

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ÇİFTLİK: THE REDISTRIBUTION OF
LAND AND LAND TENURE RELATIONS IN THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY PROVINCES OF IOANNINA AND TRIKALA

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the Thesis of Uğur Bayraktar, for the degree of Master of Arts from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History to be taken September 2009.

Title: Political Economy of Çiftlik: The Redistribution of Land and Land Tenure Relations in the Nineteenth Century Provinces of Ioannina and Trikala

This work scrutinizes the relations of productions being employed in the çiftlik, large farms, of the northern Greece in the nineteenth century and the tensions emanating from them in a class-analysis method. The Tanzimat reforms and the redistribution of the çiftlik located in this region and their respective consequences are elaborated. Due to the reciprocity of landlords and the State, the lands belonging to landlords of Albanian origin with their militia forces impeded the State from enforcing the proclaimed reforms and ends of redistribution. This reciprocity culminated in the degradation of the status of the peasant çiftlik. While landlords resorted to further exploitation of sharecroppers' labour along with arbitrary demands the State did not appear to materialise its proclamations concerning the reforms. Having lost protection by the State against the interests of the landlords in Northern Greece, the peasantry opted to stand for their rights on their own, making their voices heard often throughout the nineteenth century.

ÖZET

Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü'nde Yüksek Lisans Derecesi için Uğur

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Başlık: Çiftliklerin Ekonomi Politikası: On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl Yanya ve Tırhala Sancakları'nda Toprak Dağıtımı ve Toprak Mülkiyeti İlişkileri

Bu çalışma on dokuzuncu yüzyıl Kuzey Yunanistan'ında kullanılan üretim ilişkilerini ve bunlardan doğan gerilimler, sınıf analizi doğrultusunda açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Tanzimat Fermanı ve bu bölgede bulunan çiftliklerin yeniden dağıtımı ve bunlar dolayısıyla ortaya çıkan sonuçlar da işlenmektedir. Tanzimat angaryayı ve tarımsal üretimde birçok feodal benzeri görevleri kaldırırken öte yandan da yeniden dağıtım süreci de Teselya'daki çiftliklerde üretimi iyileştirmeyi ve teşvik etmeyi amaçladı. Ancak, çoğunun kökeni Arnavutluk hanedanlarına dayanan vücut ise devletin bu ilân edilen reformlara ve yeniden dağıtımın asıl amaçlarını icra etmesine karşı durmuştur. Bu bağlamda da, toprak sahipleriyle devlet arasındaki pek de kolay olmayan bu karşılıklı Tanzimat döneminde çiftliklerde istihdam edilmiş olan çiftçilerin durumlarında bir gerilemeye yol açmıştır. Toprak sahipleri bu ortakçılar üzerindeki emek sömürüsü ve yanında keyfî talepleri artırırken devlet ise tarımsal emeğe dair daha önceden öne sürdüğü yaptırımları gerçekleştirebilmiş gözükmemektedir. Tüm Kuzey Yunanistan'da toprak sahiplerinin çıkarlarına karşın devletin korumasını yitiren çiftçiler ise kendi haklarını aramak için seslerini duyurmaya çalışsalar da bu ses on dokuzuncu yüzyıl boyunca çok nadiren duyulmuştur.

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PREFACE

When starting this thesis project, I was occupied with one central theme, which was corvée labour in the Ottoman context. Its existence and resemblance to early modern European feudalisms has attracted me to a great extent and this fed my curiosity leading to scrutinizing the case of the Ottoman Empire in the age of the nationalist and liberal aspirations and their consequences in the Balkan lands. Even though the rest of the Tanzimat Reforms deserves far more attention, the abolition of this labour practice is poorly represented in the literature. The Rescript of Gülhane, seemingly promised much beyond what it could have accomplished. The abolition of corvée labour and such similar feudal-dues were, on the contrary to the reforms, known to persist in the *çiftlik*s of the Empire, especially in the Balkans. Interested in this unheard of and moderately enigmatic exploitation of labour, I imagined accomplishing an introductory as well as sweeping study with respect to the practices of these feudal remnants in the context of the relations of production involving *çiftlik*s. However, the initial findings were discouraging. Although it was sure and evident that these kind of practices took place at most of the *çiftlik*s operating on sharecropping contracts, it was difficult for me to conceptualise then this illegitimate labour extraction method. Being employed in various sectors, such as the construction of infrastructure and transportation, I was especially interested in the one which was related to the agricultural relations of production. In the end, both due to the lack of satisfactory material as well as the insignificance of the issue with respect to the discussions in

the literature, I opted to take another path, which I now realise was the most rewarding option among the possible paths.

As such, the research following the traces of *corvée* in the Archives unexpectedly brought about this very rewarding option in a short period of time. As the most possible places to trace these feudal dues, a survey of Balkan *çiftlik*s afforded me records of a considerable number of *çiftlik* sales, or redistribution, that took place in the settlements of Northern Greece. At first, it was remarkable to discover such findings for I had not been informed of such redistribution-like sales before. Yet, this discovery changed the direction of the study drastically. Albeit with the scarcity of relevant literature, the direction hitherto had been directed towards labour exploitation practices. The new findings necessitated, however, additional readings on the characteristics of the land tenure relations in Northern Greece, which was a similar enigma in the literature. Nonetheless, it was not the reading material that was had to be changed. The main arguments, which had been designed to concretise *corvée* labour, were abandoned and replaced by a more dynamic approach in accordance with class analysis. However abandoned they were, there is still a strong residue stemming from the earlier tendency towards *corvée* labour.

This two-tiered argumentation might be regarded as a major setback of this work, but I suppose that, quite to contrary, it is a truly more comprehensive study since the consequences of both acts were similar, that is, in relation with the State. The political economy of *çiftlik*s, in a more generalised sense, was therefore lucid by means of a distinct elaboration of the dominant classes engaging in these acts. Accordingly the local autonomy of the landlords against the central administration

was responsible for these consequences. Furthermore, the case of Ottoman Greece, in my opinion, requires a more particular approach. The reign of Albanian militia leaders mostly has been overlooked in the nineteenth century Ottoman social history. The *çiftliks*, most of which belonging to these prospective pashas, were the financial means of these quasi-independent personalities. In this context, the two tiers of the study seemed graspable, for the *çiftlik* redistribution and the persistence of corvée labour originated in the same source. While the former was on a more general level, the latter was more particular and actually a by-product of the former. Having presented as such, this work merged these two related arguments with a view to signify the principal source of the phenonema that led the peasantry to a disadvantageous status.

The accumulation of data concerning the sale of *çiftliks* was accordingly not straightforward. The standardisation of the raw information in documents into more understandable terms took longer time than I had expected. It was because some documents lacked the data to fill in the necessary items, and also there was a significant number of parts that I had difficulty in transcribing. Fortunately, once the standardisation and computation came to an end, the illustrations were to a great extent rewarding. That is, the graphs and figures accurately visualised the significance of the years of redistribution. Yet, the final document, I discovered towards the end of the project, had something different to say. Although I did not argue to present an overall portion of *çiftlik* sales, this document actually revealed that there is an immediate need for further research to unveil the *çiftliks* that were redistributed but cannot be documented.

Similarly, as my degree of specialisation in the archives surpassed the threshold, I was able to locate more documents revealing the persistence of feudal-like dues in relation to *çiftliks*. Especially in the regions expanding from Thessaly to Macedonia, which were renowned as the playgrounds of militia-leaders of Albanian origin, there were glimpses of harassment-like acts towards the peasantry by these landlords. Unfortunately, there was no possibility in terms of time limits to construct a coherent part to be incorporated in the study. Yet, these individual cases indicated that the *çiftliks* were not “static” oppression locations, rather, the peasantry as well as the landlord were very eager to struggle for their own interests.

In this sense, one case was quite significant, in the early years of Tanzimat: a landlord attempting to change a village into a *çiftlik* aroused the wrath of the peasantry of the estate. As these antagonistic claims underwent the trial process, the peasantry was accused of not making the necessary payments while the landlord tended to treat them as his serf-like employees. Apart from the concluding verdict, this case is important for it demonstrates that peasantry of the *çiftliks* resorted to the State, albeit with the ignorance of the latter. As such, the findings to support the attitude of the State towards the peasantry on the *çiftliks* were therefore gathered from these kinds of petitions throughout this study. It should be, therefore, noted that the peasantry in Ottoman Europe was not an “ideal” class with their preconceptional characteristics attributed to themselves.

As the project came to a close, it appeared that the redistribution of *çiftliks* and their consequential effects were more important to trace the unfamiliar aspects of the *çiftliks* which hitherto had been regarded as anything expanding from

“colonies of enterprise” to “large estates of Eastern Europe”. What I accomplished, thus, at least seems to draw a picture of the *çiftlik* as property to be exchanged between different parties, including the State. While doing this, I also noted that the sharecropping contracts were being highly in favour of the landlords presumably; in the end, the political economy of the *çiftliks* resulted in the redistribution of the land from the State to the wealthy landlords, deteriorating the status of the peasantry while presenting no significant advance in production techniques.

Apparently, there are other shortcomings of these studies as well. To be noted firstly, even though the sales of *çiftliks* in Northern Greece were validated with their respective archival material, the necessary information concerning their sizes, exact locations, and their details concerning the relations of production remains unknown. More importantly, even though it can be assumed that most of these *çiftliks* were located on the plains of Northern Greece, information on the production is lacking.

