timber-sellers (*yiğitbaşı-ı taife-i keresteci*), and el-Hac Halil, who was a butcher by trade. In addition, there was a personage bearing the honorific *fahriü'l-akran*, who may well have been a military man. Put differently, the guarantors were outsiders to the construction-related guilds and the heads of the latter do not seem to have appeared at all in this court session. At the very end of the register we are informed that the 150 Albanian masons drafted for the project all stood surety for one another and that, in addition, the assistant head of their guild and a number of men without titles also acted as guarantors.

We encounter a similar arrangement when examining the guarantors vouching for the appearance of other craftsmen in Hotin; once again the proper use of the funds expended on the travel of carpenters, stonecutters, or glaziers was the main concern of the authorities. Certainly in this case the *kethüdas* of the relevant guilds were prominently in evidence. However, they almost never vouched for their men alone, but shared the risk with a large number of people who once again did not bear any titles and therefore must have been ordinary craftsmen. At the end of these enumerations we often find the note “and others” (*ve sairleri*); this remark may mean that the guarantors were too numerous to mention individually. Presumably the risks involved in standing surety were too great for any one person to shoulder; and even when there was no explicit statement to this effect, all members of the guilds involved may well have stood surety for one another, according to a pattern also known from other ‘difficult’ or ‘delicate’ situations.¹⁹

The vast majority of the men and boys drafted for Hotin were Christians of one sort or another; the register did not include any Jews at all. Muslims mostly clustered in certain crafts: thus, all the blacksmiths adhered to Islam. In addition, a few Muslims appeared among the workmen extracting stone from quarries. Decorators, glaziers, as well as makers of boring equipment and water conduits, who also were all Muslims, must have counted among the more highly skilled craftsmen; but it is impossible to say whether they were also better paid. After all, the accounts lump together wages and travel expenses and even

19 Başaran, ‘Remaking the Gate of Felicity’, has discussed these matters as regards Istanbul during the late 1700s; her book on the subject is forthcoming.

though we possess information on average travel grants, we do not know whether the latter were the same for everyone or else graded according to skill or seniority.

As was customary when detailing the sultans' free subjects, our register identified the draftees by their own names and the names of their fathers. In addition, residence was a major factor. People might live in a business structure or khan (*han*) located in Istanbul or an ordinary urban ward in the same city; if we are willing to accept a certain margin of error, we may claim that the inhabitants of a khan lived apart from their families, either because they were recent immigrants or because they had for some reason left the households headed by their fathers. Another reason for which we need to admit a significant margin of error is because brothers or cousins might strike out together; and the same thing might apply to a man and his young son. Thus, when we find people with the same patronymic in one and the same line of our register, it makes sense to assume that they were brothers. On the other hand, we may posit that the men domiciled in an urban quarter co-habited with family members including females, either because they were married or else because they still formed part of their fathers' households.

When recruiting workmen, the officials seem to have collected information on the areas where members of the craft they were looking for were likely to reside. Apparently it was common enough for people of the same craft and/or religion to live in the same urban ward or at least in neighbouring town quarters. Thus, a sizeable group of Armenian carpenters was on record in Kasımpaşa, near the dockyards where they may have found employment in shipbuilding. Other Armenians lived around the church of Surp Kevork/Sulumanastır, which until 1641 had been the patriarchal seat.²⁰ A large group of Albanian masons lived in the neighbourhood known as Çukurçeşme; presumably this locality was identical to the quarter of that name appearing on early twentieth-century maps, not far from the Süleymaniye.²¹ Three blacksmiths all claimed to live in the vicinity of the Edirne Gate, while knots of Armenian stonecutters dwelt in the area around the Hippodrome and in a place described simply as 'Mevlevihane'. In all probability this latter term designated not one of the often rather elite lodges of the Mevlevi order of dervishes, but rather the Mevlevihane Gate in the Istanbul land walls, which is still the centre of a very modest district. Outside the city limits, Armenian stonecutters inhabited the village of Makrohorya, otherwise known as Makrihorye, and today as the rather well-to-do Istanbul district of Bakırköy. In all these cases, however, it remains unclear whether the 'addresses' given corresponded to workshops or else to people's homes.

Somewhat more information is available on the lime-burners, whose shops were located at some distance from the city centre because of the space required and the ever-present danger of fire. We find some of these establishments in the vicinity of the gates in the Byzantine land walls known as Topkapı and Edirnekapı. Another batch bordered the shores of the Bosphorus in the village of Çubuklu, and lime-burners also operated in the as yet unidentified settlement of Umuryerli (?). In this instance the Sultan's officials iden-

20 *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. 'Kevork (Surp) Kilisesi' (V. Seropyan).

21 On the locations mentioned here, compare İ. Dağdelen (ed.), *Alman Mavileri: 1913-1914 I. Dünya Savaşı Öncesi İstanbul Haritaları*, 3 vols (Istanbul 2006-2007).

tified the draftees by stating the name of the master operating the workshop (*kârhane*) where they laboured. Unfortunately, we do not know whether Kristo, Kara Miho, Yani, and other owners of such workshops were active at the time of writing or whether these people were long dead and other entrepreneurs continued to use the names of their predecessors. We can only conclude that, in spite of a diligent search in the archival sources, many aspects of artisan life as yet remain a closed book.

Last but not least, there were the numerous men declaring that they lived and/or worked in a khan or barracks (*han, odalar*). Owing to the damage that the register has suffered, numbers are approximate, but quite obviously a minimum of 150 men or 37 per cent of the total lived in various urban khans. These men resided mainly in the ‘Yeni Odalar’, one of the larger janissary barracks.²² Most inhabitants of the khans and especially the Yeni Odalar were also on record as ‘Arnavud’; apparently it was thus possible at least for Albanian Christians to find more or less temporary refuge in janissary barracks.

Kuşunlu Han 27	Mehmed Ağa Hanı 2	Testereci Hanı 3	Papas Odaları 6	Gedikpaşa Tekneci Odaları 5
Hekimbaşı Hanı 5	Yeni Odalar 78	Zincirli Han 8	Papas Hanı 14	Çatal Hanı 2

Table II: Draftees residing in urban khans²³

Physical Characteristics and Ethnicity

When it came to identifying individuals, evidently the scribes compiling our register considered certain physical characteristics a ‘must’. Official concern focused on beards and moustaches; interestingly the eye-colour of the men and the configuration of their eyebrows were not a major issue, although, after all, these characteristics were more permanent than beards, which easily could be shaved off. At least among early eighteenth-century Istanbul Christians, it was common enough to be clean shaven; by contrast, the men described here never seem to have rid themselves of their moustaches. However, many of the draftees were so young that they did not as yet possess fully developed facial hair; our scribes recorded these adolescents as possessing a *taze bıyık* without specifying the colour. Occasionally these young men also appeared as *emred* or more rarely as *genç*. As for those people who did possess moustaches of a recognisable colour, they appeared as fair (*sarışın*), light brown (*kumral*), black (*kara*) and – probably – pepper-and-salt (*kırılmış*), rarely as grey (*kır*). The same colours also served to describe beards;

²² Compare *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. ‘Yeni Odalar’ (N. Sakaoglu).

²³ I have excluded khans with only one recorded sojourner. Among the buildings listed, only the Zincirli Han corresponds to a building mentioned in the list of late eighteenth-century Istanbul khans as compiled by K. Pamukciyan, ‘18. Yüzyılın Sonlarında İstanbul Hanları’, reprinted in Idem, *İstanbul Yazıları* (Istanbul 2002), 119–123. A Papasoğlu Hanı also appears in this list, which may or may not be identical with one of the two similarly named buildings in our table.

as people normally wore some kind of head-dress, their hair remained invisible and thus did not concern the officials.

Given the many workmen sharing the same features, even within one and the same trade, these facial descriptions must have been of little help to the scribes attempting to identify individuals who had absented themselves during the long voyage to Hotin. But perhaps when holding roll-calls of smaller groups, the enumerations of facial features may have been of some limited assistance: after all, most of the craft-based groups conveyed to Hotin were small, so that the number of people with the same recorded characteristics was limited as well. It is thus noteworthy that the bureaucrats in charge attempted physical description on a large scale, even if the results obtained were less than impressive.²⁴

As for ethnicity, it was of major importance whenever the men in question declared themselves as Albanians/Arnavud, or if the authorities believed that the men under consideration belonged to this particular ethnic group. In such cases Muslims did not receive the privilege of having their names precede those of the 'unbelievers', although this practice was otherwise universal in Ottoman bureaucratic records. Furthermore, the number of Muslims among the Albanians recruited for the Hotin project was rather limited, even though by this time, the Islamisation process in the Albanian provinces had been going on for many years. The scribes simply recorded the Muslims whom they encountered, mixed in with the Christians and with no regard to ceremony.

Ridding the Capital of People Deemed 'Undesirable'?

If in this instance Albanian ethnic identity was the dominant consideration, we need to search for the motivation for this unusual behaviour. As we have seen, normally Ottoman officialdom took matters of precedence and the public honour accorded to the Muslim religion and its adherents very seriously indeed. But perhaps Istanbul bureaucrats had a poor opinion of the often destitute immigrants who came to work in the capital and even refused to take their conversions very seriously. But admittedly this is no more than speculation.

When looking at the ages of the workmen about to depart from the capital for distant Hotin, once again we get the impression that most of the men in question were not highly skilled. In 36 cases or 9 per cent, the workers are described as adolescents (*emred*), who on account of their ages cannot have been fully qualified masters. In addition, we have 70 cases in which the young men are on record as having possessed a *taze bıyık*, another indication of youth and a concomitant lack of experience and training. Unfortunately, we cannot simply add up the two categories, as some people might both possess a *taze bıyık* and be described as *emred*.²⁵ But even if we make allowance for this fact, almost

24 Gutton, *Etablir l'identité, passim*, also stresses that personal descriptions in early modern France were of limited usefulness.

25 In 14 cases the records speak of "taze bıyıklı emred"; thus, 36+70=106, 106-14=92, which gives us 92 juveniles, corresponding to 23 per cent of all draftees.

one quarter of the men sent to Hotin must have been too young to be fully qualified in their respective crafts.

On the other hand, we know that in certain cases the authorities hired unqualified labourers in towns and villages near the fortresses to be repaired; thus, in early eighteenth-century Nis, certain skilled artisans came from Crete, while locals did the unskilled work.²⁶ Thus, we may ask ourselves whether there were other reasons for sending these workmen away from the Ottoman capital; because, during this period, the administration constantly worried about the size of the Istanbul population, not only because of the strain on food supplies, but also because young unattached men were prime candidates when it came to participating in urban rebellions. Certainly officials in 1718 had no way of knowing what would happen in 1730; but only 15 years previously, in 1703, soldiers and religious personnel, supported by Istanbul artisans worried about their livelihoods, had forced Mustafa II (r. 1695-1703) to abdicate in favour of the current ruler Ahmed III (r. 1703-1730).²⁷ Perhaps officials even hoped that some of the workmen sent to Hotin would not return to the capital. Or, if they did, they might not find the witnesses to prove that they were bona fide residents of Istanbul and thus could be excluded for good.²⁸

The prominent presence of Albanians among the draftees is another reason for suspecting 'ulterior motives' in the minds of the Sultan's officials. In the eighteenth century, Albanian gardeners, guards, and mercenaries were a common sight in the capital. Our register reflects this presence: there were 54 Albanian masons recruited by a certain Yovan Arnavud, domiciled, as noted above, in the janissary barracks known as the Yenî Odalar. In addition, the 'labour boss' Dimitri *kalfa* had recruited around 60 Albanian workmen.²⁹ Moreover, among the lime-burners there were a further nine persons whom the text described as 'Arnavud', although once we take personal names into consideration, it appears likely that the real number was larger. According to the official summary, there were 150 'Arnavud' masons involved in the entire project, a figure that we cannot verify because of paper damage, but which is equal to 38 per cent of the total of all workmen recruited for the Hotin enterprise. Given the frequency of Albanians in other trades as well, it makes sense to estimate that 40-45 per cent of the workmen sent to Hotin were Albanians, for the most part Christians. Of course, definite statements are impossible because the Sultan's officials did not detail their motives; but it is quite likely that apart from restoring Hotin, they also intended to remove a significant number of 'suspicious-looking' Albanians from the capital and its outskirts.

26 Compare S. Faroqhi, 'Fifty Years after the Conquest: Eighteenth-Century Reforms in Ottoman Crete', in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *The Eastern Mediterranean under Ottoman Rule: Crete, 1645-1840. Halcyon Days in Crete VI: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 13-15 January 2006* (Rethymno 2008), 246-247.

27 R. A. Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics* (Leiden 1984).

28 M. Aktepe, 'XVIII. Asrın İlk Yarısında İstanbul'un Nüfus Mes'elesine Dâir Bâzı Vesikalar', *TD*, IX/13 (1958), 1-30.

29 Some names are illegible because of damage to the paper; therefore, the figures given here are approximate.

Armenians are the only other ethnic group easily apparent in our register, the Greeks being difficult to identify because so many Albanians were Orthodox and thus shared the same Christian names. However, where these non-Albanians were at issue, the authorities were not at all concerned with ethnicity, so that we have to rely on the sometimes ambiguous evidence of given names. We can wonder whether the Sultan's bureaucrats also had special reasons for sending Armenians to Hotin, but at present I do not think that an answer to this question is possible.

Moreover, if we look at the large share of khan-dwellers among the draftees, and particularly the concentration of people in the Yeni Odalar, we may surmise that the authorities combed the khans and janissary barracks for people whom they considered poor and single and thus prime candidates for resettlement outside the capital. However, once again it is impossible to go beyond hypotheses, as we may also imagine that some of the men concerned had originally lived somewhere else and the officials in search of likely candidates had concentrated them in the Yeni Odalar prior to the long journey to Hotin. We may never find a safe answer to this particular question; but once we know more about eighteenth-century procedures of population control, we may at least base our suppositions on better evidence than we possess at present.

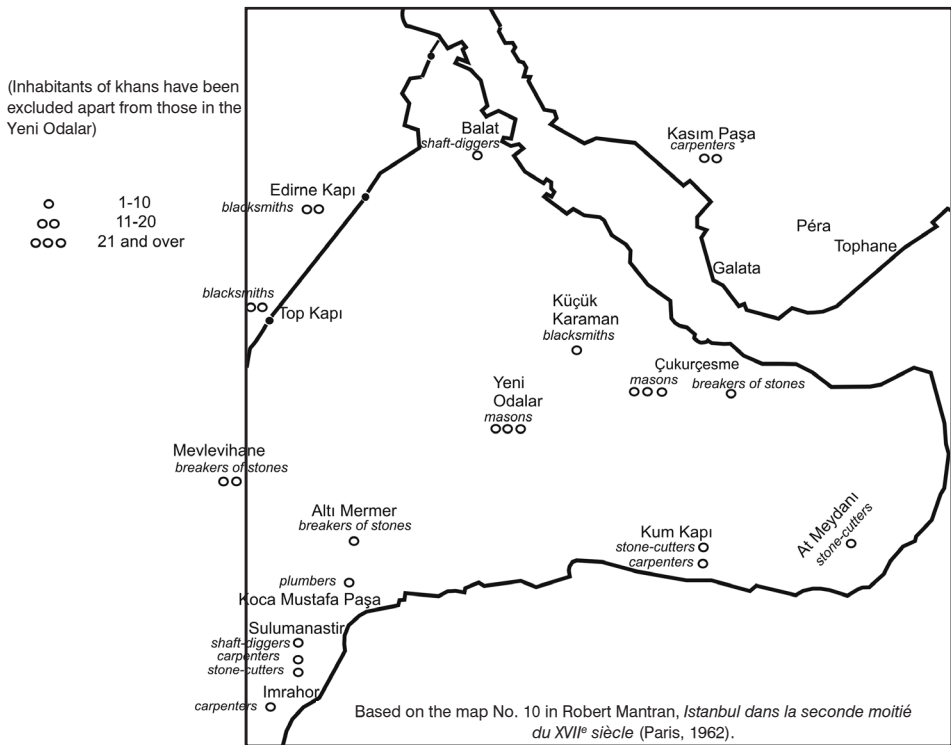
In Conclusion

This debate about control procedures brings us back to the problem of identifying individuals. If indeed the Ottoman administration wished to reduce the number of poor, single, Christian and particularly Albanian, inhabitants of the capital, it was necessary to identify likely candidates, bring them together and prevent them from decamping once the group was about to leave for Hotin. In all probability, identification procedures were still rudimentary and could not have worked without the ancient institution of mutually standing surety; and, as we have seen, such officially enforced guarantees enmeshed not only the draftees, but also a sizeable number of people well ensconced in Istanbul, both Christians and Muslims. Presumably guild *kethüdas* and other influential masters put pressure on the draftees to keep evasions – which surely could not be avoided altogether – within tolerable limits. Perhaps one day we will find records detailing the building workers who had escaped and the sums of money that their guarantors needed to pay. We also can read our document as an early example of the mass listings of the capital's inhabitants that were to reinforce official controls some 80 to 100 years later, in the reigns of Selim III and Mahmud II.³⁰

For the historian of Ottoman subjects and their concerns, however, our document admittedly poses more questions than it answers. Scholars dealing with military conscription have often considered this enterprise a tacit contract: in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, young and not so young men obeyed – and obey – the call to arms. But, for instance, during the First World War, under certain circumstances, these people might consider the contract broken and desert or even mutiny. Among other con-

30 Kırılı, 'A Profile of the Labor Force'; Başaran, 'Remaking the Gate of Felicity'.

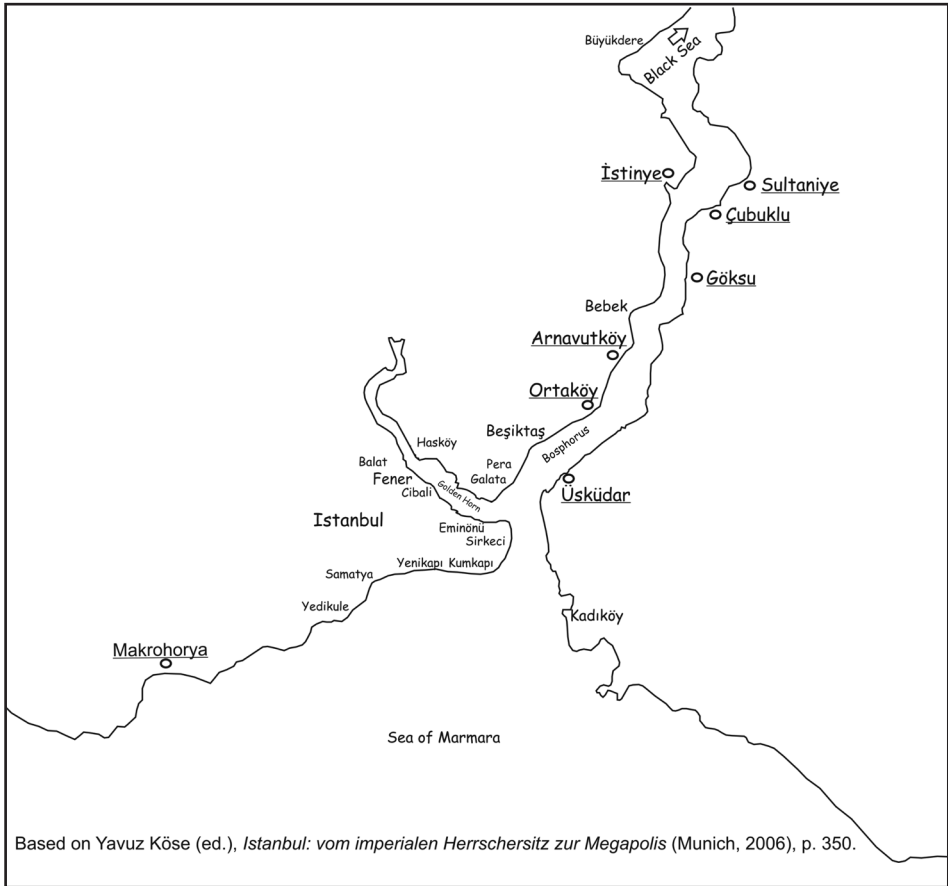
cerns, the length of the fighting, the poor quality and insufficient quantity of the food available, dissatisfaction with the way in which the war was being conducted or, perhaps even more decisively, hopelessness concerning its outcome, all might induce soldiers to consider that the ‘tacit contract’ was null and void.³¹ Hypothetically speaking, since the Ottoman elite did not have an overwhelming force available to escort our Albanian and other building workers to far-off Hotin, a similar ‘tacit contract’ must have obtained in the early 1700s. But as long as we lack evidence concerning the workmen who absconded or perhaps even joined robber bands, or, even better, some record of their motivation for doing so, we early modernists cannot duplicate the work on state-society relations that is currently leading to a thorough revision of late Ottoman historiography.

APPENDIX³²

Map 1: Living spaces of artisans drafted for Hotin, 1716 (Istanbul)

31 I am grateful to Mehmet Beşikçi whose as yet unpublished study has made me aware of this issue; and to Antonis Anastasopoulos for the ‘food for thought’ that he has so consistently provided.

32 I thank Yavuz Köse, Hamburg, for kindly drawing the two maps in the Appendix.



Map 2: Living spaces of artisans drafted for Hotin, 1716 (outskirts of Istanbul)

THE OTTOMAN DECREES ‘UP’ IN ISTANBUL AND WHAT THE RUMELIA SUBJECT PERCEIVED AT THE ‘BOTTOM’ (SEVENTEENTH-EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES)

Svetlana IVANOVA*

THE MARGINAL NOTES ON SOME SLAVONIC CHRISTIAN manuscripts of the Ottoman era reveal that the men of letters of those times were informed about what was going on in the Ottoman state. To cite but a few indicative examples: “In the year 1621 the Turks marched against Poland, and, as they got nothing, they came back in tatters”;¹ “King Murad seized Baghdad, and the moon went dark during the night, and red snow fell on the earth ... and at that time, during the second year, King Murad died, and King İbrahim came to the throne, you should know, and then a new coin was minted” (1639-1640);² “This year a census-taker went out to count the population in the entire Turkish state, something which also happened in the days of Caesar Augustus” (1643);³ “In the year of Our Lord ... there was unrest among the Turks in Istanbul because some of them were dissatisfied; and a quarrel broke out as more than 30,000 soldiers turned against the Sultan; and the viziers went out and stopped the rebels, but many of them lost their lives” (1730);⁴ “In 1754, in the month of December, day four, Friday, at noon, Sultan Mahmud died, and, on this day, Sultan Osman ascended the throne”.⁵

Even though these notes elucidate the Christian perspective or, in strict terms, the perspective of a very limited group within the Christian elite,⁶ they aroused my interest

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1 V. Nichev and N. Fermendjiev (eds), *Pisahme da se znae* [We wrote so that it be known] (Sofia 1984), 70.

2 Ibid., 75.

3 Ibid., 76.

4 E. Sprostranov, *Opis na rakopisite v bibliotekata pri Rilska manastir* [Inventory of manuscripts in the library of Rila Monastery] (Sofia 1902), No. 4/14; S. Dimitrov, ‘Dvijenieto protiv pogolovnia danak prez 1730-1731 g.’ [The social movement against the poll-tax, 1730-1731], *Vekove*, 1979/2, 58-62.

5 Nichev and Fermendjiev (eds), *Pisahme*, 101.

6 R. Gradeva, ‘Ottoman and Bulgarian Sources of Earthquakes in Central Balkan Lands (17th-18th Centuries)’, in E. A. Zachariadou (ed.), *Natural Disasters in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete III: A Symposium Held in Rethymnon, 10-12 January 1997* (Rethymno 1999), 56-58.

about a broader issue, namely, what channels of communication existed between the Ottoman provinces and the Ottoman capital, between subjects and sultans.

How could the authors of the notes have been so well informed if – as many nowadays are inclined to believe – their knowledge was limited to their small world ‘between two hills’? Brought by travellers and storytellers, among whom the traders, the muleteers (*kiraci*), the military, and perhaps the itinerant monks (*taksidiot*) stand out, news was a common commodity in the public spaces, such as the market-place, the coffee-house, the tavern, and the fair.⁷ But how could we find out what kind of information circulated among the people? How could we work out what they knew if, up until the nineteenth century, because of the dearth of writings by the elite and other social strata, we are faced with the seemingly inevitable problem of a ‘silent majority’?⁸ At the same time, the large body of available Ottoman state documents tempts us to try and get a glimpse of what the subjects knew about the state where they lived and how they were able to communicate with it. Using the standard sultanic decrees, or *fermans*,⁹ of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I will limit my inquiry to how the subjects living in the European Ottoman provinces could learn about the Empire’s political life and thereby form a perception of what the Empire meant to them.¹⁰ I have focused on three types of events concerning state politics: dynastic, diplomatic, and military. I argue that learning about the events taking place in the capital or on the battlefields was a constitutive element of the Empire’s mechanism of government and that the state itself informed its subjects of such events, as this was an integral element of the technology of administering the provinces. In the *fermans* selected for this project, announcing a past or anticipated event was used as an occasion for demanding the subjects’ loyalty, their participation in a military campaign, or, most often, the fulfilment of their tax obligations.



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- 7 Ibid., 59; V. Mutařchieva *et alii* (eds), *Rumeliyski delnitsi i prazdnitsi prez XVIII vek* [Work-days and holidays in Rumelia] (Sofia 1978), 155-169; P. Mitev, ‘Panairnata targovia v balgarskite zemi prez XVIII vek’ [Trade at fairs in the Bulgarian lands during the eighteenth century], *Studia Balcanica*, 23 (2001), 488.
 - 8 On the ‘silent’ societies during the Middle Ages, see A. Gurevich, *Srednevekovyi mir: kul’tura bezmolstvuiushchego bol’shinstva* [The medieval world: the culture of the silent majority] (Moscow 1990). In a different context, on zones where “world history does not reach, zones of silence, undisturbed ignorance”, see F. Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*. Vol. 3: *The Perspective of the World* (New York 1984), 18. For a discussion of what the meaning of the absence of information is in Ottoman documents, i.e., for the ‘argument from silence’, see L. T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1996), 246.
 - 9 B. Nedkov, *Osmanoturska diplomatika i paleografia* [Ottoman-Turkish diplomacies and palaeography], Vol. 1 (Sofia 1966), 127; *EP*², s.v. ‘Ferman’ (U. Heyd and P. Hardy).
 - 10 S. Ivanova, ‘The Transfigurations of Historical Time’, in J. Bonnet with E. Karpodini-Dimitriadis (eds), *Les temps de l’Europe*. VII. *Temps mythiques européens*. *Delphe*, septembre 1992 (Strasbourg 1994), 95-98.

I will begin with a set of documents specifically intended to inform the Empire's subjects about a new sultan's ascent of the throne.¹¹

For example, in 1774 a decree announced the ascent of Abdülhamid I (1774-1789) of the throne as follows: "... an order was issued to deliver in public the *hutbe* in my name, to have coins minted ... to spread the word around, so that all who should know will be informed – in every town, *nahiye*, and village ... in every mosque; ... the *hutbe* delivered on Friday or on holidays should mention my most honourable name and titles. ... The content of my decree shall be announced and disseminated to reach each and every *kaza*. The cannons at the fortresses shall fire salutes and give expression to the general joy".¹²

Including the ruler's name in the Friday sermons (*hutbe*) in the mosques and minting coins (*sikke*) with the ruler's name on them were seen as symbols of his sovereign power over Muslims.¹³ As the monarch was using the Friday prayers in order to announce his claim to sovereign power, his legitimacy, thus, became connected with the legitimacy of the Friday prayers.¹⁴

The Hanafite community itself was a political subject and an agent in dynastic changes. The identity of the Muslim community was defined by Islamic law; however, the Sharia had to be applied in the conditions of a legitimate dynasty which authorised and appointed the law-keepers.¹⁵ By taking part in the prayer and listening to the *hutbe*, which included the sultan's name, Muslims, as represented by the actual Muslim congregations (the devotional *cemaat*), acknowledged the ruler and expressed their loyalty to him. During the 1703 rebellion in Istanbul, in the course of five weeks the rebels banned the performance of the *hutbe*. Under their orders, the new *şeyhülislam* issued a *fetva* prescribing that the reading of this prayer in any of Istanbul's major mosques required the presence of the ruling Sultan. Yet, since the Sultan did not appear (Mustafa II and his court had withdrawn in Edirne), the *hutbe* was invalid.¹⁶ Thus, a ruler's ascent of the throne, legitimised by the community, became an important political event for Muslims and was honoured with solemn rituals. Of course, this was true mostly of the capital,

11 H. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600* (London 1975), 64-68.

12 S. Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori za istoriata na Dobrudja i Severoiztochna Balgaria* [Ottoman sources for the history of Dobrudja and north-eastern Bulgaria] (Sofia 1981), 57-58.

13 Alderson, *Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 13, 18, 54; C. Imber, *Ebu's-Su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Edinburgh 1997), 79; H. A. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I/1 (Oxford 1950), 31; *EP*, s.v. 'Djuma' (S. D. Goitein), 'Khutba' (A. J. Wensinck), 'Salat' (G. Monnot), 'Sikka' (C. E. Bosworth, R. E. Darley-Doran, and G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville); N. Calder, 'Friday Prayer and the Juristic Theory of Government: Sarakhsi, Shirazi, Mawardi', *BSOAS*, 49 (1986), 35-47.

14 Imber, *Ebu's-Su'ud*, 79-81.

15 *Ibid.*, 65.

16 A. Musaev, 'Vosstanie v Stanbule v 1703 g.' [The 1703 uprising in Istanbul], in *Osmanskaia imperia. Sistema gosudarstennogo upravleniia, sotsialnie i etno-religioznye protsessy* [The Ottoman Empire: system of state government, social and ethno-religious problems] (Moscow 1986), 206, 209.

where these ceremonies took place.¹⁷ The capital's population witnessed and participated in all important ceremonies and political events.

Yet, *fermans*, such as the one cited above, demonstrate that the people in the provinces, too, were informed of this important dynastic event; the provinces, too, accepted the new sultan in their own way. On a Friday, when all Muslims were called to prayer, the Sultan's name was announced. This means that dynastic news directly reached every Muslim within the scope of the network of mosques.¹⁸ On the other hand, in the places where these institutions were not established, information must have travelled more slowly and by roundabout channels.¹⁹

Fermans or other documents which announced a new sultan's accession to the throne, did not directly address the non-Muslim *reaya*, but it is doubtful whether they were ignorant of such an event. The festivities that the authorities organised on such occasions made dynastic events known to non-Muslims as well. There was a Friday mosque in every market-place, and the fireworks and cannon salutes prescribed in such documents would have attracted everyone's attention.

The imperial ascent of the throne, or *cülus-ı hümayun*, as the *fermans* called it, also entailed the Empire-wide procedure of re-issuing the *berats* of all the members of the Ottoman elite.²⁰ This must have provided another occasion for publicising dynastic news in the provinces.²¹ In the invariable formulation of the newly-issued *berats*, "Following the Sultan's majestic ascent of the throne of happiness, the august [Ottoman] seat of power, a general renewal of *berats* was mercifully decreed".²² Many subjects from the provinces had to travel to the capital for this procedure. There they could learn many things directly from the source. According to an imperial decree of Mahmud I, "... when on 2 October 1730 I ascended the glorious Ottoman throne, I decreed that the *berats* be renewed". A tax-farmer named Murtaza "brought his old *berat* to the capital, asking me to renew it", and paid "1,562.5 *guruş*" to the treasury "as a fee on the occasion of the august ascent; ... his old *berat* was taken from him, and on 3 November 1730 his wish was granted by my sultanic mercy...".²³ Every *sipahi*, bey, imam, or mufti took care of his *berat*'s renewal, by paying part of the income allocated to him by the state. A document of 14 February 1692 announced that, following an order issued by the central government, the payment of *vakıf* salaries would be temporarily suspended, so that the treasury might cover the

17 *EP*², s.v. 'Bay'a' (E. Tyan), 'Khalifa' (J. B. Kelly), 'Marasim' (P. Sanders *et alii*), 'Sultan' (J. H. Kramers and C. E. Bosworth); Alderson, *Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 53-56; İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 66-67; there are also many European accounts of these celebrations.

18 S. Faroqhi, 'The Anatolian Town and its Place within the Administrative Structure of the Ottoman State (1500-1590)' in Eadem, *Making a Living in the Ottoman Lands, 1480 to 1820* (Istanbul 1995), 39-45.

19 Gurevich, *Srednevekovyi mir*, 30.

20 İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 66.

21 Nedkov, *Osmanoturska diplomatika*, 58, 75, 91.

22 A. Velkov, *Vidove osmanoturski dokumenti* [Types of Ottoman-Turkish documents] (Sofia 1986), 83.

23 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 56-57.

expenses (*baḥşıṣ*) for the ascent of a new sultan. After the *ferman* issued on this occasion was entered in the registers of the *kadıs*, it had to be announced publicly and carried out.²⁴ After the accession of Mehmed IV to the throne, and the public announcement of the order for the renewal of *berats* at the Hamza Bey Mosque in Zağra-ı Atik,²⁵ Mevlâna Ahmed Efendi, who was paid a daily wage of 12 *akçes*, took his old *berat* to the capital and requested a new one, issued on 21 May 1650.²⁶ The *berats* of the *mukataa* tax-farmers were also renewed.²⁷

The wide resonance of the *cülus-ı hümayun* procedure and the bureaucracy that it entailed are not surprising, given that the *berat*-holders (*beratlıs*) – state servants who, as members of the ruling Ottoman class, received salaries from the Sultan – were a large group. The non-*reaya* included not only the military officers, the administration, and the judiciary, but also school teachers, librarians, and the religious functionaries: imams, muezzins, *hatibs*, *vaizes*, Qur'an readers, and even the heads of the cleaning staff in the mosques. The group of the *beratlıs* also included the bishops.²⁸ A *berat* of 1703, issued by Sultan Ahmed III, reads: "As, on the occasion of my happily predicted imperial ascent of the high and happy Ottoman throne on 23 August 1703, I ordered the renewal of the *berats*", the current Patriarch requested the renewal of the *berat* which had been granted to the Sofia Metropolitan Anastasius.²⁹ The bishops' *berats* contained the basic legal framework which regulated the activities of the Church and its faithful in the Ottoman world; therefore, these *berats* had a significance which surpassed the appointment of a given person, as they in fact concerned the very existence and practice of the Christian religion in the Christian communities. Hence, dynastic 'gossip' could reach the non-Muslims via church documents, i.e., by way of the administrative channels through which major church documents travelled. It is not accidental that marginal notes about incidents in Christian society were often dated by the reigning sultan; references to him furthermore adhered to the rhetoric of the subjects' loyalty to him.³⁰

24 Oriental Department, Sts Cyril and Methodius National Library, Sofia, Bulgaria (henceforth: OrO), F. 157, a.u. 24.

25 Stara Zagora, Bulgaria.

26 OrO, F. 93A, a.u. 11.

27 OrO, F. 119, a.u. 182.

28 O. Todorova, *Pravoslavnata tzarkva i balgarite XV-XVIII v.* [The Orthodox Church and Bulgarians, fifteenth-eighteenth centuries] (Sofia 1997), 144; J. Kabrda, *Le système fiscal de l'église orthodoxe dans l'Empire ottoman (d'après les documents turcs)* (Brno 1969); S. Ivanova, 'Predi da se rodi balgarskiat millet' [Before the Bulgarian *millet* had been born], in *Darjava i tzarkva, tzarkva i darjava v balgarskata istoria* [State and church, church and state in Bulgarian history] (Sofia 2006), 166-169.

29 J. Kabrda, 'Dva berate na Sofiiskia i Vidinski mitropoliti ot parvata polovina na XVIII v.' [Two *berats* of the Bishops of Sofia and Vidin from the first half of the eighteenth century], *Izvestia na Instituta za Balgarska Istoria*, 7 (1957), 382.

30 P. Kitromilides, "'Balkan Mentality': History, Legend, Imagination", *Nations and Nationalism*, 2/2 (1996), 163-191; S. Faroghi, 'Robbery on the Hajj Road and Political Allegiance in the Ottoman Empire (1560-1680)', in Eadem, *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1720* (Istanbul 1995), 208.

Thus, the renewal of *berats* throughout the Empire – an action which may be seen as part of the *cülus-ı hümayun* process – was another channel through which dynastic news routinely travelled to the least influential and most numerous members of the ruling class. Spread throughout the provinces, these people physically and administratively represented Ottoman power and the ruling dynasty to its subjects, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.³¹

The *fermans* sent to the provinces also conveyed information about the Empire's international relations. Such *fermans* included the sultanic decrees which guaranteed the safe journeying of foreign ambassadors and delegations in the Ottoman state. In practice, the population had to fund and support such travel, and in this manner the Empire's subjects learnt who the Ottomans' partners and enemies were, as well as of important events in international relations. Thus, in 1740, a *ferman* sent to the *kadıs* and the *ayan* of the *eyalet* of Özi³² informed them of the "exchange of ambassadors on the border" between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, and that "this is an old ritual. ... The current governor (*vali*) of Özi, with all due magnificence and splendour, shall meet the Muscovites' ambassador and take him personally to Bender."³³ ... Being charged with such a mission and in order to act fittingly, the mentioned [*vali*] will incur many expenses. Therefore, despite the end of the war, I order that the *eyalet's* taxpayers pay a wartime tax (*imdad-i seferiye*) for 1740 as an emergency measure".³⁴ Another *ferman*, addressed to Seyyid Mehmed Paşa, *muhafız* (governor) of Belgrade, Yahya Paşa, *vali* of Rumelia, the *kadıs* of the provinces which lay between Küçük Çekmece and Belgrade, the *serdars* of the janissary units and the *ayan*, guaranteed the safe passage of a second-tier ambassador (*orta elçi*) going to the Habsburg Empire (*Nemçe devleti*) via Belgrade. The *ferman* specified that the ambassador should be given horses, one hundred *kiles* of rice and two *okkas* of coffee daily, wax, etc. The population of the *kazas* was charged with preparing the rations for the ambassador, the horses, and the mules.³⁵ On some occasions, such delegations travelling through Rumelia could include up to several hundred people. The extant descriptions convey the immense interest that such delegations aroused among the local population. According to contemporaneous descriptions, "Turkish" women went out to meet the travellers and see them off, while peasant women used the occasion to make some money by selling them groceries.³⁶ However, the news about such delegations spread beyond

31 Tz. Georgieva, *Prostranstvo i prostranstva na balgarite, XV-XVII v.* [Space and spaces of the Bulgarians, fifteenth-seventeenth centuries] (Sofia 1999), 155-164; L. Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 2003), 90.

32 It extended over north-eastern Bulgaria and Ukraine (Oczakov).

33 Benderi, Moldavia.

34 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 90; see also *ibid.*, 93.

35 OrO, S312/8, p. 26-a, doc. I (henceforth: page/doc.).

36 I. Shishmanov, 'Stari putovanja prez Balgaria po posoka na rimskia voenen pat ot Belgrad za Tzarigrad' [Ancient travelling across Bulgaria along the Roman military road from Belgrade to Istanbul], *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenja i knijnina*, 4 (1891), 380-391. For Ottoman documents about supplying foreign embassies see M. Mihailova-Mravkarova, *Opis na turski do-*

the main roads, because their maintenance was undertaken by the local population. In 1740, the following item was entered in the *sicil* of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık:³⁷ "For the queen of Moscow. Rations for her great ambassador"; furthermore, horses were to be "supplied by the *kazas* located on the road from Babadağ³⁸ to Edirne and to the left and right of the road".³⁹ Local people, and, above all, the village elders (*kehaya*, *kethüda*, affluent men), or the urban *ayan*, were those who catered for such delegations, providing them with a place to stay, food, fodder for the animals, etc. The *sicil* of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık describes the expenses incurred for an ambassador travelling to Istanbul in 1732, who spent two nights in the city: "hay from Sarı Mahzar, 5 *guruş*; coffee for refreshment from Hacı Bekir, 1 *okka* for 3 *guruş*; *rakı* from the *kapıcıbaşı*, 10 *guruş*; ... carts rented from Hacı Bekir, 16 *guruş*; a total of 486 *guruş* which shall be collected from the local people".⁴⁰ If the travellers themselves or the accompanying janissaries did not pay immediately the people who provided them for such services, payments were made from the money budgeted for the so-called local, or *vilâyet*, expenditures.⁴¹ Numerous entries in *kadı* records provide strong evidence that on many occasions the local authorities and the people themselves had to attend to foreign political representatives.

Exploring the structure of the pre-modern Balkan mindset, Paschalis Kitromilides emphasises the influence of a new factor in the eighteenth century: the idea of Europe, of a wider civilised world. This idea came through the influence of the European powers, via the geographical writings of the eighteenth century, and through the emerging understanding of how international relations and conflicts affected the fate of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire.⁴² Is it possible that *fermans* informing the people of delegations, peace treaties, and so on, influenced the Rumeliot subject's developing perception of the world, given that this subject was literally supporting Ottoman foreign policy? I cannot answer this question. Yet, for example, the elite strata of the traders made an 'informed' use of the treaties between the Ottomans and the European states – especially of the Capitulations (*ahdname*). Obviously, they drew such information from Ottoman sources. The Ottoman border administration – especially the customs where the trading provisions of international treaties would have been applied most frequently – and the most elite trading corporations received specific excerpts from the trading provisions in the Capitulations (*ahdname*) that the Ottomans accorded or the trade agreements (*ticaret muahedesi*) that they signed.⁴³

kumenti za Rusia, Polsha i Chehia, zapazeni v Orientalския otdel na NBKM [An inventory of Turkish documents about Russia, Poland and Czechoslovakia preserved in the Oriental Department of the Sts Cyril and Methodius National Library] (Sofia 1974).

37 Dobrich, Bulgaria.

38 Babadag, Romania.

39 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 95.

40 Ibid., 39.

41 For documents on this subject see Mihailova-Mravkarova, *Opis*.

42 Kitromilides, 'Balkan Mentality'.

43 See, for instance, the Passarowitz Trade Agreement of 1718 (OrO, R50, 54-b/I). By request of the "kapı kethüdası" of the [Holy] Roman Emperor in Istanbul a copy of the *ahdname* with

Detailed information about state politics, as in the examples above, and even interpretation of specific Ottoman political moves, can also be found in the second group of *fermans* normally sent to the provinces. These *fermans* tell of important military actions and events on the Empire's borders, of Ottoman victories or defeats, of the casualties that the Muslims suffered or the booty that they took.⁴⁴ The objective was to notify the local population of such events and then, depending on the event's nature, invite the people to celebrate, send troops on military marches, or support the marches by providing food, ammunition, and communications. For example, a decree about the conquest of Belgrade – issued in 1739 – demands that everyone be informed about the news so that “the Muslim people shall be joyful and praise the Lord Almighty”.⁴⁵ Similar documents provide detailed narrative descriptions of specific battles, told in the style of Ottoman historical prose.⁴⁶ One such *ferman* states that the army of Hasan Paşa, *vali* of Sivas, reached the Orlova hamlet and seized it on 28 August 1788. Some of the 6,000 Austrian soldiers in the hamlet were killed, but most were taken into captivity. As the hamlet was an important trading post, the winners took plunder: “treasure coffers, stores full of colourful fabrics, piles of money ... and numerous slaves”. The *ferman* concludes by ordering that the victory “shall be announced everywhere and all shall pray to God for further Muslim victories”.⁴⁷

Such events, especially military defeats, affected every Muslim's life. Ottoman narrative texts tell of the intense grief expressed for all who died on the battlefield.⁴⁸ In 1790, all the *kazas* were informed that “with God's will and in hope of saving and recovering the Islamic regions”, an army was sent on a march under the sacred flag. A big public prayer was held on that occasion. “In accordance with the sacred decree that I am now issuing, every *kaza* shall set a place where a thousand and one prayers will be said for our army's victory every evening until the end of the war”.⁴⁹

Austria was prepared containing the provisions about the Austrian (*nemçe*) merchants; the same was given to the merchant Dimitriu and his aide Djurdje who wanted to protect themselves against erroneously paying the *cizye* and other taxes, contrary to the *ahdname*, whilst going about Rumelia (OrO, S42, 30-b/I and 31-a/I).

44 R. Gradeva, ‘The Activities of a Kadi Court in Eighteenth-Century Rumeli: The Case of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık’, *Oriente Moderno*, 18 (79)/1 (1999), 181.

45 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 67.

46 M. Kalitsin, ‘Traditzia i novatorstvo v sachinenieto na Hoca Sadeddin “Korona na istoriite”’ [Tradition and innovation in Hoca Sadeddin's work ‘The Crown of Histories’], in Eadem (trans.), *Hoca Sadeddin, Korona na istoriite* [Hoca Sadeddin's ‘The Crown of Histories’], Part 1 (Veliko Tarnovo 2000), 98-99, 104-105, 110-111, 149-150, 166-168, 174 and *passim*.

47 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 257.

48 M. Muezinović (ed. and trans.), *Mula Mustafa Ševki Bašeskija. Letopis (1746-1804)* [Mula Mustafa Ševki Bašeskija's chronicle (1746-1804)] (Sarajevo 1987); A. Zhelyazkova, ‘Formirane na miusiulmanskite obshtnosti i kompleksite na balkanskite istoriografii’ [Formation of the Muslim communities and the complexes of the Balkan historiographies], in *Miusiulmanskite obshtnosti na Balkanite i v Balgaria* [Muslim communities in the Balkans and Bulgaria] (Sofia 1997), 22. See also Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 67.

49 Ibid., 313.

Some *fermans* cover a wide political and geographical scope. They create the impression of having been written with the purpose of introducing the public to the broad lines of Ottoman foreign policy. A *ferman* of 1787, addressed to the military, the *kadı* administration, and the notables of Bender, summarises the hostile actions of the “Muscovite infidels” with regard to the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) and the Aynalı Kavak Convention (1779): “It is clear that the true reason why they are here is the Crimean border”. They want “to subdue the numerous Muslims – women, men, and elderly people – who live on the territory of Crimea and reduce them to *reaya* status”. All this compelled “the august state to recruit its armies, deploy border troops, and send out its fleet, which resulted in incessant and varied expenses”. Further on, the document tells of the Russians’ contacts with the khans of Tiflis, rebellions in Georgia and Azerbaijan, Field Marshal General Potemkin’s activities, and the inhabitants of Oczakov who harvested salt from the Kılburun lakes. “The *ulema* scholars, the state dignitaries, and the *ocak* commanders were summoned to meetings several times”, and the *şeyhülislam* issued a *fetva*: “As the Muscovites’ perfidy towards the Muslim people has become obvious, and it is clear that they cannot be trusted any longer, it is our sacred duty to declare war on them; failure to fulfil this duty will be a grave sin. ... The Russian ambassador to the capital was therefore taken prisoner in the fortress of Yedikule. Additionally, the Prophet’s banner – our talisman and the pride of all prophets – has been prepared and will soon be taken to war...”. Finally, the *ferman* rules: “For the time being, the *muhafız* and the other persons mentioned shall announce and inform the border troops and the army generals of these circumstances, and shall take every measure to reinforce and defend the fortress mentioned”.⁵⁰

Another *ferman* of 1787 mentions the Russian Empress Catherine II’s trip to the Crimea, in the company of the Austrian Emperor Joseph II; a trip which became notorious for the fake facades of villages erected by Catherine’s lover Potemkin: “At this time, despite the fact that my august state – may it live forever – is at peace with Russia, the Russian general Potemkin has headed towards the *eyalet* of Özi and its neighbouring territories with more than 40 or 50,000 soldiers. At the same time, the Muscovites’ queen intends to start towards the Crimea in early spring, under the pretext of travelling and inspecting her territories. ... Each state has been observing the other’s behaviour and moves along our borders...”.⁵¹

Moving back a century, at the end of the war with the Holy League, several *fermans* related to the war were copied in the *sicil* of the *kadı* of Rusçuk.⁵² The texts emphasise that “it is everybody’s religious obligation to participate in this jihad”, and repeatedly issue warnings against those who try to evade military service. It was decreed that the *si-*

50 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 210-211, 364; according to Gradeva, ‘The Activities of a Kadi Court’, 181, who discusses the same documents from the *sicils* of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık, the *kadı* court was the place where documents of great importance for the entire Empire were officially announced and registered in the *sicils*.

51 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 197-196, 362.

52 Ruse, Bulgaria.

pahi army, which was supported by the *timar* system, be sent out. Yet, according to a *ferman* of January 1696, “for several years now, the military have shown little diligence”; the previous year’s inspection register shows that, while 1,200 men, including *cebelüs*, had been required for the needs of the holy war, only 774 reported for duty.⁵³

Earlier still, on 15 May 1636, the following *ferman* was sent to the *kadı*s in Rumelia: “As the *kızılbaş* refuse to submit to their fate and plan to attack the fortress of Revan, ... it was decided that our entire victorious army shall take part in the Sultan’s military march”. The *ferman* specifically demanded that the janissaries and the *sipahis* should go on a march and, together with the *kaymakam* of Sofia, report for duty at the military camp in Plovdiv.⁵⁴ In January 1639 the same *kadı*s received a long *ferman* which uses quotations from the Qur’an and Hadith in order to describe the arrival of the Ottoman troops in Baghdad, the siege of the city, and the attack: “After the city had been attacked for 39 days, on Friday, 25 December 1638, the victorious Islamic troops rushed forward, shouting *yürüŧ*..., and the Baghdad fortress and everything in it ... became part of the Ottoman lands. ... I order that when [this *ferman*] reaches you, you shall order that cannons and guns be fired in all fortresses and towers, and that city squares be illuminated and festively decorated, as the ancient custom mandates, as an expression of our gratitude and for the glory of our troops. You shall also order various celebrations and festivities. All honest, pious, noble, and free people shall constantly pray for my long life and lasting success and for the longevity of my might and power”.⁵⁵ The detailed description of this event is more typical of historical narratives. In fact, a *ferman* of 1788, calling subjects to fight desertion and corruption in the army ranks, states: “Our great ancestors – to the glory of God – cleared and took away from the infidels so many cities, fortresses, regions, and countries. ... If sent to holy war or on a march of conquest, they persevered in winter and summer alike ... and even when they were tired ... rose to the attack with valiance and self-denial. Acting in accordance with the holy scripture which says that indeed God loves those who purify themselves, as if being embellished creatures, when going to battle for the sake of His name, they renounced their minds and souls in the conquest campaigns for the glory of God’s name. ... Even today history books talk about the excellence and perseverance of the soldiers who went on those marches, and people tell legends about them; so, it is unnecessary to describe them here”.⁵⁶

To meet the needs for ammunition and cannons for the Ottoman army’s campaign against Napoleon in Egypt in 1798-1799, the state sent out various *fermans*.⁵⁷ One of those – issued on 11 May 1799 and addressed to every *kaza* “from the estuary of the Black Sea to the end of the coast of Rumelia”, to the learned *hatıbs*, and others – states in much detail that some time ago, “in violation of the peace treaty between my august

53 OrO, R4, 69-a/I, and 68-b/I.

54 *Turski dokumenti za istoriatu na makedonsiod narod* [Turkish documents about the history of the Macedonian people], Series 1, Vol. 3 (Skopje 1969), 23-24, 70-71.

55 Ibid., 145-146.

56 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 230.

57 Gradeva, ‘The Activities of a Kadi Court’, 180.

state and the French state", one of the French Republic's (*França cumhuri*) commanders, the famous general, the so-called Bonaparte, appeared with his fleet in the Mediterranean (*Akdeniz*) on 17 Muharrem of this year, and "invaded Alexandria in Egypt suddenly and unexpectedly", contrary to the law, and conquered it, and then headed off to Cairo by water. This is why all must be vigilant and attentive and defend the Mediterranean coasts of Anatolia, Rumelia, and the islands; and all Muslims must defend with religious fervour all the places invaded by the French. Besides, the Russian state, which is an enemy of the French, has sent a fleet from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean to chase the French away from Alexandria and Rashid,⁵⁸ "if so be God's will".⁵⁹ These narratives were integrated into official Ottoman documents which were to be widely publicised, in order to trigger public action and involve all the Muslim communities throughout the Empire in an all-state campaign.

The narrative about the Ottoman victories and defeats is thematically and ideologically linked to the Empire's state-political ideology and to the jihad doctrine.⁶⁰ A synthesis between religious dogma and practice, this doctrine provided (idealistic) justification for these events within the Muslim exegesis.⁶¹ Additionally, according to the Ottoman state ideology, the ruler's involvement in jihad reinforced his sovereign status.⁶² In an early version of the Ottoman dynastic myth, the Sultan drew his authority from the heroic characters of the Persian and Turkic epics. At the same time, he also began to take upon himself various religious tasks in accordance with the Sharia. The dynastic ideology was influenced by the Ottomans' conflict with the Safavids and the infidels: the Spanish king and the Habsburgs of the Holy Roman Empire (Austria). The Sultan fought both against the infidels and against those who falsely claimed to be Muslims.⁶³ Having declared himself a leader of the jihad, the Sultan and the Ottoman state continued to define the military actions against their enemies as jihad even in the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ The state's increasing doctrinal and legal orthodoxy was translated to the subjects in terms of social behaviour.⁶⁵ Presented as a 'shepherd', the Sultan appealed to his subjects' involvement in times of war, and wars were practically always

58 Rosetta, Egypt.

59 OrO, R42, 6-b/I.

60 R. Peters, *Jihad in Mediaeval and Modern Islam: The Chapter on Jihad from Averroes' Legal Handbook 'Bidāyat al-Mudjtahid' and the Treatise 'Koran and Fighting' by the Late Shaykh al-Azhar, Maḥmūd Shaltūt* (Leiden 1977).

61 M. Kalitsin, 'Islamskata doctrina za djihada v osmanskata narativna traditzia ot kraia na XIV do XVI v.' [The Islamic doctrine of jihad in the Ottoman narrative tradition, late fourteenth-sixteenth centuries], in *Balkanite mejdu mira i voinata XIV-XX v.* [The Balkan region between peace and war, fourteenth-twentieth centuries] (Sofia 2002), 60.

62 Imber, *Ebu's-Su'ud*, 66.

63 Idem, 'The Ottoman Dynastic Myth', in Idem, *Studies in Ottoman History and Law* (Istanbul 1996), 305, 318; Idem, *Ebu's-Su'ud*, 74-76; Peirce, *Morality Tales*, 36; Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society*, 24.

64 *Izvori za balgarskata istoria/Fontes turcici historiae bulgaricae*, Vol. 18 (Sofia 1973); see also Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 281.

65 Peirce, *Morality Tales*, 10.

given religious significance. In turn, fighting in wars entitled every soldier to a share of the spoils.⁶⁶

The Hanafite doctrine of governance represented the holy war of jihad as an act of prayer (*ibada*) and a religious duty, which was to be fulfilled by the community as a whole rather than by the individual. A portion of every Muslim community had to fight, or the entire community would fall into a state of sin and suffer. In the event of general mobilisation following an enemy attack, the jihad was transformed into everyone's personal mission. It is possible that as the Muslim volunteer militias gained importance in the seventeenth century, the holy war started to be perceived as a duty of the entire community, and the narratives of victorious battles in *fermans* provided such religious motivation. A decree of 1739 states: "Our benighted enemies, the Muscovite infidels, have invaded the Boğdan⁶⁷ region. ... [Troops will be sent there shortly]. ... However, guided by the holy sentence which declares that he who goes to war for Allah with his body and his property wages holy war, which obliges every Muslim to fight the infidels, and given that the troops will be passing through your region, everyone among you shall think of the holy war as his own, rather than his neighbour's duty". It is ordered that all janissaries, as "men supported by the state, [as well as all men] who receive no support from the state, whoever they may be and as long as they are fit to fight, come out fully armed, organised in voluntary militias throughout the Ottoman lands".⁶⁸ Hence, the jihad can be thought of as a collective act which imposes a moral commitment on local communities.⁶⁹ Or, as one of the documents cited states, taking part in the jihad is everyone's religious mission.⁷⁰

Translated into practical terms, the *ferman* ordered that local communities and their leaders – the *ayan* and military functionaries – should organise local militias. Their members would be drawn from the "village reservists" (to use Suraiya Faroqhi's term),⁷¹ youths eligible for recruitment, who were also referred to as *yerli* (locals) or *evlâd-ı fatihan* (descendants of the conquerors). At the turn of the eighteenth century, the 'private troops' funded by local dignitaries and the troops of the provincial pashas (*kapı halkı*)⁷² were recruited from the ranks of local Muslims and supported with their money. In response to a *ferman* which decreed that militias be sent to war in Bender in 1793, the local *ayan*, imams, and elders gathered in the court of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık to make a list of expenses and volunteers, namely, one person per *hane* (a fiscal unit). From the neighbourhood (*mahalle*) of Göceri, 8 *sehms* (shares in the expense), 2 volunteers; from the neighbourhood of Tabakhane, 6 *sehms*; and from the neighbourhood of Pir Ahmed, 6 *sehms*,

66 Imber, *Ebu's-Su'ud*, 77, 85-88.

67 Moldavia.

68 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 69-70.

69 Peters, *Jihad in Mediaeval and Modern Islam*, 4, 9-10.

70 OrO, R4, 69-a/II. See also Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 243.

71 S. Faroqhi, 'Political Tensions in the Anatolian Countryside around 1600', in Eadem, *Coping with the State*, 115-119.

72 M. Meyer, 'Ayani i ih mesto v osmanskoi istorii' [The *ayan* and their place in Ottoman history], *Tiurkologicheskii sbornik*, 1979, 56.

3 volunteers, etc. Similar lists were drawn up in the villages, too: village of Boğdan, 1 *sehms*; village of Valali, 1½ *sehms*; village of Küçük Alaca, 1½ *sehms*, 1 volunteer, etc.⁷³ A list drawn up by the *ayan* and military officers shows the number of soldiers required to fight under the command of Abu Ağa, a *serdeli* of the governor (*vali*) of Silistre Hasan Paşa: [from] the *kaza* of Cısr-i Mustafa Paşa,⁷⁴ 47 men, [led by] *başbuğ* Mehmed Bölükbaşı; [from] the *kaza* of İslimiye,⁷⁵ 300 men, [led by] *başbuğ* Hacı Hasan Ağa; [from] the *kaza* of Yanbolu,⁷⁶ 105 men, [led by] the *ayan* Mehmed Ağa, etc.⁷⁷ Given that such brigades were supported by the people, the people were entitled to receive military reports from the respective *fermans*. This official news was added to the first-hand information that many Muslim volunteers obtained through their direct involvement in military action.

The emergence of a stratum as broad as the Muslim volunteer militias in Rumelia, as well as the fact that some local Muslims managed to obtain exemption from some taxes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, transformed the traditional social division between the *reaya* and the *askeri*, i.e., the taxpayers and the military class.⁷⁸ Whereas Muslims and non-Muslims were previously grouped together as *reaya* in opposition to the *askeri*, this novel status gave Muslims one more reason to feel distinct from the non-Muslim *reaya*. Thus, a mixture of political and religious factors prevented social cohesion between the Muslim and the non-Muslim *reaya*. It is possible that these same factors also bore upon the ways in which the two groups responded to information about state politics. In fact, decrees which demanded the locals' participation in military action were addressed primarily to Muslims. For instance, a decree of 1793 about sending troops in support of İbrail⁷⁹ reads: "At this time of hardship, it is the inescapable and necessary duty of all Muslims from the area to assist in the defence of the fortress. ... A sacred *fetva* has been issued which states unequivocally that it is everyone's duty to help, a duty bestowed upon us by our ancestors. Hence, all Muslims, old or young, shall show their concern and fervour, sacrifice their bodies and their possessions, and come to our aid as soon as they can".⁸⁰ Non-Muslims, by contrast, were charged with providing logistic support. We may, thus, assume that after the Muslim *reaya* were transformed into something different from the 'classic' *reaya* status, they started to listen to military reports in a different way from non-Muslims. Furthermore, it is possible to speculate that the extent to which non-Muslims were aware of military news is an indication of the scope of circula-

73 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 72-74.

74 Svilengrad, Bulgaria.

75 Sliven, Bulgaria.

76 Yambol, Bulgaria.

77 OrO, F. 93A, a.u. 170, fol. 1-2.

78 S. Faroqhi, 'Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Some Evidence for their Existence', in Eadem, *Coping with the State*, 38.

79 Braila, Romania.

80 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 67. For the opposite case, namely, desertion from military service, see, for example, OrO, R4, 39-b/III.

tion of such information, as non-Muslims were the least important of the groups that the state propaganda tried to reach.

In any case, it is likely that information about military events resonated strongly with the Muslim and non-Muslim communities because the majority of the *fermans* which were sent to the provinces about political and military events demanded the payment of taxes and performance of *angarya* (statute labour). In other words, the *fermans* engaged Ottoman subjects in logistics: supplying the army, the capital, and the palace with weapons, ammunition, and enormous quantities of food; maintaining the roads, building ramparts, and attending to foreign delegations. This is why decrees of this type reached every corner of the Empire. For example, a *ferman* of 1789 states that grain from the new harvest should be shipped to the *kaza* of Sofia for the troops who were heading for the northern front.⁸¹ The *kadis*' records and the *mühimme defters* compiled in time of war vividly describe how the Empire mobilised all the resources available to the people for the purposes of the war.⁸² A selection of *fermans* from a *sicil* of the period of the war against the Holy League (1683-1699) illustrates this point: "This year, 1696, when the happy spring comes by the will of God", funds are to be raised in the *kaza* of Rusçuk to buy grain and biscuit, and carts have to be sent for the Islamic army which will join the forthcoming victorious sultan campaign (*sefer-i hümayun*) to Hungary. The *ayan* and the local population were ordered to collect the supplies in accordance with the available *hanes*. The document reveals the role of the *mübaşir* Çertezade Mustafa, an official who served as a quartermaster in Rusçuk and who had to report to the capital by means of "arz ve ilâm". Another decree orders the transportation of grain, bought from the ports of Silistre and Hırsovo,⁸³ to Belgrade. Payments were to be made from the *bedel-i sürsat* tax for 1695-1696, collected in the *kaza* of Rusçuk and delivered to the *mubayaacı* (cereals purchasing agent), who was to issue a receipt (*temessük*), while a ratifying document (*hüccet-i zahriye*) was to be copied on the verso side of the *ferman*. As for a *ferman* of 16 January 1696 to the *kadis* in the *sancak* of Niğbolu⁸⁴ and to the janissary commanders and *ayan*, it first summons the cavalry and the riflemen militias (*piyade ve tüfenkçi levendleri*) to ensure victory over the Hungarians. Then it comes to the logistic support of these militias, in the form of purchase of additional oxen, which were to be funded from the taxes (*tekâlif*) for 1696-1697. According to another *ferman*, dated 12 February 1697, 171 *hanes* from the *kaza* of Rusçuk – minus the villages in the Sultan's *vakıfs* – were used to fund the purchase of 70 ox carts for the troops who were expected to arrive at the military camp by Filibe⁸⁵ ten days later. The money for the purchase would be covered by the *avarız* tax for the year 1106 (1694-1695) and the *nüzül* tax for 1107 (1695-1696). A list then shows the distribution of the cost of the carts: from the neighbourhood of Cami-i Cedid (3 *hanes*), 1 cart; from the neighbour-

81 Ivanova, 'The Transfigurations of Historical Time', 96.

82 See, for instance, J. Gregozewski, *Z siedzylatow Rumelijskich epoki* [From the *sicils* of the age of Rumelia] (Lviv 1912).

83 Harshovia, Romania.

84 Nikopol, Bulgaria.

85 Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

hood of el-Hac Musa, including the Armenians (5 *hanes*), 2 carts, etc.⁸⁶ Such examples demonstrate that logistics were organised at the level of the neighbourhood communities and, eventually, individual households. Hence, we can assume that the taxpayers, when paying such taxes, also received information about the events which were related to them.

People knew well whose subjects, or taxpayers, they were. The political and military developments, especially since the seventeenth century, entailed important changes in Ottoman fiscal practices. The so-called emergency state taxes made up the majority of collections from the population.⁸⁷ These included the *avarız* and *tekâlif-i örfiye* state taxes, as well as the *tekâlif-i şakka* governor (*vali*) taxes; in the seventeenth century, the latter were given the legal status of *imdad* (peacetime and wartime subsidy) and *masarif-i vilâyet*.⁸⁸ All these taxes – collected in cash, goods, or statute labour, and payable to the state, the *valis*, or the local administration and the local communal institutions – were collected on a neighbourhood basis. The procedures for allocating, distributing, collecting, and paying the taxes entailed the active involvement of the actual tax-paying communities.⁸⁹ At this time, administrative divisions were no longer, or not solely, based on the deployment in the provinces of military units (mainly, the *sipahis*), who would collect their income from the *timar* taxes; instead, administrative divisions came to be based on fiscal networks. Every administrative level – *vilâyet*, *sancak*, *kaza*, village, or city (which could be further sub-divided into neighbourhoods and ethnic-religious communities) – was allotted a quota defined in *hanes*, which was to be obtained from some (future) global tax (whose exact amount was not defined until later). In this context, individual households were not directly responsible for tax payments, but rather collectively responsible, together with all the other members of their communities.⁹⁰

Of course, this means that the fiscal practices of public spending required a degree of autonomy⁹¹ for the tax-paying communities, which were bound together by their collec-

86 OrO, R4, 63-b/II, 64-b/I, 67-b/III, 68-a/I, 69-a/I-II, 71-b/I, 80-a/I-II.

87 H. İnalcık, 'Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700', *ArchOtt*, 6 (1980), 283-337; S. Faroqi, 'Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)', in Eadem, *Coping with the State*, 62-64.

88 A. Sučeska, 'Promjene u sistemu izvanrednog oporezivanja u turskoj u 17 vijeku i pojava nameta tekâlif-i şakka' [Changes in the system of extraordinary impositions in Turkey in the seventeenth century and the appearance of the *tekâlif-i şakka* tax], *Prilozi za Orientalnu Filologiju u Sarajevu*, 10-11 (1960-1961), 30-34, 102-105.

89 S. Ivanova, 'Danachnoto obligane na naselenieto v balgarskite gradove i formiraneto na negovite institutzii, XVII-XVIII v.' [The taxation levied on the population of the Bulgarian towns and the formation of its institutions, seventeenth-eighteenth centuries], *Izvestia na Darjavnite Arhivi*, 65 (1993), 18; G. Veinstein, 'Inalcik's Views on the Ottoman Eighteenth Century and the Fiscal Problem', *Oriente Moderno*, 18 (79)/1 (1999), 4.

90 Ivanova, 'Danachnoto obligane'; Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 138; B. A. Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society and Justice in the Ottoman Empire: Legal Practice and Dispute Resolution in Çankırı and Kastamonu (1652-1744)* (Leiden and Boston 2003), 78-79.

91 Another of the "innumerable bastions of local autonomy", to use the expression of F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Vol. 2 (London 1995), 692.

tive tax responsibilities.⁹² These communities were internally controlled, and they themselves organised the collection and delivery of cash, goods, and statute labour. Because of this, every administrative-fiscal community was not only able to control its members, but also to negotiate with the authorities,⁹³ express dissatisfaction, and insist that certain tasks be modified. Local communities were involved in an incessant dialogue, or endless arguments, between the centre of power and the regions,⁹⁴ which, in turn, spurred the development of local self-governance. The key role that tax-paying communities played in the implementation of state projects transformed them into *de facto* (if not *de jure*) addressees of the sultanic decrees. The decrees did not always explicitly address a *kaza*'s, *sancak*'s, city's, or village's population (*ahali*). But although the addressees were formulated as the *vilâyet*'s *ayan* (and clerks), it is not difficult to envisage the actual payers whom the *ayan* represented. If it was imperative that tax-paying communities ensured the implementation of state projects, and if they were given a certain autonomy in doing this, it is only logical that the *fermans* which demanded their involvement should have reached them. This explains the emergence of the widespread practice of publicly announcing the *fermans* which demanded a certain payment or *angarya* labour. In fact, it was decreed in the very texts of the *fermans* that they should be announced in public.

In September 1717 the *kadı* of Rusçuk received a *ferman* demanding that grain be supplied (*sürsat zahiresi*) to the army. However, the *kaza* of Rusçuk was far from the troops' location, and, therefore, it would be difficult for the *reaya* to deliver the grain. According to the decree, the Sultan's compassion for the *reaya*'s condition prompted him to order that the grain be bought from *kazas* closer to the troops and only paid for by the *kaza* of Rusçuk.⁹⁵ This formulation is characteristic of how the Sultan talked to his subjects. In a *hatt-ı hümayun* issued in the military camp by Niş⁹⁶ and sent to the *kadı* of Vidin, the authorities described themselves as particularly merciful. The document states that "the *reaya ve beraya* from the villages and towns (*kasabas*)" in the *kaza* "located on the Islamic border" are exhausted (the text most likely refers to the end of the war against the Holy League). Because the sovereign learnt about this, he ordered that the Muslims of the *kaza* be exempt from taxes for three years, and that the Christians only pay the lowest *cizye* rate and be exempt from paying tithe on the crops, as well as from the *avarız* and *niüzül* taxes. If in three years the *kaza* had not recovered, the Christians would be exempt from taxes such as the *menzil akçesi* and other *tekâlif-i örfiye* and *vilâyet* expenses (including the *kul* and *huddamiye* fees and judiciary expenses such as the *mübaşir* service fee). Neither would they pay the *imdad* contribution to the *vali*. Fi-

92 S. Ivanova, 'Institutat na kolektivnata otgovornos v balgarskite gradove prez XV-XVII v.' [Institutions of collective responsibility in the Bulgarian towns, fifteenth-seventeenth centuries], *Istoricheski pregled*, 1 (1990), 33-44.

93 Veinstein, 'İnalcık's Views', 5.

94 Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 138; İnalçık, 'Military and Fiscal Transformation', 335-337; M. Ursinus, '"Avarız Hanesi" und "Tevzi" Hanesi" in der Lokalverwaltung des Kaza Manastir (Bitola) im 17 Jh.', *Prilozi za orientalnu filologiju*, 30 (1980), 481-493.

95 OrO, R1, 22-a/II; see also Sučeska, 'Promjene u sistemu', 79-80.

96 Nis, Serbia.

nally, the document ruled that "when this imperial decree reaches its destination, it must be implemented and a copy of it must be entered into the local court register".⁹⁷ One can see how emotions and policies travelled along the communication channel between the state and its subjects. Most important, however, everyone to whom this document had been read would know that the war had ended. As long as one was a taxpayer, one would be interested in receiving this information; this is why we can be certain that the news circulated widely. A *hatt-ı hümayun* of 1718, which decrees that justice be done, also includes the text of the *adaletname* (rescript of justice) addressed to the 'right wing' of Rumelia and Rumelia's glorious viziers, *beylerbeys*, *sancakbeys*, *kadis*, *mütesellims*, *cabis*, *mültezims* of *avarız*, *nüzül* and other tax-farms, *zâbits*, *mütevellis* of *hasses* and *vakıfs*, *ayan-ı vilâyet*, and clerks (*iş erleri*). The text announced the Sultan's act of mercy towards the poor and weak subjects (*reaya ve beraya*) who lived in the villages and towns of the well-protected state: "By the will of God, for several years now we have been fighting against the infidels (*kâfirs*) from Austria (*Nemçe*) and Venice. ... Troops and supplies have been coming from all sides". The poor *reaya ve beraya* were exhausted, and, therefore, the Sultan reprimanded the collectors who had been collecting more than had been decreed.⁹⁸

The circulation of *fermans* thus established an information channel which linked the capital to the tax-paying communities in the provinces and spread news about important state-political events. If a decree contained a story about a military-political event, the need to publicise the decree meant that the story itself would be widely publicised, too.⁹⁹

As the new fiscal rules became established, the routine procedure of distributing and levying taxes took place at the state's major administrative centre, namely, the *kadı* court. The presence and participation of the local people, or, actually, their representatives, were required because the procedure entailed a community's assumption of collective responsibility for fulfilling their tax obligations. All other fiscal activities, which the local communities organised independently and then reported to the state, were based on this procedure: these included distributing the community's tax obligations among its individual members (most often on the basis of households) according to their property status, delivering the sums of money or goods collected and obtaining a receipt, putting pressure on taxpayers who were trying to evade their tax obligations, taking out collective loans to pay the community's taxes and paying the loans off, negotiating with higher-ranking administrative offices on lowering taxation quotas, or filing complaints against unjust taxation, and so on.¹⁰⁰

97 OrO, S305, 39-b/I.

98 OrO, S67, 96/I.

99 OrO, R2, 101-a/I.

100 Ivanova, 'Danachnoto obligane'; Eadem, 'Varoy: The Elites of the *Reaya* in the Towns of Rumeli, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries', in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003* (Rethymno 2005), 206-216; Ursinus, "'Avariz Hanesi" und "Tevzi" Hanesi"', 481-493; Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 104-137. See the *adaletname* of 1740, in Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 109.

The local administrative and military officials and the *ayan* took charge of carrying out hundreds of such fiscal campaigns which the capital had decreed by means of various *fermans*. The local peasants and city-dwellers were also directly involved; depending on the specific occasion, they could be represented by the imams of their neighbourhood mosques, the priests, secular representatives of the Muslims, Christians, and Jews from the cities, as well as the village elders or the *deruhdecis*, that is, village creditors, wealthy persons who prepaid the village taxes and then collected them from the local people with interest. A *hüccet* certified by the *kadı* of Zağra-ı Atik, Mehmed, attests that the following community representatives came to his court: from the neighbourhood of Havacaki, the imam Mustafa Efendi and Mehmed, son of Süleyman; from the neighbourhood of İbn İvaz, Ahmed Dede, son of Samail, and el-Hac Ali; from the neighbourhood of Dabagin, the *kapıcıbaşı* Mehmed Ağa, and el-Hac Hasan; from the villages of Karahalil Ürükleri, Halife Pınarı, and Arnavudlarmüslim, Ustoyu and Memişoğlu; from the villages of Kara Pınar, Uzun Hasan, and Bohaz Kesin, the priest Yovan, and Petko; and others. A *ferman* of 1701-1702 decreed that the same *kaza* choose 18 sappers (*beldar*) who were to join a sultanic campaign. To pay for their services, the state treasury advanced 40 *guruş* per person, or a total of 720 *guruş*, and the sappers confirmed that they received the entire sum.¹⁰¹

The state delegate, or *mübaşir*, played an important part in the tax-collecting process.¹⁰² The archival evidence builds up the following general picture of the *mübaşir*'s activities: the central government issued a *ferman*, copies of which were taken to the *sancaks* by a *mübaşir*. For example, a decree of 1696 entitled "A *ferman* for carrying out a *mubayaa*", brought personally by the *kapıcıbaşı* Hüseyin Ağa, ends by stating that "the decree shall be handed to the *reaya*".¹⁰³ The expenses incurred by the *mübaşir* in the course of his travel and stay in the *sancak* were paid by the local people. In other words, he did not need a 'per diem' from the state, or at least the state did not pay for all of it; rather the province to which he travelled met his expenses. When the *mübaşir* arrived at a local administrative centre, those who participated in the allocation and collection of taxation gathered in the court to hear the *ferman* and decide how to carry out its contents. A copy of the *ferman* was sent to the *kazas* of the *sancak*, and the entire procedure was repeated in their courts. In the meantime, the *mübaşir* stayed in the major city of the province (though sometimes he would also visit the *kazas*), where the locals took care of his needs. In some places, the locals even maintained special 'community accommodation' for such officials, so that they would not have to stay with any family for too long. The *mübaşir*, however, was not just a courier; he also served as an inspector or commissioner, and shared the responsibility for the decree's implementation with the pasha and

101 OrO, F. 93, a.u. 156. See also OrO, R2, 53-a/I; OrO, R4, 90-b/I. On *tevzi defters* as a source for the composition and characteristics of the local elites, see A. Anastasopoulos, 'The Mixed Elite of a Balkan Town: Karaferye in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', in Idem (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire*, 262.

102 M. Ursinus, *Grievance Administration (Şikayet) in an Ottoman Province: The Kaymakam of Rumelia's 'Record Book of Complaints' of 1781-1783* (London and New York 2005), 20-21.

103 OrO, R4, 63-b/I.

the *kadis* of the *sancak*. The *mübaşir* also was present at court whenever a payment, a transfer by means of money order, the *sebeb-i tahrir* procedure, or the delivery of goods or money was carried out, or the receipt of compensation in cash needed to be certified.¹⁰⁴ But we should not neglect also to take into account violations of the law by the *mübaşirs*. An *adalet fermanı*, sent to the 'right wing' of Rumelia to announce an act of mercy by the Sultan, also enumerates various offences against the *reaya*, which had been committed by the *mübaşirs*, "whom I have charged" with collecting state taxes such as the *mukataa*, *cizye*, *avarız*, *nüzül*, *bedel-i sürsat*, *bedel-i beldar*, etc.¹⁰⁵

The reason why I have discussed the *mübaşir* in such detail is that this figure enables us to make an informed guess about the length of time that someone who carried information directly from the capital would have spent in close contact with local officials and elders. I have also tried to envision the excitement that such a person would have created. It was the *mübaşir*, in his capacity as commissioner charged with specific tasks, who personified the connection between the capital and the provinces. In addition to the *ferman*, it was he who embodied the state, stood for it, made himself visible, talked, and, presumably, advanced the state's interests. Through the use of such temporary 'commissioners' the Ottoman central government complemented its provincial administration.¹⁰⁶

In this way, a *kaza* would receive and implement scores of decrees every year. In addition to their obligations concerning state taxes, the local communities had to raise funds for numerous local expenses, such as the communal (let us call it 'municipal') budget and the local police and military forces (the money for the latter was itemised under the category of 'wartime and peacetime assistance for the pasha').¹⁰⁷ The distinction between these 'local expenses' (*masarif-i vilâyet*) and the state *avarız* taxes was quite arbitrary. For instance, let us consider the following summary list (*defter*), compiled on 21 December 1695 on the basis of the *kadı* court's record of expenses, which were certified "in the presence of the entire population" of the *kaza* of Rusçuk. The *defter* lists the money owed to the city *kethüda* Hüseyin Çelebi, including his salary, the expenses he incurred in hosting state officials (*mübaşir*) and arranging for their travel by land and sea, and the expenses for sending three boats with ammunition and food to Belgrade. It also lists the court fees for preparing the *defter*, as well as two or three distribution ledgers – records of the tax-paying units on the basis of which the court prepared the break-down of the sums to be collected – to facilitate tax collection. The grand total amounted to 3,094 *guruş*. This sum was then distributed over all the *vakıf* villages in the *kaza* and over its 121 *hanes* and $\frac{3}{4}$,¹⁰⁸ with the unanimous approval of all the *ayan*, *zaims*, and *erbab-ı timar*. Fifteen *guruş* was to be taken from each *hane*.¹⁰⁹ Clearly, the *defter* accounts for the servicing of state *avarız* taxes, taxes for the *vali*, and 'municipal' expenses.

104 See Velkov, *Vidove*, 96-101.

105 OrO, R4, 88-b/I.

106 Ergene, *Local Court*, 171.

107 Ursinus, *Grievance Administration*, 11.

108 In other places in the same *sicil*, 150 *tevzi hanes* are mentioned; OrO, R4, 92-b/I.

109 OrO, R4, 60-b/I.

As in the case of providing services for foreign embassies, the people charged with various local tasks met the expenses involved out of their own pockets; thus, for instance, a list of local expenses of 1787 states that “İbiş Ağa paid 129 *guruş* out of his own purse”. This practice also applied to hosting *mübaşirs* from the capital (which included providing storage space in exchange for future rent payments, providing carts, etc.) and to funding ‘municipal’ activities.¹¹⁰ Only the most affluent people in a community could afford this; hence they made up the small group of local notables. After each specific expense they incurred was registered in the court ledger, everyone concerned was given a receipt (usually a *temessük*).¹¹¹ Their expenses had to be reimbursed either by the state treasury or the local taxpayers. In the latter case, the relevant expense was added to the sum total of the so-called local (*vilâyet*) expenses.¹¹² Notes in the *sicil* of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık list such individual expenses: “For accommodating the *kapıcılar kethüdası* of the palace court, coffee and 6 *guruş*; from Canbazoğlu İsmail to İsmail Ağa, 5 *okkas* of coffee; from Canbazoğlu İsmail to the village of Çayırılı Göl, 50 *okkas* of rice”. Alternatively, one can find the following kind of notes: “This is to record the accommodation expenses for the *başçavuş ağa*. 16 April 1782: Hacı Ali Ağa hosted the *başçavuş ağa* for 11 days, 10 *guruş*; Molla Abdullah hosted the secretary of the *başçavuş*, 5 people, for 11 days, 12.5 *guruş*; Ahmed Ağa hosted the *çavuşes*, 9 *guruş*; Çakır Halil hosted the *çuhadars*, 9 *guruş*”.¹¹³ A complaint filed in 1738 by the *voyvoda*, es-Seyyid Ramazan of Rusçuk, informs us that he took charge of a petition (*arz*) on the problems of the *reaya* and took it to the capital. The authors of the *arz* told him: “Pay for all necessary expenses out of your pocket. We will reimburse you for whatever expenses you may incur”. And so he did: “I was spending my own money. When I came back, they not only did not give me the money they owed me, but the local *ayan* Kubbeli and Lûtfullah Efendi, the so-called Bâtılzade Hosko and several others from their circle, including Kantarcı Hüseyin, Bâtıloğlu Salih, and Timur Alioğlu Hüseyin, tried to harm me and my business”.¹¹⁴

The *ayan* and the locals met at the *kadı* court, usually every six months, and compiled a list of the expenses laid out for state and local military-administrative and ‘municipal’ needs; these lists contained the so-called ‘local expenses’ (*masarif-i vilâyet*) mentioned above.¹¹⁵ The reported expenses were then distributed among the population (in the so-called ‘*tevzi defters*’) in the same way that the *avarız* taxes were collected, and people who had paid out of their pockets were thus reimbursed. For instance, a Sofia *sicil* lists all the expenses (*masarifat*) which were incurred by the *reaya* of the *varoş* of Sofia between 24 January and 20 July 1765. These included expenses for the Sofia seraglio of the governor of Rumelia, and payments for three carts and for the seraglio’s steward; payments

110 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 149.