Still, despite the setbacks of this study, it reveals the veiled characteristics previously attributed to the *çiftlik* concept in the nineteenth century Balkans. In this sense, the political economy of the *çiftliks* with respect to three distinct classes and thus redistribution policies seems to be the novelty of this work which would hopefully be incorporated in the *çiftlik* debate. The century of incorporation to the capitalist world economy, in the final analysis, did not appear to take place on these agricultural estates, for the feudal remnants remained intact until the end of the century. The struggle of the peasantry and of landlords proved this resistance as the State attempted to deal with these feudal-like remnants.

The *çiftliks* of the Ottoman Empire, which was defined as certain plots of land cultivated by peasants and in the later centuries taxfarmed to the notables, have been the centre of attention for long with debates reaching from the passage from feudalism to capitalism to the central agricultural unit driving on the incorporation to the world system. However, what is actually known about the practical aspects of *çiftliks* is limited. Although, there have been discussions in terms of the idealisations attributed to *çiftliks*, the actual practices occurring in these *çiftliks* have gradually been exposed within the recent decades. This study reveals the veiled aspects of the *çiftliks* in Northern Greece with respect to their redistributions in the early Tanzimat Period, elucidating the consequential effects of this redistribution policy on the landlords as well as the peasantry. This sale of imperial estates to third parties was strongly against the very existence of the Ottoman self-definition for it opted to lose the very essential tax-base of the peasantry to the mediating classes. When these policies are considered with the reforms of the Tanzimat, the initial expectation would be more promising reforms for the direct producers being employed on *çiftliks*. Yet, this proved to be an illusion.

Therefore, the main argument of this study is that the redistribution policies of the State as well as the Tanzimat reforms did not contribute to the amelioration of the sharecropping peasantry, and quite to the contrary, both instruments were, to a great extent, critical leading to the possibilities of arbitrary demands and of furthered labour exploitation by the landlords. As these redistributive policies were the hidden explosives set under the social formation of the Empire, redistributed lands, with the reforms barely being received, were characterised by

a cooperation of the State with the landlords in the Northern Greece who in turn led to the further exposure of peasantry to arbitrary harassment.

The departure point was, as one of the clear-cut examples of this harassment of sharecropping, *corvée* labour in agriculture. Abolished in 1839 by the Rescript of *Gülhane*, forced labour definitely persisted in the Balkans during the incorporation to the capitalist world system. The initial expectation was to unveil a type of labour exploitation which had not been discussed in the literature and was similar to its counterparts in European feudalism on the eve of incorporation to the world economy. The scarcity of the archival material, however, does not suffice to present a coherent text, which presented a major setback to the study. Changing direction towards the place where this kind of exploitation took place, the *çiftlik* redistributions as well as the would-be landlords' acts, however, seemed to comply with the departure point. Since the feudal-like dues and demands, such as *corvée*, already originated from the relations of productions in *çiftlik*s, the redistribution and its subsequent effects were in accordance with the persistence of this feudal-like production method and respective land tenure relations.

The attention paid to the redistributed *çiftlik*s, accordingly, was centrally important since recent literary knowledge with respect to practices is still seemingly behind the theoretical discussions. In this sense, this study attests the process of the redistribution policy in the early years of the Tanzimat which was essential, with a view to demonstrating the three-tiered struggle between the peasantry, the landlords and the State. Underlining the common techniques employed in the redistribution process, the study also remarks on the

consequences which usually legitimised the *de facto* possession rights of the landlords, and thus their ascension whereas the peasantry was degraded with regards to bargaining in sharecropping contracts. The uneasy reciprocity between the landlords and the State was, thus, the reasons underlying the decaying status of the peasantry.

The data constructing these theoretical demonstrations were gathered from the archives. The *çiftlik* redistribution documents were included mostly in the Interior subsection in the Imperial Decrees part. Yet, it was difficult to collect the necessary data from the documents even though their content was on average short. Since the items to be included in the *çiftlik* sales were valuable, it made the data gathering and compilation further difficult. The items concerning the location of the *çiftlik*s, the necessary payments – both down payments and following installments – as well as the names of the bidders were in most cases present, but when the *çiftlik*s were sold in a wholesale manner, the names of *çiftlik*s as well as the details concerning the payments per-estates were impossible to trace.

Apart from these minor setbacks, there were more serious deficiencies. That is, the study is based on the only seventeen percent of the total *çiftlik*s to be redistributed; although rest of the *çiftlik*s redistributions would not change the whole picture, the numbers that the study encapsules remains low. Apart from this deficiency, one major setback is the relative absence of data concerning the sizes of *çiftlik*s, their production commodities, as well as the exact relations of production. That is, while capturing the location and the monetary value and the status of the prospective landlord of the *çiftlik*s, the core of the issue did not emanate from these documents. However, the other incidents, again gathered from

archives, seemed, at least, to visualise the confines of how production actually took place in the very first place. These setbacks yet it do not undermine the basic findings of the study, which hopefully can be regarded as making a contribution to the field with respect to the *çiftlik* debate. For the policy, which was equally as far as from “sale” as to “tax farm”, hitherto had been probably unknown, therefore, the actual practices, techniques of the redistribution process and their consequences appear to be the major novelty of this preliminary study.

Chapter One, accordingly, elaborates the genesis of the *çiftlik*s in order to trace its existence in the nineteenth century Balkans. Surveying the literature, the status of the agricultural producers, or the peasantry, is remarked with regards to their level of independence. The question of the independence of the peasantry is essentially important since the argument conducted throughout the study is closely related to the feudal remnants in the Ottoman Balkans which were made visible by means of the independence of the peasantry. Putting aside the independence of the small-scale producers, the rest of the chapter scrutinizes the emergence of the *çiftlik*s both in terms of theoretical and practical contexts. Aggregating the different point of views with regards to this genesis, the chapter then deconstructs the weaker points of these different theoretical stances with a view to consolidating a more accurate synthesis of the *çiftlik* concept. Having accumulated these theoretical variations, the answers to “how?”, “when?” and “where” are presented in order to draw a general picture of the *çiftlik* emergence in Ottoman Europe. Even though a sweeping generalisation cannot be made – for it also would be not very healthy – the most common occurrences were presented with a view to drawing the general premises of the land tenure relations on these

agricultural estates. The most controversial aspect of the discussion, which is trade, is discussed with a more revisionist approach compared to the earlier studies. Suspecting the very role of trade with the West, which has been attributed to the *çiftlik*s as a locomotive of the incorporation to capitalism, this section underlines how the trade opportunities were not the sole agents in terms of their significance. Finally, the Ottoman reforms and their prospective consequences upon the Balkan peasantry are demonstrated in accordance with the *çiftlik* debate. The extent of the Sublime Porte's over arching agricultural policies and reforms were criticised, thus undermining the very reckless state of the central government.

Having put forward the main elements of the thesis, Chapter Two exhibits the practical consequences of the acts of the State while the *çiftlik* lands were being distributed. It, then, presents the meanings attributed to the *çiftlik* concept in its historical context. Underlining the misleading aspects of these attributions, the chapter constructs a revised version of the *çiftlik* concept with a strong emphasis on the relations of production. In order to reconstruct the political economy of *çiftlik*s in the nineteenth century Balkans, then the "years of distribution" are presented with their illustrative details. Once the geography and the status of the new landlords of the *çiftlik*s are discussed, the rest of the chapter is devoted to explaining this experience with respect to three parties: the State, the landlords, and the peasantry. Thus, revealing the transformation that the peasantry underwent upon the "redistribution," the end of the chapter concludes with remarks on the degraded land tenure relations which were very disfavoured for peasantry, but also was actually carried out by the State.

Chapter Three, in this context, examines the particular cases of these disfavoured conditions of peasantry on these *çiftlik*s. The reciprocity between the State and the powerful landlords in Ottoman Europe, on one hand, and the reforms of the Porte which were thwarted by again the Porte, on the other hand, constitute an astounding contradiction. Having remarked on the possibility of such acts, the rest of the chapter deals with the struggle of the peasantry on the *çiftlik*s, due to the abuses to which they were exposed, against the State and these landlords. While these cases contribute to strengthening the thesis of the “uneasy reciprocity” between the two ruling strata, a case of brigand-cum-pasha of Albanian origin is presented in effect to concretise this reciprocity. Ultimately, the concluding remarks of the chapter shed light on the relations of production on these *çiftlik*s with respect to their legitimisation emanating from the State and its maintenance by the State in collaboration with the provincial elites of Ottoman Europe.

In conclusion, it appears that the common wisdom maintaining the absence of enserfment-like practices in agriculture needs serious revision. Though these kinds of options were not awakened by the imminent trade opportunities with the West, there was still feudal-like dues and labour exploitation in Ottoman European agriculture. The reforms of the Tanzimat and its consequences in Ottoman agriculture and their extent are strongly important to observe the relations of production on these estates. The stance of the Sublime Porte was significantly interesting in the sense that it may bring about a new perspective in the land tenure relations. Similarly, the redistribution of idle *çiftlik*s was a newly method of the State in terms of redistribution of wealth. Thus, the political economy of

çiftliks in Ottoman Europe signifies an extensive revision, for the earlier misconceptions or prejudices seem to be thwarted, at least in Northern Greece.