111 See, for instance, an incomplete *defter* about the supplies given to the Hungarian ambassador (*elçi-i Engürüs*) by the local populace; OrO, R2, 23-b/I.

112 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 146, 149.

113 Ibid., 145; OrO, R2, 10-b/I.

114 OrO, R7, 92-b/I-II.

115 Gradeva, ‘The Activities of a Kadi Court’, 184.

owed to the lamp-maker and the cow-herder; expenses for the inspection (*teftiş*) of the church of the “başefendi” (possibly, the bishop?), for the “molla efendi” (possibly, money paid to the *kadı*?), and others; money for the *mütesellim*, and the *kethüda bey*; wages of eight horse-handlers (*yedekçi*); wages of the meadow-keepers of “our” *molla efendi* and the *mütesellim ağa*; money paid to Sarvan Paşa; expenses for foreign ambassadors (*elçi*), and others; all of which added up to a total of 1,564 *guruş* and 23 *paras*. The sum was distributed in accordance with the quotas (*sehm*) of the neighbourhoods of the *varoş*. A list of Sofia’s neighbourhoods and their respective quotas follows the text.¹¹⁶

Thus, with the progress of time, the Ottoman authorities did not simply make people fund them, but also managed to involve them in the local spending of tax money. A careful look at the *tevzi* and *masarif defters* shows the incredible degree to which various state projects occupied the time and the daily self-governing agendas of the *reaya*’s local communities and their representatives. It is very likely that, as the Sultan’s subjects were dealing with the handling of taxation (collecting state taxes, recording local expenses, or compiling the semi-annual *tevzi defters* of local taxes), they also learnt the specific reasons why a certain tax was being levied. In this manner, state-political, military, or diplomatic news of various sorts literally thrust itself upon the attention of provincial communities, which thus gained access to political ‘gossip’. In other words, the transmission of information was made possible by the very mechanism of collecting state taxes, particularly by the fact that in urban or village communities the collection took place within the context of the neighbourhood, a small unit whose daily routine came to be dominated by the need to administer its tax obligations through its elite; this presumably brought the people into direct contact with the *fermans* which not only imposed the taxes but also cited the political and military activities that these taxes would fund. This awareness was even truer of local expenses, because collecting them entailed listing all the activities which took place in a specific region and required monetary contributions from its population. Eventually, the Ottoman taxation practices powerfully redefined the small corporate communities which constituted the pre-modern society (village communities, urban neighbourhoods, and ethnic-religious communities), and, sociologically speaking, transformed them into institutions with rather uniform formal or semi-formal structures, organisation, leadership, and functions.¹¹⁷ These institutions not only took care of the state’s financial and material needs, but also became channels for routinely transmitted socio-political information.

The entire taxation process – from levying a tax and informing the population of its nature to collecting it in accordance with the law (which ruled that people should be informed about the purpose of a tax) – was described in a decree of 1717 about the collection of wartime and peacetime subsidies (*imdad*) for the pashas. After news of the tax was received, the *kadı* had to summon the council of the *ayan* and all the administrators in the *eyalet*’s major city. Under the *kadı*’s and the *mübaşir*’s guidance, these had to determine the sums owed by each *sancak*, depending on its population and resources. Af-

116 OrO, S 22, 31/I.

117 J. Szczepanski, *Elementarne pojęcia socjologii* [Elementary notions of sociology] (Moscow 1969).

terwards, the *ayan* of the *sancaks* had to summon the notables of the *sancaks*' *kadiliks*, and the sum owed by the *sancak* had to be allocated in accordance with each *kaza*'s *avarızhanes*. The collection of sums higher than the ones determined by the council of the *ayan* was strictly prohibited. The decree prescribed that a copy of it be posted in a conspicuous place in the bazaar of the province's capital city.¹¹⁸

The authorities' need to 'converse' with their subjects was made evident in the course of this process. The tone of this 'conversation' varied, depending on the authorities' intention: to engage the subjects, make them feel involved, or threaten them. The authorities used the rhetoric of religious thinking, but also arguments about the interests of the state. It was as if the authorities believed that the subjects would swallow the bitter pill more easily if the state 'made them privy' to why a tax was necessary and why in this exact amount. In all instances of written communication with the population which I have cited the authorities did not simply rely on their subjects, but also constructed and maintained their legitimacy before them. The use of religion, ideology, and myth can build credibility, but true commitment derives from a feeling of involvement. By emphasising their fairness in the documents that they produced, the authorities endeavoured to present themselves as understanding, laying stress on their own fairness. Such self-representation coincided with the Sultan's established image of himself as a shepherd, which was used even in the most improbable situations.¹¹⁹

However, the mechanisms of governing the population also need to be taken into account. The state informed its subjects because it actually involved them in its policies (thus making up for one major weakness in the famous Ottoman centralism: the lack of specialised provincial administration), and, as far as the process of taxation was involved, it made them responsible for carrying out a major part of it. As a result, the autonomous tax-paying communities were literally forced to administer themselves, which necessitated continual co-ordination, via documents, between them and the government agencies.¹²⁰ Here is an instance of such two-way communication: in 1698 a *ferman* was issued, demanding the recruitment of 680 mounted *sekbans* who were to protect some *kazas* in the *sancak* of Niğbolu from gangs. The *kaza* of Rusçuk had to provide 100 men. Another *ferman* was issued in response to a petition (*arzuhal*) signed by the *kadı*, the *ayan*, and others from the *kaza* of Rusçuk and sent by courier. The *arzuhal* requested that the number of men required from the *kaza* be reduced, from 100 to 50 (12-21 April 1698). After the modified number was approved, the *kaza* of Rusçuk, led by the *ayan* Halil Ağa and the standard-bearer Ali Bey, prepared a *defter* for the maintenance costs of the 50 *sekbans*. The *defter* was then handed to Halil Ağa who was charged with collecting the money needed (30 April 1698).¹²¹

118 M. Meyer, *Osmanskaia imperia v XVIII veke. Cherti strukturnogo krizisa* [The Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century: the features of a structural crisis] (Moscow 1991), 161.

119 Faroghi, 'Political Activity', 62; Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 282.

120 Ibid., 299-300.

121 OrO, R2, 50-a/I, 50-b/II (published in B. Tsvetkova, *Haidutstvoto v balgarskite zemi prez XV-XVIII vek* [Haiduk activity in the Bulgarian lands during the fifteenth-eighteenth centuries] [Sofia 1971], 284-285), and 51-a/I.

This is how the Empire's administrative system brought forth a communication channel which, according to the existing documents, was widely used from the seventeenth century on.¹²² There is also some indirect evidence for this: the vocabulary used in nineteenth-century narratives and the rare Bulgarian-language documents from the earlier centuries includes terms and phrases from Ottoman tax-related documents, in Turkish or in literal Bulgarian translation.¹²³

It is hoped that the above case studies explain at least in part how people in distant locations could know about what took place on the battlefields by the imperial borders, in the capital, or on the international stage. When a community representative went to the court of law, he heard information essential to his and his neighbours' daily lives – what or how much they were expected to provide or pay to the state – and took this information to his neighbourhood or village. In addition to this specific information, he must have had the opportunity to discuss or hear about the military and political events which made a collection necessary. Thus, the community representative could take stories about 'big' politics, distant lands, wars and political events, a change of sultan or important moments from the capital's life to his 'closed-off' world of ordinary existence. In addition to finding out that he/she was being taxed, the taxpayer could also learn exactly why this was happening. In this respect, the Ottoman state was no longer a distant and elusive concept for its subjects; it acquired specific substance through the *fermans* that the local representatives heard in court and then reported to their communities.

The *fermans*' contents were publicised through the channels which carried the state administrative documents throughout the bureaucratic system. This system was based on the spatial structure of Ottoman society, and the effectiveness of the channels finally depended on the availability of a dense and accessible institutional network in the provinces, on the availability of a procedure whereby the subjects could send feedback to the authorities, and on the subjects' knowledge of administrative practices. In simple terms, the exchange of information required administrative channels of communication between the population and the authorities.¹²⁴ As I have noted, this communica-

122 Gradeva, 'The Activities of a Kadi Court', 189.

123 S. Ivanova, 'Hristianska i miusulmanska blagotvoritelnost po balgarskite zemi v XVI-XVIII v. (dokumenti, uchastnitsi, institutsii)' [Christian and Muslim charity in the Bulgarian lands in the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries (documents, participants, institutions)], in P. Mitev (ed.), *Daritelstvo i vzaimopomosht v balgarskoto obshtestvo prez XVI-nachaloto na XX v.* [Charity and mutual aid in the Bulgarian society, sixteenth-early twentieth centuries] (Sofia 2003), 58–59; Faroghi, 'Political Activity', 45–46 (the author argues that the popular 1609 *adaletname* by Ahmed I, which describes the abuses that the *reaya* suffered from the governors, *kadis* and other officials, has influenced the style and language of complaints by the populace).

124 R. Gradeva, 'Za pravnite kompetenzii na kadiiskia sad prez XVII vek' [On the judicial powers of the *kadi* court in the seventeenth century], *Istoricheski Pregled*, 1993/2, 98–120. In the academic literature there are terms such as 'process of imperialisation' (i.e., the spread of the Ottoman judicial institutions and integration of a newly conquered province into the Ottoman military, financial, and legal system) and 'Ottomanisation' (i.e., the curbing of old autonomies in exchange for security ensured by the functioning of unified institutions and, more precisely, the court). See Peirce, *Morality Tales*, 9–11, 88.

tion¹²⁵ in fact used one of the most stable components of the community's socio-spatial structure: the residential network.¹²⁶ Based on the residential, the administrative network, whose centre was the *kadı* court,¹²⁷ in time became more dense and all-encompassing,¹²⁸ as a result of the Ottoman provincial administration's growing territorial density and functional development. According to some available lists of *kazas* from the seventeenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, nearly 70 *kazas*, divided into *nahiyes*, functioned in the territory of present-day Bulgaria. The courts were more or less uniformly spread out (with the possible exception of those in the Rhodope mountains). What this means, in practical terms, is that the judiciary institution, and through it the state, was very accessible to all, individuals or groups, regardless of religion, gender, or social status.¹²⁹ This situation can be described as the outcome of "urban islamisation" (M. Stain-

125 Some modern notions can be useful in analysing this material: 'channel of communication' (the exchange of messages based on a certain level of mutual understanding between the participants and executed directly or via technical means between the communicator and the recipient between whom a connection of relative community is established; this is a key mechanism of mediation between the different social spheres and a means of their self-organisation), and 'mass communication' (a process of simultaneous public distribution of socially relevant information by technical and institutionally organised means among scattered audiences which are varied in terms of their social composition. Communication has among its functions the organisation of society); *Entziklopedichen rechnik po sotziologia* [Encyclopaedic dictionary of sociology] (Sofia 1996), 205-206.

126 Georgieva, *Prostranstvo*, 150-165.

127 R. Gradeva, 'Kadiiskata institutzia na Balkanite XIV-XVII vek' [The *kadı* institution in the Balkans, fifteenth-seventeenth centuries], unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Institute of Balkan Studies (Sofia), 1988.

128 On the increase of the number of *kazas* in Anatolia, see Faroqhi, 'Political Activity', 53. According to Darling, starting from the sixteenth century, the administrative network relies directly on the communities of the taxpayers and stimulates the formation of their body of leaders; Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 299-300, 304. On the *kadı* institution in the Balkans, see R. Gradeva, *Rumeli under the Ottomans, 15th-18th Centuries: Institutions and Communities* (Istanbul 2004), and Eadem, *War and Peace in Rumeli, 15th to Beginning of 19th Century* (Istanbul 2008). The importance of tax collection for the state and the involvement of the *reaya* in it resulted in an increase in the exchange of documents, which probably is a reflection of the widening of the pool of power-holders in the Empire, what Darling and others have called a "qualified oligarchy"; Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 245. On the problem, see also Faroqhi, 'Political Activity', 39-41; S. Oreshkova, 'Osmanskii istochnik vtoroi polpvi XVII veka o sultanskoi vlasti i nekototrih ososbenostiah sotzialnoi strukturi osmanskogo obshtestva' [An Ottoman source of the second half of the seventeenth century on the Sultan's rule and some features of the Ottoman social structure], in *Osmanskaia imperia. Gossudarstvennaia vlast i sotzialno-politicheskaia struktura* [The Ottoman Empire: government power and socio-political structure] (Moscow 1990), 254; Peirce, *Morality Tales*, 9.

129 S. Ivanova, 'Predavane na vesti v Osmanskata imperia i upravlenieto na podanitsite i' [The diffusion of news in the Ottoman Empire and the administration of its subjects], in Eadem (ed.), *Etnicheski i religiozni prostranstva na Balkanite. Sbornik v chest na prof. Dr. Tzvetana Georgieva* [Ethnic and cultural spaces in the Balkans: contributions in honour of Prof. Dr. Tzvetana Georgieva] (Sofia 2008), 476-477.

ova), "the Ottomanisation of the Bulgarian social space" (Tz. Georgieva), or "the imperialization of the Ottoman state, following its administrative consolidation" (L. Peirce).¹³⁰ The territorial organisation of the *kadı* network is important because it connected the social actors who are the subject of this paper, i.e., the people, to the central authorities. Since the court was open to all social strata – to the Muslim and non-Muslim *reaya*, as well as to the Muslim soldiers – it was particularly well suited also to manage fiscal tasks, and indeed these tasks were increasingly assigned to it. In turn, this established the court as the centre of local life. To put it simply: if the authorities demanded something from the provinces, they would use the court as a mediator, and the court would rely on the representatives of the local communities to carry out state orders.

Apart from through the *kadı* court, the communication between centre and province was made possible also thanks to the *ayan*, who, unlike the Sultan's functionaries, the governors and the *kadı*s, who came and went, were a stable component of the local administrative scene.¹³¹ Networking and working with the neighbourhood and village communities, in order to advance the interests of the state, was integral both to the nature and the functions of the *ayan*. Hundreds of documents list the names of local administrators and notables who represented the *reaya*. To us, these names also represent people who talked directly to the entire population and were able to provide all kinds of information. From the seventeenth century on, the *ayan* and other local notables constituted a community council, and were the major executors of all state and 'municipal' projects: collecting taxes and recruiting soldiers, maintaining social order, and providing funds for the administration, for public works, and for infrastructure, among other things.¹³² Current historiography describes the Ottoman administrative machine as a big head – the central authorities consisting of numerous functionaries in Istanbul – with no developed body attached to it, meaning no adequate administration in the provinces. Moreover, the members of the Ottoman administrative system often held no specific titles or specialised offices. It was because of the multifunctional community councils of the *ayan* and local *reaya* elders, which were gradually established in all *kazas*, that the Ottoman government was able to exert real influence in the provinces or at least to communicate with them without having to maintain a well-developed, specialised provincial administration.¹³³ The community council served as the local decision-makers: people who enjoyed the

130 M. Stainova, 'Islam i islamskaia religioznaia propaganda v Bolgarii' [Islam and Islamic religious propaganda in Bulgaria], in *Osmanskaia imperia. Sistema gosudarstvennogo upravleniia, sotzialnie i etnoreligioznie problemi* [The Ottoman Empire: the system of state rule, the social and ethno-religious problems] (Moscow 1986), 83; Georgieva, *Prostranstvo*, 150-165; Peirce, *Morality Tales*, 9.

131 I. M. Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650* (New York 1983); Gradeva, 'Kadiiskata institutzia'.

132 Meyer, 'Ayani', 54; Ivanova, 'Danachnoto oblagane'; V. Mutafchieva, *Kardjaliisko vreme* [The epoch of the Kirdjalis] (Sofia 1976); A. Sućeska, *Ajani. Prilog izučavanju lokalne vlasti u našim zemljama za vrijeme turaka* [The *ayan*: a contribution to the study of local power in our lands during the Turkish period] (Sarajevo 1965).

133 Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 245; Ivanova, 'Varoş'.

public's respect and performed public functions.¹³⁴ Although the council did not consist of expert administrators, it could solve a wide range of local issues, and, most important, it could carry out tasks assigned by the state – this was a manifestation of a “community in action”, in Boğaç Ergene's words.¹³⁵

The means of transport are certainly crucial to the speed of information transmission (as the expression ‘news flies’ testifies),¹³⁶ but I will not analyse them in this paper. But, as a brief note, obviously we should not overlook the importance of the *ferman* couriers, the *mübaşirs*, of whom we talked above. Neither will I analyse the road connections between the capital and the provinces, whose major features were the post stations.¹³⁷

Another important element in the ‘conversation’ between the state and its subjects were the documents themselves. For several years now, the *mühimme defters* (ledgers of summaries of the decrees issued by the Sublime Porte) have been among the most extensively researched Ottoman sources. It has been established that local administrative offices, local communities, and even individuals could send statements, complaints, and petitions (*arz*, *arzuhal*, *ilâm*, *mahzar*) to the Sultan, to which the central authorities responded via *fermans*. In addition to the *fermans* and *berats* that the Porte issued on its own initiative, it issued decrees in response to petitions from its subjects; from the seventeenth century on, these *fermans* were entered in the *şikâyet defters* (grievance registers). Gradually, a comprehensive procedure of communication between the central authorities and the local administration developed.¹³⁸ The objective of the rigorous investigation of the *mühimme* and *şikâyet defters* by scholars is to bring out the implicit information in the people's petitions that the *defters* contain so as to uncover an image of society that Faroqhi has described as “society minus the state”.¹³⁹ These *defters* are seen as providing a

134 S. Faroqhi, ‘Town Officials, Timar-Holders, and Taxation in the Late Sixteenth-Century Crisis as Seen From Çorum’, in Eadem, *Coping with the State*, 89–91.

135 Ergene, *Local Court*, 151.

136 Cf. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, 1:355–374.

137 Georgieva, *Prostranstvo*, 298–302; C. Heywood, ‘The Ottoman Menzilhane and Ulak System in Rumeli in the Eighteenth Century’, in O. Okyar and H. İnalcık (eds), *Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi, 1071–1920: Birinci Uluslararası Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi Kongresi Tebliğleri/Social and Economic History of Turkey, 1071–1920: Papers Presented to the First International Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey* (Ankara 1980), 179–186; O. Zirojevich, ‘Tzarigradski drum od Beograd do Sofije (1459–1683)’ [The Istanbul road from Belgrade to Sofia (1459–1683)], *Zbornik Istoriskog muzeia Srbije*, 7 (1970), 3–107; A. Antonov, ‘Kam vaprosa za menzilit v balgarskite zemi prez XVI–XVII vek’ [On the question of the *menzils* in Bulgarian lands during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries], in E. Radushev, Z. Kostova and V. Stoyanov (eds), *Studia in Honorem Professoris Verae Mutaftchieva* (Sofia 2001), 35–50; see also E. A. Zachariadou (ed.), *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule, 1380–1699. Halcyon Days in Crete II: A Symposium Held in Rethymnon, 9–11 January 1994* (Rethymno 1996).

138 Halil İnalcık defines this procedure as a *şikâyet* mechanism; H. İnalcık, ‘Şikâyet Hakkı: ‘Arz-i Hâl ve ‘Arz-i Mahzar’lar’, *OA*, 7–8 (1988), 33–54. See also Faroqhi, ‘Political Activity’; H. G. Majer (ed.), *Das osmanische “Registerbuch der Beschwerden” (Şikâyet Defteri) vom Jahre 1675. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. Mixt. 683* (Vienna 1984), 17–23.

139 Faroqhi, ‘Political Tensions’, 112. For a study, based on documents from the Oriental Depart-

view of the subject's life which research has overlooked for decades, focusing instead on the sultans, the capital, and the central institutions of the Empire, as well as on the way in which "official parlance"¹⁴⁰ was conveyed. By contrast, the historiography based on the *mühimme defters* seems to have focused more on the route from the subject to the government, adopting a 'bottom-up' viewpoint, to quote Faroqhi,¹⁴¹ which elucidates how the Sultan and his subjects perceived each other. In fact, the process of communication resembled a shuttle between two points: from the periphery to the centre of state power, and from the centre to the periphery. Various types of documents travelled between these two points. In this paper, I have been analysing what happened at 'the bottom', once specific information came to the provinces, by reading documents which were issued at 'the top'. By assuming such a 'top-down'¹⁴² perspective, I am trying to understand what kind of news reached the subjects. As it seems, they heard much about taxes; in doing so, they realised what it meant to be a subject, but, peripherally, they became aware of another kind of information, namely, information about the state and important state events.

Research into the *mühimme* and *kadı* registers demonstrates that the subjects knew the procedural steps – which actually form a circle – in the contact between subject and state, and between state and subject.¹⁴³ Thus, the *kadı* and other local Ottoman functionaries, together with the community councils of the *ayan* and the *reaya*'s elders, became the Ottoman authorities' major correspondents. All the decrees were sent to them; they carried them out, and in turn informed the capital of what they had done and of any difficulties that they encountered, or applied for modification or even cancellation of the tasks imposed on them. Numerous documents, sent from the centre to the provinces and vice-versa were fed to this administrative machine (Faroqhi refers to the *kadı* as a paper tiger).¹⁴⁴ The procedures that I have described ran smoothly because they were constantly in use. What is important is that this mechanism was successfully based on written documents in that largely illiterate society because it implied mandatory public readings and debate of the texts of the *fermans* in front of an audience which was specifically selected so that certain types of information could reach every subject. A *berat* concerning

ment of the Sts Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia, of the *arzuhal* and its circulation through administrative bureaus in Istanbul until the issuing of an official response see A. Velkov, 'Dopalnitelni vpisvania varhu osmano-turskite finansovi dokumenti ot XVI-XVIII vek' [Additional notes on Ottoman-Turkish financial documents of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries], *Izvestia na Narodnata biblioteka "Sv. Kiril i Metodii"*, 14/20 (1976), 83-140.

140 Faroqhi, 'Robbery on the Hajj Road', 207.

141 Eadem, 'Political Initiatives'.

142 This expression refers to the system of allocation of taxes among groups, and their collection as a lump sum (*toptan*); Veinstein, 'Inalcik's Views', 5.

143 The Ottoman subjects were in a position to protest against the actions of the government and to make their desires known to the system. The financial clerks in the centre were dependent on those who were based in the provinces – officials, villagers, city-dwellers. These were the only ones who knew the local conditions well enough to determine the appropriate solution to the issues that they raised. See Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 281-282.

144 Faroqhi, 'Town Officials', 91.

the collection of *cizye* in the district of Sofia in 1616-1617 states that its text has to be publicised: "I ruled that when my servants [the tax-collectors] arrive with my sacred decree, you, the *kadıs*, shall publicise it immediately and give all necessary instructions in front of all the people...".¹⁴⁵ A *ferman* of 1787 about the post stations in Rumelia ends as follows: "You, the *kadıs* and the deputy *kadıs*, shall make each and every person understand that when specific *kazas* are required to provide food for this system ... the full amount must be collected and delivered. ... You shall send reports via the courier who brought you this *ferman*, and these reports shall specify that ... all will be acting exactly in the way required of them...".¹⁴⁶ Even a cursory glance at the documents shows that the explicit instruction about reading a *ferman* publicly – "word by word" – was frequently cited, especially in documents which dealt with or addressed specific Muslim strata, typically not part of the *reaya*. Thus, a *ferman*, addressed to the judges, the *emins* of the *mukataas*, *gümriüks*, and *cizye* in the 'right wing' of Rumelia, decrees that the members of the *ulema* who demand to be paid their salaries from these taxes shall be audited. The *ferman* concludes: "When this sacred decree (*emr*) reaches you, all of you who are *kadıs* shall announce its distinguished contents publicly (*ilân*) by reading it in everyone's presence (*kıraat*) and informing everyone of what it says (*işaa*)".¹⁴⁷

It is clear that reading a *ferman* in front of many listeners, verbalising its message, and having the listeners transmit it orally to the lower levels of the tax-paying community and, ultimately, to the individual households within it, was integral to the administrative procedure whereby the central authorities assigned tasks to the subjects. Whenever a local community received orders from the centre, a group of people gathered in court. The group included the administrators to whom the *ferman* was addressed, the *ayan*, and, if the order concerned them, (Muslim and non-Muslim) representatives of the *reaya* (such representatives could include members of urban neighbourhoods, villages, and other professional, confessional, or social groups; often *kadı* records list them by name, or mention, more generally, that members of such groups were present). State documents were read to these people and specific decisions about how to carry them out were made in their presence, especially those concerning the distribution, or breaking-down (*tevzi*), of fiscal obligations and *angaryas*.¹⁴⁸

A few *fermans* specifically charge the *kadıs* with informing the Porte, by *arzes* or *ilâms*, about having received the document sent to them. In fact, among the *kadı*'s obligations, upon receiving a decree, was not only to publicise it, and record it in the *sicil*, but also to notify the capital of having done so in an *arz* or an *ilâm*: "The illustrious decree which was issued, arrived in the court of Zıştovi."¹⁴⁹ After the decree was registered,

145 *Izvori za balgarskata istoria*, 26:212-213.

146 Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 196-197.

147 OrO, R4, 73-a/II.

148 See some documents in D. Ilchiev, 'Turski darjavni dokumenti za Osman Pazvantoglu Vidinski' [Turkish state documents about Osman Pazvantoglu of Vidin], *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenje i knijnina*, 24 (1909), 123.

149 Svishtov, Bulgaria.

we invited all who had to be present, to the court of law. After the decree was opened and read in their presence and all expressed their obedience, they took charge of acting in compliance with the noble order".¹⁵⁰ Let me note that various kinds of *arzes* and *arzuahals* were used in the communication between the capital and the provinces. Some *arzes* were sent from the province, eventually via the *kadı*: a typical example of a 'bottom-up' initiative.¹⁵¹ But there were also *arzes* which were an item in the chain of the regular administrative communication of the centre with the provinces and the feedback from the provinces: as seen above, first, the Sublime Porte would address a *ferman* to a *kadı*, and, in response, the *kadı* would report to the Porte by an *arz* on the enforcement of the *ferman*.¹⁵² It is in this type of *arzes* where we may specifically read that a *ferman* was received and read in court. To provide two more examples, an *arz* of 1688 by Mehmed, judge (*müvellâ hilafeten*) of Tatar Pazarcık,¹⁵³ informed the central authorities that the local people were "summoned to the court, where a *ferman* was opened and read, and its contents were made known", namely, that a tax for a general call to arms (*nefir-i âm*) would be collected from the tax-paying *reaya*, the *cizye*-paying infidels, and everyone else among whom the tax needed to be distributed. The *kadı*, furthermore, reported that in compliance with the sacred *ferman*, the decree was entered in the court register, and then "all the residents of the *vilâyet* expressed their obedience and respect. The cash equivalent was broken down and distributed immediately and everyone was instructed to pay their due".¹⁵⁴ In a similar fashion, on the occasion of shipping grain, stored by granary owners and the *reaya*, to the port of Tekirdağ, the *kadı* of Zağra-ı Atik, Seyyid Mehmed, issued on 9 December 1756 an *arz* reporting that, when the decree arrived in the local court, the *ayan*, the residents, and the *zâbits* were "invited, and the decree's illustrious text was read and proclaimed in their presence and made clear and known to everyone; with the help of the court, the decree was announced to all who had to be notified".¹⁵⁵

This is how the administrative process was completed. Understanding this process enables us to define tentatively the time period within which publicising fiscal tasks and, in doing so, transmitting information about state initiatives became an established practice. If we can agree that the evolving taxation practices were the major cause of the changes in neighbourhood communities' corporate organisation, of their shift to a higher degree of self-governance, and of the changes in the Empire's overall social structure, we have to focus on the seventeenth century.¹⁵⁶

150 OrO, F. 26, a.u. 3656; Velkov, 'Doplnitelni vpisvania', 73-75.

151 Faroqhi, 'Political Activity', 37-38.

152 S. Ivanova, 'The *Sicills* of the Ottoman *Kadis*: Observations over the *Sicill* Collection at the National Library in Sofia, Bulgaria', in K. Çiçek (ed.), *Pax Ottomana: Studies in Memoriam Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç* (Haarlem and Ankara 2001), 60-62.

153 Pazardjik, Bulgaria.

154 OrO, F. 95, a.u. 27.

155 "Feth ve kıraat ve mazmun-ı münifi cümleye tefhim ve işaat olunup tenbihi lâzım gelenlere mahkemede tenbih olındıkta"; OrO, Sz 6/4.

156 According to İnalcık, the *avarız* taxes became regular during the 1593-1606 war against the Habsburgs, and, according to Suçeska, from the 1630s. As a result of that, the *ayanlık* phe-

An important aspect of the administrative process is the language issue, since the written language was used by only a narrow stratum in the largely illiterate pre-modern society, and was, therefore, neither the only, nor the most important communication medium;¹⁵⁷ in fact, the more isolated a community, the better regulated the methods of oral communication that it used.¹⁵⁸ Through the *kadı* institution, any person, even if illiterate, could learn about the contents of the documents which were read aloud in court. The question which naturally follows is perhaps the hardest to answer: did the people present understand what they heard and, if so, to what extent? The documents were written and read in Ottoman Turkish and included Arabic and Persian words which only well-educated people would know.¹⁵⁹ It is unlikely that this elite language was easily understood by the average Turkish-speaker, not to mention those who did not speak Turkish.¹⁶⁰ The *kadı* presumably was the one in charge of explaining documents in such a way that they would not just be announced but also understood. This is another aspect of why his position was so significant, and adds to our knowledge of his functions: in addition to being a judge, a notary, an investigator, a *kaza*'s chief functionary, and a member of the *ulema*, the *kadı* was also a universal mediator and interpreter of state politics in the provinces.

For those who did not speak Turkish, such as presumably the majority of the non-Muslims, the entourage of the *kadis* in larger cities included an interpreter (*tercüman*).¹⁶¹ However, we must also consider the evidence which suggests that many non-Muslims, especially the elites and the city residents, spoke Turkish.¹⁶² This was the official lan-

nomenon came about, the allocation of taxes as a lump sum (*toptan*) became habitual, and local funding for the *mübaşırs* from the capital became frequent. All that is regular practice at least from the middle of the seventeenth century in the region under consideration here. See İnalçık, 'Military and Fiscal Transformation', 315; Sućeska, 'Promjene u sistemu', 90-94; Veinstein, 'İnalçık's Views', 5.

157 Gurevich, *Srednevekovyi mir*, 30.

158 B. Bogdanov, *Orfei i drevnata mitologia na Balkanite* [Orpheus and the ancient mythology of the Balkans] (Sofia 1991), 14; J. Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization, 400-1500* (Oxford 1988), 139, 238.

159 N. Yüce, 'Ottoman Turkish', in E. İhsanoğlu (ed.), *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 2002), 3-27.

160 According to İnalçık, the *adaletnames* were intended to be read aloud so that the entire audience could hear and understand them, because the claim of legitimacy was addressed to the audience, including the most indigent and illiterate subjects, Muslim and non-Muslim alike; H. İnalçık, 'Adaletnameler', *Belgeler*, 2/3-4 (1964), 49-145; cf. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 296-297.

161 See, for instance, OrO, S21, 18/I; A. Fotić, *Privatni život u srpskim zemalima u osvjet modernog doba* [Private life in Serbian lands at the beginning of modern times] (Belgrade 2005), 44; K. Çiçek, 'Interpreters of the Court in the Ottoman Empire as Seen from the Sharia Court Records of Cyprus', *Islamic Law and Society*, 9/1 (2001), 1-15.

162 G. Hazai, 'La langue turque dans les provinces de l'Empire ottoman et l'attitude des élites locales envers celle-ci: Le cas de la Hongrie', in Anastasopoulos (ed.) *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire*, 3-9; P. Stathi, 'Provincial Bishops of the Orthodox Church as Members of the Ottoman Elite (Eighteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)', in *ibid.*, 77. Cf. Anastasopoulos, 'Mixed Elite', 262 – the author discusses the *tevzi defters* as a source for the local 'mixed' elites.

guage in which they communicated with the government;¹⁶³ Kitromilides defines Ottoman Turkish as a *lingua franca* used in a context of linguistic syncretism where language barriers were easily crossed.¹⁶⁴ But the opposite may be true as well: Tzvetana Georgieva, who focuses on the role of converts and the implications of mixed marriages in the past in the area of present-day Bulgaria, reminds us that the Muslims were not necessarily or exclusively Turkish-speakers: there were those who knew Bulgarian and acted as translators and interpreters.¹⁶⁵ Georgieva maintains that knowing the other group's dominant language made the distinction between Christians and Muslims less strict and facilitated the daily contacts not only between these two religious groups, but also between the people and the authorities. In turn, this facilitated the development of administrative autonomy.¹⁶⁶ The process of *deruhdeci*, whereby a specific person (a moneylender, or, in many cases, the holder of the *timar* to which a village belonged) managed the taxes of a village, reminds us that in some cases villages – including those with an entirely Christian population – were represented by Muslims.¹⁶⁷ It is also possible, although I cannot tell how common it may have been, that urban non-Muslims, whose mother tongue presumably was Bulgarian, were represented by people who spoke another language, such as Greek.¹⁶⁸ More languages and more translators, who transmitted and in fact explained state orders, can be added to the chain of communication with the state.

However, a person's access to information did not depend solely on knowing Ottoman Turkish or another language or on having someone translate to them, but also required their ability to understand a document's meaning. My guess is, as I have suggested above, that, in addition to translation, explanation was much needed: paraphrasing the 'learned' text into the language of the uneducated majority. One major advantage of having a network for the collective collection of the *avarız* and *vilâyet* taxes was that the state fiscal agencies did not have to communicate with individual taxpayers. Instead, they 'talked' to the representatives of the neighbourhood or village communities; as noted above, the practice of tax collection defined the *reaya*'s elites. Let us review what happened. At first the *ferman* arrived, brought by a *mübaşir* who explained the *ferman*'s contents to the local officials, *ayan* and other notables in the court of the *sancak*'s major city. Together, they all decided how to carry out the tasks decreed in the *ferman*. The rep-

163 A. Tietze, 'Ethnicity and Change in Ottoman Intellectual History', *Turcica*, 21-23 (1991), 385-395.

164 Kitromilides, 'Balkan Mentality'.

165 Tz. Georgieva, 'Transformatziite na edin sbilasak na tzivilizatzi: hristianstvoto i islama na Balkanite' [Transformations of an encounter of civilisations: Christianity and Islam in the Balkans], in *Balkan Identities*, Part 3 (Sofia 2003), 69-71; on the role of religious conversion in assuming an Ottoman identity, see W. H. McNeill, 'Hypotheses Concerning Possible Ethnic Role Changes in the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century', in Okyar and İnalcık (eds), *Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi*, 129.

166 Georgieva, 'Transformatziite', 71.

167 See Dimitrov (ed. and trans.), *Osmanski izvori*, 79.

168 J. Radonić, *Rimska kuria i južnoslovenske zemlje od XVI do XIX veka* [The Roman Curia and the southern Slavic lands, sixteenth-nineteenth centuries] (Belgrade 1950), 640.

representatives of the villages (*kura zâbitleri*, *deruhdecis* or other Muslims; non-Muslim elders were from among the ordinary *reaya* and from the beginning of the eighteenth century were known as *çorbacı*s) then returned to their villages, where they summoned the village elders and delivered the message which needed to reach the peasants. The message was first and foremost about the money that the peasants had to pay; yet the notables could also tell them the reason why the state needed the money: a war, a delegation passing through, etc. The message was an explanation of the *ferman*'s text, paraphrased to match common people's language and understanding;¹⁶⁹ this text was modified multiple times as the high register of the state language¹⁷⁰ went down the provincial administrative ladder.

The persons to whose attention the state orders were brought, because they had to carry them out, are the ones that I call the *reaya* elite. The Muslims and non-Muslims who knew or at least were in the position to know the administrative Ottoman language served as the *reaya*'s representatives and as mediators between the subjects and the state. Even though they did not hold government offices, they were charged with the administration of the local communities; on this account they assumed certain proto-political functions.¹⁷¹ Those were the people who could best understand the information addressed to the subjects in its entirety, including the political 'gossip' about state-political events. In turn, they could spread the 'gossip' among others in their communities in the usual way that information travelled across all social levels, i.e., through face-to-face communication: orally sharing a story in the presence of witnesses.¹⁷² The *reaya* elite is likely to have been the major interpreter of state information addressed to the large mass of the population.

It is unlikely that events in the capital, dynastic successions, military victories and defeats, or the Empire's diplomatic relations with near and more distant states concerned the daily lives of the subjects of those times any more than such events concern the citizens' daily lives today. Local news concerning trade, the production of goods, prices, or impending calamities would have been much more important in terms of the people's routine activities. On the other hand, the knowledge of state-political 'gossip' which could be obtained from the sultanic documents sent to the provinces must have conferred an aura of elitism upon those whose wealth, social influence, or experience distinguished them among the *reaya*. Literacy or the privilege of having access to information must have added to the existing social tensions. The varying degrees of access to infor-

169 The opposite procedure is also observed: the analysis of the texts of *mühimme defters* and *sicils* illustrates how the words of the subjects were edited and standardised in order to meet the requirements of the legal procedures. Thus, the voices of the 'common folk' reach us in the form of institutionalised 'translations'. See Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 8-9; Faroqhi, 'Political Activity', 62; Peirce, *Morality Tales*, 9; D. Ze'evi, 'The Use of Ottoman Shari'a Court Records as a Source for Middle Eastern Social History: A Reappraisal', *Islamic Law and Society*, 5/1 (1998), 52.

170 "Official parlance"; Faroqhi, 'Robbery on the Hajj Road', 207.

171 Ivanova, 'Varoş'.

172 Gurevich, *Srednevekovi mir*, 41, 56.

mation must have created new divisions among the *reaya*: a small part of the subjects knew much more about the Ottoman state than the rest. This knowledge must have been one reason (and not the least important one) why this part constituted the *reaya*'s elite; they knew the procedures and how to apply them. These same people must have been involved in managing the activities connected with the religious establishment and religious foundations. This must have been especially true of the Christian *reaya* elites. It seems logical that they must have had a special connection with the few learned people in their communities, including the clergy, who also authored the marginal notes which prompted my argument in this paper.¹⁷³



The old glitter of Ottoman imperial centralism has faded. As historical inquiry shifted towards the local, the local turned out to be less controlled and unified than expected. The study of local administration – non-differentiated and non-specialised, its functions lacking clear definition – has led modern scholars to disagree with the earlier affirmations of an Ottoman super-centralism. Yet, in terms of the realities of a pre-modern society, the Empire possessed a relatively adequate network of unified institutions which enabled it to reach the provinces and to control them for long stretches of time throughout its existence (at least with regard to obtaining resources and troops from the provinces). As the bureaucratic text was created and then publicised locally, the subjects became informed about the social reality and about their place and opportunities within it. Yet, they also learnt about the state they lived in, the extent of its territories, the ruler who governed from the throne, and important international events. This knowledge came from the information circulating between the state (whose image was the outcome of events such as a new sultan's accession to the throne, wars, victories, and defeats) and the subject (who, willingly or not, was involved in these events not only intellectually but also financially).

The positive knowledge that the people obtained as a result of fulfilling their obligations to the state turned out to depend upon their obligations as subjects, which added negative aspects to the communication between the Empire and its subjects. This complex relationship again raises the question of whether the Ottoman authorities needed to talk to their taxpayers, what sort of conversation it was, and whether this conversation included state propaganda.¹⁷⁴ Ottoman political thought postulated that taxation and guaranteeing justice were closely connected and that justice was a reliable indicator of the le-

173 Ivanova, 'Hristianska i miusiulmanska blagotvoritelnost'.

174 See Mutafchieva, *Kardjaliisko vreme*, 163–168; J. E. Matuz, 'Transmission of Directives from the Centre to the Periphery in the Ottoman State', in C. E. Farah (ed.), *Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire* (Kirkville 1993), 19–27; B. McGowan, 'Ottoman Political Communication', in H. D. Lasswell, D. Lerner, and H. Speier (eds), *Propaganda and Communication in World History*. Vol. 1: *The Symbolic Instrument in Early Times* (Honolulu 1979), 444–492.

gitimacy of the state and its official representatives.¹⁷⁵ This viewpoint shows another link between the distinct aspects of the state's conversations with its subjects; for instance, between informing the subjects of the accession of a new sultan to the throne, of military action, or of Muslims' involvement in jihad, on the one hand, and of an impending tax collection, on the other. It was through his administration that a sultan could effectively win or lose the loyalty of his subjects.¹⁷⁶ Is it possible then that the state used this correspondence not only as a means of accomplishing a specific task, but also, and more broadly, as a means of obtaining legitimacy? Why would taxes be reduced in the midst of a full-blown crisis? In Linda Darling's view, this was done because the need for legitimacy overrode the need for revenues. The Islamic political concept of the Circle of Justice (*daire-i adliye*) explains the close connection between taxation and the authorities' legitimacy. According to this concept, God's protection, military power, the production of wealth, and the ruler's justice are seen as interdependent.¹⁷⁷ I cannot tell whether the authorities pursued propaganda, but overall the Sultan was respected, which is to say that his image as a shepherd must have looked realistic.¹⁷⁸ The image of a sultan-shepherd legitimised the Ottoman ruler; hence, he had to maintain it, at least on the page.