CHAPTER 1

UNVEILING THE *ÇİFTLİK*S: THE OTTOMAN BALKANS, TRADE OPPORTUNITIES AND THE *TANZİMAT* REFORMS

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the European lands of the Ottoman Empire witnessed socio-economic and political upheavals. The waves emanating from the French Revolution were embraced by the people under the Ottoman “yoke” with a view to promoting liberation while the attempts to centralise in the Sublime Porte meant the more “liberal” privileges granted to the non-Muslim people, the *reaya*, were commonly used to indicate these communities in the nineteenth century. In addition the changes taking place in the economic policies of the Empire accordingly meant a tendency for the agricultural producers to have an orientation to export production. As such, these changes were relatively incomplete in the sense that if one would like to comprehend the developments taking place in Rumelia in the nineteenth century, the premises of agriculture was one of the ultimate causes underlying the social changes that took place in the Balkans. Then the question should be dwelled on these premises. Accordingly agriculture on large estates needs – rather than the small-scale agriculture – further attention since these agricultural production centres were characterised by the employment of sharecropping labour, which might be deemed to be the predecessor of wage-labour instead of independent production being conducted by the small-landed farmers.

In this context, it would be beneficial to draw a general picture of the peasantry – that is, the primary class engaged in production – in Rumelia,

culminating in a review of the literature, correspondingly, with a view to incorporate the former into the triangle against the State and the *âyâns*, or local notables. This case would be more illustrative once the struggle for the possession of the *çiftliks* during the mid-nineteenth century in the Balkans is clear.

The Independence of the Ottoman Peasantry and the Genesis of *Çiftliks*

It is arcane to claim Ottoman peasant, without any hesitation, to have been “free” even regardless of the changing conditions in the nineteenth century. It was not similar in the so-called classical period. When the given tension between the non-Muslim peasants and the Muslim landlords (in the loose meaning of the term) is added, this freedom seems substantially at odds with the ideals of the Sublime Porte, which tended to create a manoeuvring sphere via giving the non-Muslim communities of the Empire equal status with their Muslim counterparts, as the motto of the era, which was summarized as liberty, equality, and fraternity, suggested. In short, the ever-changing conditions that the Balkan peasantry experienced were in relation to their status in the social formation in particular and accordingly with the dominant mode of production, feudalism in this particular case, in general. Hence, while stressing the general characteristics attributed to the peasantry in the Balkans with a view to comprehending the change in the nineteenth century the background will be given on the stage of feudalism in which Ottoman society was entrenched and thus, the extent of the Ottoman central power aiming to diffuse the very same society.

In this context, returning to the classical period of the Ottoman Empire, the *reaya*¹ were considerably free in the sense that the “legitimacy of the political power is based on the perpetuation of an independent peasantry who enjoy unassailable usufructuary rights over state lands,” in the conventionally described *reaya* merely was supposed to pay the customary tax to the representatives of the state, in this case the *timarli sipahis*, who was granted land by the State in return for providing cavalymen to the Imperial Army as well as maintaining order in the countryside.² The peasantry was relatively “independent” in the sense that, they were the ultimate owners of their production, that is, no prior directions were to shape their production, along with the natural boundaries of the subsistence economy, and nevertheless the *reaya* was bound to the land, thus emphasising the limits of their freedom.

In view of the conventional wisdom above, Ö. L. Barkan, who produced pioneering works on the Ottoman agriculture, land, and law with his affinity towards the *Annales* School, compared the nature of the Ottoman peasantry that of the peasant in Western Europe predominated by classical feudalism. He asserted that the Ottoman peasants were “independent,” though admitting that they were bound to the land with a view to maintaining the economy of the Empire. What deserves a particular attention concerning the question here was the existence of

¹ Throughout the study, although its extent was ostensibly beyond such a restrictive class, *reaya* is employed usually to refer to the non-Muslim cultivators of the Empire, either on *çiftlik* s or small-scale agriculture, unless otherwise indicated.

² Çağlar Keyder, “Introduction: Large Scale Commercial Agriculture in the Ottoman Empire,” in *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East*, Ç. Keyder and F. Tabak eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 1.

kulluks, rather than the Ottomanist analysis of the agricultural production. This system of *kuls*, (slave-like serfs) according to him, highly resembled the serfdom of Western Europe in the sense that the former were severely subordinated to their masters in terms of restrictions on marriage and inheritance, occupations and of providing corvée labour, with various gifts to their individual masters' quarters where the law of the Ottomans was not recognised.³ As easily suggested, the practice of *kulluks*, or the lands slave-like serfs were placed, was limited to regions close to Istanbul and tended to disappear during the mid-sixteenth centuries.

What makes the discussion above important is that the pre-existing condition of the peasantry was to remain independent, if not "free," since the Imperial Treasury depended mostly on this exploitable tax-base, beginning increasingly from the eighteenth century. On the other hand, the basic agricultural unit, *çift-hane* system, which was composed of family workers with a given plot on which they enjoyed usufructuary rights, was not that independent of abuses. Unfortunately, Barkan's idealism concerning the hardworking peasantry and the honest bureaucracy is challenged in the Balkans, beginning from the eighteenth century onwards. Though clear-cut arguments obviously lack evidence, it would not be quite incorrect to argue that the eighteenth century decentralisation of the Ottoman Empire should have marked a significant impact on the small-landed peasantry in the Balkans. In this context, Barkan's attempt to incorporate the

³ For probably the first work concerning the corvée labour in the Ottoman context, see Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Türkiye'de Servaj Var mıydı?" *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi* (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1980), pp. 717-724.

local agricultural structures prior to the Ottoman conquest to the çift-hane system is indicative of tracing the “remnants of feudalism” in the Balkans. Based on the sixteenth century regulations (*kanunnames*), not particularly confined to the Balkans, Barkan suggested that the Ottoman government complied with the pre-existing practices of the agricultural production in the lands conquered and furthermore, and that this compliance was materialised in the regulations mentioned above with a view to maintain the tax base.⁴

In the light of such evidence, it is defensible to argue that the peasants were not that “independent,” especially in the Balkans, since the continuation of the old habits might have created a considerable burden on them. Having regarded the fate of the small-scale peasantry existing on the plains of the Balkans, the very same independence was undermined severely which, unfortunately for a couple of centuries, was not restored. The pre-existing practices, thus, becoming the common relations of the production of the region, would be identified with the feudal-remnants even in the forthcoming centuries. Still, one must be cautious about the generalisation of this case to the entire Ottoman Balkans and similarly the evidence is lacking concerning the period after the integration of the region to the mainstream Ottoman agricultural practices. All in all, it is possible to suspect

⁴ For the early modern Ottoman Empire, Barkan peculiarly claims that in the aftermath of the conquest of the Balkan lands, the Ottoman government tolerated the pre-Ottoman practices in agriculture with a view to maintaining the tax base. Gradually and only when met with discontent, he further argues, that these lands were subjected to mainstream Ottoman practices. He further asserts that the Ottomans adopted these *bidats* – corvée labour, gifts, etc. – though they were against the principles of the former. This argument – valid by the *kanunnames* he presented, but is an enigma in practice – strengthens the fact there is the probability of “feudal remnants” even in the nineteenth century. Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Çiftçi Sınıfların Hukuki Statüsü”, *Türkiye’de Toprak Meselesi* (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1980), pp. 725-788, especially p. 735.

these innocent “feudal remnants” survived through the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries when there was a great possibility of revival during “the age of the *âyâns*”.

Keeping in mind the fact that the “Ottoman *timar* [was] an indivisible and unalterable unit,” McGowan, who has attempted to save the Ottoman realm from the negligence of Braudel, who considers the former similar to the Western Europe agricultural structures, underlines the need for and importance of the *reaya* when he suggests that “only by stabilising the labour available on each *timar* could its registered character be maintained.”⁵ The dilemma between the perfect independence of the *reaya* and the concerns of the State in this “regulated universe,” is further underlined by McGowan, who is worth quoting in full:

Like the colonus of post-Diocletian Rome, the person of *reaya* status was legally free though saddled with a stigma of inferiority which was expressed in concrete ways, above all by the obligation to remain in the village where he was registered, or if he moved in order to gain some advantage, to pay for the privilege of doing so. Other disabilities characteristic of *reaya* status have received full attention elsewhere – the peasant’s inability to change his class status, his liability to taxes characteristic of his class and his being subject to *corvée* service for the state.⁶

Having drawn a comprehensive portrait of the *reaya* class, it has been maintained that the *reaya* was relatively free or independent when compared to the

⁵ Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe: Taxation, Trade, and the Struggle for Land, 1600-1800* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press), p. 52.

⁶ McGowan further establishes a relationship of man and land based on the law excerpts, with a view to draw an accurate degree of binding and tenure. Having grouped the excerpts, there are four categories: (1) the *reaya*’s ability to leave the land, (2) his ability to alienate his rights to land, (3) his right to remain on the land, (4) his right to pass on his tenure to his heirs. For a detailed discussion on these grouped excerpts, see McGowan, *Economic Life*, pp. 52-55.

contemporary peasant masses in Continental Europe, though the fundamentals of the two were overwhelmingly diversified, which thus has made any comparison difficult. However, here a detailed discussion with a premise on the modes of production will not be conducted, but rather will be presented with a view to grasping the debates of the period along with a glimpse on agricultural units. The first of these instances comes along with the Bulgarian “revival,” which promotes the ultimate cause against the feudal “Ottoman yoke.”⁷ In a peculiar way, it is complicated to argue that feudalism prevailed *de facto* in the Ottoman lands with respect to its European counterparts even though Ottoman decentralisation in the eighteenth century was a remarkable process that might be identified with, at least, the remnants of feudalism. Nevertheless, Moutafchieva, who valiantly challenges the “classical” Western European feudalism in favour of Eastern feudalisms, places the Ottoman system in the category of Eastern feudalism, characterised by a strong centralised power.⁸ Not entirely shaped along the Eastern Feudalism, she further acutely distinguishes the importance of local tradition, which was reflected upon the Ottoman feudal institutions.

Nevertheless, the characteristics of these feudal institutions and their respective organisation bear a significant magnitude in effect to understand the

⁷ The debate on *çiftliks* in particular and on agriculture in general was centred around the modes of production, prior to Wallerstein arguing the “second serfdom” with a considerable emphasis on trade. As such, the former category consists one of the Bulgarian historians, Todorov, who preferred to employ the term feudalism but stated “it is obvious that in the case of the Ottoman Empire we cannot speak of the classical type of serfage that existed both in Western and Eastern Europe”. For a more comprehensive discussion, see Nikolai Todorov, “Social Structures in the Balkans during the 18th and 19th Centuries,” in N. Todorov, *Society, the City and Industry in the Balkans, 15th-19th Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

⁸ Vera Moutafchieva, *Agrarian Relations in the Ottoman Empire in the 15th and 16th Centuries* (Boulder CO: East European Monographs, 1988), pp. vi-viii.

subsequent transformation of these land tenure relations and thus its consequences upon the peasantry. In this context, the classical land tenure characteristically being composed of the basic agricultural unit, which is *çift-hane* system, and its subsequent transition in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which ended with the *çiftlik*s being idealised as “large estates” resembling those founded in the Eastern Europe involved in export-oriented production. First and foremost, it should be stated clearly that, as recent research suggests in line with the arguments made here, the *çiftlik* formation – though significant to a certain extent in certain regions of the Balkans – was not a defining characteristic of Ottoman agriculture in the period under question, which was still shaped predominantly by small family farm units. The areas where *çiftlik*s existence was significant were presumably in the plain fields and necessarily near transportation routes.

Having formulated this admonition, it is beneficial to illustrate the basic premises of the land regime preceding the *çiftlik* formation. In this sense, the *çift* or *çiftlik* was primarily not a standardised piece of land; instead, it varied depending on the fertility of region. Furthermore, İnalçık, who somewhat exalts the importance and thus significance of the nineteenth century *çiftlik*s, gives a strict definition of the *çift* system which “consisted of an organisation of agricultural production on the basis of peasant households, *hanes*, each of which was given a *çift* or *çiftlik*, a plot of land of sufficient size to sustain one peasant household and pay the ‘rent’ to the landholder (the State).”⁹

⁹ Halil İnalçık, “The Emergence of Big Farms, *Çiftlik*s: State, Landlords, and Tenants,” in *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East*, Ç. Keyder and F. Tabak eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 18.

More importantly, this basic agricultural unit prevailed upon the *miri*, or state-owned lands, while the *çift* was supervised by the *timar* system of which it was an integral part. Thus, the dichotomy of military/non-military social formation¹⁰ was established in such a way that the former extracted the agricultural surplus on the behalf of the State, which was the ultimate owner of the land, via the Sultanate, while the latter benefited from security services as well as the relatively unrestrained usufructuary rights on land. In this regulated universe, the State ensured not only its revenues, but a regular cavalry army thanks to the exploitation of the agricultural producers – as the name attributed to them is seemingly meaningful, *reaya*, or *horde* – whose efforts to overcome this inferior status failed throughout its existence in the Empire.

The feudalistic tendencies, however, were not that unlikely as the sixteenth century drew to a close. To use Moutafchieva's distinction based on the forms of feudal land ownership very similar to the dichotomy described above, that is official and unofficial, aids in to signifying the feudal inclination to try to "steal" the land and its control from the state. Even though Moutafchieva's observations are concerned with Asia Minor and Central Asia, it is considerably applicable to the case in the Balkans. This later era is called "the age of the *âyâns*" by the prominent authors:

... conditional feudal landownership is usually strengthened by the arrival of the new, seminomadic [*sic*] masses, and that it inevitably accompanies the

¹⁰ This dichotomy, which indeed was a fundamental state concept, experienced severe ruptures in the eighteenth century. The rise of the local notables will be discussed in the forthcoming section. For this dichotomy, see Bruce McGowan, "The Age of the Ayans, 1699-1812," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2 H. İnalcık and D. Quataert eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 660-1.

establishment of the power of new conquerors while, at the same time, the relative share of unconditional landownership is considerably reduced. With the further development of feudalism in the same societies, unofficial land ownership (which expands at the expense of official – usually military – land ownership, and aims to make it subordinate) becomes ever more significant.¹¹

Thus, as far as the genesis of the *çiftlik*s is concerned, this expansion at the expense of the official was the key factor underlying this agricultural change. In other words, the rising local notables in the countryside attempted to alter the *timar* system with their own retainers while increasing their share of the agricultural surplus, which in the end meant an increasing burden upon the *reaya*. Accordingly, in line with Moutafchieva's generalisation, control over the state lands was loosened, leading to ever-increasing entitlements as *mülk*, or outright property, as peasants still worked on those lands, but usually paid double rents, first to the would-be landowners and second to the State.

Leaving the peasants aside for a moment, the emergence of *çiftlik* attains a greater significance since its emergence and existence resulted in degrading conditions for peasants especially in the Balkans throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This necessitates a more meticulous elaboration to grasp the agricultural background of the nineteenth century Balkans.

Conventionally, the genesis of the *çiftlik*s has been attributed to diversifying but at the same time coherent factors, which – in the final analysis – add up to an inclusive picture of this genesis. One of the prominent authors dealing with the so-called *çiftlik* debate has condensed – in its historical context – the three distinct

¹¹ Conditional and unconditional feudal land ownership means official and unofficial respectively. Moutafchieva, *Agrarian Relations*, p. vii.

arguments in an inclusive manner: the Marxist theory; another one including a revised version of Marxism one with a shift on trade opportunities, which was later to be boosted by Wallerstein; and the Ottomanist theory. Seemingly, Marxist theory stipulates this phenomenon as a the passage from feudalism to capitalism while the second attributes it to rising demand in central and western Europe for basic agricultural commodities, while the last maintains that the corruption of the classical Ottoman institutions was related to the *timar* system.¹²

Notwithstanding the fact that these factors seem to be promising in terms of shedding light on the genesis of these large estates, consequent criticism has not been absent. That is, to start with the Marxist theory, the exploitation of peasantry by the Ottoman landlords – situated in both class and religious antagonisms – is severely exaggerated, to the extent that peasant exploitation was unbearable and respectively this led the “progressive” elements concerning the use of labour force and respective methods of cultivation. With respect to the Bulgarian case in particular, there have been misjudgements about the existence of *çiftlik*s in relation to the two factors just mentioned above. With the course of time, the actual significance of *çiftlik*s has been revealed and their lack of change in their methods of production – that is, a more vital inclination to commercial agriculture, thus changing the relations of production – stood awkwardly in the

¹² Veinstein’s novelty seems to be his attempt to intertwine the latter, that is, the Ottomanist theory, with the former two when he reasoned that “since it was first expressed by Ottoman chroniclers and political thinkers themselves and exerted a great influence on Ottomanist historians until the present day.” Gilles Veinstein, “On the *Çiftlik* Debate,” in *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East Ç*. Keyder and F. Tabak eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 35-7.

end. Still confined to the Bulgarian case, which is relevant to figuring out the Balkans in general, the theoretical formation of *çiftliks* can be drafted as such:

The grounds for treating the *chiftlik* as at least partially capitalist are the commodity character of the production (for the market) and the partial employment of wage labour; conversely, they are characterised as ‘semi-feudal’ by the partial use of *corvée* and sharecropping, and most generally by the fact that they presumably emerged from the disintegration of the *sipahi* ‘feudal’ fief.¹³

As seen already, early Bulgarian historians were more likely to be concerned with the inclination to present this phenomenon in clear-cut stages, though admittedly Bulgarian historians such as, Gandev and Dimitrov, tended to ameliorate the former by stressing the former’s limited scope.

Subsequently the latter instrument devised in understanding the genesis of *çiftliks*, in line with the Marxist tradition, was the “shift in accent” inclining to trade opportunities. Despite the recent discussions emphasising the relative insignificance of trade with Europe in the Ottoman realm, McGowan defies the views that Ottoman exports were “marginal” or “peripheral” and yet argues approvingly the view in question here as such: “Ottoman exports, though they amounted only to a small friction of total world trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *made an important contribution to European economic evolution and to the evolution of land-use patterns in Europe.*”¹⁴ This evolution,

¹³ Thus *çiftlik* had been a puzzling structure for the Bulgarian Marxist historians, which were then shaped according to the needs of the Bulgarian state. For particular and distinctive elaborations of the Old Bulgarian historians, see Roumen Daskalov, *The Making of a Nation in the Balkans Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), pp. 57-79, especially pp 66-73.