175 İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 69-73; Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 296.

176 Ibid., 296.

177 Ibid., 282-283; H. Gerber, *State, Society and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective* (Albany 1994); H. İnalcık, 'State and Ideology under Sultan Süleyman', in Idem, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society* (Bloomington 1993), 72.

178 Faroqhi, 'Political Activity', 62; Kitromilides, 'Balkan Mentality'.

PART FIVE

GOING MACRO

LEGAL HISTORY ‘FROM THE BOTTOM UP’: EMPIRICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES FOR OTTOMANISTS

Boğaç ERGENE*

AS A HISTORIAN WHO CAME of age eagerly absorbing the works of the British Marxist historians and, later, those of the Subaltern Studies school, I have been profoundly inspired by ‘history from below’ or ‘history from the bottom up’. In an academic environment (the late 1980s and the early 90s, following the 1980 *coup d’état* in Turkey) that was deliberately a-political, I, like many others of my generation who sympathized with anti-establishment sentiments, was convinced that studying the conditions of the oppressed and exploited masses was both an academically and politically appropriate choice. A progressive academic posture, many of us thought at the time, required a focus on socioeconomic inequality and injustice in historical and contemporary contexts, and an interest in the relations of production, exchange, and exploitation that structured class relationships. As I think of my later academic training, and, more specifically, of my doctoral research, I realize that my inclination to study Ottoman court records (*sicils* in Ottoman Turkish) had a lot to do with this early academic-political stance. The court records, as advertised by the pioneers of *sicil* research in Ottoman studies, constituted a source base that contained information about the masses, common men and women.

As the 2009 Halcyon Days in Crete Symposium demonstrated, history ‘from the bottom up’ is currently flourishing in Ottoman historiography. During the symposium, researchers specializing in different regions and periods shared with their colleagues many instances of political action by different groups, ethnicities, and religious communities who did not belong to the provincial or imperial elite. Indeed, the papers presented in Crete provided a colorful collage of Ottoman subjects, who were, individually and collectively, scheming and engaging local and imperial power-holders. The variety of research on display at the symposium is proof that history ‘from the bottom up’ has be-

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I would like to thank the organizers of the Halcyon Days Symposium, Antonis Anastasopoulos, Elias Kolovos, and Marinos Sariyannis, for their hospitality. I am also grateful to Antonis Anastasopoulos, Febe Armanios, and one anonymous referee for useful suggestions and criticisms, which helped to improve the text. I bear the responsibility of all remaining shortcomings.

come a popular paradigmatic choice in Ottoman history-writing. This is precisely why it might be time for us to make a conscious effort to assess, in empirical and theoretical terms, how this methodological orientation shapes our relationship with the Ottoman past and historical sources. The concern with “political (or other types of) initiatives ‘from the bottom-up’” requires us to approach the past and read documents in particular ways. The question we should then tackle is the degree to which these methods allow us to get closer to the truth of the past in its full complexity.

This paper addresses such issues in the context of my own field of specialization – Ottoman legal history. Although it does not provide historical examples of political or legal initiatives involving the common folk against the elite, as many other papers in this volume most capably do, it does address the potential merits and shortfalls of the methodological approach employed in writing history from below. As a caveat, I should emphasize that my observations and generalizations have been largely shaped by my own individual development as a historian and are specific to Ottoman legal historiography, in particular the branch based on *sicils*. While I believe that many of my claims below are generalizable, researchers with different backgrounds and/or from other fields will surely find points to qualify, elaborate, or disagree with. Because of the subjective nature of the discussion and also since I originally intended my presentation in Crete to spur dialogue among symposium participants, this essay should be read as a relatively casual dispatch to colleagues whom I know to be interested in the topic.



When I first started working on my dissertation in the late 1990s, my plan was to explore court records in order to decipher legal processes and understand how, in the arena of the court, various socioeconomic groups interacted with and struggled against others. Very much intrinsic to this orientation was a determination on my part to identify what Ranajit Guha had earlier called the “autonomous domain” of the politics of the people,¹ and bring to the fore indigenous subaltern actors in the Ottoman past as independent and politically conscious agents.² The critique that scholars of the Subaltern Studies school had leveled at the colonialist and nationalist narratives of South Asian historiography, I thought, was applicable to some degree to the existing historiography on the Ottoman lower classes and class relations. I was also convinced that the terminology and conceptual categories that they had introduced could be adapted to Ottoman history to help generate sophisticated interpretations of Ottoman state-society relationships.

1 R. Guha, ‘On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India’, in Idem (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I* (Oxford 1982), 4.

2 According to Guha, “the historian needs to struggle to recover ‘marginal’ voices and memories, forgotten dreams and signs of resistance, if history is to be anything more than a celebratory account of the march of certain victorious concepts and powers like the nation-state, bureaucratic rationalism, capitalism, science and progress”; G. Pandey, ‘The Prose of Otherness’, in D. Arnold and D. Hardiman (eds), *Subaltern Studies VIII: Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha* (Oxford 1994), 214.

As far as I know, the first ideologically conscious, politically left-leaning studies of Ottoman state-society relations started to emerge in Turkey in the 1960s. Similar types of studies continued to appear during the politically charged decades of the 1970s and the 1980s.³ The authors of these studies used different models of historical materialism to characterize the configuration of dominant social and economic relationships in the Ottoman Empire.⁴ Hence, although their conceptualizations of the super-structural characteristics of Ottoman society differed significantly, they all considered the fundamental contradictions in relations of production to be the primary determinant in the structuring of Ottoman society. This presumption was in obvious conflict with the ideas of an earlier generation of Turkish historians – as epitomized in the works of Fuad Köprülü, Ömer Lütfi Barkan, and later, to a lesser extent, Halil İnalcık – who had minimized the sources of economic and political conflict.⁵

Thus, the materialist approach to Ottoman sociopolitical history shared a common focus with the Subalternist genre on the conflict among the social structures of the state, the privileged elite, and the marginalized masses. This was one aspect that attracted me to the works of Mustafa Akdağ, Sencer Divitçioğlu, and others. At the same time, and under the influence of Marxist historiography, the materialist approaches of the 60s, the 70s, and the 80s lacked the cultural and ideological sensitivity that many, if not all, Subalternist historians exemplified in their work. Overall, the representatives of Turkish historical materialism appeared dismissive of, if they addressed at all, the complex religious and cultural worlds of the Ottoman masses. In particular, the Gramscian emphasis on the ideological aspects of class struggle – how the state and/or ruling classes attempted to define themselves and their opponents in ideological terms; how they justified their actions and challenged the legitimacy of those of their enemies; and how they shaped the religious, cultural and political expectations of the lower classes – was missing from their analyses.⁶

3 See, among others, M. Akdağ, 'Celali İsyanlarında Büyük Kaçgun', *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2 (1964), 1-49; Idem, *Celali İsyanları: Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası* (Istanbul 1975); S. Divitçioğlu, *Asya Tipi Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumunu* (Istanbul 1967); Ç. Keyder, 'The Dissolution of the Asiatic Mode of Production', *Economy and Society*, 5 (1976), 178-196; T. Timur, *Osmanlı Toplumsal Düzeni* (Ankara 1979); Idem, *Osmanlı Kimliği* (Istanbul 1986); H. İslamoğlu and Ç. Keyder, 'Agenda for Ottoman History', *Review*, 1 (1977), 31-57; Eidem, 'The Ottoman Social Formation', in A. M. Bailey and J. R. Llobera (eds), *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Science and Politics* (London and Boston 1981), 301-324; M. A. Kılıçbay, *Feodalite ve Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Üretim Tarzı* (Istanbul 1982); H. Berktaş, *Kabilelerden Feodalizme* (Istanbul 1983); Idem, 'The Feudalism Debate: The Turkish End – Is 'Tax-vs.-Rent' Necessarily the Product and Sign of a Modal Difference?', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 14 (1986/87), 291-333.

4 Obviously, I am omitting here the academic literature produced by contemporary Balkan historians of Marxist disposition, who usually, if not always, produced their work in their own languages. Unfortunately, this literature has remained inaccessible to Turkish readers.

5 See H. Berktaş, 'The Search for the Peasant in Western and Turkish History/Historiography', in Idem and S. Faroqhi (eds), *New Approaches to State and Peasant in Ottoman History* (London 1992), 109-183.

6 The language of Islam and the paternalistic discourse of the Ottoman state as aspects of Ottoman legitimacy have long been acknowledged in the field and especially in Turkish academia.

However, the most attractive aspect of the Subalternist research orientation, I thought, was its strong inclination to locate the focal point of history-writing outside the boundaries of the state and its relationship with other elements of Ottoman society. It is well known that Ottoman historiography has been an overwhelmingly, if no longer completely, state-centric field. Since the early twentieth century, our focus has been concentrated predominantly on the nature and functions of state institutions, although, and thanks to the efforts of our colleagues working on the Balkans and the Arab lands, this tendency is disappearing. It is still common for researchers to explore the structural characteristics of the Ottoman sociopolitical and financial 'system', at the expense of local and, for lack of a better term, 'civil' entities. For example, while much has been written about the hegemonic aspects of the Ottoman polity as a factor that contributed to its phenomenal longevity,⁷ remarkably little is known about counter-discourses that might have challenged the ideological legitimacy of the Ottoman state in various contexts. Nor do I know of many historians in the 1990s, left-leaning or not, who were genuinely interested in deciphering what Guha and his colleagues have called the "hidden transcript" of the masses, a critical theme for any researcher interested in history from the bottom up.

Thus, I was convinced at the time that the historical approach exemplified by the Subaltern Studies school could help develop a fresh perspective in Ottoman historiography and enable us to produce non-state-centric accounts of history that recognize the agency of exploited and marginalized groups in the Empire. What I did not realize before going into the archives is that writing history from 'the bottom up' might not only prove to be difficult in practice, given the nature of our sources, but could also obscure, unless we are careful, the complexity of past realities. In the rest of this essay, I focus on some of the major challenges associated with such an approach as I have experienced them in my own research.



Many of our colleagues have characterized the Ottoman state as essentially a just political entity that was committed to Sunni Muslim principles and the need to safeguard the interests and welfare of its subjects. Because the Ottoman state was a just and unwaveringly Muslim political entity, the argument went, the Ottoman social order remained calm and stable, for the most part, and the Ottoman subjects loyal and obedient, at least until the nineteenth century, when external factors disrupted the sociopolitical harmony. See, for example, the following works of Halil İnalcık: 'Adaletnameler', *Belgeler*, 2/3-4 (1965), 49-145; 'Şikâyet Hakkı: 'Arz-i Hâl ve 'Arz-i Mahzar'lar', *OA*, 7-8 (1988), 33-54; 'Köy, Köylü ve İmparatorluk', in *V. Milletlerarası Türkiye Sosyal ve İktisat Tarihi Kongresi: Tebliğler* (Ankara 1990), 1-13; 'State and Ideology under Sultan Süleyman I', in *Idem, The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society* (Bloomington 1993), 70-94. For more recent and theoretically sophisticated discussions of Ottoman hegemonic prowess see H. İslamoğlu, *State and Peasant in the Ottoman Empire: Agrarian Power Relations and Regional Economic Development in Ottoman Anatolia during the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden 1994); K. Barkey, 'Rebellious Alliances: The State and Peasant Unrest in Early Seventeenth-Century France and the Ottoman Empire', *American Sociological Review*, 56 (1991), 699-715; Eadem, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca 1994).

7 See n. 6 above.

Let us start with empirical issues: although we encounter thousands of court clients in court documents and learn much about their reasons for coming to court, the relative paucity of detail in these sources renders it difficult to make generalizations. In fact, the socioeconomic backgrounds and class identities of court clients are rarely specified in the *sicils*. What we find is largely limited to the names of court clients, including their fathers' names; their honorary titles (if the male clients belonged to the military or religious establishment); religious epithets (signifying if they were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad or had made the pilgrimage to Mecca); and the names of their villages or quarters. This information is not always adequate to differentiate lower classes from upper classes and common men/women from the elite. While court records do occasionally provide detailed information about specific people – for example, clients who are mentioned in multiple entries – most individuals encountered in these documents disappear immediately, with the result that we are unable to ascertain fully who they were and the sociopolitical significance of their disputes or transactions with others.

Thus, court records cannot facilitate a socioeconomic analysis of local communities unless we are willing to make bold associations between honorific titles and socioeconomic status.⁸ And even if we are willing to make such associations for practical purposes, we know for a fact that peasants, the urban poor, and women are severely under-represented in court records compared to, say, the ranking members of the religious and military establishments. These limitations of court records undercut our attempts to accurately represent the legal dealings of subaltern groups in Ottoman society. It is not a coincidence that the literature on legal practice based on *sicils* is largely impressionistic

8 Some historians, including the present author, have made assumptions in their work about the social and economic characteristics of court clients based on their honorary titles. See, for example, B. Ergene and A. Berker, 'Wealth and Inequality in the Ottoman Empire: Observations from Eighteenth-Century Kastamonu', *IJMES*, 40 (2008), 23-46; Ö. L. Barkan, 'Edirne Askeri Kassamı'na Ait Tereke Defterleri (1545-1659)', *Belgeler*, 3 (1968), 1-479; R. Gradeva, 'Towards a Portrait of 'the Rich' in Ottoman Provincial Society: Sofia in the 1670s', in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003* (Rethymno 2005), 149-200; H. Gerber, *Economy and Society in an Ottoman City: Bursa, 1600-1700* (Jerusalem 1988); J.-P. Pascual and C. Estabiet, *Familles et fortunes à Damas: 450 foyers damascains en 1700* (Damascus 1994); R. Roded, 'Ottoman Service as a Vehicle for the Rise of New Upstarts among the Urban Elite Families of Syria in the Last Decades of Ottoman Rule', in G. Warburg and G. Gilbar (eds), *Studies in Islamic Society: Contributions in Memory of Gabriel Baer* (Haifa 1984), 63-94. However, it is impossible to establish direct associations between all titles and religious markers and socioeconomic privilege for all Ottoman contexts; see G. Tülüveli, 'Honorific Titles in Ottoman Parlance: A Reevaluation', *IJTS*, 11 (2005), 17-28. For one thing, the relationship between title/marker and status is contextual. Second, not all titles or markers indicate socioeconomic status. For a learned discussion of the possibilities and shortcomings involved in using honorific titles and other markers of status in identifying class characteristics of Ottoman subjects in various provincial contexts see E. Gara, 'Moneylenders and Landowners: In Search of Urban Muslim Elites in the Early Modern Balkans', in Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites*, 135-147.

in nature, and tends to take individual examples of court processes and interactions as perhaps too representative.

Beyond these issues is another, possibly more serious, problem confronting the historian committed to speaking for the common man and woman. As elite sources, composed according to specific legal and bureaucratic requirements, *sicils* do not usually give voice to the authentic utterances of the subaltern. Instead, they translate subaltern 'speech' into a legalistic and technical language, suitable for the ears and eyes of the educated, Muslim, male elite, and created with the intention to justify the conduct and legal outcome of the court proceedings. Thus, it is not surprising to find, for example, non-Muslim court clients describing their own traditional practices as "unsound/false/superstitious customs" (*ayin-i batılamız üzere*).⁹ Regardless of how these individuals actually referred to these practices in the presence of court officials, according to the religious and legal ideology that produced the court records such practices were *batıl*, and, thus, were referred to as such.

The issue is not merely one of labeling actions or identities according to elite frames of reference. It is also frequently the case that the real, not-necessarily-judicial motives of court clients remain unacknowledged or are even deliberately misconstrued in the *sicils*. It was not uncommon for women, for example, in a variety of contexts, to bring suit against specific men for rape despite being unable to prove their allegations. Why they did so remains a mystery, given how serious the legal consequences of *kazf* (unfounded accusation of unlawful intercourse) and confession to *zina* (illicit intercourse) could be.¹⁰ It is by no means clear that these women made such accusations in court willingly or that their complaints were characterized and registered by court officials as rape litigations with serious legal repercussions. Historians have attempted to explain such cases of obvious self-incrimination by suggesting the possibility that the real intention of these women was a public proclamation of their innocence, regardless of the legal consequence of their actions, or by claiming that these women sought non-litigious, court-mediated settlements of their contentions (see below for more on this possibility).¹¹ Nevertheless, it remains a fact that the records were composed in such a way as to reflect not the women's actual intentions in bringing suit but the legal consequences of their words and actions, and the judicial processes that took place to manage these consequences. Rather than a detailed 'snapshot' of the lives or problems of court clients, court records provide merely

9 For example, on 20 Şaban 1151/3 December 1738, a Christian woman made the following statement in the court of Kastamonu: "I lost my eyesight a couple of years ago and since then I have been in no condition to serve the needs of my husband. For this reason, my husband has recently got married to another woman in accordance with our false/unsound customs (*ayin-i batılamız üzere*), and now I would like to get divorced from him..."; Kastamonu Court Records, Vol. 36, 26-42.

10 See R. Peters, *Crime and Punishment in Islamic Law* (Cambridge 2006), 61-64.

11 For such explanations see L. Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley 2003), 276-310, 351-375; B. A. Ergene, 'Why Did Ümmü Gülsüm Go to Court? Ottoman Legal Practice between History and Anthropology', *Islamic Law and Society*, 17 (2010), 215-244.

a one-dimensional, 'official' (legalistic) characterization of them, generated strictly with bureaucratic intentions.

Obviously, Ottomanists are not the first to encounter such problems with archival sources. In fact, it has been long acknowledged by both historians and other researchers that archival documents are rarely receptive to the concerns of the researchers. As Jacques Derrida insists, archives have their own agendas and even agencies, which often not only resist the concerns of the researcher but deliberately undermine the viability of his/her project. The archive struggles, perhaps as much as the historian, to represent the past in a certain way, the way of its creators (the "archon" in Derrida's parlance), and to define what is important to remember and what is not, which, if in conflict with the historian's agenda, is a basis of frustration for the latter.¹² Arlette Farge, a French historian of the early modern period who has written extensively on crime and disorder, cogently expresses this sense of frustration in her *Le goût de l'archive*, which can be read as an account of Farge's personal experiences in the archive and the challenges that she faced there. She suggests that even when the archive appears to "easily deliver what one expects of it, the work is [still] demanding. We must patiently abandon our natural 'sympathy' for what the archive offers us and consider it an *adversary to fight*; [what the archive offers] is a piece of knowledge that is not there [for us] to annex but one that functions to disrupt [our narrative]; to be able to really know it, you have to unlearn it and not assume you understand it from a first reading" (translation and emphasis mine).¹³

Historians have offered techniques to recover, if partially, the unstated in their uncooperative sources. In particular, Guha, following Walter Benjamin, proposed reading elite texts (both archival documents and the historical narratives based on them) "against the grain" as a strategy to capture the silenced voices of the marginalized. As a historical technique, such an attempt requires an ability and determination to turn inside out the labels and categories used by the elite ('barbarians' are in fact 'natives'; 'monuments of Western or Islamic civilization', such as cathedrals, mosques, and palaces of the elite, could in fact be the products of colonial aggression and oppression), and to attribute agency and historical consciousness to the 'other' when these are deliberately denied to the latter. The objective, then, is to recover the authentic voice of the 'other', make it historically visible.¹⁴ But this strategy has its own potential shortcomings. First, it is based on the assumption that the 'other' possessed an essence that is singular, distinct, and recoverable. As Ann Stoler reminds us, the essence of the 'other', as reflected in documents, is usually "protean", anything but fixed or stable, "subject to reformulation again and again". Documents are often "uncertain", "doubtful", and, even, self-contradictory

12 J. Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago 1998), 25-33. Also see C. K. Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick 2002), 1-17.

13 A. Farge, *Le goût de l'archive* (Paris 1989), 90.

14 R. Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi 1983), Introduction. Also see M. Lövy, "'Against the Grain': The Dialectical Conception of Culture in Walter Benjamin's Theses of 1940", in M. P. Steinberg (ed.), *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History* (Ithaca 1996), 206-215.

when they (mis-)represent the 'other', which Stoler attributes to the variable nature of his/her essence. Thus, a determination to recover the voice of the 'other' risks, in the name of history, attributing a time-less and, therefore, un-real character to him/her.¹⁵

Second, if it is improper for the nationalist and colonial elite to speak for the subaltern, would it not also be improper for us to do so? Gayatri Spivak insists that we recognize the subaltern as beyond the limit of historical understanding in order to resist a paternalist recovery of the subaltern's voice.¹⁶ Spivak's is a powerful critique of the historian's attempts to represent the subaltern subject, especially when our sources do not help us uncover or explain their agency. As Mark Hobart makes clear in his assault on the interpretive anthropology of Clifford Geertz, the text, whether historical, literary, or anthropological, "awaits the active resourceful interpreter (commonly male) to prize and enjoy its riches... The interpreter assumes [...] further powers as judge to interrogate and conduct whatever forensic procedures he [...] will on the objectified products of mind by a mindset apart in judgment, knowing, superior".¹⁷ The problem is that this process of interpretation requires what Hobart calls "preinterpretation":

A difficulty of interpretation is that you cannot begin guessing without some background of prior texts (pre-text or inter-text) and without determining beforehand what kind of object you are dealing with in the light of what you already know (a further determination). In short, hermeneutic methods require preinterpretation, with little restriction on how you procure the results. As we can never approach something innocently, we inevitably introduce assumptions and presuppositions. We begin preinterpreting in the act of listening.¹⁸

One can imagine that "preinterpretations" shape interpretations most significantly when they are not kept in check by sources. And in this regard historians working on peasants, workers, women, and colonized peoples are even less fortunate than anthropologists, who live with the people they study, learn their languages, engage them in conversation, observe their daily lives, participate in their routines, and ask questions. Ottoman court records, in particular, provide little help in restraining the historian's pre-interpretive urges.¹⁹

Florencia Mallon wisely insists that we should not underestimate the flashes of insight that the process of historical inquiry can provide:

15 A. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton 2009), 4-5.

16 G. C. Spivak, 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography', in D. Landry and G. MacLean (eds), *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (New York 1996), 211-216; also see Guha, *Elementary Aspects*, 276.

17 M. Hobart, 'As They Like It: Overinterpretation and Hyporeality in Bali', in R. Dilley (ed.), *The Problem of Context* (New York 1999), 110.

18 Ibid.

19 D. Ze'evi, 'The Use of Ottoman Sharī'a Court Records as a Source for Middle Eastern Social History: A Reappraisal', *Islamic Law and Society*, 5 (1998), 35-56.

I, too, want to touch the pictures of the historical subjects I struggle to retrieve; yet I, too, know that "there is no 'real [subject]' to be found." This is precisely the point. The contradictory attempt to "know" the past, to become acquainted with the human beings who made it, leads us through archival sources that refuse to yield clear pictures. But because the archives provide unique clues about power relations, and about the human, moral, and philosophical quandaries faced by the people who produced them and by the people whose shadows inhabit them, we cannot afford to do without them. In my experience, it is the process itself that keeps us honest: getting one's hands dirty in the archival dust, one's shoes encrusted in the mud of field work; confronting the surprises, ambivalences, and unfair choices of daily life, both our own and those of our "subjects." However poignantly our search is conditioned by the understanding that we will never know for sure, occasionally, just for a moment, someone comes out of the shadows and walks next to us. When, in a flash of interactive dialogue, something is revealed; when, for a brief span, the curtain parts, and I am allowed a partial view of protagonists' motivations and internal conflicts – for me, those are the moments that make the quest worthwhile.²⁰

Very similarly, Farge is adamant that past realities could be re-imagined if one is willing to endure and overcome the capricious nature of archival documentation. With patience and perseverance, and after a lot of sifting and sorting, disconnected and often contradictory bits and pieces of information could lead to the identification of general patterns and historical structures and provide partial answers to questions about the past.²¹ What is striking in both Mallon and Farge's approaches to historical truth is how situated and personal they are. They both seem to argue that it is not the 'facts' in the archival documents that determine the truth of the past but one's unique experiences with his/her sources. Reconstructing the past is not learning as much as it is enlightenment in a spiritual sense (it is "revealed" in a "flash of interactive dialogue" says Mallon). The historian in the archive, very much like the Sufi dervish in his/her cell, suffers ("çile çekmek" in Ottoman Sufi parlance) to achieve this enlightenment. In both cases, the reward of the suffering is more felt (to be true) than actually known.

The zeal for enlightenment not only perpetuates our *çile* but also motivates our determination to bend the archival information to our will. In this quest, the decision to willingly suspend judgment or refuse to make an interpretation is not a legitimate choice. This mindset often tempts us to overlook the questions implicit in Hobart's and Spivak's critiques: how far may we push our sources? How forcefully should we make them speak to our concerns when they are unwilling to do so? How much guesswork is too much in history-writing?



20 F. Mallon, 'The Promise and Dilemma of Subaltern Studies: Perspectives from Latin American History', *The American Historical Review*, 99 (1994), 1507.

21 Farge, *Le goût de l'archive*, 9-11.

In addition to the practical and moral/political concerns relevant to the question of the suitability of court records for writing history from below, there is also the problem of the suitability of ‘history from the bottom up’ as a methodological orientation for the type of history that we want to write – in my case, legal history. Here is an attempt to define this problem: a determination to write ‘history from below’ tends to force us to assume, at least strategically, the existence of two or more analogous, comparable, and discrete categories of historical actors in order to study their interaction and relationships. These categories might be the state and society; the elite and the masses; rural and working classes; or *askeri* and *reaya*. The question is whether these categories, if defined in homologous fashion, are suitable for the kind of research that focuses on Ottoman legal practice and its participants.

I will discuss below the problem that this approach raises for Ottoman legal history. But before I do so, it should be mentioned that this is not a novel criticism: for example, following Mikhail Bakhtin, Stuart Hall proposed that historical subjects should be characterized by historians “dialogically”, that is, not in terms of their peculiar and unique characteristics but in terms of their relationship to other subjects with whom they shared historical and linguistic space. According to Hall, in Bakhtin’s characterization of the carnival it is precisely the boundary separating low from high culture that is transgressed: the low invades the high, blurring the hierarchical imposition of order; creating not simply the victory of one over the other, but those impure and hybrid forms of the ‘grotesque’; and revealing the dependence of the low on the high and vice versa, the confusingly mixed and ambivalent nature of all cultural life, and the reversibility of cultural forms, symbols, language, and meaning.²²

Similarly sensitive insights have been emerging for some time in the post-colonial literature as many researchers now challenge the implicit or explicit assertions of singularity and coherence made in relation to colonial and post-colonial identities.²³ Perhaps not surprisingly, a parallel tendency has also become evident in historical sociology and social theory, which forces us to reconsider how we characterize socioeconomic groups and collectivities. Michael Mann’s depiction of society as “multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power” is particularly relevant to this discussion, since this characterization recognizes the porous nature of socioeconomic boundaries.²⁴ Mann proposes this characterization of the social order to challenge what he calls the systemic or unitary conception of society that has dominated social sciences. This unitary conception, Mann argues, construes society as a set of separate building blocks – classes according to Marxist social theory, or status groups in Weberian characterizations – that are configured according to set and inflexible organizational principles and attached to other

22 S. Hall, ‘For Allon White: Metaphors and Transformation’, in D. Morley and K.-H. Chen (eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London and New York 1996), 286–306.

23 See, for example, H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York 1994); R. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York 1995).

24 M. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760*, Vol. I (Cambridge 1986), 1.

building blocks in specific ways; that shape the overall structure of the society; and that allow social change to take place only in a particular fashion. Instead, Mann insists that,

[s]ocieties are not unitary. They are not social systems (closed or open); they are not totalities. [...] Because there is no system, no totality, there cannot be “subsystems,” “dimensions,” or “levels” of such a totality. Because there is no whole, social relations cannot be reduced “ultimately,” “in the last instance,” to some systemic property of it – like the “mode of production,” or the “cultural” or “normative system,” or the “form of military organization.” Because there is no bounded totality, it is not helpful to divide social change or conflict into “endogenous” and “exogenous” varieties. Because there is no social system, there is no “evolutionary” process within it. Because humanity is not divided into a series of bounded totalities, “diffusion” of social organization does not occur between them. Because there is no totality, individuals are not constrained in their behavior by “social structure as a whole,” and so it is not helpful to make a distinction between “social action” and “social structure.”²⁵

What is particularly important for the concerns of this paper is how Mann's depiction of society as multiple overlapping and intersecting power networks forces us to reconsider the degree of permeability that we have attributed to various social and political boundaries in the Ottoman context. Mann's characterization perceives human interaction and patterns of socialization in their plurality, which cannot be reduced to a single defining logic, identity, or institutional structure. In pursuit of specific social, economic, and political goals, individuals create or become part of “various networks of power”, which collectively constitute for every single individual a social matrix of interests and allegiances. This complexity of social identity resists categorization in bi-polar and rigid terms. Such abstractions as ‘the state’, ‘the peasantry’, ‘the masses’, ‘lower classes’, ‘upper classes’, and ‘provincial society’ are deceptively simple and arbitrarily fixed constructions; their relationship with the realities that they refer to is not only approximate but is also, for the most part, assumed. A historian's excessive reliance on such constructions thus risks assigning to them a historical agency that is independent of the individuals and groups that constituted them.

To our credit, Ottomanists are becoming more aware of such risks in many respects. For example, we have known for some time that the boundaries that separated the *askeri* and the *reaya* were particularly porous after the sixteenth century, to the extent that these categories have largely lost their analytical relevance. More recently, studies of Ottoman financial and economic history have demonstrated that provincial notables, originally considered to be outside the boundaries that defined the Ottoman administration, and, consequently, Ottoman identity in local contexts, became incorporated into the Ottoman state structure as they began to invest heavily in life-term tax-farming over the course of the eighteenth century.²⁶

25 Ibid., 1-2.

26 See A. Salzmann, ‘An Ancien Régime Revisited: “Privatization” and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire’, *Politics and Society*, 21 (1993), 393-423; D. R. Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540-1834* (Cambridge 2002).

At the same time, the literature on Ottoman legal practice still lacks this nuance, as is obvious from the ways we have thus far portrayed Ottoman courts of law and their operations. It is fair to say that the predominant tendency of such characterizations, with a few notable exceptions, has been to separate the court and court officials from the communal contexts in which they operated. Numerous examples could be given from our collective work, but I am going to limit my discussion to the assertions made by one of the most respected (and deservedly so) scholars of Ottoman legal practice, Ronald Jennings. To my knowledge, Jennings is one of the few Ottomanist historians, perhaps the only one, who attempted to define the sources of the *kadı*'s authority in explicit and theoretically informed terms. In an early, well-known essay he claimed that the *kadı*'s office "partakes of all three kinds of 'legitimate authority' – the rational-bureaucratic, the traditional, and the charismatic – as analyzed by Max Weber".²⁷ While "the *kadı* was a bureaucrat in the Ottoman administrative system", who ensured "rational implementation of Ottoman law",²⁸ he also "stood in the stream of a thousand-year-old Islamic moral-legal tradition, which was the source of the greater part of the law he implemented", and which also legitimized his official actions.²⁹ Furthermore, according to Jennings, at least in the context of seventeenth-century Anatolia, the *kadı*'s identification with and representation of the religion of Islam lent him a charismatic quality that commanded a great deal of respect which other civil and military authorities could not hope to garner.³⁰

As far as I know, Jennings' identification of the sources from which the *kadı*'s authority and legitimacy derived has not received any major criticism in the last thirty years and still constitutes a basis on which many researchers continue to build their own portrayals of Ottoman legal practice and actors. This is so despite the fact that it is lacking at least in one fundamental respect: it does not acknowledge that the *kadı*, and the office he represented, i.e., the local Sharia court, had to be at least partially integrated into the local context in which they operated, to be identified with the community in certain respects, and at times to be willing to fulfill communal expectations, including judicial as well as non-judicial ones. In fact, we have only recently started to identify the ways in which the local community exerted influence on local processes, manipulated legal procedures, and influenced *kadıs*' decisions in cases that involved public threats against communal interests.³¹ In such cases, it seems that the *kadı*'s legitimacy was (also) based on the community's approval of his actions.³²

27 R. Jennings, 'Kadi, Court and Legal Procedure in 17th Century Ottoman Kayseri', *Studia Islamica*, 48 (1978), 137.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., 138.

30 Ibid., 139-141.

31 See, for example, Peirce, *Morality Tales*, 5, 111-112, 204-208, 354; B. A. Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society and Justice in the Ottoman Empire: Legal Practice and Dispute Resolution in Çankırı and Kastamonu (1652-1744)* (Leiden and Boston 2003), Chapter 8.

32 Cf. L. Rosen, *The Justice of Islam: Comparative Perspectives on Islamic Law and Society* (New York 2000).

The importance of the relationship between legal practice and communal considerations has long been recognized in European historiography. Historians of Western Europe, and in particular Britain, have written about how the law worked through social interactions and how various groups effectively used the power of law for socioeconomic advantage.³³ More directly relevant to the present paper are the ways in which legal/official and un-official discourses came to overlap with one another in the operations of the court. For example, as early as 1987, Natalie Zemon Davis suggested the possibility of an “exchange” between “official” and “popular” cultures in sixteenth-century French legal practices.³⁴ Recent research on European legal history has significantly expanded on this theme. An increasing number of historians are now interested in the interplay between judicial rules and moral/communal norms, and the particular ways in which these two influenced and re-shaped one another.³⁵ We now have plenty of examples of how legal authorities reached decisions “in light of both legal precedent and social mores, at once more pervasive and more diffuse than statutory requirements”.³⁶ As Barbara Yngvesson, a legal anthropologist by training, reminds us, it is precisely such dialectical processes of interaction between the “legal” and the “communal” that make local courts *local* in terms of their ability to identify with and represent hegemonic discourses on gender relations and socioeconomic domination in their settings.³⁷ Without the flexibility to respond to communal concerns and represent them, these institutions are bound to remain illegitimate.

In the Ottoman context, magistrates had many practical reasons for being sensitive to the communities they served: the number of disputes brought to court by local people and the judges’ income from court fees, which constituted the most significant portion of their earnings, depended on local perceptions of these judges and their activities. Court clients could always choose another court in a neighboring locale, depending on the reputations of the judges, despite administrative injunctions against this practice. There is also evidence that particularly unpopular judges were sometimes forced by local people to leave their jurisdictions and, consequently, remained unemployed for extended periods. If they were to last in their positions, judges had to pay careful attention to local attitudes and values.

33 See, for premodern English legal history, P. Coss (ed.), *The Moral World of the Law* (Cambridge 2000); C. Brooks and M. Lobban (eds), *Communities and Courts in Britain, 1150-1900* (London 1997); A. Musson, *Medieval Law in Context: The Growth of Legal Consciousness from Magna Carta to the Peasants’ Revolt* (Manchester 2001).

34 N. Z. Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford 1987), 112.

35 For a good example see J. Hoegaerts, ‘Legal or Just? Law, Ethics and the Double Standard in the Nineteenth-Century Divorce Court’, *Law and History Review*, 26 (2008), 259-284; also see the bibliography of this work for other relevant examples.

36 A. J. Hammerton, *Cruelty and Companionship: Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Married Life* (London 1992), 33.

37 B. Yngvesson, ‘Inventing Law in Local Settings: Rethinking Popular Legal Culture’, *The Yale Law Journal*, 98 (1989), 1689-1709.

Communal interests had other ways of exerting influence on legal processes besides putting pressure on the *kadı*'s actions. As we well know, other than the *kadı*, court positions were staffed by local people. Assistant judges, scribes, as well as local police were all members of the community. We know little about the role of these court functionaries and security forces in legal practices and thus cannot generalize about their influence on judicial processes at the local level. Should they be assumed to have shared the rational-bureaucratic legitimacy of the *kadı* as Jennings defined it? Were they, too, identified with the moral-traditional legitimacy of the Islamic legal tradition? And to what extent did they represent the charismatic aspects of Islamic religion? We cannot answer these questions with any certainty. What we can justifiably presume is that court officials were affiliated with local interests and power configurations. It would therefore not be extreme to claim that the court they represented was as much a player in local power dynamics as it was an imperial (read 'elite') institution. While court functionaries all served specific legal functions in a court's operations, they also facilitated communal involvement in legal processes and represented communal interests.

Bradley Reed's research on local clerks and runners in nineteenth-century Qing courts in China offers an instructive example that may help us think about Ottoman court personnel at various levels. On the one hand, these officials represented the imperial government and its ideology at the local level, as they were, more so than the magistrate himself, the most accessible agents of the court: "It was the yamen staff, the magistrate's talons and teeth, who collected taxes, made arrests, delivered court summons, registered land sales, posted notices, and carried out investigations in the countryside".³⁸ On the other hand, the yamen clerks and runners tied the court to local networks of power and opened it up to the influence of communal interests: "The pecuniary and occupational interests of clerks and runners combined with the informal nature of local administrative practice and the lack of external control to create ample room for the exercise of personal acquaintance and influence in dealing with these agents of the state".³⁹ It is precisely these observations that lead Reed to challenge the tendencies to characterize state-society relations in the Qing context in bi-polar and dichotomous terms and to presume clear boundaries of demarcation between conceptual entities: "We need [...] to look beyond the boundaries of formal institutions and statutes to see the county yamen not as a discrete institution inserted within the equally discretely bounded local community, but rather as a site of resources and practices – both formal and informal, material and symbolic – that were to varying degrees available to particular social and occupational groups".⁴⁰ Thus, according to Reed, the local government in general, and the yamen court in particular, should be perceived as an "area of negotiation, exchange, and computation where informal and formal elements of administration combined with social and customary practices along with per-

38 B. Reed, *Talons and Teeth: County Clerks and Runners in the Qing Dynasty* (Stanford 2000), 258.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., 262.

sonal and group interests to produce highly localized patterns of cooperation as well as conflict".⁴¹

We find comparable examples in other historical settings. For instance, in seventeenth-century colonial America, court functionaries and other low-level government officials were critical for communal participation in legal processes.⁴² Unlike lawyers in the modern sense of the term, these individuals did not have formal legal training nor were they attached to professional organizations such as the Bar. Nevertheless, their experience with and knowledge of the legal system, what Mary Sarah Bilder calls "legal literacy", as well as their social accessibility, made it possible for lay people to influence judicial processes through them. 'Legal literates' often counseled lay people in legal matters and helped them reformulate their claims in legally acceptable terms; at other times they represented them in the courtroom; and on many occasions they informed judicial and administrative authorities of the concerns of the common people.⁴³ In other words, these individuals functioned to mediate legal and communal considerations, a service that helped erode the boundaries that were supposed to separate the two. It is likely that the 'legal literates' in the Ottoman context acted in precisely the same fashion. I have observed in my own research that a number of habitual names among the *şühudî'l-hal* (witnesses to proceedings) and even a few court officials, including clerks, often appeared as litigants' representatives, which is evidence for the interaction between regular and often official participants in court proceedings and common people. While it is not precisely clear how such associations influenced legal processes, their existence certainly makes us think carefully about the boundaries that were supposed to separate the legal and communal realms in Ottoman society.

Here is the gist of my argument: it is not an easy task, and perhaps an impossible one, for the historian who wants to write Ottoman legal history 'from the bottom up' to determine who represents the 'bottom' and who the 'up'; who the state and who the masses; who the judicial and administrative realm and who the community; who the privileged and who the subaltern. I should also emphasize that, while it is one thing to acknowledge the embeddedness of the Ottoman court in its immediate surroundings and the influence of this embeddedness on its legal and administrative functions in specific contexts, it is quite another to view this influence as an important basis for the court's authority and viability rather than simply a malfunction in the system or even a 'corruption'.⁴⁴ I believe that there is an inherent tension between the desire to fore-

41 Ibid., 16.

42 M. S. Bilder, 'The Lost Lawyers: Early American Legal Literates and Transatlantic Legal Culture', *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities*, 11 (1999), 47-117.

43 According to Bilder, "(l)egal literacy refers to the reading, writing, speaking, and thinking practices that relate to the conduct of litigation"; *ibid.*, 51.

44 This perception of 'corruption' is based on the discrepancy between the proper functions of the *kadı* and other court personnel as promulgated by imperial authorities in official documents, and what the historical record suggests was actual practice. If local circumstances forced court functionaries to intercede 'unofficially' in processes of community dispute resolution, their actions cannot simply be dismissed as aberrations or malfunctions in the system, but must be tak-

ground the agency and worldviews of the non-elite and the aim of representing the full complexity of the past. If our goals are to illustrate the complexity of legal processes, the intricacy of the court's role in managing conflict, and the variety of strategies used by disputants in challenging their opponents, we must be prepared to refine or even discard those conceptual tools and categories identified with a particular methodology to which we feel attached for some personal or political reason.

Chinese legal historiography provides yet another good example of a complex representation of past legal practices that resists the binary conceptual classification implicit in 'history from the bottom up' – Philip Huang's attempt to identify "the intermediate spheres of judicial practice" during the Qing era.⁴⁵ In his work, Huang describes dispute resolution processes which involve the interaction of the formal court apparatus with communal conflict management mechanisms, creating what he considers to be a third realm of dispute resolution (the first realm being the arena of the court, and the second being local communal venues). In such instances the magistrate's court functioned in symbiosis with less formal communal modes of mediation and arbitration to form what may be called hybrid processes of dispute resolution. The fact that the boundaries separating the 'formal' from the 'informal', the 'judicial' from the 'communal', and the 'bureaucratic' from the 'substantive' could be crossed in various Qing contexts forces us to contemplate the possibility of such permeability in Ottoman ones.⁴⁶

I believe that Ottoman legal historiography is saturated with assumptions of impermeability, despite the recent efforts of Iris Agmon, Leslie Peirce, Avi Rubin, and others. I suspect that this has something to do with the fact that until recently our research has focused too much on the systems, structures, and institutions that constituted the judicial realm and not enough on the contexts, relationships, and interactions that shaped the actions of the courts and their clients. This is not a good strategy for representing the past in its full complexity. For example, students of Ottoman law and legal practice have generally disregarded *sulh* proceedings as a topic of legitimate scholarly interest. *Sulh* constitutes a peaceful and amenable alternative to adjudication in the resolution of a particular dispute, and *sulh* settlements comprise a large portion of the entries contained in court records. In fact, in the eighteenth-century court records of Kastamonu with which I am most familiar, their number is as large as the number of litigations, if not greater. Why, then, are there so few studies that explore Ottoman *sulh* processes from a sociolegal perspective (discounting the few cursory pages that most works allot to them)?⁴⁷

en instead as evidence that the 'system' itself was more complicated than imperial documents suggest. Cf. *ibid.*, 18-25.

45 P. C. C. Huang, *Civil Justice in China: Representation and Practice in the Qing* (Stanford 1998), 195, 211, 221, and *passim*.

46 *Ibid.*, 110-137; and Idem, 'Between Informal Mediation and Formal Adjudication: The Third Realm of Qing Civil Justice', *Modern China*, 19/3 (1993), 251-298.

47 See A. Mutaş, 'Amicable Settlement in Ottoman Law: *Sulh* System', *Turcica*, 36 (2004), 125-140; I. Tamdoğan, '*Sulh* and the 18th Century Ottoman Courts of Üsküdar and Adana', *Islamic Law and Society*, 15 (2008), 55-83.

I think the answer is related to the fact that Ottoman Sharia courts have long been regarded as institutions that only facilitated litigation and adjudication, a view related to the tendency discussed above to see the *kadı* as primarily a judicial-bureaucratic agent, rather than a member of the community. Mediation, on the other hand, is assumed to have taken place outside the court, in an informal, extra-judicial proceeding that only involved (non-judicial) representatives of the community. Thus, mediation has not been perceived as a subject relevant to Ottoman legal history. As I have explained elsewhere, however, these understandings of the court's functions and *sulh* proceedings are based on a narrow reading of court records, which are silent about the court's participation in or absence from mediative processes, but which, also, do not entirely reject this possibility.⁴⁸ This reading denies the capacity of court functionaries to influence mediative processes both as members of the community *and* as judicial professionals. Contrary to what is often assumed in the literature, mediation was supposed to be judicially informed (after all, settlements were legally binding) in addition to appeasing all parties involved. This must have necessitated the involvement of judicial experts in mediative processes in some capacity. It is even possible that the courts were inclined to resolve, alongside communal attempts at settlement, particular types of disputes or disputes involving related parties through mediation and/or arbitration, a tendency sanctified by classical works of Islamic jurisprudence.⁴⁹



My discussion of some of the empirical and methodological problems associated with writing 'history from the bottom up' in the context of Ottoman legal history is not meant

48 Ergene, 'Why Did Ümmü Gülsüm Go to Court?'. The tendency to define mediation as outside the responsibilities of the Ottoman court is in stark contrast to how anthropologists have characterized the operations of modern Islamic courts, which regularly force court clients to seek mediation and which often participate in mediation, especially in certain kinds of disputes and when clients are related. See, for example, R. Antoun, 'The Islamic Court, the Islamic Judge, and the Accommodation of Traditions: A Jordanian Case Study', *IJMES*, 12 (1980), 455-467; Idem, 'Litigant Strategies in an Islamic Court in Jordan', in D. H. Dwyer (ed.), *Law and Islam in the Middle East* (New York 1990), 35-60; A. Layish, *Women and Islamic Law in a Non-Muslim State* (New Jersey 1975); E. Stiles, 'Broken Edda and Marital Mistakes: Two Recent Disputes from an Islamic Court in Zanzibar', in M. Masud, R. Peters and D. Powers (eds), *Dispensing Justice in Islam: Qadis and their Judgments* (Leiden and Boston 2006), 95-116; J. R. Bowen, *Islam, Law and Equality in Indonesia: An Anthropology of Public Reasoning* (Cambridge 2003); S. Hirsch, *Pronouncing and Persevering: Gender and the Discourses of Disputing in an African Islamic Court* (Chicago 1998); Z. Mir-Hosseini, *Marriage on Trial: Islamic Family Law in Iran and Morocco* (London 2000).

49 For an enlightening judicial discussion of *sulh* as a legal mechanism of dispute resolution see A. Othman, "'And Amicable Settlement is Best": *Şulh* and Dispute Resolution in Islamic Law', *Arab Law Quarterly*, 21 (2007), 64-90. Also see Eadem, "'And *Şulh* Is Best": Amicable Settlement and Dispute Resolution in Islamic Law', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2005.

as a wholesale dismissal of the approach; indeed, the desire to recognize and represent subaltern groups is as legitimate a motivation for history-writing as any. Instead, my intention is to bring to fore the tensions inherent in attempts to negotiate with historical sources from a perspective that they were not designed to accommodate, and in efforts to represent past realities in ways that, for the purposes of coherence and generalizability, privilege specific historical dynamics at the expense of others. These tensions, however, need not be debilitating. In fact, they can be stimulating for the historian, since engaging with them openly and in a critical fashion is essential for rendering more nuanced depictions of the past. Thus, in my own research I still continue my attempts to represent subaltern voices, but I am also more aware now (as compared to ten years ago) that this commitment is not, in itself, sufficient to produce solid, sophisticated historical narratives. It needs, rather, to be accompanied (and perhaps tempered) by a keen sense of our responsibility to remain faithful to our sources and recognize when interpretive silence might be preferable to educated simplification.

PATTERNS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE EARLY MODERN BALKANS

Eleni GARA*

27 July 1550: The Muslim community of Sofia requests the Sharia court to authorise repairs on the domes of the men's bath that had recently been burnt down.¹ Two weeks later (9 August) the townspeople arrange at the court for the repair of the bath and the dismissal of its manager.²

28 April 1620: The townspeople of Veroia (Ott. Karaferye) request the court to prohibit the selling of milk and raw wool produced in their district to Jewish buyers from Salonica.³

Early July 1627: A group of Christians storms the courtroom of Veroia and protests against the application of Islamic law at the hearing of litigations during the visitation of a special envoy from the capital who is conducting investigations into "cases of injustice".⁴

Late August 1640: The Muslim notables (*ayan ve eşraf*) of Bitola (Ott. Manastır) enter into a contractual agreement with the collector of the non-Muslims' head-tax (*cizye*) concerning the amount of *cizye* to be paid by each Christian household in the district.⁵

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1 G. Galabov and H. Duda, *Die Protokollbücher des Kadiamtes Sofia* (Munich 1960), 46, No. 163. The initiators of the request were, according to the entry, a grocer, a soap-boiler, a cook, two (?) tanners, a saddler, and "a multitude of Muslims".

2 Ibid., 16, No. 30. The initiators of the arrangement were, according to the entry, "the Muslim notables and a large majority of the inhabitants of Sofia".

3 Karaferye Sharia Court Register No. 6, fol. 33v, No. 2. Hereafter, 'Karaferye Sharia Court Register' will be abbreviated as 'IKB' (from 'Hierodikastikos Kodikas Veroias' in the Greek alphabet), followed by the numbers of volume, folio, and entry. The initiators of the request were, according to the entry, "the *eşraf*, imams, *hatibs*, as well as the other (*sic*) tanners and shoemakers, and the whole town population".

4 IKB 11.33r.3. The event is described in the entry as "a rebellion (*ihtilâl*) and rally (*cemiyet*) of the unbelievers (*kefere*)"; the protesters are described as brigands (*eşkıya*).

5 *Turski dokumenti za istorijata na makedonskiot narod*. Serija prva: 1640-1642 [Turkish documents for the history of the Macedonian people. First series: 1640-1642], ed. V. Boškov, Vol.

6 August 1651: At the Sharia court of Larisa (Ott. Yenişehir), the inhabitants of 15 all-Muslim villages attached to two different districts accuse their *voyvoda* of excessive taxation and ask for the return of the money that he had collected illegally.⁶

THE EVENTS MENTIONED ABOVE OCCURRED in four different Balkan towns between the mid sixteenth and the mid seventeenth century, and were recorded in the registers (*kadı sicilleri*) of the respective Sharia courts. They had no special impact on the course of Ottoman history and are unrelated to each other. They share, however, a common trait, to which they also owe their intrinsic value: these are occasions on which groups of Ottoman subjects became involved in collective efforts with the aim of achieving common goals. In other words, they are instances of collective action by Ottoman subjects.⁷ These events are by no means the only instances of this kind on record, nor the earliest ones.⁸ They are, however, particularly suited to serve as an introduction to the present paper for three reasons: first, because they document forms of Ottoman subjects' involvement in the management of public affairs; second, because they derive from some of the earliest surviving *kadı sicilleri* from the Balkans; and third, because they are indicative of the variety of purposes for which Ottoman subjects, whether as individuals or as groups, joined forces and acted collectively.

4 (Skopje 1972), 24, No. 26. The contract must be understood as the result of negotiation between the Christian population and the tax-collector, in which the Muslim notables played the role of mediators and guarantors of the agreement.

6 G. Salakides, *He Larisa (Yenişehir) sta mesa tou 17^{ou} aiona: koinonike kai oikonomike historia mias valkanikes poles kai tes perioches tes me vase ta othomanika hierodikastika eggrapha ton eton 1050-1052 (sic) (1650-1652)* [Larisa (Yenişehir) in the mid seventeenth century: social and economic history of a Balkan town and of its district based on the Ottoman Sharia court records of H. 1050-1052 (sic) (A.D. 1650-1652)] (Salonica 2004), 185, No. 239. In the trial, each village was represented by two (in one case by one and in another by three) persons, presumably the village elders.

7 The present paper adopts a broad definition of collective action, according to which the latter "consists of all occasions on which sets of people commit pooled resources, including their own efforts, to common ends"; C. Tilly, 'Introduction', in L. A. Tilly and C. Tilly (eds), *Class Conflict and Collective Action* (Beverly Hills and London 1981), 17. It must be noted that, although scholarship on pre-modern or early modern societies has mostly explored collective action with respect to riots, rebellions, and revolts, recent research has shown that other forms of collective action were equally important. For a thought-provoking recent contribution on this issue see T. de Moor, 'The Silent Revolution: A New Perspective on the Emergence of Commons, Guilds, and Other Forms of Corporate Collective Action in Western Europe', *International Review of Social History*, 53 (2008), Supplement, 179-212.

8 See, for instance, the cases presented and/or analysed in Ö. Ergenç, *XVI. Yüzyılda Ankara ve Konya* (Ankara 1995), 140-143; L. Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 2003), 293ff.; E. Kolovos, 'Ragiades kai Phragkoi sten pyle tou sultanou: he koinonia tes Androu to 1564 kai he othomanike kentrike dioikese' [Reaya and Franks at the Sultan's Porte: the society of Andros in 1564 and the Ottoman central administration], *Agkyra: deltio tes Kaireiou Vivliotheskes*, 2 (2004), 55-88.

Collective Action in Ottoman Sources

This emphasis on Sharia court records may appear misplaced at first sight. After all, it is well known that evidence of collective action by Ottoman subjects can be found in other kinds of Ottoman archival sources as well. This is particularly true with regard to sultanic rescripts in response to petitions, which were copied into registers kept in the imperial archives, namely, in the *mühimme*, *şikâyet* and, from the mid eighteenth century, in the *ahkâm defterleri* series. The seminal studies of Suraiya Faroqhi,⁹ as well as further scholarship that utilises documents from the imperial archives, especially the work of Linda Darling,¹⁰ have demonstrated the importance of these sources in assessing the political activity of Ottoman subjects. Research has established that in the Ottoman Empire, as in most European states of that time,¹¹ common subjects made systematic use of the institution of petitioning, not only to ask for the redress of grievances but also to make all kinds of demands.¹² A large number of petitions were collective, submitted by groups that ranged from a few individuals to the populations of whole districts. Such petitions were much more than denunciations of the wrongs to which the Ottoman subjects were subjected or pleas for the Sultan's intervention on their behalf. They were an expression of intentional and rational action aimed at achieving concrete goals, and a means for the articulation of requests, demands, or complaints, used by Ottoman subjects for negotiating their position vis-à-vis the authorities or between themselves against the background of local conjunctures and power struggles.

Their importance as a source notwithstanding, *mühimme* registers and the like provide only a partial understanding of the range or the aims of collective action by Otto-

9 See especially S. Faroqhi, 'Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Some Evidence for their Existence', in H. G. Majer (ed.), *Osmanistische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vančo Boškov* (Wiesbaden 1986), 24-33, and Eadem, 'Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)', *JESHO*, 35 (1992), 1-39.

10 L. T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1996).

11 On the political role of petitions in early modern Europe, see, among others, D. Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton 2000), 217-265; A. Würgler, 'Voices from Among the 'Silent Masses': Humble Petitions and Social Conflicts in Early Modern Central Europe', *International Review of Social History*, 46 (2001), Supplement, 11-34; R. W. Hoyle, 'Petitioning as Popular Politics in Early Sixteenth-Century England', *Historical Research*, 75/190 (2002), 365-389; D. M. Luebke, 'How to Become a Loyalist: Petitions, Self-Fashioning, and the Repression of Unrest (East Frisia, 1725-1727)', *Central European History*, 38 (2005), 353-383.

12 For an overview see M. E. Kabadayı, 'Petitioning as Political Action: Petitioning Practices of Workers in Ottoman Factories', in E. Gara, M. E. Kabadayı, and C. K. Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi* (Istanbul 2011), 57-74 (particularly pp. 59-63); E. Ginio, 'Coping with the State's Agents "From Below": Petitions, Legal Appeal, and the Sultan's Justice in Ottoman Legal Practice', in *ibid.*, 41-56 (particularly pp. 43-46); E. Gara, 'Popular Protest and the Limitations of Sultanic Justice', in *ibid.*, 89-104 (particularly pp. 89-96).

man subjects, at least up to the eighteenth century. The reason is that the institutional and procedural framework within which petitions to the Sultan were organised and presented and the rescripts in response were produced¹³ influenced both their content (the issues they addressed) and form (the way they were composed). Petitioning, whether by individuals or groups, was part of the Ottoman administrative routines and a formal mode of communication between subjects and the imperial authorities. Sultanic rescripts, therefore, document instances of collective action with regard to matters that fell within the purview of the central administration or otherwise involved the authorities in Istanbul. It is true that, because of the continual expansion of Ottoman bureaucratic structures from the early sixteenth century onwards, there was a broad range of matters that had to be referred to the capital. For the most part, however, sultanic rescripts respond to protests and requests by local societies or social groups on issues of taxation, usually complaints about excessive taxation, as well as accusations against abusive officials or corrupt administrators.¹⁴ More rarely they concern contested matters that caused friction in local societies.¹⁵ In the latter case, the Sultan was called in to intervene in his capacity as supreme regulatory authority.

Copies of sultanic rescripts in response to petitions are to be found in the Sharia court registers as well. They constitute a significant part of the *kadı sicilleri* entries that refer to collective action. In addition to that, however, Sharia court records also document collective action which was locally constrained and did not reach the central authorities, including instances of popular protest.¹⁶ This is hardly surprising, since the *kadı* court constituted a venue for presenting complaints and asking for the redress of injustice that was more easily accessible to most Ottoman subjects than the Sultan – or rather the imperial council. Unlike other sources, however, the *kadı sicilleri* also record other kinds of collective action, including decisions taken by bodies such as guilds, or village or town communities, which had to be authorised by the court, requests or demands of any kind submitted by groups of inhabitants to the local authorities, as well as settlements between groups of subjects and officials or local power-holders concerning matters of administration or taxation.

It must be noted that the relevant records are not very numerous and can easily pass unnoticed, buried as they are among entries of contracts, court decisions, patents of appointment, or sultanic orders; but they appear regularly and Ottomanists have long been

13 On the petition process, see Darling, *Revenue-Raising*, 248–260; S. Ivanova, ‘Ottoman Documents about Crete Preserved in the Oriental Department of the Sts Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia’, in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *The Eastern Mediterranean under Ottoman Rule: Crete, 1645–1840. Halcyon Days in Crete VI: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 13–15 January 2006* (Rethymno 2008), 312–313.

14 See, for example, the analysis of the contents of the published *şikâyet defteri* of 1675 in H. Gerber, *State, Society, and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective* (Albany 1994), 154–173.

15 For example, in 1620 the Muslim community of Veroia petitioned the Sultan to issue a decree forbidding Christians to slaughter pigs inside the town; IKB 9.18r.2 (9–18 September 1620).

16 The cases cited at the beginning of the paper are examples of such instances.

aware of their existence.¹⁷ Nonetheless, scholarship has only rarely discussed this kind of archival documentation from the perspective of collective action. As a consequence, its implications for research into political participation of Ottoman subjects have not yet been fully realised.

This paper is an attempt to contribute to the issue by exploring the forms and functions of collective action by Ottoman subjects from the mid sixteenth to the late eighteenth century within the context of two major developments: the evolution of representational structures in the provinces, on the one hand, and the eruption of political factionalism in towns, on the other. I will restrict myself to the Balkan provinces, because, although the above seem to have been Empire-wide developments, their configurations were not necessarily the same everywhere,¹⁸ given the considerable differences in the demographic composition and in the socio-political and institutional structures in the many regions of the far-flung Ottoman Empire.

Collective Action beyond Popular Protest

Research based on the *mühimme defterleri* has demonstrated the importance of collective petitions, especially as a medium of popular protest. Research into the Sharia court records, in its turn, reveals that collective action took many forms. Petitioning the Sultan was only one of the means used by Ottoman subjects to pursue demands and influence decision-making. Furthermore, it makes evident that collective action was not limited to complaints and requests for the redress of injustice, or other forms of popular protest, but extended to a broad spectrum of issues: urban administration, tax assessment, management of pious foundations, regulation of the market, administration of justice, control of the comportment, religious beliefs, and morals of individuals.

Take, for example, the first case cited on the opening page of this paper, the one from Sofia in 1550. The issue at stake was the repair of a bath recently destroyed by fire. This was, of course, a responsibility of the manager of the pious foundation to which the bath belonged, and normally would not have required public attention. Obviously the manager did not rise to the occasion (he either did nothing about the repairs or did too little), and

17 For instance, Halil İnalcık made use of such documentation in his influential 'Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration', in T. Naff and R. Owen (eds), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale and Edwardsville 1977), 27-52. By adopting, however, a state-centred perspective, he ignores completely the aspect of collective action.

18 For instance, political factionalism in Egypt and other Arab provinces was predicated on the division of the Muslim population in two factions (incorporating both elite and non-elite members), which were distinguished by distinctive symbols and made use of public rituals for the articulation of antagonism; J. Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions: Myth, Memory, and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen* (Albany 2003); Eadem, 'Bilateral Factionalism in the Ottoman Provinces', in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003* (Rethymno 2005), 31-38; Eadem, 'Bilateral Factionalism and Violence in Ottoman Egypt', in Gara, Kabadayı, and Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest*, 145-157.

the townspeople of Sofia decided to take matters in hand. Two weeks after their initial request to the *kadı* to intervene and authorise the necessary repairs, the townspeople's pressure resulted in the beginning of works and the dismissal of the incompetent manager. Or, take another example: in March 1628, a tax-farming complication in the town of Veroia and its dependencies (an imperial *hass* at the time) had as a result that the town was left without a governor (*voyvoda*) for a while. As a consequence, no new market inspectors (*muhtesib*) could be appointed, though the term of office of the previous ones was over, and the market malfunctioned. Instead of waiting for the arrival of the new *voyvoda*, the townspeople of Veroia took matters in hand and asked the *kadı* to appoint three persons of their choice as market inspectors.¹⁹

The expression of the local population's opinions and wishes through public assemblies or demonstrations was particularly important in matters of public and social order. Popular involvement was a regular feature in trials of persons accused of brigandage or violent behaviour, and was crucial for obtaining their condemnation, while collective requests at the court were routinely used as a means for the expulsion of drunkards, hooligans, or whores.²⁰ Furthermore, collective pressure in the form of crowd gatherings in the marketplace or the mosque and of representations at the court was instrumental in the conviction and execution of persons accused of heterodoxy, apostasy from Islam, or blasphemy, as well as of all those whose actions challenged established social hierarchies.²¹ This aspect of collective action, already evident in archival documentation, is much more pronounced in the narrative sources that give accounts of such events (including hagiographies of Christian and Muslim martyrs) and show how much angry and determined crowds could influence the authorities and the decisions of the court.²²

In instances of collective action such as those mentioned above, but also in cases of popular protest at the *kadı* court, Ottoman subjects did not use the medium of petition. This has significant implications for the representation of such action in the documents and, as a consequence, for our own understanding of the matter. The norms of communication with the central authorities required of subjects that they framed their requests as

19 IKB 11.80v.3 (7-16 March 1628).

20 Gerber, *State, Society, and Law*, 38-39; E. Ginio, 'The Administration of Criminal Justice in Ottoman Selânik (Salonica) during the Eighteenth Century', *Turcica*, 30 (1998), 201-203; A. Anastasopoulos and E. Gara, 'Othomanikes antilepseis peri egklematos kai timorias' [Ottoman attitudes towards crime and punishment], *Mnemon*, 21 (1999), 47-53; B. A. Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society and Justice in the Ottoman Empire: Legal Practice and Dispute Resolution in Çankırı and Kastamonu (1652-1744)* (Leiden and Boston 2003), 152-161.

21 See, for example, R. Gradeva, 'Apostasy in Rumeli in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century', *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies*, 22 (2000), 29-73; E. Gara, 'Neomartyr without a Message', *ArchOtt*, 23 (2005/06) [Mélanges en l'honneur d'Elizabeth A. Zachariadou], 155-175; Eadem, 'Popular Protest'.

22 See, for example, the *vita* of Ioannes from Serres; T. Karanastasis, 'Henas neomartyras stis Serres tou b' misou tou 15. (sic) aiona: ho hagios Ioannes ho Serraios kai he akolouthia tou, ergo tou megalou retoros Manouel Korinthiou' [A neomartyr in Serres in the second half of the fifteenth century: Saint Ioannes of Serres and his memorial service, composed by the Great Rhetor Manouel Korinthios], *Byzantina*, 16 (1991), 197-262 (particularly pp. 254-255).

appeals to the Sultan, invoking his role as protector of the common people (*reaya*) and as guarantor of justice in the Ottoman realm. Conversely, the same norms required from the imperial chancery that it framed its response as a direct order by the Sultan, demanding the thorough examination of the matter and the redress of injustice. Rescripts in response to collective petitions by Ottoman subjects, therefore, regardless of the issue they concern, reproduce the dual imagery of subjects as a powerless flock in need of their shepherd's protection and of the Sultan as defender of the common people, which constituted a major pillar of Ottoman imperial ideology.²³ In Sharia court records, on the contrary, the imperial subjects appear a lot more assertive: they notify the *kadı*, request the taking of measures, denounce transgressions, or demand the implementation of the law; but they do not supplicate.

Take, for example, three entries from the Sharia court records of Veroia, dated July 1613, that are related to a case of strife within the Christian community of the town. The first entry records a statement by the Christians of Veroia, testifying to the noble character of one Yalpa, son of Manol, and to his wise management of the affairs of the common people.²⁴ The second entry is also a statement. This time, however, the community's testimony was not in favour of but against another Christian, one Simo, son of Marcel, whom they denounced as a malicious and treacherous person as well as a usurer.²⁵ Who these persons were and why they became the object of collective testimonies at court is made evident by the third entry.²⁶ This time we are confronted with the record of a litigation in which the plaintiffs were the Christian community of Veroia, headed by Yalpa, and the defendants the bishop of the town together with Simo. The charge was that the latter had attempted to enter in the community's ledgers the expenses for an embassy to Istanbul that had been organised by the bishop and financed by Simo. The aim of the embassy had been to forward a collective petition, made in the name of the Christians of Veroia, against the town's governor (*voyvoda*). Nonetheless, as the plaintiffs claimed, the petition concerned a private dispute between the bishop and the governor and had not been authorised by the community as a body. Reluctant to contribute to the financing of an operation they did not endorse, Yalpa and the like-minded did not hesitate to bring the bishop and his allies from among the community's leadership to court and, thanks to the *kadı*'s verdict, to prevent them from burdening the communal purse with the expenses.

In short, Sharia court records show an active involvement of elite and popular actors in a wide range of public matters at the local level, and also record a variety of ways through which the participation of Ottoman subjects in local decision-making was

23 See especially Darling, *Revenue-Raising*, 283-299; H. İslamoğlu-İnan, *State and Peasant in the Ottoman Empire: Agrarian Power Relations and Regional Economic Development in Ottoman Anatolia during the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1994), 2-13; O. Todorova, 'The Ottoman State and its Orthodox Christian Subjects: The Legitimistic Discourse in the Seventeenth-Century 'Chronicle of Serres' in a New Perspective', *Turkish Historical Review*, 1 (2010), 101-108.

24 IKB 2.30v.3 (10 July 1613).

25 IKB 2.30v.4 (10 July 1613).

26 IKB 2.31r.3 (11 July 1613).

achieved. Complaints to the court or petitions to the Sultan were part of a larger repertoire of collective action in which Ottoman subjects engaged. This realisation helps put popular protest in perspective and provides a better understanding of its place in Ottoman political life. Popular protest in the early modern Ottoman Empire was not only a way of reacting to oppression, injustice, or abuse of power, or of exerting pressure on the judicial and administrative authorities; it also functioned as a vehicle for the involvement of the common people in matters of governance within an imperial structure that formally excluded all subjects from administration and decision-making, which were the preserve of a governing elite.²⁷ In other words, popular protest was widely used by Ottoman subjects as a framework for political action. This, in its turn, raises further questions about the scope and functions of contentious forms of protest, including riot, rebellion, and revolt, which, though far from uncommon in the Ottoman world, have not yet been adequately researched.²⁸

Emergence of a 'Know-How of Collective Action'

Establishing the scope and forms of collective action marks only the beginning of research. Another major issue is the frequency of such action and its differentiation in time against the background of continuous institutional and societal change. When did the subjects' involvement in collective action become a feature of local administration and politics in the Ottoman Balkans? What was the role of the politically excluded – yet socially and economically important – local elites in initiating collective action? Did the involvement of commoners gain or lose in importance in the course of time? Did some forms of collective action appear earlier while others later in time? These are only a few from among a spectrum of relevant questions that unfortunately will remain unanswered, probably for ever – for a lack of adequate sources. Given the fact that, with very few exceptions, the oldest surviving Sharia court registers from the Balkans date from the early seventeenth century,²⁹ most of our understanding of collective action in the first two Ottoman centuries is necessarily based on speculation. Speculation, however, does not equate with arbitrariness.

A close look at the earliest available documentation, like the cases already discussed, makes clear that the kind of collective action on record, be it popular protest or otherwise, implies a well-established know-how of organising collectively and pursuing common goals, on the part of the subjects, and of responding to such action, on the part of the authorities. Neither *mühimme defterleri* records nor *kadı sicilleri* entries betray any hesitation or awkwardness in either the arrangement or the handling of collective action.

27 S. Faruqi, 'Introduction', in Eadem, *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1720* (Istanbul 1995), xv.

28 E. Gara, C. K. Neumann, and M. E. Kabadayı, 'Ottoman Subjects as Political Actors: Historiographical Representations', in Gara, Kabadayı, and Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest*, 5-7 (with further literature).

29 *EP*, s.v. 'Sıddıll: In Ottoman Administrative Usage' (S. Faruqi), 541.

There can be no doubt that this know-how emerged, partly at least, during the early period of Ottoman rule. It is plausible to assume that some of the features of collective action which are evident in sixteenth and seventeenth-century sources go back to the period of the Ottoman conquest. After all, for reasons of expediency, convenience, or tradition, Ottoman administrators preferred from the start to deal with their subjects as collectivities (or as members of collectivities) in an array of matters, including the collection of taxes, criminal liability, the defence of the shores, and the policing of the countryside. The frequency of collective action relating in one way or the other to matters of taxation manifests how it emerged as a collateral result of an institutional framework based on the collective assessment and payment of taxes. In other words, collective liability went hand-in-hand with collective action, not to say incited it.³⁰

This notwithstanding, the full-fledged 'know-how of collective action', evident in seventeenth-century Ottoman sources, must have evolved only gradually, in tandem with the transformation of two key institutions, the imperial council and the Sharia court, which occurred during the long process of bureaucratisation of the Ottoman Empire. These two were the most important venues of communication and channels of mediation between rulers and ruled throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to a large degree also in the eighteenth. Of course, the subjects' right to protest to the *kadı* or other provincial authorities and, most important, the right to forward complaints and to petition the Sultan existed well in advance. Furthermore, the proclamation of writs of justice and inspection tours in the provinces by viziers,³¹ though occasional, effectively encouraged popular protest. It is, however, plausible to assume that it was the creation of a dense network of *kadı* seats in the sixteenth century and the formalisation of the petition procedure that gave a boost to collective action.³² After all, the right to resort to the *kadı* court is rendered almost useless if subjects have to travel far in order to reach the nearest one, while the right to address the ruler becomes a dead letter if there are not established procedures to ensure that the subjects' petitions reach the Sultan or the imperial council.

Collectivities and Leaderships

By the early seventeenth century, the accommodation of plural legal traditions, administrative practices, and societal needs in the Balkan provinces had resulted in a hybrid institutional framework with contradictory traits, which promoted social organisation

30 See especially S. Ivanova, 'Institutăt na kolektivnata otgovornost v bălgarskite gradove prez XV-XVIII v.' [The institution of collective liability in Balkan towns, fifteenth-eighteenth century], *Istoričeski Pregled*, 46 (1990), 33-44.

31 See especially H. İnalçık, 'Adâletnâmeler', *Belgeler*, 2/3-4 (1965), 49-145; Idem, 'Şikâyet Hakkı: 'Arz-i Hâl ve 'Arz-i Mahzar'lar', *OA*, 7-8 (1988), 33-54; M. Ursinus, *Grievance Administration (Şikâyet) in an Ottoman Province: The Kaymakam of Rumelia's 'Record Book of Complaints' of 1781-1783* (London and New York 2005), 3ff.

32 Another factor was presumably the probability of success. Boğaç Ergene, who has looked systematically into the issue, concludes that commoners were more likely to succeed in a lawsuit against members of the elites if they acted collectively; Ergene, *Local Court*, 72-74.

along corporative – or quasi corporative – lines. Even though legal entities were not formally recognised and corporate collectivities remained to a large extent informal (in the sense that they were not entirely institutionalised), they were in fact fully functional.³³ As Fikret Adanır aptly remarks, “by belonging to a corporate community, the members of which were collectively liable to fulfil common duties, [the individual] acquired civil status.”³⁴ Within this environment, the emergence of bodies like community boards or councils of notables allowed subjects a degree of involvement in matters of administration and taxation. Collective action, including popular protest, was tacitly accepted by all as a necessary as well as a legitimate means at the disposal of subjects, both for the promotion of public good and for the defence against the transgressions of the authorities. At the same time, fixed collectivities with defined rights neither became acknowledged nor were stable hierarchical structures for the pursuing of collective goals and demands established.

This situation had two important results: first, no societal group was *a priori* excluded from political participation, however limited this participation may have been; and, second, divisions between collectivities or potential collectivities were not rigid. Any group of people bound by common interests or pursuing the same goals could initiate collective action. Who the participants might be depended on the issue at stake: it might be the whole population of a village or only those inhabitants who supplied special services to the state; only those belonging to a particular *hass* or *vakıf*, irrespective of their administrative affiliation, or the villages of a whole *kadı* district or of a province; the whole populace of a town or only its Muslim, Christian, or Jewish inhabitants. This feature is, in my opinion, crucial for an understanding of political life in the Ottoman provinces both before and after the emergence of institutions for the representation of the population.

The most complex collectivity in this respect is that of the townspeople. The inhabitants of the Ottoman towns were divided in manifold ways, far beyond anything possible in the average village. Formal lines of distinction, which divided townspeople in different categories, were drawn according to religion, status of taxation, kind of occupation, or permanence of residence; while wealth or prestige, resulting from personal or familial merit, added more layers to the differentiation of urban populations. In the absence of institutions of representation, as seems to have been the case until the mid seventeenth century, only extremely rare occasions could mobilise into collective action such disparate groups of people, who often had conflicting interests. Nevertheless, such cases are

33 E. Gara, ‘In Search of Communities in Seventeenth Century Ottoman Sources: The Case of the Kara Ferye District’, *Turcica*, 30 (1998), 135-162; S. Ivanova, ‘*Varoş*: The Elites of the *Reaya* in the Towns of Rumeli, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries’, in Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites*, 201-246; S. Petmezas, ‘Christian Communities in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Greece: Their Fiscal Functions’, *Princeton Papers*, 12 (2005) [special issue: *Parallels Meet: New Vistas of Religious Community and Empire in Ottoman Historiography*, ed. M. Greene], 71-126.

34 F. Adanır, ‘Semi-Autonomous Provincial Forces in the Balkans and Anatolia’, in S. N. Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*. Vol. 3: *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839* (Cambridge 2006), 162.

in record, including instances of protest against orders by the central administration. The townspeople, usually represented by the notables (*ayan ve eşraf*), the “leading figures in the economic and civic life of the city”,³⁵ and/or the heads of guilds, acted collectively in order to reach decisions in matters of crucial importance for the town and in order to take steps in emergencies that had to be dealt with quickly.³⁶ It is, of course, unwise to take archival sources at face value and believe that the whole population was involved in the taking of such decisions or that all endorsed them. But this is beside the point: the crucial issue is that by the early seventeenth century, if not long before, in cases of a common cause a local leadership would arise and take steps with more or less broad consent. Most important, this leadership would legitimise its action not by virtue of its status but by invoking popular consensus.

The surviving sources indicate that the first half of the seventeenth century witnessed a constant widening of the issues that were considered by local leaderships as ‘our’ responsibility to deal with; or as emergencies where ‘we’ cannot or must not wait for the administration to take the proper steps or for the prescribed procedures to unfold; where ‘we’ are entitled to act and should do so. The financial, economic, and demographic crisis of the middle decades of the seventeenth century played, in my opinion, a pivotal role in the widening of the scope of the town leadership’s involvement in administrative matters. In the surviving *kadı sicilleri* from this period, the notables are for the first time recorded as being actively involved in negotiations concerning the tax load of towns and districts, as well as in pursuing negotiations about the payment of collective debts in an unprecedented way, acting as representatives of or mediators on behalf of the people.³⁷

This does not mean that decisions, even those with broad consent, were placidly accepted by all. Decisions reached by unstable local leaderships with no formal authority, like those of the time, could be more easily challenged than a direct order coming from the imperial centre. Popular protest through petitioning, an established right of Ottoman subjects, was the more readily available way for ‘oppositions’ to reverse such decisions and to promote their own agendas. Already in the first half of the seventeenth century the success of popular protest depended more on the local constellation of power than

35 L. Peirce, ‘Entrepreneurial Success in Sixteenth-Century Ayntab: The Case of Seydi Ahmed Boyacı, Local Notable’, in Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites*, 117. On the composition of the group of the *ayan ve eşraf*, see E. Gara, ‘Moneylenders and Landowners: In Search of Urban Muslim Elites in the Early Modern Balkans’, in *ibid.*, 135-147. On the increase in the numbers of the *eşraf*, i.e., persons claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad, in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see H. Canbakal, ‘On the ‘Nobility’ of Provincial Notables’, in *ibid.*, 39-50 (with further literature).

36 For a systematic discussion on the basis of archival material from the early seventeenth century see Gara, ‘In Search of Communities’, 156-159. For Anatolia see especially H. Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: ‘Ayntab in the 17th Century* (Leiden and Boston 2007), 150-178. See also Ergenç, *XVI. Yüzyılda Ankara ve Konya*, 140-143; Peirce, *Morality Tales*, 293ff.

37 Gara, ‘In Search of Communities’; Ivanova, ‘*Varoş*’.

on the imperatives of the imperial centre.³⁸ The latter, going through the political turmoil that accompanied the transformation of the Ottoman polity into what Baki Tezcan has recently dubbed 'the Second Empire',³⁹ appears to have been consistent only in one matter: in securing the flow of taxes to the treasury and ensuring the provisioning of the army.

Political Life after the Establishment of Institutions of Representation

The broader economic and social changes from the mid seventeenth century onwards, which resulted in the large-scale transformation of administrative institutions and taxation procedures,⁴⁰ created a new framework for collective action and political activity in the Ottoman Empire. New elites emerged who profited from landholding and tax-farming and aspired to political control; excessive taxation made established divisions according to tax status more prominent than before; the acquisition of the tax-exempted *askeri* status by large segments of Muslim town-dwellers, usually through affiliation with the janissary corps, deepened the gap between religious communities, especially in the Balkan provinces; the new assessment of *cizye* on a personal basis since the 1690s brought novel challenges to Christian and Jewish communal leaderships; lastly, a new category of Ottoman subjects emerged, as wealthy non-Muslims benefited from expanding opportunities to acquire foreign protection created by the proliferation of the Capitulations.⁴¹

38 For an example see E. Gara, 'Çuha for the Janissaries – Velençe for the Poor: Competition for Raw Material and Workforce between Salonica and Veria, 1600-1650', in S. Faroqhi and R. Deguilhem (eds), *Crafts and Craftsmen of the Middle East: Fashioning the Individual in the Muslim Mediterranean* (London and New York 2005), 121-152.

39 B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge 2010).

40 See especially M. Genç, 'Osmanlı Maliyesinde Malikâne Sistemi', in O. Okyar and Ü. Nalbantoğlu (eds), *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri* (Ankara 1975), 231-296; H. İnalcık, 'Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700', *ArchOtt*, 6 (1980), 288-337; B. McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe: Taxation, Trade and the Struggle for Land, 1600-1800* (Cambridge and Paris 1981); R. A. Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Albany 1991); A. Salzmann, 'An Ancien Régime Revisited: "Privatization" and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire', *Politics & Society*, 21 (1993), 393-423.

41 For recent conceptualisations and further literature on the emergence of new social and political elites from the mid seventeenth century onwards see S. Faroqhi, 'Coping with the Central State, Coping with Local Power: Ottoman Regions and Notables from the Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century', in F. Adanır and S. Faroqhi (eds), *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 2002), 366-371; J. Hathaway, 'Rewriting Eighteenth-Century Ottoman History', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 19 (2004) [*New Historiographies of the Ottoman Mediterranean World*, ed. A. Singer], 29-53; D. Rizk Khoury, 'The Ottoman Centre versus Provincial Power-Holders: An Analysis of the Historiography', in Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, 135-156; B. Masters, 'Semi-Autonomous Forces in the Arab Provinces', in *ibid.*, 186-206; Adanır, 'Semi-Autonomous Provincial Forces'. See also the pertinent articles in Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites*.