¹⁴ McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 7. Emphasis added.

apparently, was not restricted to Europe for çiftliks seemed to be spreading across the Balkans, similar to those emerging especially in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, this argument maintained by McGowan actually owes much to Wallerstein's ideas which materialised in his grand theory. In *The Modern World System*, he devoted particular emphasis to the Ottoman Empire with its distinct agricultural characteristics.¹⁵ What the original emphasis on trade proposed was that the increasing demand witnessed in Western Europe oriented towards basic commodities was to result in a shift in the forms of land tenure and of labour which in turn would favour more extensive and market-oriented production.¹⁶ Contrary to these ideas, there were sound misconceptions by some scholars bringing about their respective criticism concerning the volume of trade between the core and peripheral zones of the world. The terminology that world-system approach introduced will be preferred throughout this study since it is believed that the continuum of corvée labour in the Balkans in particular – in line with “the second era of great expansion” of capitalism throughout the world in general – indeed can be attributed to the emerging trade prospects that took place in the Ottoman Balkans which, at the time, became semi-peripheral, if not peripheral at all. The decreasing terms of trade stemming from agricultural production were to relegate the Empire to a peripheral status on the general level while the relations

¹⁵ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System III: The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730-1840s* (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1989). Wallerstein's fundamental theses will be elaborated in the following sections.

¹⁶ Originally, this argument precedes the theses of Wallerstein and goes back to Busch-Zantner, Stoianovich and Braudel. Still, it is unquestionably remarked by Wallerstein who accurately placed this phenomenon in a world-wide context, albeit with its misjudgements. Veinstein, “On the *Çiftlik* Debate”, p. 36.

of production appeared to become more exploitative on the particular level of production.

The Marxist and the subsequent world-system approaches were followed by the Ottomanist approach, which has had a significant number of proponents in the çiftlik debate. Suitably, as Veinstein precisely describes, “the emergence of the çiftlik is the product of the corruption of the classical Ottoman institutions related to the *timar* system.” Furthermore, he lucratively underlined those scholars who combined the Marxist approach with the “Ottomanist theory,” which shifted the emphasis away from socio-economic conditions to excessively internal factors.¹⁷ Nevertheless, it is arguable that the whole corruption in the Ottoman institutions suffices to explain the alterations in the Ottoman land tenure practices and yet it is proper to keep in mind its side effects, which would contribute to the construction of a comprehensive picture of landholding patterns in general and of çiftlik formation in particular.

Having discussed the varying theoretical explanations underlying the genesis of the çiftliks, it should be immediately remarked that there was no sole or exclusive process that ultimately ended up in these large estates. On the contrary, there were distinctive, multiple processes paving the way for the emergence of these so-called big farms which predominantly depended on the transportation routes by means of which either the local or the foreign market created a significant demand for production. In this sense, not only did the landholding

¹⁷ The Ottomanist theory presumably is traced back to Ottoman chroniclers and writers of the period as well. Yet, İnalçık and Ö. L. Barkan is the contemporary representatives of this theory followed by Moutafchieva at the very first place. Veinstein, “On the *Çiftlik* Debate”, p. 37; also see the classical Ottoman land regime by Moutafchieva, *Agrarian Relations*.

patterns change in those çiftliks, but their very name experienced a break with the past, as Gerber maintains,

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the term signified the amount of land a pair of oxen could plow in a plowing season (which probably lasted for one month). [...] However, as early as the sixteenth century the term çiftlik began to change in meaning, and by the seventeenth century it definitely was used to designate an estate – that is, a large house adjacent to arable land of varying size which could consist of less or much than one çift.¹⁸

Hence, the question arises: How did these çiftliks emerge in the very first place?

To answer this central question, however, necessitates the additional questions “where?” and “when?” As mentioned above, the genesis did not occur in a singular way and, more importantly, not simultaneously; but it does not mean that the various cases ending up with these agricultural estates prevents the sketching of the general characteristics concerning this genesis.

Conventional wisdom asserts that there was a two-folded way of emerging çiftliks both in terms of timing and of organisation. To commence with the former, those large-estates with market-orientations went back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries according to Gerber’s remarks, albeit relatively less significant compared to the nineteenth century; yet the latter century witnessed two distinct groups of çiftlik formations. The first, before circa 1830, included estates that somehow evaded the recentralisation of Ottoman power, which will be the central period of the study here. Moreover, Quataert gives details of this distinction: “in the absence of effective countervailing pressure from Istanbul,

¹⁸ Haim Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), pp. 36-40.

market demand had encouraged large farms on the water routes to Europe,” which were predominantly common in the Balkan areas. Respectively, the second group that Quataert depicts, which was formed in the later nineteenth century and is beyond the scope of this study, “at the apex of the central power,” primarily in the northern Arab regions and in adjacent areas of south-eastern Anatolia.¹⁹

Obviously, the firstly grouped çiftliks came into existence beginning from the eighteenth century, if not even earlier, in the Balkans, under the aegis of the âyâns who in turn resorted to profiting from the trade opportunities with the West by instigating harsher conditions for the cultivators without changing the fundamental method of production.

In this context, çiftliks were either created top-down or bottom-up, to follow Veinstein’s remarks concerning their formation. In other words, the top-down approach meant basically the transformation of the former pre-bendal or timar unit, not necessarily one unit as well, to a çiftlik emanating from the lack of central power. Secondly, the bottom-up method was employed by non-timar holder by various ways, to be discussed briefly below.²⁰

In order to understand the top-down transformation, the basic tenets of the Ottoman land regime and its subsequent evolution should be made clear. This

¹⁹ Donald Quataert, “The Age of the Reforms, 1812-1914,” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* vol. 2, H. İnalcık and D. Quataert eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 873-4.

²⁰ Veinstein also remarked İnalcık’s third possible source of çiftlik formation, that is, grant of the large, waste, or abandoned lands (*mevat*) to prominent members of the ruling class in return for necessary improvements in infrastructure (i.e. irrigation works) with a view to realise land reclamation (*ihya* or *şenlendirme*). These lands did not belong to state lands and more likely resembled to freehold property. Nevertheless, these lands remained to be marginal. For details, see İnalcık, “The Emergence of Big Farms”; Veinstein, “On the Çiftlik Debate”, p. 38.

evolution, or corruption to be noted by the Ottomanist scholars, was ultimately the çiftlik-building process owing much to the government's attempt to rechannel the revenues on agricultural surplus via tax-farming. *İltizam*, or tax farming, to be employed more common for agricultural lands, was thus one of the fundamental factors harassing the land regime accompanied by the trade opportunities glowingly presented by Western Europe.²¹ In this sense, McGowan has made a distinction, which in turn only necessitates drawing its general remarks in effect to underline the change in the land regime, and the çiftlik formation respectively: Usurpation, dispossession of the cultivator and çiftlik formation.²²

However, before dealing with these distinct processes depicting the genesis of çiftliks, some generalisations about the çiftliks should be made since the former bears a substantial degree of suspicion where to trace the abuses of the tenants due to offensive acts of the landlords. That is, since the emphasis is oriented towards the opportunities generated by trade, it is predominantly regions close to the trade routes where these large estates emerged in the beginning. To follow Stoianovich, who was one of the scholars dealing with the çiftliks in his pioneering work, asserted as such:

The *çiftlik* village spread by the end of the eighteenth century through much of Thessaly, Epirus, Macedonia,

²¹ The transformation from former *timar* system to tax farming is clearly beyond the scope of this study and discussed only within the context of *çiftlik* formation. For a general description of the preceding centuries, see Suraiya Faroqhi, "Crisis and Change," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* vol. 2, H. İnalcık and D. Quataert eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 413-636; Moutafchieva, *Agrarian Relations*.

²² McGowan, *Economic Life*, pp. 60-73. I will only elaborate the broad explanations of these three instruments with a view to contemplating the formations underlying the emergence of the çiftlik.

Thrace, the Marica Valley, Danubian Bulgaria, the Kosovo-Metahija basins, the coastal plains of Albania and parts of Bosnia. The institution of *çiftlik*, as an enterprise of colonisation, hence expands, along the arteries of communication: the coastal plains and inferior basins (...) ²³

Having presented conventional generalisations about the çiftliks, in effect to understand its genesis, a comprehensive picture of the Ottoman land regime in transformation dating back to sixteenth century is needed. That is, it is defensible to argue that this process was initiated by “usurpation,” which highlighted the Ottoman subjects as well as the members of the ruling class with their inclination to realising their personal wealth and subsequently material security, then, to be materialised by “land.” Yet, McGowan, giving various examples of usurpation in both Rumelia and Anatolia, emphasises that not all these cases were relevant to incentives created by the convenient commodity market, adding that “the prevailing level of rents was quite enough to justify the struggle.” It is, hence, accurate that all lands evading the state control was not necessarily used for trade, if it is recalled that some abuses of tax-farming had actually nothing to do with trade. On the other hand, usurpation mostly took place due to peasant flight as

²³ “Enterprise of colonisation” is seemingly not valid today, since it is admittedly argued that these estates lacked the change in the method of production and furthermore remained little significant, if not marginal. Traian Stoianovich, “Land Tenure and Related Sectors of the Balkan Economy,” *Journal of Economic History* 13, no. 4 (Autumn 1953), p. 402-3. Also, McGowan, remarking the rough locations of this genesis, yet depicts this market-oriented agriculture as a two tier development, south and north of south-eastern Europe. McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 78.

well as tax-farm contracts which ultimately ended up with conversion and displacement.²⁴

Conversion seemed to be a more legal manoeuvre to escape land from the *timar* system and was eventually validated, or at least not contested seriously, through property grant (*temlik*) or as a pious endowment (*vakıf*). In this sense, it was more likely to be amalgamated with the top-down approach of estate formation. Displacement, on the other hand, depicting more complex possibilities, simply is attributable to the bottom-up approach, which can be the attainment of tax-farming lands, repressing the weaker sipahis, or in other scenarios such as default of heirs, increased entry fines (*resm-i tapu*), encroachment upon the village commons, falsification of records, debt coercion, and coercion by force.²⁵ This phenomenon was intertwined with absentee landlordism, which prevailed predominantly throughout the nineteenth century Balkans and, in the end, would mean that the peasants were stripped of their lands they had been cultivating, but remained there subject to double authority, that of the State and the local notables.