In the course of the transformation of provincial administrative institutions which took place in the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, provincial governors and councils gained in importance,⁴² while town and district councils were established, in which local notables participated as representatives of the population.⁴³ Even though these councils were not explicitly recognised as administrative bodies, they became *de facto* part of the provincial administration. By the 1680s, provincial notables (*ayan-ı vilâyet*) had become regular recipients of sultanic orders and were entrusted with administrative duties of all kinds by the central government. This state of affairs was consolidated during the war with the Holy League, when the notables were called upon by the central state, alongside *kadıs* and military commanders, to implement orders concerning the participation of their provinces in the war effort.⁴⁴

In the first half of the eighteenth century, structures for the subjects' representation at the provincial level were gradually established. The sophisticated hierarchical system of the Morea, with its three levels of representation (community, district, province),⁴⁵ may have been an exception in its formality, but the situation appears to have been similar, even if more crude, elsewhere as well.⁴⁶ The representatives of the population were fully involved in the administration of towns and districts and came into regular contact with provincial governors through the institution of provincial councils. Archival evidence shows that representation followed both territorial and religious divisions. The basic unit

42 Indicative of this development is the functioning of the councils of provincial governors as courts of appeal. Compare, for example, the activities of the council of Manastır in 1781-1783 as recorded in the 'record book of complaints' published in Ursinus, *Grievance Administration*.

43 See especially Ivanova, 'Varoş', 227-240; Canbakal, *Society and Politics*, 150-178.

44 On the institutional aspects of the emergence of the *ayan*, see especially İnalçık, 'Centralization'; B. S. Baykal, 'Ayanlık Müessesesinin Düzeni Hakkında Belgeler', *Belgeler*, 1/2 (1964), 221-225; D. R. Sadat, 'Rumeli Ayanları: The Eighteenth Century', *The Journal of Modern History*, 44 (1972), 346-363; Y. Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Âyânlık* (Ankara 1977).

45 In the Morea (Ott. Mora) a pyramidal system was established for the representation of the population. In every district (*kaza*), local notables, who represented their respective communities, elected one Muslim and one Christian 'official notable', as well as a treasurer, who acted as a council to the district's governor (*voyvoda*). The assembly of 'official notables' from all districts elected from among them two Muslim and two Christian representatives, the so-called *morayan* (i.e., *ayan* of Mora), who, together with the dragoman (interpreter) appointed by the Sublime Porte, acted as a council to the governor (*vali*) of the province; M. V. Sakellariou, *He Peloponnesos kata ten deuteran Tourkokratian (1715-1821)* [The Morea during the second period of Turkish rule] (Athens 1939 [reprinted 1978]), 87-98; M. Pylia, 'Leitourgies kai autonomia ton koinoteton tes Peloponnesou kata te deutere Tourkokratia (1715-1821)' [Functions and autonomy of the Morean communities during the second period of Turkish rule (1715-1821)], *Mnemon*, 23 (2001), 69-70.

46 Naturally, local peculiarities in the demographic composition and social organisation influenced considerably the functioning of the institutions of representation. In Bosnia, for instance, janissaries and *kapudans* played a prominent role; M. Hadžijahić, 'Die privilegierten Städte zur Zeit des osmanischen Feudalismus: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Privilegien der Stadt Sarajevo', *SF*, 20 (1961), 130-158; M. Koller, *Bosnien an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Gewalt (1747-1798)* (Munich 2004), 64-68.

was the territorial community, but in villages and towns with mixed populations, each religious group was represented by its own delegates, one person in the case of villages, more than ten per religious group in towns and cities.⁴⁷

It is self-evident that a general assembly of the district population's representatives might take place only in extraordinary circumstances.⁴⁸ Under normal conditions, provincial councils were attended only by those few who were acknowledged as the 'official representatives' of the populace. How many these persons were and how they were originally elected and/or appointed remains unclear. By the 1770s, however, the system for the subjects' representation by persons elected from among the notables (Muslim *ayan*,⁴⁹ Christian *kocabaşı* or *çorbacı*) had reached such a degree of institutionalisation⁵⁰ that a tradition had been invented. In a sultanic order regulating the procedure for the appointment of such representatives, issued in 1779, we read the following: "from time immemorial it has been established that in towns and districts *ayan* are elected through the unanimous consent of the people of the province (*vilâyet*) and that the important affairs of the province are managed by them and by those chosen by the people and recognised by the Sharia court."⁵¹

The established culture of collective action, the right to protest in the name of the people, as well as the official recognition of the representatives' role in the town's and district's affairs gave new scope to political struggle in the eighteenth century. It has been remarked that "provincial elites in the Ottoman Empire gained legitimacy and secured their prestige and status by defending the interests of their district – obviously in conformity with how they perceived these interests – against 'threats', be they external or internal".⁵² For provincial notables, defending the interests of their homeland could en-

47 For example, the representatives of the district's population who appeared before the *kadı* court of Salonica on 20 June 1752, in order to testify in favour of *mütesellim* Ali Bey, amounted to 98 persons; I. K. Vasdravellis (ed.), *Historika archeia Makedonias. A' : Archeion Thessalonikes (1695-1912)* [Historical archives of Macedonia. I: The Salonica archive (1695-1912)] (Salonica 1952), 238-239, No. 179.

48 On such an occasion in 1782, the representatives of more than 250 villages were gathered in Kandiye (mod. Heraklion, Crete) to provide mutual sureties and monetary pledges in the aftermath of a local revolt; A. Anastasopoulos, 'Political Participation, Public Order, and Monetary Pledges (*Nezir*) in Ottoman Crete', in Gara, Kabadayı, and Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest*, 127-142.

49 The term *ayan* has been used very loosely in the literature, and, depending on the context, may denote either provincial notables, members of the administrative or military elites in the provinces, or the representatives of local populations within the institutional framework described above. In this paper the term is consistently used in the last sense. On the meanings of the term in Ottoman sources, see A. Sućeska, 'Bedeutung und Entwicklung des Begriffes A'yân im Osmanischen Reich', *SF*, 25 (1966), 3-26.

50 Indicative of this development are the repeated efforts of the central government to regulate the procedure for the election and appointment of the *ayan*; see İnalçık, 'Centralization', 46-51.

51 Vasdravellis (ed.), *Archeion Thessalonikes*, 298, No. 214.

52 A. Anastasopoulos, 'The Mixed Elite of a Balkan Town: Karaferye in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', in Idem (ed.), *Provincial Elites*, 259.

tail many different forms of action, from the bribing of tax-collectors or the negotiating with officials sent by the imperial centre over the forwarding of collective petitions in the name of the district's inhabitants to the agitating of local populations against *kadıs* or governors. Thus, the emergence of 'political elites' in the provinces, in conjunction with their function as representatives of and intermediaries between commoners and the authorities, resulted also in a more pronounced involvement of members of the elite in incidents of popular protest. The proliferation in the eighteenth century of local rebellions and revolts in which prominent figures in local societies, often officially appointed *ayan*, played a leading role, is indicative of the dynamics unleashed by the developments outlined above.

Not that lust for power, concern for the preservation or expansion of privileged status, or antagonism between persons or families were not important. On the contrary: the eighteenth century witnessed an escalation of political conflict, both in the capital and the provinces, which often took the form of factional struggle.⁵³ Prominent persons competed for the offices of the local populations' representatives (Muslim *ayan*, Christian *kocabaşı* or *çorbacı*),⁵⁴ while town or district leaderships tried by every means to influence or even control the appointments of governors, *kadıs*, or bishops.⁵⁵ A crucial tool in this struggle was the sending of petitions and embassies in the name of the people to provincial capitals and foremost to Istanbul, a practice that reached unprecedented dimensions in that period. In this way, the idiom of popular protest through petitioning, sanctioned by time and routinely used against abusive officials, was appropriated by political factions in their struggle for power. In the long run, the shift of the management of local affairs into the hands of the notables led to the formation of oligarchies who effectively restricted popular participation in decision-making, though at the same time invoked the will of the people in defence of their actions.⁵⁶

In the fierce political strife that erupted in many eighteenth-century towns, opposing parties fought in the name of the common people, in an effort to acquire legitimacy.⁵⁷ As a rule, we cannot discern in the Ottoman documents where popular protest ends and po-

53 On political factionalism in the Ottoman Empire (with further literature), see C. V. Findley, 'Political Culture and the Great Households', in Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, 74-79; Masters, 'Semi-Autonomous Forces'; Adanır, 'Semi-Autonomous Provincial Forces'.

54 Ibid., 173ff.; İnalçık, 'Centralization', 32ff.

55 See, for example, M. Hadžijahić, 'Die Kämpfe der Ajane in Mostar bis zum Jahre 1833', *SF*, 28 (1969), 123-181; Pylia, 'Leitourgies kai autonomia', 90-91.

56 See, among others, Hadžijahić, 'Die privilegierten Städte', 138-140; G. Kontogiorgis, *Koinonike dynamike kai politike autodioikese: hoi hellenikes koinotetes tes Tourkokratias* [Social dynamics and political self-government: the Greek communities of the period of Turkish rule] (Athens 1982), 242-254.

57 See the cases discussed in Y. Tzedopoulos, 'Nomimoteta kai syllogike drase sten Othomanike Autokratoria: synecheies kai neoterika stoicheia ste diekdikese aitematon apo to 16^o sto 19^o aiona' [Legitimacy and collective action in the Ottoman Empire: continuities and elements of modernity in the assertion of demands from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century], unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Athens, 2003, 32-34.

litical factionalism begins.⁵⁸ In the rare cases for which other documentation is available, we observe a society where political struggle was closely linked to rather fluid factions with shifting allegiances.⁵⁹ The latter followed not only changes in local patronage relations but also fluctuations in the constellation of power in the imperial centre, where the patrons of the local *ayan* and *kocabaşıs* lived. Indeed, another trait of eighteenth-century political life was that provincial power struggles unfolded partially in the capital. Provincial power-holders and their adversaries, old-established community leaders or politically ambitious newcomers, cultivated close links to officials in the capital, searched for allies among the great households that dominated the central political scene and controlled appointments,⁶⁰ and occasionally also used compatriots residing in Istanbul as representatives in their dealings with the central authorities. The result was a constant coming and going of embassies from the provinces to Istanbul who activated any available networks in order to fulfil their mission.

Political Struggle and Factionalism: The Example of Athens

A good example of the developments described above is the political strife in the town of Athens between 1775 and 1795. It is a complex and multi-layered issue known as yet only through local histories and memoirs written by Christian contemporaries.⁶¹ Katerina

58 See the cases analysed by Antonis Anastasopoulos in 'Lighting the Flame of Disorder: *Ayan* Infighting and State Intervention in Ottoman Karaferye, 1758-59', *IJTS*, 8/1-2 (2002), 73-88, and 'Crisis and State Intervention in Late Eighteenth-Century Karaferye (mod. Veroia)', in F. F. Anscombe (ed.), *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830* (Princeton 2006), 11-33.

59 The case of the Morea is well researched. See, among others, J. C. Alexander, *Brigandage and Public Order in the Morea, 1685-1806* (Athens 1985), 40ff; D. Stamatopoulos, 'Kommatikes phatries sten proepanastatike Peloponneso (1807-1816): ho rolos ton Tourkalvanon tou Lala hos paragontas politikes diaphoropoieses' [Political factions in the pre-revolutionary Morea (1807-1816): the role of the Muslim Albanians of Lala as a factor of political differentiation], *Histor*, 10 (1997), 185-233; Idem, 'From Machiavelli to the Sultans: Power Networks in the Ottoman Imperial Context', *Historein*, 5 (2005), 76-93; Idem, 'Constantinople in the Peloponnese: The Case of the Dragoman of the Morea Georgios Wallerianos and Some Aspects of the Revolutionary Process', in A. Anastasopoulos and E. Kolovos (eds), *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation. Proceedings of an International Conference Held in Rethymno, Greece, 13-14 December 2003* (Rethymno 2007), 149-164; M. Pylia, 'Conflits politiques et comportements des primats chrétiens en Morée, avant la guerre de l'indépendance', in *ibid.*, 137-147.

60 On the political role of the households of Ottoman grandeess, see especially Findley, 'Political Culture', 65-80.

61 The most important sources are a short chronicle (*Ephemerides*) and a history of the town of Athens (*Historia nea ton en Athenais symvevekoton*), written by Ioannes Benizelos at the turn of the nineteenth century, as well as the memoirs (*Enthymemata*) of Panages Skouzes, written in 1841; I. Benizelos, *Historia ton Athenon* [A history of Athens], ed. M. I. Manoussakas, 2 vols (Athens 1986), and P. Skouzes, *Chroniko tes sklavomenes Athenas sta chronia tes tyrantias tou Chatzale* [A chronicle of enslaved Athens in the years of Hacı Ali's tyranny], ed. G. Valetas (Athens 1948). It must be noted that the two authors belonged not only to dif-

Stathi's doctoral thesis on eighteenth-century Athens (currently in its final stages), which utilises Ottoman documents, will certainly shed more light on the matter and allow a better understanding of the context within which the strife unfolded. Even in the absence of Ottoman archival documentation, however, it is worthwhile to dwell briefly on this case, since it will elucidate many of the points made above.

Athenians, both Christian and Muslim, had been politically very active since at least the mid seventeenth century.⁶² Among other things, they had repeatedly managed to get rid of unpopular governors (*voyvodas*) and bishops, usually through petitions and embassies to Istanbul but occasionally also through revolts. By the mid eighteenth century the management of town affairs appears to have been in the hands of a few prominent families, and guildsmen were largely excluded from decision-making. The notables (*ayan*) who comprised the council of the town came from among the wealthy and prestigious Muslim families who had been investing in landed property and tax-farming, as well as dominating most of the appointments to local offices. Among Christians, who outnumbered Muslims by far and constituted the bulk of the townspeople, as well as the overwhelming majority of the taxpaying population (*reaya*), the offices of the notables on the community board (*proestotes*, Ott. *kocabaşılar*) and of the representatives or plenipotentiaries of the community (*epitropoi tes politeias*, Ott. *şehir kethüdarları*) had become the preserve of a few families who belonged to the 'first class', or archons, and derived income from landholding and trade.⁶³

ferent generations but also to different social strata. Benizelos (c.1735-1807) was the scion of a prominent family of notables, a scholar, and a teacher at Dekas's School in Athens. On the other hand, Skouzes (1777-1847) was the poorly educated son of an Athenian soap-maker who became impoverished during Hacı Ali's rule. Skouzes managed to make a fortune as a shipowner and captain in the merchant marine, and played a prominent role in the Greek War of Independence; later he became a major landholder in Athens (by buying Muslim properties) and the founder of a bank. For Skouzes's account of the events, his evaluation and viewpoint see J. Strauss, 'Ottoman Rule Experienced and Remembered: Remarks on Some Local Greek Chronicles of the *Tourkokratia*', in Adanır and Faroqhi (eds), *The Ottomans and the Balkans*, 208-214.

62 See Benizelos, *Historia*; Skouzes, *Chroniko*; T. N. Philadelphus, *Historia ton Athenon epi Tourkokratias, apo tou 1400 mechri tou 1800* [A history of Athens under Turkish rule, from 1400 to 1800], 2 vols (Athens 1902 [reprinted 1981]); D. Kampouroglous, *Mnemeia tes historias ton Athenaion* [Monuments of the history of the Athenians], 3 vols (Athens 1890-1892 [reprinted 1993]); Idem, *Historia ton Athenaion* [A history of the Athenians], 3 vols (Athens 1889-1896 [reprinted 1969, with the addition of a fourth volume composed by D. Gerontas]). Philadelphus and Kampouroglous include many documents, narrative sources, and other materials of the Ottoman period.

63 Benizelos, *Historia*, 151-154, 160-161, 467-468; Philadelphus, *Historia ton Athenon*, 1:241-252; Kampouroglous, *Historia*, 2:117-162; Idem, *Mnemeia*, 1:319-323 (*hüccets*, in Greek translation, concerning the election of *kocabaşı* in the years 1789, 1815, 1819), 251-257 (documents of the Christian community on the election of *kocabaşı* in 1819 and 1820, as well as a pact between rival factions). According to a tradition recorded after the establishment of the Greek state, eligible as *kocabaşı* were all adult males belonging to the 'first class', provided that they had married within their own class (ibid., 3:139-140). Kampouroglous includes many

The revolt of 1754 against the incumbent *voyvoda*, Sarı Müsellim, appears to have been a watershed event in Athenian politics,⁶⁴ ushering in a period of intense social and political conflict that was often accompanied by violence (see Appendices I and II). In the second half of the eighteenth century, the townspeople were clearly divided into factions that opposed one another on any occasion and often clashed over the control of appointments to the governorship. Factions cut through religious divisions and, though rather unstable, as a rule brought together the landholding elite, on the one hand, and guildsmen and craftsmen, on the other. Political strife, fuelled by antagonisms between the notables, as well as by the guildsmen's resentment towards community leaders, erupted regularly, especially whenever a *voyvoda*'s or a bishop's actions and demands were considered provocative or unjust.

The appointment of Hacı Ali Haseki as the governor (*voyvoda ve zâbit*) of Athens in March 1775 and his purchase of a share of the town's lifetime tax-farm (*malikâne*) in the following year⁶⁵ triggered unprecedented factionalism in the town, which continued for 20 years and had long-lasting repercussions. Hacı Ali's determination to hold on to the governorship of Athens, something that none of his predecessors had attempted, led to the division of the townspeople between his proponents and opponents. The two factions consisted of both Muslims and Christians and were roughly divided along the lines of the 'notables', on the one hand, and 'commoners', on the other. During the next 20 years these two factions competed for control over the offices of the governor and the bishop, by protesting to the central authorities, by staging demonstrations in Athens, by demolishing the houses of opponents or even killing them, and, most of all, by activating existing networks of patronage or forging new ones in an effort to depose their opponents or re-impose their favourite candidates (see Appendix II).

The most successful governor of that period proved to be Hacı Ali, whose supporters managed to re-impose him in office four times and who had each time longer terms of

documents, narrations, and other materials that show the elitist spirit of the archons, including genealogies of the most prominent families (*ibid.*, 1:293-308, 3:247-262).

64 According to Benizelos, *Historia*, 162, "it was because of him [Sarı Müsellim] that [Athens] started turning towards misfortune, because of revolts and scandals and disturbances caused by the fellow citizens themselves (*ton idion sympoliton*).” Indicative of the importance of the event, at least in Benizelos's eyes, is that he chose the revolt against Sarı Müsellim as the starting-point for his *Modern History of Athens* (*Historia nea ton en Athenais symveveketon*), the second part of his historical work. Earlier events, including the Ottoman conquest of the town, are narrated in the first part, entitled *The Old History of Athens* (*Palaia historia tes poleos Athenon*), which begins with Greek antiquity.

65 The governorship of Athens was tied to the revenues from the taxation of the town and its dependencies (several nearby villages). By the eighteenth century the tax revenues had been bestowed on (or otherwise transferred to) the *vakf-ı haremeyn* and the town's governorship was in the Chief Eunuch's gift. In 1760 the tax revenues of Athens were transformed into a lifetime tax-farm (*malikâne*). From then on, governors assumed office by buying the right to the town's tax revenues from the owner(s) of the tax-farm. Hacı Ali was exceptional (compared to previous governors of Athens) in that he wanted to establish himself in town. To that end he bought a share of the *malikâne*.

tenure than his competitors (see Appendix I). In the end, however, his disastrous last term between 1789 and 1792, together with his refusal to join the imperial army in the campaign of 1791, led to his downfall. This period was distinguished by the fierce persecution of his opponents and his unscrupulous efforts to amass landholdings, leaving many dispossessed and leading a large number of the townspeople to flee Athens. His enemies in Istanbul and Athens succeeded in condemning him to exile on the island of Kos in 1795, where he was executed shortly after. Apart from the dramatic events in Athens itself, during this strife petitions and embassies from both factions reached Istanbul almost yearly in favour of or against one candidate or the other (see Appendix II). Needless to say, everything was done in the name of the people of Athens.

Conclusion

It is not easy to unravel popular participation in political life in a society where authority was fragmented, where the imperial centre tried to assert its control over the provinces by circumscribing the authority of appointed officials and by promoting a culture of popular protest, where anyone could challenge a decision taken by a local body or the actions of an official by complaining to the *kadı* court or appealing to the Sultan, and where a degree of popular consensus, manifested in the absence of complaints, was an essential qualification not only for a successful tenure but also for the future career of anyone aspiring to a public office. Given these circumstances, a focus on collective action is essential in order to understand both how social groups or local societies negotiated with the Ottoman state and how political struggle unfolded in the provinces.

This notwithstanding, the place of collective action in Ottoman political culture, its scope and its forms have not yet been adequately researched. On the one hand, the absence, in the early centuries of Ottoman rule, of institutions providing for the subjects' involvement in the management of local affairs has successfully obscured the fact that they did get involved. On the other, the presence of elite actors in rebellions and revolts has put popular involvement in doubt, while popular initiatives to advance demands through petitioning have been disguised by the submissive language of petitions. It is thus no wonder that much of the scholarship on Ottoman provincial administration and politics has effectively denied any kind of agency to popular actors and underestimated their impact on decision-making.⁶⁶

In recent years, this picture of passive and silent subjects has been substantially revised, thanks to research focusing on specific provinces or localities. Nevertheless, scholarship still seems at a loss as to how to integrate the insights deriving from these separate case studies into the general narrative on the social and institutional transformation

66 See also Gara, Neumann, and Kabadayı, 'Ottoman Subjects', 3-9. A notable exception, apart from Suraiya Faruqi, is Linda Darling, who remarks that "[t]he initiative of the subjects was an intrinsic part of political reality in Near Eastern empires", and notes that, through the use of petitions, common people could "influence the distribution of resources or call to book the abuses and misdeeds of officials"; Darling, *Revenue-Raising*, 298-299.

of the Ottoman Empire between the early sixteenth and the late eighteenth century. The 'top-down' approach that had long dominated Ottomanist historiography – though it has come under heavy critique since the 1980s – still permeates the accounts of the relationship between provincial societies and the imperial centre: local developments are more often than not viewed through the lens of the centre's priorities, while processes of empowerment in local societies are judged and measured according to their effect on reinforcing or diminishing central control.

Even in its revised form, the master narrative on the transformation of the Ottoman state and society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries deals with how the central state coped, dealt, or co-operated with local elites within the framework of the centre-province relationship.⁶⁷ These are definitely major aspects, indispensable for any conceptualisation of Ottoman social history, but they are only one part of the story. If we shift the perspective and put local societies in the focus of research, other aspects gain in importance and a different picture emerges. Ottoman subjects, be they elite or commoners, villagers or townspeople, Christians or Muslims, tried to find ways to defend their interests, promote demands with a view to ameliorating their position, manage their own affairs, and evade encroachments on the part of the central administration or local officials. Collective action in its various forms enabled subjects to pursue such aims vis-à-vis the authorities, and also allowed social groups to fight for their interests within local communities. By the early seventeenth century, probably also before, much of the local decision-making, both in the sense of taking decisions and of challenging them, was the result of collective action, as well as of negotiation both at the local level and with the imperial centre.

Given the initial absence of institutions that would allow, as well as regulate and control, the subjects' involvement in local administration, the tradition of collective action proved crucial for the emergence of local bodies of representatives of the subjects from the mid seventeenth century onwards, at a time of crisis and need for large-scale negotiation with the centre or with local power-holders. The profound changes in taxation and administration introduced in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century not only facilitated the consolidation of Muslim provincial elites, commonly referred to in the bibliography as *ayan*, and of their Christian counterparts, the *kocabaşıs*, but also their political empowerment. These new elites implicated themselves as never before in the management of local affairs, became recognised by the central authorities as part of provincial administrative structures, and eventually challenged the prerogative of the imperial centre to control the appointments of officials. This, on the one hand, broadened the scope of political activity in the provinces and, on the other, led to the emergence of oligarchies and of powerful individuals in provincial rule.

Nonetheless, the fact that provincial notables, the *ayan*, found a place in the political structure in their capacity as representatives of the population was not without ramifications. The power of the *ayan* was based on their control over resources; their lever-

⁶⁷ Compare, for example, Faroqhi, 'Coping with the Central State'; Rizk Khoury, 'The Ottoman Centre'.

age vis-à-vis the central state depended on their ability to ensure the flow of taxes to the treasury and to raise armies for war; but their political legitimization rested on their being representatives of the Sultan's subjects and held good as long as they could obtain (or extort) the allegiance of the common people, not only of a restricted number of clients and dependants.⁶⁸

The central state's upholding of the subjects' right to protest and complain by addressing the court or by petitioning the Sultan, as well as the emphasis on popular consensus for the appointment of representatives to provincial councils and for the continuation of the tenure of officials, allowed a degree of political participation for the common people, otherwise marginalised or excluded from local decision-making.⁶⁹ These features of eighteenth-century political life might explain to a degree why the imperial centre did not lose control of the provinces at a time of large-scale alienation of resources to local magnates and of the government's almost complete dependence on provincial notables (*ayan*) in military matters. On the other hand, this situation also gave rise to fierce political strife, manifested in factionalism and rivalry between prominent notables, which destabilised local societies every now and then, and also put in doubt the ability of the Sultan to fulfil what imperial ideology perceived as the cornerstone of the ruler's purpose and duty, namely, to ensure the prosperity of his subjects.

68 Very instructive are the trajectories of particular *ayan* families. See, for example, Y. Nagata, 'Ayan in Anatolia and the Balkans during the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth Centuries: A Case Study of the Karaosmanoğlu Family', in Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites*, 269-294; V. H. Aksan, 'Canikli Ali Paşa (d. 1785): A Provincial Portrait in Loyalty and Disloyalty', in Gara, Kabadayı, and Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest*, 211-224.

69 In the words of Halil İnalcık, "it would not be an exaggeration to regard this system as a kind of decentralized home rule which provided the people with a say in government"; İnalcık, 'Centralization', 48.

APPENDIX I

Governors (*voyvodas*) and Bishops of Athens, 1754-1800,
according to Ioannes Benizelos⁷⁰

Year	Governor		Bishop	
1754	Sarı Müsellim	Removed after revolt.	Anthimos	
1755	Hacı Ahmed Ağa			
1756	Hamızağazade ⁷¹			
1757	Hüseyin Ağa Salıbeyoğlu			
1758	Hüseyin Efendi			
1759	Cizdaraki ⁷² from Athens			
1760	Halil Ağa the Good			
1761				
1762	Hacı Ahmed Ağa Hamızağazade, again	As steward for the lifetime tax-owner.		
1763	Mehmed Ağa the Beardless			
1764			Vartholomaïos	Dies (12 January 1764)
1765	Abdi Bey from Corinth			
1766		Removed after popular protest and embassy to Istanbul.		
1767	Hacı Hasan Ağa			
1768				
1769				
1770				
1771	“an old man” (in March)	As steward for the lifetime tax-farm-owner.		
	Hüseyin Ağa Bostancı (in spring)	As steward for an unnamed <i>voyvoda</i> . Recalled after the <i>voyvoda</i> reneged on his appointment.		
	Hacı Hasan Ağa, again (late June 1771-February 1772)			
1772	Hacı Halil Ağa the Farrier ⁷³	Removed after popular protest.		Forced to flee after popular protest (August 1765). In self-exile until late June 1766. Suspected of being in communication with the Maltese and forced to flee, again (May 1769). In self-exile until June 1776.
1773	Musti Bey from Karystos	Imprisoned by the Pasha of Eğriboz and removed after the killing of two young Muslims in a brawl.		
1774	Yeşilci Mehmed Ağa	Removed after popular protest and embassy to Istanbul.		
1775	Hacı Ali Ağa Haseki	Removed after popular protest and embassy to Istanbul.		
1776	Hasan Ağa from Chios	Removed after popular protest.		

70 Information derives from the short chronicle and the two historical works composed by Ioannes Benizelos, namely, *Ephemerides* [Journals], *Palaia historia tes poleos Athenon* [The old history of the town of Athens], and *Historia nea ton en Athenais symveveketon* [A modern history of events in Athens], published in Benizelos, *Historia*, 431-464, 77-155, and 159-426, respectively. Chronology follows fiscal years, which begin in March and end in February. Dates are given in the Julian calendar.

71 The Hamızağazades or Hamza(a)ğazades (Chamouzagazades in the original) were an old family of Athenian notables.

72 Tzistarakes in the original, from Ottoman *dizdar*, i.e., warden of a castle. The Greek ending -aki(s) was also commonly used by local Muslims.

73 Alampanes in the original, probably from Gk. *almpanes* < Ott. *nalband*.

1777	Hacı Ali Ağa Haseki, again from			
1778	late November 1778 to February			
1779	1780 deputised for by İsmail Ağa	Removed after popular protest and embassies to Istanbul.		
1780	İbrahim Ağa			
1781	Hacı Mustafa Ağa (until October 1782)		Venediktos	Dies (27 April 1781).
1782		Removed after popular protest.		
	Hacı Ali Haseki, again (October 1782-September 1785); from July to September 1785 deputised for by Kara Mustafa			
1783				
1784				
1785		Removed after popular protest and repeated embassies to Istanbul.		Deposed and exiled (5 June 1785).
	Zaim Ali Ağa (September 1785-February 1786)		Athanasios	
1786	Kara Mustafa, again (March-May 1786)	Removed after popular protest.		Forced to flee after popular protest (May 1786). In self-exile until May 1787.
	Silâhdar Halil Ağa, sword-bearer of the High Admiral (June 1786-August 1788)			
1787				Deposed and exiled after popular protest (June 1787).
1788		Replaced by governor extraordinary.	Venediktos, again	
	Ahmed Ağa, majordomo (<i>vekil-harc</i>) of the High Admiral (September 1788-February 1789)			Forced to flee (October 1788). In self-exile until February 1788. Deposed (mid September 1789).
1789	Hacı Ali Haseki, again (February 1789-April 1792)		Athanasios, again	Deposed (late September 1789).
1790			Venediktos, again	
1791				
1792		Exiled for clashing with troops sent by the Pasha of Eğriboz.		
	İbrahim Efendi (May 1792-February 1794)			
1793				
1794	Molla Kadir from Volos (March 1794-December 1795)	Replaced by governor extraordinary.		
1795				
	Süleyman Ağa (January 1796-February 1797)	As steward for the New Treasury.		Deposed after popular protest (October 1796).
1796			Athanasios, again	
1797	Hacı Emin Efendi			
1798				
1799	Hacı Hüseyin Efendi			Dies (20 September 1799).
			Gregorios	
1800				

APPENDIX II

Collective action, popular protest, and political violence in Athens, 1754-1800,
according to Ioannes Benizelos⁷⁴

Date	Event
1754, July	The townspeople, Muslims and Christians, revolt against the <i>voyvoda</i> , Sarı Müsellim, and besiege him in his residence. Assemblies take place and an embassy is sent to Istanbul in order to press charges against the <i>voyvoda</i> . When Sarı Müsellim arranges for the arrest and the murder of a prominent Muslim notable and leader of the insurgents, the townspeople storm his residence, kill his men, and sack the house, forcing him to take refuge in the castle. The situation remains tense for the next five months, and is not solved even after the hearing of the case at the provincial council and in Istanbul. There is imminent risk of a brutal suppression; but the imperial order for the execution of the revolt's leaders (30 Muslims and Christians) is not implemented because of the Sultan's death. In the end, the Athenians are not punished, although they are forced to pay indemnities to Sarı Müsellim. The brother of the murdered notable is appointed <i>voyvoda</i> . [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 431; <i>Historia nea</i> , 162-173.]
As an aftermath of the revolt against Sarı Müsellim, the Christian community becomes heavily indebted, since it is burdened with all the expenditure; neither the Muslims of the town nor the local Christians who are consuls of European states contribute.	
1759, summer	Embassy of the Christian community to Istanbul in order to protest against the Pasha of Eğriboz (Euboea). The Pasha is forbidden by imperial edict to enter the town of Athens. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 431; <i>Historia nea</i> , 176-177.]
In 1760 the revenue of the town of Athens and of the villages attached to it becomes a lifetime tax-farm (<i>malikâne</i>).	
1764	Embassy of the Christian community to Istanbul in order to protest against the immunities of the Sultan's Christian subjects who are consuls of European states. As an aftermath, an imperial edict is issued, forbidding Ottoman subjects to become European consuls. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 179-180.]
1765, August	Protest of the priests and of the Christian community against Bishop Vartholomaïos, forcing him to flee the town. Assemblies take place and reports are sent to the Patriarchate. The notables try to defend Vartholomaïos, but are almost lynched by the crowd. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 432; <i>Historia nea</i> , 184-188.]
1766, early	Embassy of the Christian community to Istanbul in order to protest against Bishop Vartholomaïos. The Grand Vizier does not credit the Athenians and demands the reconciliation of the two parties. Vartholomaïos returns to Athens (end of June), but is forced to pay indemnities. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 432; <i>Historia nea</i> , 189-194.]
1766, summer	Embassy of the townspeople, Muslims and Christians, to Istanbul in order to protest against the <i>voyvoda</i> , Abdi Bey. He is removed from office and is forced to pay indemnities. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 432; <i>Historia nea</i> , 194-195.]
In autumn 1768 war begins between the Ottoman Empire and Russia (it will last until 1774). Weapons owned by Christians are confiscated by imperial edict.	
1768, late	The Pasha of Eğriboz orders the inspection of Christian churches, but the Muslim notables of Athens refuse entrance to his men. An imperial order, issued at the pasha's instigation, sentencing the notables to exile, is not implemented. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 196-199.]

⁷⁴ Dates are given in the Julian calendar.

1769, May	The Muslims of Athens turn against Bishop Vartholomaïos, whom they suspect of being in clandestine communication with the Grand Magister of Malta. The bishop is imprisoned, but later released. He is nonetheless forced to flee Athens. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 433; <i>Historia nea</i> , 206-214.]
1770, early	Bishop Vartholomaïos attempts to return to Athens, but the Muslims rise against him and threaten to lynch him. He leaves and returns only in June 1776. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 433; <i>Historia nea</i> , 214-215.]
The Russian fleet roams the Aegean, Christian revolts erupt in the Morea and elsewhere, and Athens is caught in the events. Troops pass through the environs of the town on their way to the Morea and the castle guard is strengthened with a contingent of Albanians. There is much concern about an imminent attack by the Russian fleet and the Muslims of Athens fear that the Christians will revolt and collaborate with the Russians.	
1771, early	Metromaras, a Christian from a village near Athens, and his men join the Russian fleet and occupy the island of Salamis. Many Athenians join them and take part in raids in the vicinity of Athens. Inter-communal tension in the town reaches a peak. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 223-226.]
1771, spring	The Muslims of Athens rise against Christians after the insurgents attack two of the <i>voyvoda</i> 's men and take the receipts of the Christians' head-tax. A massacre is avoided through the intervention of the mufti and the <i>voyvoda</i> , Hüseyin Ağa Bostancı, who manage to appease the angry crowd. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 435; <i>Historia nea</i> , 227-230.]
	When the Albanian troops stationed in Athens clash with another contingent of Albanians, sent by the Pasha of Eğriboz to replace them, the two communities unite before the common threat. Muslims and Christians send a report to the Grand Vizier against the Albanian guard and its commander, and request their removal. A new guard replaces the old one. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 435-436; <i>Historia nea</i> , 230-232.]
1771, summer	Nikolaos Latinos, a prominent and politically very active Christian notable, is murdered. Rumours circulate that the murder was incited by the Muslim notable Osman Makfi. ⁷⁵ [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 437; <i>Historia nea</i> , 241.]
	Embassy of the Christian community to Istanbul in order to declare the loyalty of the Athenians to the Sultan and to request the appointment of Hüseyin Ağa Bostancı to the governorship (the latter to no avail). [<i>Historia nea</i> , 232-233.]
The Christian community of Athens is under imminent threat of persecution because of charges of revolt and collaboration with the rebels of Salamis brought against them by the Pasha of Eğriboz. An imperial edict declaring the Christians of Athens rebels against the Sultan is revoked at the very last minute through the intervention of the town's lifetime tax-farmer, but troops sent by the Pasha are stationed in the town and terrorise the Christian community.	
1771, mid November	When soldiers from among the troops stationed in Athens kill a Muslim notable who defended a Christian cheese-seller, the Muslims take arms and attack them. Through the <i>voyvoda</i> 's intervention, the Pasha of Eğriboz recalls the troops. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 436; <i>Historia nea</i> , 238-239.]
1772	A section of the priests and the people of Athens sign a petition to the Patriarchate against Bishop Vartholomaïos (still absent from the town) and in favour of another candidate, but to no avail. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 437.]
	The townspeople press charges against the <i>voyvoda</i> , Hacı Halil Ağa. He is removed from office. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 437.]

75 Osuman Makphes (< Mahfi) in the original.

1773	Charivari in front of the residence of the <i>voyvoda</i> , Musti Bey, by a group of young Muslims belonging to the faction of the notable Makfi. When two of them are killed by notables loyal to the <i>voyvoda</i> , Makfi and his followers press charges with the Pasha of Eğriboz. The <i>voyvoda</i> is imprisoned and removed from office. Those responsible for the killings flee Athens, but their houses are demolished by imperial edict. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 438; <i>Historia nea</i> , 242-244.]
Owing to the new <i>voyvoda</i> 's submissiveness, the Pasha of Eğriboz is able to retain a strong presence in Athens and to influence local politics by encouraging those with a grudge to appeal to his council.	
1774	Another futile attempt at having Bishop Vartholomaïos (still absent from the town) removed. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 438.]
1774, summer	Embassy to Istanbul in order to request the removal of the <i>voyvoda</i> , Yeşilci Mehmed Ağa, and to find a suitable candidate for the town's governorship. ⁷⁶ Hacı Ali Ağa Haseki is appointed <i>voyvoda</i> with the support of Makfi and of two other notables, a Muslim and a Christian. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 245-246.]
1775	An embassy of Christian notables travels to Istanbul in order to press charges against the <i>voyvoda</i> . Hacı Ali manages to have some of them arrested, but they win the lawsuit and he is removed from office. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 439; <i>Historia nea</i> , 248-250.]
In 1776 Hacı Ali Ağa Haseki buys a share of the <i>malikâne</i> of Athens. Gradually a pro and an anti-Haseki faction form that, at least in the case of the Christian community, interlock with the pre-existing split between 'the archons', the rich landowners and merchants and their followers, and 'the common people', dominated by guildsmen.	
1776	The Christian notables, fearing that Hacı Ali will manage to be re-appointed to office, prepare an embassy to Istanbul. Hacı Ali and Bishop Vartholomaïos, who had recently returned to Athens, incite the people against the notables. Popular protest results in the removal of the Christian notables from office and in the appointment of persons sympathetic to Hacı Ali. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 253-258.]
	The townspeople, Muslims and Christians, send reports to Istanbul pressing charges against the <i>voyvoda</i> , Hasan Ağa, and requesting the appointment of Hacı Ali. The request is granted. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 439; <i>Historia nea</i> , 259.]
1778, February	The townspeople, under the leadership of Hacı Ali, the <i>voyvoda</i> , organise a militia of both Muslims and Christians and attack a contingent of 600 Albanian soldiers who had been roaming the countryside and threatened to sack the town. The Athenians emerge victorious from battle (February 2). Under Hacı Ali's command, the townspeople start to build a defence wall around Athens (February 18). The wall will be completed by mid July. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 439-440; <i>Historia nea</i> , 261-266.]
A heavy epidemic of smallpox (May-November 1778) claims the lives of several hundred children. When winter arrives, it is harsh with much snow. There is much resentment towards Hacı Ali because of forced labour and heavy taxation.	
1778, late	In late November Hacı Ali and two Christian notables leave for Istanbul. The Muslim notable Mustafa Ağa Hamızağazade and his followers, Muslims as well as Christians "of the second class", take advantage of Hacı Ali's absence and incite popular protest against the <i>voyvoda</i> and the notables. Reports are sent to the Pasha of Eğriboz, who summons the notables to his council. The latter flee to Salamis and remain there until the arrival of Hacı Ali's steward. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 440; <i>Historia nea</i> , 270.]

76 "After a short while, the notables sailed to the capital in order to arrange and manage in a better way the [communal] affairs, and in order to obtain a worthy governor;" Benizelos, *Historia*, 245.