Once displaced, the peasantry experienced either physical or titular dispossession,

The decision to take over the 'deed' (*tapu*) of the cultivator, in order to dispossess him of his customary rights under the prebendal system, is one thing. It is quite another matter physically to dispossess the peasant, drive him off the land and replace him with a

²⁴This whole argument based on usurpations is extracted from McGowan, for descriptive schemes showing the transformation; see *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁵ Apparently, given the *çiftlik* formations in Northern Greece in general and Thessaly in particular, the two methods still seemed valid in the nineteenth century. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

share cropper or a wage labourer. It is the latter type of dispossession which is associated with the *chiftlik* formation process.²⁶

The various motives which encouraged either physical or titular dispossession are beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, McGowan argues that physical dispossession was in accordance with voluntary abandonment due to intolerable conditions as well as the insecurity raging through the region, especially on the plains.²⁷ The activities of bandits as well as irregular troops, usually of Albanian origin made it almost impossible to survive on the plains without substantial harassment. Yet, this kind of dispossession seems to have invited harsher conditions as well since the peasantry, being deprived of their rights to the lands, had no resolution concerning the insecurity emanating from the outlaws. Furthermore, peasants, who were dispossessed of titles, were desperately in need of security, which then meant another advantageous hand for the provincial elites who were at the same time the landowners. Therefore, McGowan's emphasis on the latter dispossession, that is, physical, which, he argues, was the fundamental process in terms of estate formation, seems quite trivial. It is, yet, proper to argue that peasants suffered harsher conditions since they were brought out of nowhere and then employed with unfavourable terms. It is argued here that the feudal-like dues and arbitrary acts of the landlords seemed

²⁶ Ibid., p. 64.

²⁷ The preliminary conditions leading to proto-industrialisation were thus assured in this case, for the peasantry, settling in mountainous regions, survived with respect to independent agriculture while being involved in the initial steps of domestic industries. For the case, presented in accordance with the proto-industrialisation, of Greece, see Socrates Petmezas, "Patterns of Protoindustrialization in the Ottoman Empire. The Case of Eastern Thessaly, ca. 1750-1860," *Journal of European Economic History* 19, no. 3 (1991), pp. 575-604.

to prevail on çiftliks which were formed as a result of the titular dispossession as well as the physical one, since the latter seemed to function like a proper organisation in terms of relations of production.

Correspondingly, McGowan admits the deteriorating conditions of the peasantry attributed to titular dispossession, which persisted with a debt cycle and ultimately ended up with peonage, but his inclination to treat “physical” more significant than “titular” might make sense in terms of çiftlik formation. Nonetheless feudal-like dues seem to have prevailed in lands dispossessed via titular means since the dispossessed peasants who remained in their places were then subject to two local authorities, while the resettled peasants – even their legal and social conditions *vis-à-vis* those still in place seem to have been degraded – were outside the customary tax system and at least appeared to have bargained with sharecropping contracts, but outside the control of the Empire. The difference and its puzzling aftermath are noted best by McGowan himself:

It can be easily seen that the fiscal position of peasants who lost their titular status as *chiftlik* holders but remained on their land was not the same as that of peasants who resettled under agreements so exploitative that even the actual landholder recognised that they could pay nothing in taxes beyond what they paid over to him. The cultivator remained on his land was still part of an *avarizhane* (‘tax house’) and responsible for paying the head tax to the state. *The physically dispossessed person was presumably often lost to the fisc after his resettlement, in a pattern which is an echo of late Byzantine times.*²⁸

²⁸ Ultimately, it is hardly defensible to choose one over the other, but McGowan’s remarks seemed to invite the legal position of *reaya* and their immediate exploitation by the dominant classes. To observe these different situations, see his scheme, *Ibid.*, pp. 67-8. Emphasis added.

Having elaborated the related processes involved in the transformation of the land regime, usurpation and dispossession respectively, the final process was çiftlik formation. Ostensibly, what çiftlik refers to does not constitute a monolithic institution, but rather, in all probability, two distinguished formations in line with the type of the dispossession of peasantry. Thus physically dispossessed peasants met with new arrangements relegating them to dependent positions while losing their customary right to land since the estate owners tended to keep these lands outside the State control.²⁹ On the other hand, other estate owners, without settling newcomers, acted in line with the *timar* system with a considerable decrease in their responsibilities, in turn, constituting the fundamental threats to the existence of the State which was constructed upon the perpetuity of the agricultural production.

Once the timar system became obsolete and the State resorted to tax-farming, there was a respective change in the status of the landholding, accompanied by the çiftlik formation.³⁰ That is, excluding the çiftliks formed on abandoned or physically dispossessed lands which actually remained marginal, “two rising groups stand in dramatic profile: the tax gatherers, and the local committees (âyâns), at first as separate groups with distinct functions, but, with

²⁹ Veinstein draws attention to factors leading to flight or migration of peasants which was eventually central to estates via physical dispossession. Veinstein, “On the *Çiftlik* Debate”, p. 42.

³⁰ For reasons underlying the obsoloteness of *timar* system and subsequent tendency to tax farming, see Huri İslamoğlu and Çağlar Keyder, “Agenda for Ottoman History,” in *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy* H. İslamoğlu, Ç. Keyder eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 53-60.

the passage of time as a single merged class with roots both in the country and in Istanbul”.³¹ Tax farmers who acquired these posts or statuses thanks to their close relations with the ruling class in Istanbul or to personal wealth usually began to live in the cities, leaving their tax-farms to local people of the particular tax-farm, acting relatively independent and, thus arbitrary against the peasantry, and in the forthcoming decades challenged the Ottoman state in an era called “the age of the âyâns.” These emerging local notables with their attitude towards the peasantry and their attempts to profit from the posts they had just attained will be discussed in detail in the forthcoming chapters.³²

Under the premises of common tenets of çiftlik formation drawn above, it can be argued; first and foremost, there was no singular method in paving the way for these large estates, but rather the whole process remained fragmentary both in time and space. Yet, this does not prevent illustration of some comprehensive conclusions about the çiftliks. That is, these large estates, especially those that emerged on abandoned lands, remained marginal and furthermore, this process was attributed to both emerging trade incentives, and to the internal factors of the local power groups while the former was not necessarily the ultimate incentive. Accordingly these local groups, be they former timar holders or tax-farmers, brought about degrading conditions for the peasantry which took place in such a

³¹ McGowan, “The Age of the Ayans,” p. 661.

³² For a brief discussion on the Balkan elites of the eighteenth century which would pass on its essential characteristics into the next century with a more solid background, see McGowan, “The Age of the Ayans,” p. 658-70. Accordingly, the case of Albanian brigands ending up with official posts with *de facto* independent lands in the Ottoman Balkans in the eighteenth and nineteenth century represents further incidents of the concepts attributed to these provincial elites in the Balkans.

way that, instead of reorganisation of labour, the agricultural surplus produced was appropriated in terms favouring more of the âyâns and dependency turned out to be the common aspect of the peasantry on both çiftliks under question here.

In effect to materialise the discussion conducted above, McGowan's categorisation about the creation of çiftliks – albeit considering the Manastir case in particular – it is justifiable to present it as a general process

1. by expansion of the *sipahi*'s prebendal *chiftlik*, mill, apiary, etc;
2. by the seizure of the holdings of individual villagers or, more frequently, of the pastures, woods, and other lands customarily used by villagers in common;
3. by occupying land abandoned owing to overtaxation and debt;
4. by receiving land from villagers in return for protection from tax collectors and bandits, or in return for relief from deliberate terror and harassment;
5. by foreclosing on lands given in pawn by villagers seeking loans;
6. by purchase, or by transactions tantamount to purchase.³³

Therefore, since the discussion dwelling on the relations of production in the context of the çiftlik debate, this section answered the “when,” “where” and “how” questions involved in the emergence of these large estates. While doing this, the controversies or the points necessitating revisions were situated in effect to be dealt with in the forthcoming chapters. Similarly, emphasis was confined to the Ottoman Europe or the Balkans, but the next section will reveal that this process of formation, albeit with its distinctive characteristics, was not unique in the eighteenth and nineteenth world system. That is, even though there were

³³ For concise elaborations on these ways and means, see McGowan, *Economic Life*, pp. 136-141.

internal factors explaining the genesis of çiftliks in the Ottoman context in line with the list above, there was another factor that seemed to play a more essential role in shaping the çiftlik formation in general, and the persistence of semi-feudal production methods in particular.

Çiftliks and Trade on the Eve of the Incorporation

The nineteenth century was, without doubt, the era of incorporation to the capitalist world-economy for those regions which previously had been on the edge or outside this system.³⁴ Principally, the Ottoman Empire, remaining outside the capitalist world economy, would be incorporated to the world system in which its role would be predominantly passive.³⁵ This era of expansion is also crucial to conceptualise the “çiftlik” phenomenon in a world-wide socio-economic context. There have been, indeed, attempts to relate this phenomenon to the “plantations” which were emerging predominantly in the peripheries incorporated to the world economy. It is in this context that Wallerstein seems to conceptualise that the semi-peripheralisation of the Ottoman Empire, that is, çiftliks were a part of the newly emergent “economic enterprises.” Appropriately, before dealing with the different characteristics coherent in çiftliks and plantations, it is more constructive

³⁴ For the boundaries of capitalist system emerging in the sixteenth century, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System I, Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), especially p. 300.