1779, early	Popular protest against Hacı Ali continues. The townspeople close their shops, organise assemblies, and send embassies to the High Admiral who happens to be in the vicinity of Athens (on his way to the Morea). The notables try in vain to dissuade the people, while Bishop Vartholomaïos joins the anti-Haseki faction and follows the High Admiral to the Morea. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 441; <i>Historia nea</i> , 270-272.]
1779, spring-summer	An embassy is sent to Istanbul with reports against Hacı Ali by both Muslims and Christians. Hacı Ali refutes the charges and has the Athenian delegates arrested. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 273.]
	Hacı Ali proposes a settlement and agrees to refrain from contesting the governorship. The notables accept but are unable to persuade the townspeople. Further assemblies take place, resulting in an embassy of around 70 Muslim and Christian delegates to Istanbul in order to protest against Hacı Ali. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 273-274.]
1779, late August	Hacı Ali returns to Athens with an imperial order condemning his most prominent Muslim opponents to exile. He imprisons several Muslims belonging to the opposition and orders the arrest of the Athenian delegates in Istanbul. The latter are transported to Athens in chains and remain imprisoned for a while. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 441; <i>Historia nea</i> , 274-275.]
1779, autumn-1780, summer	The opposition informs Bishop Vartholomaïos (still in the Morea with the High Admiral) of the situation. He travels to Istanbul, and meets with the Athenian delegates who had escaped arrest. The latter, despite the notables' instructions to refrain from any action against Hacı Ali, join Vartholomaïos and press charges against the <i>voyvoda</i> . Hacı Ali is summoned to Istanbul. After several hearings he is removed from office and receives a lifetime ban from the town's governorship by imperial edict. Bishop Vartholomaïos, the Athenian delegates, and the exiled Muslims return to Athens in July 1780. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 441; <i>Historia nea</i> , 275-276.]
1781, 4 November	Bishop Vartholomaïos dies. He is succeeded by Venediktos, although the Christian community had sent an embassy to the Patriarchate and petitioned for the appointment of another candidate. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 276-278.]
1782, summer-autumn	At the instigation of the Muslim notable Makfi and his followers, the townspeople, Muslims and Christians, press charges against Mustafa Ağa, the <i>voyvoda</i> , and request the reappointment of Hacı Ali to the governorship of Athens. Mustafa Ağa is removed from office and leaves hastily in October. Hacı Ali returns to Athens on 20 November and assumes the governorship. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 442; <i>Historia nea</i> , 280.]
Hacı Ali starts buying land (mainly farms, olive trees, and orchards), often by force and with only a nominal payment. He enlarges his residence, by having the nearby shops and houses demolished, and subjects the townspeople to forced labour, creating much resentment.	
1784, spring	Makfi, Hacı Ali's oldest and truest supporter, turns against him. He tries to mobilise the townspeople, Muslims and Christians, and to prepare an embassy to Istanbul in order to protest against the <i>voyvoda</i> . At the instigation of Hacı Ali, the Christian community sends reports against Makfi to Istanbul, while Bishop Venediktos recruits the support of the Dragoman to the High Admiral. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 282-284.]
	Makfi goes secretly to Salamis with a view to sailing to Istanbul. He is followed only by some Muslim notables, among whom is Emin Ağa, son of the warden of the castle (in spite of his father's objections). Without the Christian community's support (Makfi is joined only by one notable and two monks) the embassy aborts. ⁷⁷ Makfi and his followers flee to the Morea, seeking the protection of the High Admiral (end of May). [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 442-444; <i>Historia nea</i> , 284-285.]

77 "But in affairs of this kind it is necessary to have Christian (*ragiades*) [delegates] and letters from the community, both of which Makfi completely lacked;" *ibid.*, 284.

1784, end of May	At Hacı Ali's instigation, the Muslims and Christians of Athens press charges against Makfi and his followers, both to the High Admiral and to the Porte. In the course of the subsequent months most of his followers are arrested and imprisoned, but Makfi and Emin Ağa manage to reach Istanbul and go into hiding. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 285-287.]
1785, early	In Istanbul, Makfi is arrested, with the help of the brother of Bishop Venediktos, but manages to get in contact with Princess Esma Sultan and to request her support. Hacı Ali, forestalling the princess's intervention, hastens to have Makfi transported to Athens. He is brought from Istanbul in handcuffs (22 February) and put in prison. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 444; <i>Historia nea</i> , 287-288.]
1785, March	General assembly of the townspeople and public trial of Makfi that lasts for three days. Bishop Venediktos is one of his most vocal accusers. Makfi dies in prison on 7 March, ostensibly of natural causes. Rumours circulate that he was strangled on Hacı Ali's orders. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 444; <i>Historia nea</i> , 290-291.]
	Return of the son of the warden of the castle, Emin Ağa, who had followed Makfi to Istanbul. He is accompanied by envoys sent by Princess Esma Sultan, bearing an imperial edict that summons Hacı Ali and the notables, Muslim and Christian, to Istanbul. At a council in the presence of the princess's envoys, the notables and Bishop Venediktos defend Hacı Ali and accuse Makfi of habitually fomenting trouble. During the council, Makfi's daughters and many Muslim women gather in the building's court and cry out, accusing the <i>voyvoda</i> of murder. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 292.]
	The warden of the castle sides with his son and turns against Hacı Ali. He and other Muslims prepare an embassy to Istanbul and take with them Makfi's daughters and other Muslim women. Hacı Ali and the notables also leave for Istanbul, accompanied by Bishop Venediktos and an embassy of around 60 Muslims and Christians (27 March). [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 444; <i>Historia nea</i> , 292-294.]
Beginning of the political ascendancy of the anti-Haseki/anti-notables faction (henceforth: the opposition), under the leadership of two guildsmen, the Muslim Bekir and the Christian Belos. They will effectively rule the town until the winter of 1788.	
1785, spring	After Hacı Ali's departure, members of the opposition, under the leadership of the Muslim farriers Bekir Bekiraki and Ömer Fotya, ⁷⁸ free their imprisoned comrades. Athenians rise in protest and force Hacı Ali's deputies to depart. Bekir and Ömer are elected plenipotentiaries of the townspeople. ⁷⁹ A second embassy leaves for Istanbul in order to assist the first one in pressing charges against Hacı Ali. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 294-295.]
	Popular protest in Athens continues. Public assemblies take place daily and the common people turn against the notables who had remained in Athens. The latter send secret reports to Istanbul and inform Hacı Ali and the Bishop about the situation. At a general council at the <i>kadı</i> 's residence, the notables are threatened with death if they are caught communicating with Hacı Ali. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 295-298.]

⁷⁸ Bekires Bekirakes and Omeres Photias in the original; *ibid.*, 294. About their being farriers (*almpanes*), see *ibid.*, 295.

⁷⁹ "... they are elected plenipotentiaries of the townspeople and appointed by the king's judge (*psephizontai epitropoi tes politeias dia chotzetion para tes vasilikes kriseos*), something completely unusual in Athens;" *ibid.* In Ottoman, *epitropoi tes politeias* translates as *şehir kethüdaları*.

1785, spring	General assembly of the townspeople, Muslims and Christians, at the Muslim college (<i>medrese</i>). Reports against Hacı Ali are composed and another embassy to Istanbul is prepared. During the assembly Belos emerges as a leader of the Christian opposition to the <i>voyvoda</i> . [<i>Historia nea</i> , 298.]
	General assembly of the Christian community at Dekas's School. Belos and two others are elected plenipotentiaries of the townspeople, to serve alongside the Muslims Bekir and Ömer. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 298.]
	At a number of consecutive hearings taking place in Istanbul, after the arrival of the first embassy, Hacı Ali manages to refute the charges. Things seem to change after the arrival of the second embassy. Bishop Venediktos defects to the opposition and tries to talk the notables round. Hacı Ali proposes a settlement to the Athenians, but the opposition refuses. The latter seek to win the support of the new Grand Vizier, but fail. Most of the delegates are arrested and some are sent into exile. Those who escape arrest go into hiding. When the delegates of the third embassy reach Istanbul and learn of the situation, they return to Athens. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 298-302.]
1785, June	At the instigation of Princess Esma Sultan, Bishop Venediktos is deposed (5 June) and sent into exile to Mount Athos. Athanasios becomes Bishop of Athens. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 444; <i>Historia nea</i> , 298-302.]
	A letter from Bishop Venediktos arrives, and is read at a general assembly, accusing the notables who had travelled to Istanbul of having engineered his deposition. The Athenians, enraged against the notables, respond by staging a public ritual, in the course of which the townspeople curse the notables and cast stones, creating a huge pile. A petition in favour of Bishop Venediktos is sent to the Patriarchate. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 303.]
	News arrives that the Athenian exiles are aboard a ship anchored near the town. A group of townspeople under the leadership of Bekir and Belos storm the ship, free the exiles, and bring them to Athens. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 303.]
1785, July	Arrival of Hacı Ali's steward, Kara Mustafa. He is confronted with a popular demonstration against Hacı Ali and the notables, headed by Belos and Bekir. Soon Kara Mustafa becomes an ally of the opposition and succours them in their moves against Hacı Ali and his supporters. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 444; <i>Historia nea</i> , 304.]
	A fourth embassy is sent to the capital, in order to press charges against Hacı Ali and to request the reinstatement of Venediktos to the see of Athens. Once in Istanbul, the delegates realise that the situation is hopeless. They meet with the new bishop, Athanasios, and request his help. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 304.]
1785, August	Return of the notables from Istanbul. Upon their arrival at the harbour, the notables learn of the hostile situation in Athens and immediately flee to the island of Keos. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 444; <i>Historia nea</i> , 304.]
	Arrival of an envoy sent by the new bishop (on the same ship as the notables). At a public assembly, organised by Belos and Bekir, the townspeople refuse to accept Athanasios as their bishop and force his envoy to depart. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 304.]
	After learning of the exiles' deliverance, Hacı Ali accuses the opposition leaders of sedition. An imperial edict is issued, ordering their execution. When a contingent of around 100 soldiers arrives in Athens, in order to implement the order (20 August), the townspeople defend the gates and refuse entrance to the soldiers, who are forced to leave empty-handed two months later. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 444-445; <i>Historia nea</i> , 304-306.]

1785, August	Fifth embassy to Istanbul, with petitions for the appointment of Kara Mustafa to the governorship and for the reinstatement of Venediktos to the bishopric. Several delegates are arrested and put in jail on Hacı Ali's orders; the rest go into hiding. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 306-307.]
1785, mid September	Return of a delegate who had managed to escape arrest. He accuses the notable Batistas Vretos of being in clandestine communication with Hacı Ali. Vretos is arrested, repeatedly stabbed with a knife, and imprisoned. He is released through the mediation of the French Consul, but soon after dies of his wounds. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 445; <i>Historia nea</i> , 307.]
1785, autumn	In Istanbul, Athanasios, the new bishop, intervenes for the release of the imprisoned delegates. After a short while he joins them in their efforts against Hacı Ali. The latter proposes a settlement to the Athenians (in his capacity as owner of the <i>malikâne</i>), and agrees to accept a new <i>voyvoda</i> of their choice. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 307-310.] Sixth embassy of Muslims and Christians to Istanbul. The delegates are arrested and imprisoned. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 310.]
1785, 29 October	Though several delegates remain in Istanbul, most of those who had been released return to Athens, accompanied by Athanasios. After three days of deliberations, the Christian community decides to accept Athanasios as their bishop. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 445; <i>Historia nea</i> , 310.] Return (aboard the same ship as the delegates and the bishop) of the mufti and of a Muslim notable, both supporters of Hacı Ali. They are beaten and humiliated by an angry Muslim crowd and put in jail. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 310.]
1785, late- 1786, early	Return of the notables who had fled to Keos, after the mediation of Bishop Athanasios. Belos and Bekir pledge not to harass the notables, provided that they do not meddle in communal affairs. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 445; <i>Historia nea</i> , 312.]
1786, February	With the support of Bishop Athanasios, the notable Chatze Spyridon Salonites and others demand from Belos (at that time a plenipotentiary of the townspeople) an auditing of the Christian community's accounts. Belos accuses Chatze Salonites of preparing an embassy to Istanbul in favour of Hacı Ali. A crowd storms the notable's house, plunders, and partially demolishes it. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 445-446; <i>Historia nea</i> , 313.]
1786, March	The Athenian delegates who had stayed in Istanbul, succoured by further Muslim and Christian delegates sent by the townspeople, manage to have the administration of the <i>malikâne</i> of Athens taken away from Hacı Ali, as well as to arrange for the re-appointment of Kara Mustafa to the governorship. Hacı Ali loses control of the <i>malikâne</i> , but remains a shareholder. Until the fiscal year 1789, the <i>voyvodas</i> of Athens will be appointed by the Master of the Mint and the High Admiral. ⁸⁰ [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 446; <i>Historia nea</i> , 313-314.]

80 "... but the lifetime tax-farm (*malikianes* < Ott. *malikâne*) was not taken away from him [Hacı Ali] as [the Athenian delegates] proclaimed, but was delegated (*eperase vekialeten* < Ott. *vekâleten*) to the Master of the Mint, and the patent (*temesouki* < Ott. *temessüik*) of the governorship was issued with the seal of the Master of the Mint and handed over by the High Admiral;" *ibid.*, 446.

1786, April	Return of the <i>voyvoda</i> , Kara Mustafa, and the delegates (10 April). They are accompanied by Silâhdar Halil Ağa, former sword-bearer of the High Admiral. His mission is to enforce the payment of a debt owed by the Christian community to the brother of Venediktos, ex-bishop of Athens. Belos and the other officials do not recognise the debt as a communal obligation. On Easter night, the notables who had signed the acknowledgement of debt are arrested and imprisoned. Three elders remain in prison for over two months, are ruthlessly flogged, and are forced to sell their properties in order both to pay the debt and save their lives. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 446-447; <i>Historia nea</i> , 315-316.]
	Procession of the Christians through the streets of Athens and litany, at the instigation of the opposition, praising God for having delivered Athens from Hacı Ali. Bishop Athanasios is forced to officiate. When the procession reaches the <i>voyvoda</i> 's residence, Belos and the other leaders of the opposition go to him and press charges against the imprisoned notables. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 316-318.]
1786, June	Belos and Bekir suspect the <i>voyvoda</i> , Kara Mustafa, of plotting with Bishop Athanasios and a notable, with a view to pressing charges against them. The townspeople rise against Kara Mustafa, who is imprisoned and replaced by Silâhdar Halil Ağa (as an interim <i>voyvoda</i> , appointed by the <i>kadı</i>). Athanasios and the notable flee Athens. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 448; <i>Historia nea</i> , 319.]
1786, July	The opposition prepares to press charges against Bishop Athanasios. The priests of Athens pledge in writing not to sign the petition, but renege on their promise after being imprisoned and flogged. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 448; <i>Historia nea</i> , 319.]
1786, October	The opposition starts to split. The Muslim notable Emin Ağa, son of the warden of the castle and an enemy of Hacı Ali, together with another Muslim notable, prepare a petition against Belos, Bekir, and the new <i>voyvoda</i> , Silâhdar Halil Ağa. The townspeople accuse Emin Ağa to the Pasha of Eğriboz of fomenting trouble. The pasha sends a contingent to Athens. Emin Ağa is arrested, imprisoned, and strangled. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 448; <i>Historia nea</i> , 319-320.]
1786, autumn	Embassy to Istanbul requesting the deposition of Athanasios and the reinstatement of Venediktos to the see of Athens. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 448; <i>Historia nea</i> , 319.]
	Embassy to the High Admiral (at that time in Egypt) requesting the appointment of Silâhdar Halil Ağa to the governorship. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 320.]
1786, end of November	Arrival of a new <i>voyvoda</i> sent by the Master of the Mint. He is confronted with a popular demonstration at the harbour and is forced to turn back to Istanbul without disembarking. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 448; <i>Historia nea</i> , 320.]
1786, late (?)	Return of the delegates from Egypt. Public procession and feasting in honour of the <i>voyvoda</i> , Silâhdar Halil Ağa, who had been confirmed in office. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 322.]
	Second embassy to Istanbul protesting against Bishop Athanasios and in favour of the ex-bishop, Venediktos. The Athenians do not heed the Patriarch's order to accept Athanasios. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 322.]
1787, May-June	Bishop Athanasios returns from his self-imposed exile (10 May), with letters of recommendation from the High Admiral, but to no avail; the steps taken by the Athenian delegates in Istanbul, who secured the mediation of the British Ambassador, have borne fruit. In June Athanasios is sent into exile to Mount Athos, and Venediktos is reinstated in the see. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 448; <i>Historia nea</i> , 322-323.]

1787, late-1788, early	<p>Arrival of the High Admiral's private secretary (<i>mühürdar ağa</i>), who presents the Athenians with a blank patent (<i>temessük</i>) for the town's governorship and a choice: to fill in either the name of the incumbent <i>voyvoda</i>, Silâhdar Halil Ağa, or his own, if they are dissatisfied with their governor. Silâhdar Halil Ağa is re-appointed to the governorship. [<i>Ephemerides</i>, 449; <i>Historia nea</i>, 324.]</p> <p>The notable Chatze Salonites refuses to sign an acknowledgement of debt presented to him by the secretary of the Christian community, on the pretext that he cannot understand the language (the document was written in Turkish). He is arrested, stabbed with a knife, and dies. [<i>Ephemerides</i>, 450; <i>Historia nea</i>, 324.]</p>
1788, 24 March	The <i>voyvoda</i> , Silâhdar Halil Ağa, and the leaders of the opposition, Belos and Bekir, call a general assembly of the townspeople and incite them to attack the houses of three notables, one Muslim and two Christians, who had fled to Thebes with a view to reaching Istanbul and meeting Hacı Ali. The crowd demolishes the houses of the notables. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 449; <i>Historia nea</i> , 326.]
1788, end of July	An embassy is sent to Istanbul in order to arrange for the re-appointment of Silâhdar Halil Ağa to the governorship. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 450; <i>Historia nea</i> , 326-327.]
1788, September	In August news arrives that Hacı Ali has resumed control of the <i>malikâne</i> , but is not credited by the opposition. On 1 September, the High Admiral's majordomo (<i>vekilharc</i>), Ahmed Ağa, arrives, bearing an imperial order for the removal of Silâhdar Halil Ağa. Belos is imprisoned (20 September), put in chains, and repeatedly flogged. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 450; <i>Historia nea</i> , 327-328.]
End of the opposition's political ascendancy. The situation remains fluid during the subsequent months. Hacı Ali's return in early 1789 heralds a period of relentless persecution of opposition members which results in the domination of the notables allied to him, giving Hacı Ali complete political control over Athens.	
1788, October	After several assemblies (in the residences of the bishop, the new <i>voyvoda</i> , and the <i>kadı</i>), the former notables, many of them still in self-imposed exile, are reinstated in office. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 451; <i>Historia nea</i> , 327.]
	Embassy of Muslims and Christians to Istanbul in order to press charges against the former <i>voyvoda</i> , Silâhdar Halil Ağa. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 451; <i>Historia nea</i> , 328.]
1788, autumn (?)	Bishop Venediktos receives news that in Istanbul some of the Athenian delegates are moving against him and trying to arrange for Hacı Ali's appointment to the governorship. He threatens to take action against the notables and to press charges against the <i>voyvoda</i> , but is put under house arrest. He flees Athens after a few days. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 451; <i>Historia nea</i> , 330-331.]
	In Istanbul, the Athenian delegates fail to persuade the High Admiral of the rightfulness of the townspeople's lawsuit against Silâhdar Halil Ağa. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 451; <i>Historia nea</i> , 330.]
1788, late-1789, early	Hacı Ali, thanks to the High Admiral's patronage, is appointed commander of the castle of Athens (<i>muhafız</i>). Upon arrival of the news of Hacı Ali's imminent return to Athens, Bekir and other prominent members of the opposition who had not yet been arrested flee the town. Hacı Ali returns to Athens on 14 February 1789. Soon afterwards Bishop Venediktos also returns, after receiving Hacı Ali's invitation. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 451-452; <i>Historia nea</i> , 330-331.]
Athens is afflicted by the plague (January to mid August 1789) and famine (December 1788 to the end of May 1789).	

1789, February- September	Hacı Ali persecutes the leaders of the opposition. Belos is the first to be hanged (around 20 February); on 10 March there follow two further Christians; in mid August another Christian, arrested in Istanbul and brought to Athens; in early September, Bekir and another Muslim, arrested in the Morea and brought to Athens; in mid September two further Christians. All the executions, with one exception, take place in the workshop of Bekir, leader of the Muslim opposition. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 452; <i>Historia nea</i> , 332.]
1789, spring (?)	Protest of the starving crowd to the <i>kadı</i> , the <i>voyvoda</i> , and the notables. They request that the town gates be kept open and free movement allowed. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 336.]
1789, 19 September	Arrival of a patriarchal letter announcing the deposition of Bishop Venediktos and the reinstatement of Athanasios to the see of Athens, and of a letter sent by Athanasios, ordering the arrest of Venediktos. The latter is imprisoned and put in chains. He is released, however, after a few days, when a guard in the service of the British Ambassador arrives, bringing new letters from the Patriarchate which repeal the previous orders and reinstate Venediktos. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 453-454; <i>Historia nea</i> , 341-342.]
Hacı Ali burdens the townspeople with forced labour and heavy taxes. The Christian community, especially the guildsmen, is harshly affected. Those who cannot pay (including widowed women) are imprisoned and flogged. Many are forced to sell their properties. The people leave Athens en masse and flee to nearby towns.	
1792, February	After repeated refusals by the Christian community (with Hacı Ali's backing) to repay a communal debt to a Dalmatian cleric, an imperial edict is issued, summoning the notables of Athens to the Pasha of Eğriboz for the hearing of the litigation. The pasha, Silâhdar Halil, the former <i>voyvoda</i> of Athens and an enemy of Hacı Ali, sends a contingent of over 200 men, both infantry and cavalry, to arrest Hacı Ali and the notables. The pasha is encouraged in this move by Athenian refugees and self-exiles, Muslims and Christians; but in Athens, the townspeople do not welcome his men. Muslims and Christians defend the gates and emerge victorious from battle. As a result of the debacle, both the pasha and Hacı Ali are dismissed and sent into exile. Hacı Ali leaves Athens on 3 April. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 456; <i>Historia nea</i> , 346-351.]
A plague epidemic (March to late June) claims several hundred lives. Famine follows.	
From April 1792 onwards, Hacı Ali resides in Istanbul. He continues to keep his grip on Athens through his steward, to whom the <i>voyvoda</i> and the notables are submissive. In 1793, he tries to topple the Commander of the Imperial Guard and take his position. He fails and is sent into exile on Chios; but, thanks to his powerful patrons, he receives a pardon after a short while. By the summer of 1794, however, the political situation in Istanbul has altered significantly, because of governmental change and the implementation of the <i>Nizam-ı Cedid</i> reforms.	
1794, summer	Hacı Ali proposes to the Christian community to take upon himself the communal debt. General assemblies and deliberations take place. Under the pressure of the guilds, the notables agree to send an embassy to Hacı Ali. The delegates, provided by the community with a blank acknowledgement of debt, are forced to acknowledge an exorbitant sum of money as a communal obligation. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 457; <i>Historia nea</i> , 357-361.]

1794, summer	<p>Dionysios, the Abbot of the Petrake Monastery (one of the most important in Athens), goes to Istanbul to request from Hacı Ali tax relief for his monastery. When the abbot becomes seriously ill after a meeting with Hacı Ali, poisoning is suspected. Dionysios survives, remains in the capital, and starts to mobilise the Athenian community of Istanbul with a view to protesting against Hacı Ali and the notables. [<i>Ephemerides</i>, 457; <i>Historia nea</i>, 362-373.]</p> <p>Abbot Dionysios and 12 other Athenians of Istanbul, 11 Christians and one Muslim, present a petition to the Sultan (while on his way to the mosque for the Friday prayer), accusing the notables of embezzlement and requesting an auditing of the community's accounts. [<i>Ephemerides</i>, 457; <i>Historia nea</i>, 373-374.]</p> <p>The Athenians of Istanbul press charges against the <i>kadı</i> of Athens, who is submissive to Hacı Ali, and succeed in having him removed from office. [<i>Historia nea</i>, 375.]</p>
1795, August	<p>Arrival of an imperial order, summoning the notables to Istanbul for an auditing of the Christian community's accounts concerning taxes collected since 1789. Bishop Venediktos and other Athenians send reports to Hacı Ali informing him about the situation. At assemblies, many (including women) curse and accuse Abbot Dionysios and the Athenians of Istanbul of fomenting trouble. Patriarchal letters arrive, ordering the reinstatement of Dionysios in office. The townspeople, at the instigation of the bishop and the notables, do not allow them to be read publicly. Reports against the abbot are sent to the Patriarchate. [<i>Historia nea</i>, 376-379.]</p> <p>The Athenians of Istanbul send letters to Athens, requesting the bishop's and the community's assistance in their efforts against Hacı Ali, but to no avail. They manage, however, to acquire reports on the situation in Athens from the <i>kadı</i>s of the towns of Thebes and Chalkis. [<i>Historia nea</i>, 379-381.]</p>
1795, 15 August	<p>The notables try unsuccessfully to dodge the imperial edict. They leave Athens, furnished with letters of recommendation for themselves and with petitions against the abbot and the Athenians of Istanbul, composed in the name of both the Christians and the Muslims of the town. [<i>Ephemerides</i>, 457-458; <i>Historia nea</i>, 381-384.]</p>
1795, autumn- winter	<p>The Athenians of Istanbul send a report to the Grand Vizier, informing him of the arrival of the notables in the capital and accusing them of plotting with Hacı Ali to forge the community's account books. They also send a petition to the Sultan pressing charges against Hacı Ali. [<i>Historia nea</i>, 384-386.]</p> <p>During the months that follow, in the course of the auditing and the hearings that take place at the imperial council, the notables support Hacı Ali and clash repeatedly with the Athenians of Istanbul. The latter manage to recruit the support of the Patriarch and the Grand Dragoman. They also send petitions to practically every high Ottoman official, lamenting the plight of Athens and asking for redress. It is, however, not easily achieved; Hacı Ali continues to have powerful patrons. As a last resort, they hand another petition to the Sultan, stating that, if he chooses not to deliver them from Hacı Ali's tyranny, he should either provide the Athenians with another place to live, or kill them all. As an aftermath of these events, Hacı Ali is sentenced to exile on Kos by imperial edict. [<i>Ephemerides</i>, 457-459; <i>Historia nea</i>, 381-399.]</p>

1795, autumn- winter	The Athenians in Istanbul inform the Grand Vizier and the Head of the New Treasury that the notables are lobbying in favour of Hacı Ali. The notables are arrested and put in the Patriarchate's jail. Despite threats of excommunication, they continue to defend Hacı Ali and refuse to press charges against him. At last, afraid for their lives and convinced that Hacı Ali will not receive a pardon, the notables turn against him. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 400-405.]
	In Athens, the Christian community, after learning that Hacı Ali has been exiled, decides at a general assembly to give backing to the Athenians of Istanbul in their efforts against Hacı Ali. Despite the notables' objections, letters are sent to Istanbul, praising the Sultan and the high officials and pressing charges against Hacı Ali. Further reports and petitions are sent to Istanbul, after warnings by Muslim notables, followers of Hacı Ali and recently returned from Istanbul, that Hacı Ali will eventually receive a pardon. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 405-411.]
1796, January	The new <i>voyvoda</i> , the new <i>kadı</i> , and several Athenians of Istanbul arrive in Athens. Public celebrations and church services take place, thanking God for the deliverance of the town. At a general assembly of the townspeople, Christians and Muslims, at the Yeni Cami Mosque, the imperial edicts pertaining to the affair are read out publicly. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 415-417.]
	Despite his efforts to receive a pardon, Hacı Ali is executed in Kos on 23 December; his head is brought to Istanbul and displayed at the Imperial Gate. When news of Hacı Ali's execution reaches Athens, more public celebrations and praise to God take place. [<i>Historia nea</i> , 418-424.]
1796, March	In March, two of the Athenians of Istanbul recently returned to Athens are appointed plenipotentiaries of the townspeople. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 459.]
1796, spring	The Athenians of Istanbul press charges against Bishop Venediktos, but abandon action when the people of Athens send a report in favour of the bishop. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 459-460.]
	Revolt of the Muslims against the <i>voyvoda</i> , Süleyman Ağa (13 April). At the instigation of the insurgents, an interim <i>voyvoda</i> is appointed by the <i>kadı</i> . Repeated assemblies, by both Muslims and Christians, take place. Despite Muslim exhortations, the Christians do not join in the revolt. Süleyman Ağa goes to Istanbul and soon returns to Athens with an imperial edict sentencing the leaders of the revolt to exile. The Athenian Muslims accept Süleyman Ağa as governor, but resist the implementation of the imperial edict. Aided by a contingent sent by the governor of Zeytun (Lamia), Süleyman Ağa manages to arrest the leaders of the revolt. They are exiled and the Muslim community is forced to pay indemnities and to pledge on oath (<i>nezir</i>) not to harass any Christian on penalty of a fine to the New Treasury amounting to 30,000 piastres. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 460-461.]
1796, autumn	The Athenians of Istanbul and their allies accuse Bishop Venediktos of being implicated in the revolt against Süleyman Ağa, and succeed in getting him deposed. Athanasios is reinstated in the see of Athens, and returns on 14 October. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 461.]
After the return of Bishop Athanasios, he and his allies (mainly the Athenians of Istanbul) dominate the affairs of the Christian community. The bishop's authoritarian attitude causes resentment.	
1798, March	In a general assembly, the members of the Christian community elect new officials, bringing to an end the political ascendancy of Bishop Athanasios. [<i>Ephemerides</i> , 461.]

THE OTTOMANS AND CIVIL SOCIETY: A DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPT AND THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

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‘CIVIL SOCIETY’ is a concept whose original frame of reference is modern and (in its late twentieth-century re-invention) contemporary societies and states, and one which is closely connected with the discourse on democracy. However, in recent years the use of the concept has been extended and given historical depth, and thus scholars have come to apply the term to earlier societies as well, Western and non-Western alike.¹

The purpose of this paper is to test the applicability of ‘civil society’ to the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire in light of the possibility of connecting this concept to a ‘bottom-up’ vision of the ‘hierarchised’ relationship between state and society, if the holding of formal political authority is taken to be the factor which determines this ‘hierarchy’.² Even though civil society is associated predominantly with the middle and upper classes (as literacy and commerce are considered agents which strengthened it in Western Europe), lower strata also contribute to it.³ In the Ottoman context, if ‘society’ at large is treated as the ‘bottom’, in that it consisted of subjects of the Sultan, and the ‘state’ as the privileged ‘top’ towards which political demands and initiatives were addressed, then civil society, as a product of society at large, can be seen as a generator of ‘political initiatives from the bottom up’. Even if the political character of civil society is not always evident at first sight, it is a type of social action which may articulate political

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- 1 Even though I realise their inadequacy and potential for misleading, I use the terms ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ for lack of alternative terminology which would combine accuracy with conciseness. The only reason I do not place these two terms in inverted commas in this paper is aesthetic.
- 2 Here again I realise the sketchiness of the terms ‘state’ and ‘society’ in such a context, but once more it is difficult to come up with concise alternatives.
- 3 J. Kocka, ‘Civil Society from a Historical Perspective’, *European Review*, 12 (2004), 70, 72-74; J. A. Hall, ‘In Search of Civil Society’, in Idem (ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison* (Cambridge 1995), 6-7.

demands and produce relevant initiatives, especially since opposition to despotic rule is one of its major characteristics, as will be expounded below.

To start with a few suggestions: how should we treat the Kadızadeli movement of the seventeenth century and the revolts which led to the dethronement of Sultans? Were they instances or results of civil social movements? Or, can the guilds and the largely informal political institutions of local communities throughout the Ottoman Empire be treated as manifestations of the functioning of a civil society? Or, what about the emerging commercial non-Muslim social strata and groups which questioned and contested the legitimacy of Ottoman rule and of the traditional clerical and lay leadership of their communities in the Balkans and Anatolia in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries? Did they represent initiatives which can be classified under 'civil society'? Or is it, on the contrary, methodologically more prudent to concede that the existence of a civil society in a non-Western, pre-modern (or early modern) absolutist state without a clearly defined or homogeneous bourgeois middle class is impossible, and that the use of this concept in this context is wrong and anachronistic, since 'civil society' is a firmly Western idea and reality?

I believe that, in order to be able to explore issues such as these, it is crucial that I first try to define 'civil society' as clearly as possible and discuss its main features. Although there is still disagreement about how to define 'civil society', and the term has been subjected to several different interpretations by different intellectual currents and traditions in varying socio-political environments over the last three centuries or so, contemporary social scientists have achieved some degree of consensus on at least some basic elements of 'civil society' – had it not been so, it would have been impossible to talk about it. My approach here relies heavily on Jürgen Kocka's understanding of 'civil society', but also takes into account the views of John A. Hall and others. After I define 'civil society' in the pages which follow, in the remainder of the paper I will treat the Ottoman case in a more straightforward manner.

Before proceeding further, however, it should be made clear that I have no illusions about the feasibility of exhausting the issue of 'civil society', a concept shrouded in vagueness and controversy anyway, in a short essay such as this. What I hope to provide is a systematic and internally consistent argument: I think of 'civil society' as a concept which has been formulated with the modern and contemporary Western world in mind, but which is transferable to other political and cultural contexts. However, in my view, this transfer cannot be made regardless of how 'civil society' is conceived and used in its 'original' context, because otherwise one runs the risk of using the concept either as a mere slogan, without grasping its actual content and ideological and cultural underpinnings, or as a term whose meaning is only seemingly identical with what it is in the Western paradigm but really quite different, thus weakening its potential for comparative analysis and possibly creating misunderstandings between scholars who study different historical periods, states and societies. I do not contend that a concept such as 'civil society' has a fixed, unalterable meaning nor that it is not legitimate to modify and adapt it to the particularities of a different cultural, social and political context, but that this cannot be done before one has familiarised oneself with how this concept is used in its 'original' context.

Finally, limitations of space and purpose of this paper prevent me from dealing with the 'public sphere', a concept which is closely related to 'civil society' and should ideally not be separated from it.⁴ Inasmuch as the 'public sphere' was introduced as an analytical category which, especially in its Habermasian version, is associated with Western modernity and the rise of the bourgeoisie,⁵ its transfer to the Ottoman context raises issues similar to those that one has to address about 'civil society'.⁶ Thus, if we define the public sphere simply as the sphere where issues of common/public interest are freely discussed in public, which encourages political participation and action, then it existed in the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman state, and found its spatial expression in public places, such as the mosque, the church, the synagogue, the market-place, the port, the coffee-house, the *hamam*, or even the *kadı* court. But, on the basis of the argument briefly articulated in the previous paragraph, this simple definition may be in need of further elaboration before it can be considered adequate.⁷



As Kocka points out, the history of the term 'civil society' is very old, going back to the Aristotelian tradition, but in the modern era (that is, from the seventeenth century onwards), which is the one which concerns us, this concept has been ascribed three different meanings.⁸ For the authors of the Enlightenment, it described a utopian future anti-

4 For the relationship between the 'public sphere' and 'civil society' see S. N. Eisenstadt, 'Concluding Remarks: Public Sphere, Civil Society, and Political Dynamics in Islamic Societies', in M. Hoexter, S. N. Eisenstadt, and N. Levtzion (eds), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* (Albany 2002), esp. 139-141.

5 The concept of the 'public sphere' was first elaborated in J. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Neuwied 1962), and has been much debated, contested, modified and enriched since. See, for instance, C. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass. 1992); Hoexter, Eisenstadt, and Levtzion (eds), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*; F. Hasan, 'Forms of Civility and Publicness in Pre-British India', in R. Bhargava and H. Reifeld (eds), *Civil Society, Public Sphere and Citizenship: Dialogues and Perceptions* (New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, and London 2005), 84-105.

6 The use of the concept in the Ottoman context has been rather limited; see, for instance, Hoexter, Eisenstadt, and Levtzion (eds), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*. For the 'public sphere' in the late Ottoman context see N. Özbek, 'Philanthropic Activity, Ottoman Patriotism, and the Hamidian Regime, 1876-1909', *IJMES*, 37 (2005), 59-81; Idem, 'Defining the Public Sphere during the Late Ottoman Empire: War, Mass Mobilization and the Young Turk Regime (1908-18)', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43 (2007), 795-809; F. Ergut, 'Surveillance and the Transformation of Public Sphere in the Ottoman Empire', *METU Studies in Development*, 34 (2007), 173-193. Cf. C. Kırılı, 'Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire', in A. Salvatore and D. F. Eickelman (eds), *Public Islam and the Common Good* (Leiden and Boston 2004), 75-97, esp. 77 n. 2.

7 See, for instance, the critique of H. Mah, 'Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians', *The Journal of Modern History*, 72 (2000), 153-182.

8 Kocka, 'Civil Society', 66.

absolutist society largely based on the notion of self-organisation of its members, who would be mature, tolerant, socially responsible citizens.⁹ On the other hand, nineteenth-century intellectuals, especially in the German-speaking countries, understood civil society more as a (model) society reflecting and expressing the ethos, needs and interests of the bourgeoisie.¹⁰ Finally, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the concept of 'civil society', which first became popular as a term describing societal forces in opposition to the communist regimes of central and eastern Europe, refers to a responsible, socially and politically involved, pluralistic society, which is characterised by self-organisation, in contrast and opposition to – depending on the cultural and ideological tradition which uses it – either the interventionist state or the forces which promote unchecked capitalism and place corporate business interests above the people and society.¹¹

Kocka himself defines civil society in three ways: "as a type of social action; ... as an area or sphere connected to, but separate from, economy, state, and the private sphere; and ... as the core of a draft or project that still has some utopian features".¹² According to his analysis, civil society – whose several aspects are, as noted, often utopian – refers to the public sphere,¹³ and is distinguished from the government, and, in the modern world, business.¹⁴ It is based on "social self-organisation" and is "non-violent", which does not preclude tension or differences; civil society aims at social cohesion, but is not homogeneous, and does not suppress the independence of the individual. It is tolerant, and geared towards the promotion of what is understood as the common good as a result of compromise, since there may be different views about it.¹⁵

Hall, on the other hand, is much more concise and exclusive in his definition of civil society, which he associates with Europe: it "is a particular form of society, appreciating social diversity and able to limit the depredations of political power, that was born in Europe; it may, with luck, skill and imagination, spread to some other regions of the

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 66-67, 72-73.

11 Ibid., 67-68. Kocka notes that in the contemporary context, 'civil society' "emphasizes social self-organization and individual responsibility" (ibid., 67). For other surveys of the history of the term 'civil society' see A. B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (Princeton 1992); K. Kumar, 'Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of an Historical Term', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 44 (1993), 375-395; H. İslamoğlu, 'A History of the Idea of Civil Society', in Eadem, *Ottoman History as World History* (Istanbul 2007), 151-169.

12 Kocka, 'Civil Society', 68; see ibid., 68-70 for further analysis.

13 For the contribution of the 'private sphere', represented by the family, to the civil society as the 'public sphere' see ibid., 74-75.

14 According to Kocka, civil society also is "a *social sphere*" and "a *social space*" which, in the modern world, is occupied predominantly by "clubs, associations, social movements, networks and initiatives". In this respect, "[a]s far as state organs and their officials, businesses and their personnel, and families and kinship relations take advantage of this type of social action, they are active members of civil society" (ibid., 69).

15 Ibid., 68-70.

world".¹⁶ According to his analysis, civil society is civil and tolerant, endorses social differentiation, respects individualism, and abhors despotism. Apart from despotism, civil society has four more 'enemies', as he calls them, which hinder its functioning: the tradition of republican civic virtue because of its concern for unity and its inclination towards coercion; nationalism which seeks to achieve complete social homogeneity by such means as mass population transfers, forced integration, ethnic cleansing, or genocide; late development which gives rise to forced statist development; and cultural and institutional forces which inhibit the desire to balance the state and to respect individualism.¹⁷ In this context, Hall explicitly cites Islam as a cultural tradition which prevents the emergence of civil society.¹⁸

If we take the two views summarised above to represent a 'sociological' (Hall) and a 'historical' (Kocka) approach to civil society, the former seems to be more strict and exclusive, as it refers to contemporary states or their Western ancestors (such as eighteenth-century Britain) and their (actual or idealised) value systems, and thus does not leave much space for applying 'civil society' to a non-Western early modern empire. On the other hand, Kocka's historical approach seems to be more accommodating and inclusive in its definition of the term. More specifically, unless I misread him, Kocka makes it easier for historians to apply 'civil society' to pre-modern or early modern non-Western societies than the definitions of various sociologists do. This is not to say that, even so, there are not problems with the application of the term 'civil society' to the Ottoman case: for instance, as we will discuss below in more detail, there is the issue of respect for individualism, as well as the question of whether Ottoman society was unitary/cohesive or fragmented in groups defined principally through religious affiliation, with limited interaction between them. Moreover, Ottoman economy and society obviously were not dominated by capitalist relations in the pre-Tanzimat era.

The fact is that the term 'civil society' has been used extensively over the last 30 years or so, in academic and non-academic circles, in such diverse and heterogeneous ways that its actual meaning sometimes seems to be too elusive to be of much use for scholarly purposes,¹⁹ while there are also those who have challenged its usefulness altogether.²⁰ For the needs of this paper, let us stress as a major attribute of civil society

16 Hall, 'In Search of Civil Society', 25 (but also see his critical comments on pp. 25-27). See also the definition of P. Nord, 'Introduction', in N. Bermeo and P. Nord (eds), *Civil Society before Democracy: Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, and Oxford 2000), xiv.