³⁵ For Ottoman trade of the previous century, see “Trade” section in, McGowan, “The Age of the Ayans”, pp. 724-42.

to illustrate the common phenomenon taking place during this process of “incorporation.” It immediately necessitates quoting Wallerstein in full to recognise the universality of the “second era of capitalist expansion”:

Somewhere around 1750, all this [the “country” trade] began to evolve rapidly and the Indian subcontinent, the Ottoman Empire (or at least Rumelia, Anatolia, Syria and Egypt), Russia (or at least the European part), and West Africa (or at least its more coastal areas) were incorporated into the ongoing set of linked productive processes (the so-called division of labour) of the capitalist world economy. This process of incorporation was completed by 1850 (perhaps somewhat later in West Africa). *In terms of the production processes, there were three main changes, which we shall discuss successively: a new pattern of “exports” and “imports”; the creation of larger economic “enterprises” (or economic decision making entities in the four zones); and a significant increase in the coercion of the labour force.*³⁶

Presumably, the three processes that Wallerstein highlights seem to be the central themes underlying the çiftlik existence in the Balkans. Nonetheless, these three distinct processes seemed not to be taking place in the Ottoman context exactly. To start with the first one, it is disputable that a greater change took place in terms of export-import patterns in the Ottoman Europe. That is, even though basic agricultural commodities and animal products seemed to be the predominant ingredients of exports, it does not suffice to construct “a new pattern of exports and imports”. Correspondingly, Quataert has justified this fact asserting that “in

³⁶ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System III: The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730-1840s* (San Diego CA: Academic Press, 1989), p. 137. Emphasis added. There are voluminous criticisms concerning the role Wallerstein attributes to the role of the volume of the international trade between the core and the periphery. One of the most leading criticisms concerning the Ottoman Empire was that the volume of the intra-Empire trade was higher than that of the international level. Still, his conceptualisation of the nineteenth century in terms of the expansion of the world economy system is highly relevant to this study.

exports, agricultural products usually were more than the 90 percent of the total. A single commodity formed the bulk of exports from a few areas,” while these regions were doubtlessly close to trade routes – especially water routes – including some particular Balkan regions, but “reflecting patterns in Ottoman agriculture, no single item dominated exports.”³⁷ In short, there was no tendency concerning “monoculture” in Rumelia, as in the sugar plantations of the West Indies.³⁸ Furthermore, as Ottoman agricultural exports increased in quantity, they were accompanied by diversification as well.

In line with the first process, there was not a drastic change in terms of production patterns. That is, what is called *çiftlik* was not an enterprise that witnessed a considerable re-orientation to export production or a change in its production pattern. For the case in Eastern Europe, which was involved in transformation from *grundherrschaft* to *gutsherrschaft* or, from rent-collecting feudal ownership without management to large properties managed as commercial estates, the argument may hold for reality, but in the Ottoman realm it appears that the *çiftlik* did not undergo a radical change with respect to the relations of production. Rather, it was such an enterprise that, in various ways, “local

³⁷ D. Quataert, “The Age of Reforms,” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* vol 2, H. İnalcık and D. Quataert eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 833, 850.

³⁸ McGowan – in the context of the Macedonian *çiftliks* – argued that “the latter day *çiftlik* dealt with here was devoted to a single crop –a monoculture – which would be marketed to obtain a profit, not for the cultivator, but for another individual...” It is however supposed to be confined to Macedonia in general and Manastir in particular. McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 121-2.

notables, merchants or tax collectors endeavoured to benefit from changing conditions by attempting to capture a greater share of the peasants' surplus."³⁹

When it comes to the increase in the coercion of labour force as well as the arbitrary demands emanating from contracts handed to peasantry, it fittingly seems to be the central theme underlying the Rumelian incorporation to the world-system, at least in terms of agriculture. It is thus only comprehensible in terms of production changes that contribute to the elaboration of the persistence of feudal-like dues such as *angarya*, or corvée labour, in the Balkan agricultural lands. That is, as local notables became accustomed to the trade opportunities surrounding themselves, they resorted to harsher arrangements with the peasantry without changing the fundamental structure of the agricultural units. Since the majority was shaped by small-scale family units, the *âyâns* were somehow in need of such a coercive measure to meet their ends. Furthermore, Wallerstein, referring to agricultural workers employed in cash-crop production, particularly but not only within plantation-like structures, adds two distinctive conceptual elements in this coercion: "the ways in which the worker was made to work harder (more efficiently?), and longer (per hour, per year, per lifetime); and the formal rights of juridical status of the worker, and, therefore, the range of his options in relation to his work".⁴⁰ However, this conceptualisation, as admitted by Wallerstein as well, has been thwarted somehow in the Ottoman literature due to the result of

³⁹ Keyder, "Introduction," pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰ Wallerstein, *The Modern World System III*, p. 157.

scholarly neglect.⁴¹ Henceforth, the increase in this coerced labour supposedly necessitates further research, which is the ultimate end of this study, with a view to entertaining the notion of angarya and the respective labour abuses in a more comprehensive picture befitting the second era of the great expansion of capitalism and their consequences upon çiftliks.

From a comparative perspective, Wallachia and Moldavia present an explanatory paradigm. That is, the corvée labour in agriculture existed there as well, and since they were relatively distant from the Ottoman practices due to their semi-autonomous status, this practice continued in an increasing manner which indisputably meant deteriorating conditions for the cultivators. Even though Romania's incorporation to the world-system somewhat exhibited a more likely "second serfdom" approach, still, the similarities remain valuable. Accordingly, once Rumania liberated itself from the Ottoman Empire, the leading aristocratic class of the emergent state made "corvée labour" append in agricultural relations, which clearly meant the legitimisation of the practice.⁴² Yet, what is more fascinating is that the customary practice of corvée labour in these lands underwent a drastic change in the nineteenth century which can be inferred through McGowan's words:

Until well into the nineteenth century, Wallachian landholders had only limited use for the days of labour which were their right. Moldavian landholders were

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 166.

⁴² For a truly case of the incorporation to the world-economy and hence the persistence of corvée labour on a legal basis, see Daniel Chirot, *Social Changes in a Peripheral Society: The Creation of a Balkan Colony* (New York: Academic Press, 1976).

somewhat more interested in cultivating their seigniorial reserves, and thus were more demanding. [...] Then, with the better international markets of the Napoleonic years, they became more interested in farming seigniorial reserves [...] Though the Ottoman grain purchase system was not finally dissolved until 1830, the early nineteenth century opportunity to participate in an international grain market heightened Rumanian landlords interest in taking full advantage of the prescribed days of labour, which until then had usually been commuted to cash payments.⁴³

The only difference did not merely take place not only in the Principalities in terms of the dominance of the landlords, who, contrary to the rest of the Ottoman Balkans, succeeded in including the feudal-like dues in the legislation concerning agricultural production. Northern Greece, comprising of mountainous and plain regions, was accordingly characterised by the dominance of the landlords albeit with their distinction compared to their Rumanian counterparts.⁴⁴ While the continental mountainous region was dominated by semi-nomadic pastoralists and the littoral mountain ranges were inhabited by sedentary small-scale agriculturalists, the plains were composed of *çiftlik* villages operating by means of sharecropping. These sharecroppers had inalienable rights of perpetual tenancy over these lands belonging to the “Muslim landlords living in the cities where they formed the leading and social and political provincial elite.”⁴⁵ The ordinary geographic situation was, however, indeed very different merely due to the distinction stemming from the profile of the Muslim landlords. The Albanian

⁴³ McGowan, “The Age of the Ayans”, p. 683.

⁴⁴ For the geographical distinctions in Thessaly leading to diversified economic activities shaped along with the proto-industrialisation model, see Socrates Petmezas, “Patterns of Protoindustrialization,” p. 577-8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*,

warlords, who are usually regarded as responsible for the decentralisation of the Ottoman Balkans throughout the eighteenth century, acquiring these large estates, administrated these *çiftlik* in accordance with their personal interests while excluding the interests of the Ottoman Empire.