17 Hall, 'In Search of Civil Society', 7-15. As far as the five 'enemies' are concerned, here I reproduce Hall's formulation of them.

18 Ibid., 14.

19 Cf. *ibid.*, 1-3; 'Introduction: Ideas of Civil Society', in S. Kaviraj and S. Khilnani (eds), *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* (Cambridge 2001), 1-3.

20 See, for instance, Kumar, 'Civil Society', esp. 390-392; Idem, 'Civil Society Again: A Reply to Christopher Bryant's "Social Self-Organization, Civility and Sociology"', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 45/1 (1994), 127-131; Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*, 203-204; Hall, 'In Search of Civil Society', 2.

the voluntary self-organisation of society (or of social groups) with a view to the non-violent accomplishment of goals which may not be overtly but are essentially political in nature. Furthermore, civil society exists and operates within the context of a given state with which it interacts.²¹ Third, civil society is opposed to despotism, and has to be (at worst somewhat) tolerant and accept (at least a certain degree of) plurality, which entails that it allows space for dissent; in the words of Hall, “civil society is ... a complex balance of consensus and conflict, the valuation of as much difference as is compatible with the bare minimum of consensus necessary for settled existence”.²² Finally, civility is a feature inherent in the concept of civil society. As Philip Nord puts it, “the qualifier ‘civil’ is meaningful, for it implies activity that is ordered, nonclandestine, and collective”.²³

Even though such criteria contribute towards defining ‘civil society’, various aspects of the concept still remain slippery, and, as Kocka admits, it is often difficult to decide whether a specific group, organisation or movement qualifies for consideration as ‘civil society’.²⁴ Besides, Ernest Gellner – who, like Hall, associates ‘civil society’ with modern Western societies and states – has warned against too broad or too selective definitions of the concept, because eventually they are of little use for academic research.²⁵



References to ‘civil society’ in studies of the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire are quite rare, or, at least, haphazard: when the term is cited, usually it is without any analysis of its content or any attempt at theorising. Most studies which are concerned with civil society in a more systematic fashion do not deal with the pre-Tanzimat Empire, but (less) with the late, ‘modernising’ or ‘modernised’, Empire, (and more with) modern Turkey, the modern Middle East, or contemporary Islam, and thus obviously refer to conditions which are very different from those of the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman state and society. How-

21 Hall criticises the description of civil society as “societal self-organization in opposition to the state” as an “essentially negative view of civil society” (ibid., 2).

22 Ibid., 6.

23 Nord, ‘Introduction’, xiv. He goes on to explain that “[t]he crowd, the underground cell, the criminal, all are social actors, but civil society is not the stage they have chosen to walk upon”.

24 Kocka, ‘Civil Society’, 77 n. 4: “According to the definition proposed here, organizations, initiatives and networks of the third sector should be considered part of ‘civil society’ only if and to the extent that they correspond to the aforementioned type of social action. Consequently, violent or fanatic, intolerant organizations, movements and initiatives may belong to the ‘third sector’ but do not qualify as belonging to civil society. The distinction, however, is difficult to make in individual cases.”

25 E. Gellner, ‘The Importance of Being Modular’, in Hall (ed.), *Civil Society*, 32-55. Gellner provides the following as an example of a seemingly decent, but in essence too broad and thus inadequate definition: “civil society is that set of diverse non-governmental institutions, which is strong enough to counterbalance the state, and, whilst not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent the state from dominating and atomizing the rest of society” (ibid., 32).

ever, there are a few scholars who have discussed 'civil society' in the context of the Ottoman Empire (usually as an abstraction rather than in reference to a particular historical moment) before the so-called 'Westernisation' of the nineteenth century. Among them, Şerif Mardin must have been the first, as he published an article about it as early as 1969.²⁶ The contrast of institutions, state policies, and social structures between the Ottoman Empire and the West runs through his article, and Mardin leaves no room to doubt his stance by entitling the section which focuses on civil society 'Absence of "Civil Society"'. As he notes, the Ottoman Empire "lacked that basic structural component that Hegel termed 'civil society', a part of society that could operate independently of central government and was based on property rights":²⁷ the state did not authorise civic autonomy or self-government, nor did it acknowledge a legal status to corporations as such. Even though he differentiates Anatolia (as the region to which this grim picture mostly applies) from the Balkan and Arab cities (that he treats as more independent from the grip of the state), and considers the validity of an analogy between the *ayan* and "Western townsmen", he insists on the absence of civil society, among other reasons because of the lack of a Western-style bourgeoisie.²⁸

In 1995, Mardin revisited the concept of 'civil society' in relation to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in his 'Civil Society and Islam', his wider aim being to encourage a meaningful comparative examination of Western and Islamic societies.²⁹ His point of view did not change significantly in comparison to 1969, except for an emphasis on Islam as the background against which he tests 'civil society', as indicated by the title of the article, as well as statements such as that he "would like to test the relevance of civil society for Muslim culture", or that 'civil society' "does not translate into Islamic terms".³⁰ Otherwise, he puts his stress once again on the cultural, intellectual, and legal differences between the West and "the Islamic 'East'", which did not allow the cities and urban social groups to flourish into civil societies in the way that they did in the West. In this article too, he explains that Islamic law does not attribute a legal personality to corporations, and that the Islamic cities are not guaranteed any rights or privileges by law nor are rulers contractually bound to respect any such rights. Furthermore, at the level of the individual, the Western concepts of 'freedom' and 'civil liberties' were non-existent in Islam before the nineteenth century.

Karen Barkey joins Mardin in his refutation of the applicability of the concept of 'civil society' in the Ottoman context.³¹ According to her argument, the position of the state was so dominant and its structure so centralised that it did not allow the functioning of

26 Ş. Mardin, 'Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11 (1969), 258-281. Mardin points out that his understanding of civil society relies on its definition by Marx (*ibid.*, 258 n. 1).

27 *Ibid.*, 264.

28 *Ibid.*, 266-268.

29 *Idem*, 'Civil Society and Islam', in Hall (ed.), *Civil Society*, 278-300.

30 *Ibid.*, 279.

31 K. Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca and London 1994), 40-44.

autonomous associations which would be able to restrain its power. As she notes, “[t]he center was omnipotent”.³²

Another of the few scholars who have dealt with civil society in the Ottoman context is Haim Gerber. His interpretation is radically different from that of Mardin and Barkey. In an article published in 2000, Gerber argues for the existence of civil society in the Ottoman Empire.³³ His contention is that the Ottoman state was not as omnipotent, arbitrary, or despotic as it is often portrayed, and that it should be identified with the Sultan and his immediate entourage, which makes the rest of the state bureaucracy a kind of civil society, “[not] a tool of the sultan, but a group with its own will and ability”.³⁴ Furthermore, the cases of the *ulema*, the guilds, and the *ayan*, as well as the involvement of local groups of people in the administration of the law and waqfs, prove in his view that Ottoman society possessed autonomy from the state, and exhibited the signs of civil society.

In 2002, Gerber returned to the issue of civil society, this time in conjunction with the concept of the public sphere. Gerber adopts again an approach which is in stark contrast to that of Mardin: he unequivocally endorses the existence of both a public sphere and a civil society in the Ottoman Empire, and focuses on law (guild law, land law, etc.), its administrators (the *kadıs*), and the waqf institution as evidence that Ottoman society was not controlled by the state, but instead had “autonomous social institutions and groups”.³⁵ In the field of law, for instance, he cites the legalisation of charging interest on loans as an innovation which was imposed by civil society.³⁶ He also reiterates his view that the state in the Ottoman case was the Sultan, while groups such as the *ulema* belonged to the civil society, even though the *ulema* of the *ilmiye* hierarchy were related to the state apparatus.³⁷ Gerber also refers to Mardin whom he criticises for creating an “all-embracing dichotomy” between East and West, and for idealising the latter, while inaccurately portraying the Ottoman Empire as a despotic state without an autonomous civil society.³⁸ Gerber’s argumentation is interesting and thought-provoking, but what is missing is a thorough discussion of how he defines ‘civil society’.

Reşat Kasaba concurs with Gerber that there was indeed a civil society in the Ottoman Empire, but places it in the late Ottoman period. More specifically, he argues that a civil society emerged in the late eighteenth century, and that “the Greek community played a key part in its formation in western Anatolia”.³⁹ A note is in order here about the potential multiplicity of Ottoman paradigms available: since Kasaba refers to Izmir, an

32 Ibid., 44.

33 H. Gerber, ‘Ottoman Civil Society and Modern Turkish Democracy’, in K. H. Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today’s Turkey* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne 2000), 133–149.

34 Ibid., 133–134, 148.

35 Idem, ‘The Public Sphere and Civil Society in the Ottoman Empire’, in Hoexter, Eisenstadt, and Levzion (eds), *The Public Sphere*, 65–82. The quotation is from p. 65.

36 Ibid., 72–73.

37 Ibid., 74–75.

38 Ibid., 77–80.

39 R. Kasaba, ‘Economic Foundations of a Civil Society: Greeks in the Trade of Western Anatolia, 1840–1876’, in D. Gondicas and C. Issawi (eds), *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of National-*

important commercial port, where a merchant bourgeoisie active in international commerce had come into being, the society that he has in mind seems to be much closer to the Western paradigm than the Ottoman society that Mardin describes.

To return to Mardin and take him as our point of departure here, in general he is factually correct in his remarks, but I think that there is space for a somewhat different approach, as Gerber's criticism has shown. For example, Mardin rightly points out that liberties in the Western sense did not exist in the Ottoman Empire before the nineteenth century; for instance, if we move from the individual to communal life, it is clear that there was no or little "legally protected freedom of associational life".⁴⁰ On the other hand, there was a judicial system and a notion of justice which in principle guaranteed all subjects as individuals their basic rights with respect to the implementation of the law. This is an important feature of the Ottoman political ideology and practice, even if it, obviously, did not equate with the formal acknowledgement of civil or associational liberties by the state.

Besides, the distance between guaranteeing individual and corporate rights is huge, and Mardin is right again about the status of corporations in the Islamic world. Islam does not recognise a legal personality to collective entities, and, when they exist, they cannot claim any rights or privileges as such, because by law they are non-existent. Even such established institutions as the guilds (which, among other things, paraded before the Sultan on formal occasions) lacked, as it seems, a legal personality as associations.⁴¹ This point is important because civil society rests on associations and if the legal status of associations is not guaranteed, this in principle makes them vulnerable and thus weakens civil society per se.⁴²

In practice though, even under such legal circumstances, the guilds did exist and thrive in the Ottoman Empire. There does exist ample other evidence which also points to the fact that practice diverged from theory and legal doctrine, and that the state or its local agents accommodated corporate entities, even without formally acknowledging them.⁴³ Here are but a few examples: the principle of collective responsibility for the

ism: Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton 1999), 77-87. The quotation is from p. 78.

40 V. Bunce, 'The Historical Origins of the East-West Divide: Civil Society, Political Society, and Democracy in Europe', in Bermeo and Nord (eds), *Civil Society*, 214.

41 E. Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: Fluidity and Leverage* (Leiden and Boston 2004), 171 n. 16. On guild processions, see *ibid.*, 175; S. Faroqhi, *Artisans of Empire: Crafts and Craftspeople under the Ottomans* (London and New York 2009), 62-63.

42 Cf. D. L. Blaney and M. K. Pasha, 'Civil Society and Democracy in the Third World: Ambiguities and Historical Possibilities', *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 28 (1993), 6-7.

43 Cf. A. Cohen, 'Communal Legal Entities in a Muslim Setting. Theory and Practice: The Jewish Community in Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem', *Islamic Law and Society*, 3 (1996), 75-90; H. Canbakal, 'Some Questions on the Legal Identity of Neighborhoods in the Ottoman Empire', *Anatolia Moderna/Yeni Anadolu*, 10 (2004), 131-138; Eadem, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: 'Ayntāb in the 17th Century* (Leiden and Boston 2007), 173-178. Gerber, 'The Public Sphere', 70, centres his argument on Ottoman guilds. See also Kolovos's paper in this vol-

payment of taxes as well as for unsolved crimes and the establishment of public order, the existence of communal leaderships whose authority rested on a representational principle and to which the state and its agents formally or informally appealed for various matters of public interest or to whom they issued decrees, as well as specific incidents, such as the arrangement which was reached after the confiscation of monastic properties in 1568, which in effect allowed the monastic communities to continue to function as such.⁴⁴ Thus, from a strictly legal(istic) point of view, indeed the non-existence of collectivities precludes the possibility of a civil society since, as noted above, this is expressed mainly through associations. However, the situation on the ground was different, as in reality such collectivities did exist, even if not recognised by law.

Besides, I do not subscribe to a view which assesses Ottoman society on the basis of static, normative Islamic principles, and portrays the everyday activities of its members, who were not only Muslim but also non-Muslim, as dictated solely by the precepts of their religious dogmas. Despite their respect for and fear of God and religion, the people in the Ottoman era would – consciously or unconsciously, under the burden of traditional practice and necessity – find ways to circumvent religious rules when necessary. I believe that a more empirical approach to this issue has considerable merits,⁴⁵ because it can prove this point. However, it is not for us here to embark upon such a venture.

Despite all that, I think that it is clear that we cannot speak of a mature civil society in the Ottoman realm in the pre-Tanzimat era. There are basic requisites of civil society, as agreed by scholars who study it in the modern Western context, which are lacking in the case of Ottoman society. But before listing them, it should be added that, nevertheless, it is possible to trace some features of civil society, or early forms of it in the Ottoman context.⁴⁶ These features may be an expression of (or similar to) what Hall calls ‘proto civil society’.⁴⁷ If the Ottoman Empire qualifies as an early modern state (as is the current

ume (esp. pp. 63-64): the authorities did not punish all the inhabitants of the village that rioted, but only their six leaders/representatives. E. Liata, ‘Hoi koinotetes: henas thesmos me polles opseis’ [Communities: an institution with many aspects], in V. Panagiotopoulos (ed.), *Historia tou neou hellenismou, 1770-2000*, Vol. 2 (Athens 2003), 311, points out that, although the state did not formally recognise communities as legal entities, the Christian local authorities communicated with each other as ‘communities’ and not as local notables. On this point, cf. M. Pyliia, ‘Leitourgies kai autonomia ton koinoteton tes Peloponnesou kata te deutere Tourkokratia (1715-1821)’ [Functions and autonomy of the Moreot communities during the second era of Turkish rule (1715-1821)], *Mnemon*, 23 (2001), 74.

44 J. C. Alexander (Alexandropoulos), ‘The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away: Athos and the Confiscation Affair of 1568-1569’, in *Mount Athos in the 14th-16th Centuries* (Athens 1997), 149-200; A. Fotić, ‘The Official Explanation for the Confiscation and Sale of Monasteries (Churches) and their Estates at the Time of Selim II’, *Turcica*, 26 (1994), 33-54; E. Kermeli, ‘The Confiscation and Repossession of Monastic Properties in Mount Athos and Patmos Monasteries, 1568-1570’, *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 2000/3-4, 39-53.

45 But see Mardin, ‘Civil Society and Islam’, 289.

46 Gerber, ‘Ottoman Civil Society’, 133, refers to “substantial traces of civil society” in the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire, but does not elaborate on this remark.

47 Hall, ‘In Search of Civil Society’, 21. Hall explains ‘proto civil society’ as one in which “so-

trend among Ottomanists), i.e., a state possessing some preliminary elements of 'modernity', why should it not also be legitimately called a 'proto civil' or 'early civil' society, even if this concept originates in the Western paradigm?

For instance, even though Ottoman society was formally segregated along religious, and sometimes also along ethnic or social, lines, and certainly each confessional group had strong prejudices and reproduced depreciatory stereotypes about the other(s), the largely non-violent co-existence of various ethnic and religious communities for long periods of time and the absence of a desire to create a religiously (or otherwise) homogeneous society may be interpreted as evidence of openness and tolerance. People were born into a mixed society and were thus used to living with difference, even if civility, or a degree thereof, was achieved not as a conscious cultural value but for fear of the intervention of the state or as the *de facto* result of established practice.

Clearly, it is important to address the issue of whether Ottoman society in a given locality was cohesive or a conglomeration of different communities which co-existed with little actual interaction because of their legal segregation and cultural biases. Although legal discrimination against non-Muslims as well as contemptuous feelings as between different religious (or ethnic) communities did exist,⁴⁸ there was, at least to a certain extent, a shared 'Ottoman' cultural background which created a sense of unity, while it is hard to imagine that in everyday life the various communities which inhabited the same settlement would not exhibit at least some common attitudes to life, or have to come to terms with some common problems. But even if we suppose – to play the devil's advocate – that social fragmentation and estrangement was the case, in principle still this would not automatically hinder the emergence of a civil society, much as it is clear that civil society is stronger in societies which possess some unity of aims and visions.⁴⁹

Another feature is self-organisation of society, which is a key concept of civil society and did exist in pre-Tanzimat Ottoman society. Which forms of associations and social activism in the Ottoman Empire could then be candidates to register as manifestations of 'civil society'? I think that the most obvious choices appear to be the guilds and the communal institutions of the Muslim and non-Muslim populations of the Empire,⁵⁰ especially if we define 'civil society' simply as forms of collective organisation which "provide a buffer between state and citizen".⁵¹ They were largely self-organised and self-run asso-

cial differentiation is available on the basis of which civil society could be consolidated". Here again his examples refer principally to Western societies or the twentieth century.

48 See, for instance, P. Odorico *et alii*, *Conseils et mémoires de Synadinos, prêtre de Serrès en Macédoine* ([Paris] 1996), 43, 68, 70-72, 76-78, 82-84, 106, 112.

49 Hall speaks of "the social homogeneity necessary for civil society"; Hall, 'In Search of Civil Society', 13.

50 Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, 42-44, argues against the autonomy of guilds and local communities from the state.

51 A. R. Norton, 'Introduction', in Idem (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Vol. 1 (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1995), 7. Obviously the Ottoman population did not have 'citizen' but 'subject' status, but this problem will be discussed below. On guilds, see Yi, *Guild Dynamics*; Faroqi, *Artisans of Empire*; O. Yıldırım, 'Ottoman Guilds in the Early Modern Era', *Interna-*

ciations of a non-violent character which belonged to the public sphere and allowed room for dissent. Furthermore, they were meant to defend and ameliorate the living standards as well as serve and promote the interests of their members, not individually but in the form of the common good of the group, and it was in this context that they also interacted with the state and its representatives, seeking to reduce oppression and abuse.⁵² Sufi brotherhoods, spiritual unions which at the same time were social organisations with extensive penetration in Ottoman society and usually branches in more than one place, are another type of association which applies for civil social status; dervish orders were voluntary and, although they were not uniform in their practices and outlooks, many, most likely most, among them were civil in their attitudes. There is abundant literature on dervish orders in the Ottoman Empire, but their socio-political involvement in and impact on urban societies in the pre-Tanzimat period is, to my knowledge, a topic which has not been studied in great detail; therefore, I will refrain from discussing them further.⁵³ Finally, the Kadızadelis are a less likely candidate, because much as they undoubtedly were a durable activist social movement of a voluntary nature, they professed an exclusivist ideology which encouraged or even preached militancy in clear contrast with the ideal of the civil nature of civil society.⁵⁴

tional Review of Social History, 53-Supplement (2008) [J. Lucassen, T. De Moor, and J. Luiten van Zanden (eds), *The Return of the Guilds*], 73-93. On communities, see E. Gara, 'In Search of Communities in Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Sources: The Case of the Kara Ferye District', *Turcica*, 30 (1998), 135-162; Pylia, 'Leitourgies', 67-98; Liata, 'Hoi koinotetes', 309-324; S. D. Petmezas, 'Christian Communities in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Greece: Their Fiscal Functions', in M. Greene (ed.), *Minorities in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton 2005), 71-127; Canbakal, *Society and Politics*, 160-178; cf. the papers of E. Gara, esp. 407-414, E. Ginio. S. Laiou, and A. Lyberatos in this volume, and F. Adanır, 'Semi-Autonomous Provincial Forces in the Balkans and Anatolia', in S. Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*. Vol. 3: *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839* (Cambridge 2006), 161-163.

- 52 A. Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York 1989), paints a vivid picture of the merits and limitations of communal life and self-organisation in an Ottoman city, with the *mahalle* being the principal organisational unit for the local people and the waqf the main institution through which public services were provided.
- 53 Recent studies on Ottoman sufism include D. Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandīs in the Ottoman World, 1450-1700* (Albany 2005); A. Y. Ocak (ed.), *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society: Sources-Doctrines-Rituals-Turuq-Architecture-Literature-Iconography-Modernism* (Ankara 2005); R. Chih and C. Mayeur-Jaouen with D. Gril and R. McGregor (eds), *Le soufisme à l'époque ottomane, XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle / Sufism in the Ottoman Era, 16th-18th Century* (Cairo 2010); D. Terzioğlu, 'Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization', in C. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (London and New York 2012), 86-99.
- 54 On the Kadızadelis, see M. C. Zilfi, 'The Kadızadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 45 (1986), 251-269; Eadem, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulama in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis 1988), 129-181; M. D. Baer, 'The Great Fire of 1660 and the Islamization of Christian and Jewish Space in Istanbul', *IJMES*, 36 (2004), 159-181; Idem, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York 2008). Cf. the paper of M. Sariyannis in this volume.

If we now turn to the problems alluded to above in relation to the application of the concept of civil society to the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire, those have to do with specific characteristics of the associations mentioned above, but also with the context within which they operated. As far as the context is concerned, I have touched upon this issue above and I will get back to it further below: in order to determine if a civil society indeed existed, does it suffice to examine individual movements, associations, and organisations and recognise them as civil social, or are the emergence and consolidation of such a society possible and meaningful only if the appropriate wider socio-economic, political, and intellectual context exists?

As for more specific problems, can the guilds and communities really be treated as voluntary associations, even if in principle they may qualify as such in that they were not based on kinship relations?⁵⁵ In the modern world, civil society finds expression in political or other activism through participation in voluntary clubs, associations, and groups, such as human rights organisations.⁵⁶ But to what extent was membership of Ottoman guilds and communities voluntary in the fullest meaning of the word, which implies freedom to enter and leave them? Within the *Gemeinschaft* v. *Gesellschaft* dichotomy, as analysed by Sudipta Kaviraj after Ferdinand Tönnies, Ottoman guilds and, especially, communities are, I think, closer to the former rather than the latter sociological category, even though, as Kaviraj rightly points out, the distinction between the two does not always apply.⁵⁷ Guilds were not inclusive trade unions, but rather exclusive clubs, since in most cases membership of a guild was restricted and controlled, as it was a legal prerequisite for being able to practise a profession. Local communities, on the other hand, disliked losing members because this increased the per capita tax quota. As Gellner has remarked, “traditional man can sometimes escape the tyranny of kings, but only at the cost of falling under the tyranny of cousins”.⁵⁸ To adapt this comment to the Ottoman Empire, urban or rural communities or guilds might be protecting their members from the oppression of the state, but they themselves could impose strict rules and obligations on their members.⁵⁹ Wealthy merchants had the legal or extra-legal means of avoiding participation in a guild or in the tax burden of their community,⁶⁰ but this must have been impossible for the vast majority of Ottoman subjects.

Another important issue of a more general nature is that theoretical approaches to the concept of civil society take respect for individuality and the independence of the indi-

55 But descent and family relations, as well as religion, were formally or informally important in deciding the position of someone within the guild or the community.

56 For examples of civil social groupings and movements in historical perspective see Kocka, ‘Civil Society’, 75.

57 S. Kaviraj, ‘In Search of Civil Society’, in Idem and Khilnani (eds), *Civil Society*, 303–306, 311, 319–322.

58 Gellner, ‘The Importance of Being Modular’, 33.

59 Cf. S. Zubaida, ‘Civil Society, Community, and Democracy in the Middle East’, in Kaviraj and Khilnani (eds), *Civil Society*, 233–235.

60 See, for instance, A. Anastasopoulos, ‘Building Alliances: A Christian Merchant in Eighteenth-Century Karaferye’, *Oriente Moderno* n.s., 25/1 (2006) [E. Boyar and K. Fleet (eds), *The Ottomans and Trade*], 65–75.

vidual to be integral elements of civil society.⁶¹ It is questionable, to say the least, if such an attitude applies to the Ottoman period. For instance, it seems reasonable to think of the guilds and local communities as expressions of corporatism, as well as to treat communal responsibility and the efforts of local communities to prevent their members from abandoning them or refusing to contribute to the payment of the communal tax burden as loud declarations against individualism.⁶² Obviously, it was not impossible for a person to escape the control or oppression of his/her urban or rural community, but this does not make communities flexible, liberal or voluntary associations, since, when they had the opportunity to do so, they might harass or persecute the 'escapee'.⁶³

Not only that but local communities, if treated as political corporations whose goal was to influence the local and imperial balance of power and to manipulate or change in their favour the rules through which they were governed, could fall – in essence, since here again institutional formalisation is missing – under the category of 'political' rather than 'civil' society.⁶⁴ With reference to the modern world, to which this distinction basically refers, Valerie Bunce defines civil society as "legally protected freedom of associational life" (examples: independent media, church groups, bowling leagues, employee and employer associations, vegetarian societies, parent-teachers' associations, retirement clubs), and political society as "the organized activity of citizens in common pursuit of selecting who rules and influencing the agenda and the decisions of the rulers" (examples: unions, parties, and interest groups).⁶⁵

Another issue is that Ottoman society was composed of subjects of the ruler, and not of citizens. The Ottoman subjects did not have formal political or civic rights in the modern sense, while the idea of 'civil society' is closely linked to such rights, the self-organisation of citizens, and their voluntary participation in associations, which, eventually, aim or lead to democratisation of the existing political order; as noted above, civil society is in principle opposed to despotism.⁶⁶ Could civil society exist under an auto-

61 Kocka, 'Civil Society', 69; Hall, 'In Search of Civil Society', 15.

62 For examples of pressure exerted on those who refused to pay taxes within their communities see K. D. Mertzios, *Mnemeia makedonikes historias* [Monuments of Macedonian history] (Salonica 1947), 326, 359-360, 362-366; Odorico *et alii*, *Conseils et mémoires*, 110; Anastasopoulos, 'Building Alliances'. Cf. Marcus, *The Middle East*, 327.

63 Cf. Gellner, 'The Importance of Being Modular', 42. But see Marcus, *The Middle East*, 332-333 for his comment against overstressing the suppression of individualism in Ottoman society.

64 Hall, 'In Search of Civil Society', 12; Nord, 'Introduction', xiv.

65 Bunce, 'The Historical Origins', 214, 211. With regard to seventeenth-century Ottoman Ayntab, Canbakal, *Society and Politics*, 152, notes: "the elite who were involved in decision-making in public matters constituted a political society at the local level".

66 As Kocka notes, civil society "can often only be asserted and safeguarded in criticism of existing or impending conditions; in criticism ... of being spoon-fed and oppressed by the authorities, in criticism of traditional forms of inequality and in resistance to being overwhelmed by the success of capitalism and in reaction to the fragmentation of, and lack of, solidarity in society" (Kocka, 'Civil Society', 69). But Nord, 'Introduction', xv, points out that "associational militancy may well take forms that are non- or even antidemocratic".

cratic ruler whose subjects were formally described as his flock? I believe that the answer is 'yes', given that in modern non-democratic regimes, civil society is weak, but not lacking. Thus, if civil society can (or struggle to) exist under authoritarian regimes, then in principle there is no hindrance in arguing the existence of civil society in the Ottoman state, even though the latter abhorred and did not formalise/legitimise the free association of its subjects until the nineteenth century, and even then rather grudgingly.⁶⁷

As a small, but hopefully relevant, digression, I think that it is wrong to treat Ottoman subjects as politically inactive or incapacitated just because they were not citizens.⁶⁸ Besides the ample evidence provided throughout Ottoman history by individual and group petitions of the Sultan's subjects to higher authorities and riots in Istanbul and the provinces,⁶⁹ one should not forget that politically important actors, such as the eighteenth-century *ayan*, great and small, did not have citizen status either nor were they necessarily *askeri*. Furthermore, clearly there was room for political initiatives in the context of the guilds and urban or rural communities. For instance, the pressure that new mercantile, but also other, non-elite, social strata exercised on the traditional leadership of Christian Greek-speaking communities from the late eighteenth century onwards in order to force it to open up its ranks to them suggests both the politicisation of Ottoman society, and a demand for democratisation of its structures within, of course, the limits of those institutions to which these social groups had access.⁷⁰ Leaving aside instances of 'traditionalist', so to speak, contestation of the legitimacy or reliability of the central political establishment or even of sultanic absolutism,⁷¹ a clear opposition to sultanic despotism in the 'modern' spirit of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution may be found in Christian merchants, revolutionaries, and intellectuals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who acted under the influence of their ideas,⁷² even if the

67 Cf. Kocka, 'Civil Society', 73.

68 On the other hand, it is clear that universal suffrage and citizenship in a democratic state facilitate disadvantaged groups, such as women or the poor, in becoming active members of civil society (*ibid.*, 73).

69 For specific cases and relevant analysis see the papers in this volume and the sources and literature to which they refer. See also E. Gara, M. E. Kabadayı, and C. K. Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire. Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi* (Istanbul 2011).

70 See, for instance, P. Iliou, *Koinonikoi agones kai Diaphotismos: he periptose tes Smyrnes (1819)* [Social struggles and the Enlightenment: the case of Smyrna (1819)] (Athens 1986); Liata, 'Hoi koinotetes', 314. Cf. Kasaba, 'Economic Foundations', 83-85, as well as the papers of Laiou and Lyberatos in this volume.

71 See, for instance, B. A. Ergene, 'On Ottoman Justice: Interpretations in Conflict (1600-1800)', *Islamic Law and Society*, 8 (2001), 70-87. Cf. C. Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff of Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels without a Cause?', *IJTS*, 13/1 & 2 (2007), 133, for the proposal for a "cumhur cemiyeti" during the revolt of 1703, as well as B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge 2010). See also A. Yaycıoğlu, 'Provincial Power-Holders and the Empire in the Late Ottoman World: Conflict or Partnership?', in Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World*, 436-452.

72 See, for instance, *Hellenike nomarchia, etoi logos peri eleutherias* [Hellenic rule of law, or

extent to which such voices echoed wider social movements is not clear. As an epilogue to this brief digression, Kocka and others point out that the emergence of civil society is indeed not incompatible with political absolutism, but that civil society can only flourish under a constitutional government.⁷³

However, there is another aspect of Kocka's definition of civil society cited above, that is, its identification with the realisation of the utopian vision of the Enlightenment of a tolerant society of responsible and participating citizens, which poses another serious theoretical problem in tracing elements of civil society in Ottoman society. If this Western-history-specific remark is maintained as an indispensable part of the definition of civil society, and a criterion for classifying a particular movement as an instance of civil social action, then non-Western societies which do not share the intellectual and political legacy of the Enlightenment, or pre-Enlightenment societies, have to be altogether excluded from the concept of civil society. In fact, Kocka allows, as does Hall, for societies to have only partly permitted or achieved the emergence of the civil-society social sphere or action, as he in principle also allows for adaptations of civil society to local conditions outside Western Europe, but, by implication, this must only apply to post-Enlightenment societies.⁷⁴ In this respect, it is only from the late eighteenth century onwards that a civil society could have started to emerge in the Ottoman Empire among circles (such as the Christian merchants mentioned above) who had been exposed to the intellectual and political messages of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and thus exerted pressure on the traditional Ottoman political system for the widening of political participation.

On the other hand, there are students of non-Western pre-modern or early modern societies who do not consider it problematic to talk about civil society in such contexts. But this again raises the problem of the fluidity of the concept of civil society, since these scholars usually have to dispense with certain features of the concept as defined above so as to render it suitable for their case studies. Said Amir Arjomand, for instance, uses it for medieval Islamic society, but on the basis of a definition which relies on the Hegelian concept of civil society and the substitution of the patrician household for corporations as "the organizational basis of concerted agency". Furthermore, he does not treat individualism as an indispensable element of civil society, and considers the distinction between "the private and personal" and "the public and the impersonal" irrelevant be-

discourse about liberty] (Athens 1968; originally published in 1806). On the 'Greek Enlightenment', whose product *Hellenike nomarchia* is thought to be, see K. T. Dimaras, *Neohellenikos Diaphotismos* [Modern Greek Enlightenment] (Athens 1983 [3rd ed.]); P. M. Kitromilides, *Neohellenikos Diaphotismos: hoi politikes kai koinonikes idees* [Modern Greek Enlightenment: the political and social ideas], trans. S. G. Nikoloudi (Athens 1996).

73 Kocka, 'Civil Society', 70, 71-72; cf. *ibid.*, 75, for an explicit mention of the Ottoman Empire as being opposed by nineteenth-century "civil social efforts" which "viewed [it] as foreign rule". As noted, Hall, 'In Search of Civil Society', 4-7, 14, clearly associates the historical evolution of civil society with Europe, and even more so with Western societies.

74 Kocka, 'Civil Society', 76, notes that "the idea of civil society was born during the Enlightenment. It is thus a product of the West. But its principles claim universal validity."

cause of the dominance of patrimonialism, which renders the state the extension of the sovereign's household.⁷⁵ Farhat Hasan adopts the line of argumentation of Arjomand, and thus sees fit to use the concept of civil society in his analysis of the public sphere in pre-colonial India.⁷⁶ To cite yet another example, Masoud Kamali denounces the application of a uniform definition of 'civil society' based on the Western paradigm, argues that "neither individualism nor democratic institutions have been or are necessary for a civil society to exist", and treats the *ulema* and the market people (the *bazaris*) as largely autonomous social groups which could counterbalance the state and, thus, as the principal agents of what he calls "the traditional civil society in Muslim countries".⁷⁷ Approaches such as those are important and perfectly valid theoretical and methodological contributions, but it is worth asking, I think, what the point is in first adopting a concept which comes from the Western paradigm, but then stripping it of some of its major attributes so as to make it fit the non-Western paradigm that one is studying. If one rejects some essential, commonly accepted, traits of a concept, why does one still need to use it? Does not that obscure instead of facilitating comparison? Furthermore, does not such a use of Western concepts implicitly promote the symbolic superiority of West-specific analytical categories? And, thus, how can one avoid the risk of suffering what Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, who had a different, more optimistic, view on this subject, argued against, namely, (unwillingly?) turning Western analytical tools and concepts into yardsticks for evaluating non-Western societies, in the context usually of an explicit or implicit quest for signs of 'modernity' perceived in Western terms?⁷⁸

To recapitulate, the most important problems regarding the existence of civil society in the Ottoman Empire are that Ottoman society i) is pre-modern, ii) does not appreciate individualism or political liberalism, iii) does not build its non-governmental institutions

75 S. A. Arjomand, 'The Law, Agency, and Policy in Medieval Islamic Society: Development of the Institutions of Learning from the Tenth to the Fifteenth Century', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41 (1999), 263-293, esp. 264-266.

76 Hasan, 'Forms of Civility and Publicness', esp. 87-88.

77 M. Kamali, 'Civil Society and Islam: A Sociological Perspective', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 42 (2001), 457-482. The quotations are from p. 458. Cf. S. E. Ibrahim, 'Civil Society and Prospects of Democratization in the Arab World', in Norton (ed.), *Civil Society*, 1:30-32.

78 Eisenstadt, 'Concluding Remarks', in Hoexter, Eisenstadt, and Levtzion (eds), *The Public Sphere*, 159-160; see also S. N. Eisenstadt and W. Schluchter, 'Introduction: Paths to Early Modernities – A Comparative View', in Eidem and B. Wittrock (eds), *Public Spheres and Collective Identities* (New Brunswick 2001), 1-18. For a broader perspective against the restrictive association of the features of civil society with Europe see J. R. Goody, 'Civil Society in an Extra-European Perspective', in Kaviraj and Khilnani (eds), *Civil Society*, 149-164. Cemal Kafadar notes: "it is important not to lapse into the apologetic position of 'proving' that the Ottomans were just the same as the west, or just as advanced"; C. Kafadar, 'The Ottomans and Europe', in T. A. Brady, Jr., H. A. Oberman, and J. D. Tracy (eds), *Handbook of European History, 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*. Volume I: *Structures and Assertions* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1994), 615. See also D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton 2000).

on a genuine voluntary basis, iv) functions under the authority of a state which does not invest communal collectivities and other forms of corporations with a formal legal status as institutions which mediate between the individual and the state (there is no formally instituted 'civil society'), v) is plural but not necessarily tolerant or culturally unitary. If we are to define 'civil society' strictly along the lines of how it is used for modern Western societies, these problems seem to work against the possibility of applying it to the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire as a category of historical analysis, although i) Ottoman society does present (largely informal) institutions of its own meant to prevent state despotism, ii) cultural differences may not be as pronounced as they seem at first sight, and iii) the Ottoman state was in principle absolutist and centralising, but in practice much less so, while especially the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are today thought of as an age of 'decentralisation'.⁷⁹



To conclude, in this paper I have offered only a cursory discussion of the concept of 'civil society'.⁸⁰ Ideally, the exploration of a concept such as this is meaningful if its use in other socio-political contexts has shown it to be an analytical tool which may enrich our methodological arsenal and thus allow us to see Ottoman society, its constituent elements and its relationship with the state – or specifically 'political initiatives from the bottom up' in the context of this volume – in a different light. In the case of 'civil society', which, in my view, has shown such a potential as it highlights society's ability for collective self-organisation and thus social and political involvement independent of the state's patronising control, this conceptual transfer presupposes the modification of some aspects of the definition of 'civil society' as used for modern European societies, so as to address the issues which are raised above.⁸¹ As argued at the beginning of this paper, I believe that, before one imports analytical concepts, one has to systematically examine their current definition and use, and become aware of their underpinnings and implications.

Researching the history and attributes of terms and concepts, acknowledging their commonly accepted content, and defining them as clearly as possible when using them are not matters of intellectual stuffiness. I think that they are all necessary because the use of concepts cannot be uncritical or incidental: among other things, even those of allegedly universal character more often than not are case(s)-specific, in fact West-specific. Otherwise, we are exposed, as noted above, to the risk of simply perpetuating

79 For this line of thinking see the classic article by H. İnalcık, 'Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration', in T. Naff and R. Owen (eds), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale and Edwardsville; London and Amsterdam 1977), 27-52. Cf. Barkley, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, 240-241.

80 To comply with a well-known stereotype about the theoretical backwardness of the field of Ottoman history, my discussion of civil society comes with a fifteen to twenty-year delay in relation to the heyday of the popularity of this concept in the 1990s.

81 For a contemporary African perspective see D. Lewis, 'Civil Society in African Contexts: Reflections on the Usefulness of a Concept', *Development and Change*, 33 (2002), 569-586.

the domination of Western categories for no reason and to no real benefit: if we are to use a concept in a superficial manner, as a slogan rather than as a meaningful theoretical tool, then we do not need it anyway; if we are to considerably modify it without substantiating why we should still call it by the same name, then we may well use different, new, terminology which will be free from the ideological baggage of the term that we have borrowed.

What I object to are these two phenomena, not the importing of terms and concepts as such. This means that if the use of imported concepts is critical, well-argued, and clearly articulated, it is of lesser importance if they are used in full compliance or not with the definitions by historians of nineteenth or twentieth-century European modernity. In fact, then terms such as 'civil society', when applied to the Ottoman Empire, can contribute towards curbing the exclusiveness of the 'Western' paradigm and encouraging meaningful comparison beyond stereotypes based on an Occident v. Orient divide – at least for as long as the West remains the dominant conceptual paradigm in the social sciences. Such an approach has aspects which are not only academic, but also political, in the wider sense of this word. With reference to a term which is currently in fashion, I think, for instance, that describing the Ottoman Empire as 'early modern' instead of 'pre-modern' – despite the fact that this term is often reproduced without much consideration of its parameters or implications – is important in one respect, namely, in demonstrating how the researchers' perception of the Empire has changed, since the passage from 'pre-modern' to 'early modern' constitutes promotion in an evolutionary, linear conception of history. In principle, as we became able to discern elements of (even early) modernity in an empire which was called 'pre-modern' until quite recently, so we may eventually become able to see elements of (proto?) civil society in the functioning of Ottoman society. As 'early modern' brings the Ottoman Empire closer to us, closer into the modern world, even if in its early stage, so the concept of 'civil society' could contribute towards making Ottoman subjects look less 'exotic' and 'Oriental' to the students of the Ottoman and other contemporaneous states and societies. Ottoman society may have been different from Western European societies in cultural terms, but certainly it was neither totally alien to them nor politically indifferent, inert, or static.⁸²

82 Cf. Kafadar, 'The Ottomans and Europe', 615-625; Özbek, 2005, 60; V. A. Aksan and D. Goffman, 'Introduction: Situating the Early Modern Ottoman World', in Eidem (eds), *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge 2007), 1-12. See also D. Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge 2002).