The *çiftlik*s which might have been regarded ordinary in terms of usage of sharecropping labour and of engagement in extensive cereal production, were yet quite exceptional with respect to the reign of these landlords. Concerned with the scarcity of labour on the Thessalian plains, these brigands actually resorted to employing labour from the mountainous regions, usually culminating with the sharecropping contracts. Yet, the relative upper hand of the former against the central authority, these *çiftlik ağas* were to a certain extent autonomous when determining the deeds of these contracts. As long as they had the ever-ready brigand-like militia forces with them, which did not hesitate to ravage the countryside throughout the eighteenth century, they were moderately left to conduct their own business with the State. That is, the central authority did opt to comply with these warlords unless the threat was overtly directed at the very existence of itself; however, the threats, which actually undermined the peasantry, thus the tax-base of the Empire, did not seem to be the principal concern of the Empire even in the Tanzimat era. As such, the feudal-like dues emanating from these lords, most prominent of which was *corvée* labour, were to persist throughout the nineteenth century in parallel with the reforms of Tanzimat⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ To define the state of being in the agricultural lands of Thessaly, a statement by Petmezas is very beneficial: “the newly annexed (in 1881) provinces of Thessaly were

The Tanzimat Reforms and the Balkan Peasants

There have been disagreements about the nature of the *Hatt-ı Şerif* of Gülhane, or the Imperial Rescript of Gülhane, whether it was a project of “modernisation” or naively an instrument to save the Empire from demise or rather a means of integration to the new world views.⁴⁷ What it promised nevertheless was welcomed by the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire, albeit with the apparent impediments to these reforms. The Imperial Rescript of Gülhane was both proclaimed in the official newspaper of the State, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, and as its very name suggests, in Gülhane Imperial Garden. It immediately ordered all the reforms to be executed except those concerning taxation and military service. Accordingly, with the reforms enunciated, the reaya and indeed every person in the Ottoman realm, as İnalcık emphasises, began to give the reforms his or her own interpretation:

“in Filibe, where the news that the corvée was to be lifted caused extreme excitement and the *râyas*, urged on by their leaders, demanded their freedom as soon as the *Hat* was announced. This excitement of the *reaya* was however matched by an anxiety of the Sublime Porte. Since the Balkans was the play garden of the emerging Balkan bourgeoisie nationalism, aftermath of

characterised by their extensive cereal agriculture and animal husbandry. Especially in Thessaly, cereal production was stagnating in volume due to the antiquated techniques and methods of sharecropping agriculture.” Socrates Petmezas, “The Long Term Development of Greek Agricultural Productivity in a Euro-Mediterranean Perspective (1860-1980),” paper delivered in the 6th International Conference of the European Historical Economics Society in Istanbul, September, 2005, p. 2.

⁴⁷ The nature of the Reforms and their consequences are beyond the scope of this study, thus only the reforms concerning the agriculture and *reaya* will be discussed here.

the declaration of the *Tanzimat*, “the first of resolutions to be carried out almost immediately was the abolishing of the corvée.”⁴⁸

The emphasis was predominantly on the Balkans in terms of the abolition of angarya, for, as mentioned earlier, these were the lands that still operated on feudal remnants which then were among the central themes leading to the peasant discontent, which were also aspired by the nationalist sentiments. In this sense, it did not take long time to realise that even if the Sublime Porte had wanted to act it was powerless to challenge the local notables, or *vücut* as they were called after the *Sened-i İttifak*, with a view to compelling them to accept reforms. Moreover, Quataert stated this fact precisely,

By customary practice predating the Ottoman arrival, the *sipahis* collected certain extra dues and taxes not demanded in most other provinces, such as one or two months' sowing labour, a cart of wood, or a cartload of corn. *Indeed, the peasants owed as much or more to the lord than to the state. When the 1839 decree abolished compulsory services, peasants in the Vidin region quickly tried to refuse to perform them anymore when called in to decide, the state straddled the fence.* Like the Tsar's emancipation of the serfs, the sultan's decree attempted to reconcile the irreconcilable, seeking to abolish the services due but without harming the landowners. As a result landholders generally had their way, and, the reform regulations notwithstanding, services and feudal-like dues continued.⁴⁹

It should, by now, be clear that “the abolition of corvée” did not really abolish the corvée, but rather, the *agas*, *gospodars*, or in short, various local

⁴⁸ Halil İnalçık, *Application of the Tanzimat and Its Social Effects* (Lisse: The Peder de Ridder Press, 1976), pp. 1-3, 11.

⁴⁹ Quataert, “The Age of Reforms”, p. 878. For the immediate rebellions after the proclamation of the Tanzimat, see also Halil İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi* (Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1943); Ahmet Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler* (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 2002).

notables, somehow endeavoured to evade the responsibilities originating from the Tanzimat reforms, which eventually culminated in the escalation of peasant discontents in the regions where çiftlik were the majority. To understand emerging discontent from a broader perspective, it is essential to observe these arbitrary dues to be recognised from the perspective of the peasants, and in this sense İnalçık's list made a great contribution, at least to its factuality:

- I. The reaya of Vidin, until the *Tanzimat* era, had worked for the *aga* as equivalent for the "fee of the land" (*ücret-i arazi*);
- II. The villager, also, was obliged to supply the *aga* with a cart of wood, or to pay instead twelve *kuruş*;
- III. Every household, under the name of *hurizme* produce (*zahire*), was to give twenty-five each *okka*, equivalent to 1282 grams, of any kind of produce, and;
- IV. Also, under the name of *budarlık*, forty *okka* of each cart to the agha;
- V. Regions with vineyards, for every *dönüm* (one thousand grapevine, equivalent to one *dönüm*), twelve *para* was to be paid.
- VI. Finally, for the pasturing (*otlakiye*) of the sheep, a certain amount of cheese was to be given.⁵⁰

This listing is confined to the Vidin area; it is still beneficial to reveal the arbitrary taxation and the feudal-like dues to which the reaya was subject. Furthermore, the Tanzimat was supposed to put an end these arbitrary practices and replace it with more standardised taxation and regulation. When such practices became the rule, however, it is to a certain extent logical to think that the peasantry welcomed the reforms at the very first place, but it would not take too long time for them to realise that these practices, or then abuses, would not

⁵⁰ Halil İnalçık, "Vidin Gosподарlık Rejimi ve İlğası," in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Toplum ve Ekonomi*, H. İnalçık (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1996), pp. 123-4. It should be added that the material İnalçık uses is dated 1266 A.H., thus, either it is mistyped or a material, with a less probability, projecting ten years earlier.

become extinct that easily, and rather they would prevail in regions where discontent was low and limited in character, contrary to the case in Vidin.

Against this arbitrariness, however, it was not only the *vücu* that attained these very exploitative terms against the peasantry. In this context, it is quite evident that there was a substantial amount of land uncultivated, but that these lands were not that fertile, or to put it another way, usually all of the good land was under the control of either local notables or the State, while a high number of peasants were deprived of their lands which culminated with the *çiftlik* formation process mentioned above. As such, along with the market opportunities and the necessity to become market responsive, the local notables resorted to such measures, which ultimately seemed to be the fundamental cause underlying the prevalence of these feudal-like demands. In other words, the means to keep the peasants in their place was one motive while the relative scarcity of labour was seemingly felt, since the market-oriented production simultaneously meant an increasing need for labour, but on the other hand, the local notables, in order to continue this dependency, made this labour force somewhat permanent via *peonage*.⁵¹

Thus, the *çiftlik*s seemed to be entirely “a minor spot of anguish” since their cultivators seemed resistless in their particular localities. That was, furthermore, why the peasantry was understandably welcoming about this reforms being

⁵¹ “... many Ottoman *chiftlik* holders deliberately kept their tenants in their debt (‘peonage of the stick’) and at the same time allowed them to develop an interest in the plot of ground allowed to them as a garden (‘peonage of the carrot’). In return, they exacted as much of the crop as they thought the *ex-reaya* could tolerate.” This is presumably the most preeminent statement summarising the attitude of the local notables. McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 72.

introduced into the agricultural relations of production, leading them to forget, or even not to realise that the foremost reforms would barely reach them. However, it should be noted that the case was not entirely against the peasantry. That is, they were made dependent and very often deprived of their tenures to the land, but there were times these local notables – probably with the intention of securing their accumulating wealth – protected their subjects against the other rival notables or often the State, which leads to the outcome that was not necessarily so much intolerable taxation as intolerable insecurity.⁵²

On the contrary, the anguish of the reaya was not merely to be attributed to the local notables, albeit with their strong opposition to the centralising reforms of the Empire, but rather the State was one of the major factors, or impediments from another viewpoint, since the State relentlessly maintained its oblivion to the abuse of the local notables, which can only be grasped by the fact that – against the protection of the dispossessed – the Ottoman government was not interested in creating a second serfdom, as McGowan argues accurately, “since the government was not simply the instrument of a landholding class and had nothing to gain, as a corporation, from the degradation of the peasantry”.⁵³

The Sublime Porte, interested in extending its tax base with more direct contact with the production process, more likely seems to have played an intermediary role between these antagonist classes, which practically meant that the former regarded such issues as those of between landlord and tenants and thus

⁵² See a general sketch of a çiftlik during the Serbian Rebellion, in the words of a young Serbian official. McGowan, “The Age of the Ayans”, p. 685.

⁵³ McGowan, *Economic Life*, pp. 72-3.

encouraged the resolutions of issues to be resolved by these two classes, albeit with the asymmetry of power inherent in them.⁵⁴ In terms of usurpation, which ultimately reflected the subsequent çiftlik formation, McGowan acutely states this fact while saying, “whereas the peasant often lost his right to tenure, the *chiftlik* holder almost never lost his.”⁵⁵

This presents a vivid contradiction, that the entire Ottoman socio-economic structure was under a direct challenge from usurpation in general, and çiftlik formation in particular. The latter, if it reached a significant extent and was tolerated earlier through the Empire’s existence, thus then simply means that “the Ottoman self-definitions is under risk of collapse”⁵⁶ However, it is now evident that large estate formation – along with its distinctive tenets – was not the predominant unit of agricultural production, yet, it does not suggest that this self-definition was that invulnerable to these transgressions. If not for the entire Balkan Peninsula, there is evidence concerning the existence of çiftliks even in the mid-eighteenth century, in the regions of the Albanian coast, at Durazzo; in Thessaly; and along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast; and Dobruja, which accordingly necessitates the revision of the conventional wisdom that the çiftliks were of minor importance. Furthermore it is known that these estates did not resort to *gutscherrschaft*, but rather initiated relatively a restricted reorganisation of labour in the final analysis. Thus, it is undeniable that the overall significance

⁵⁴ İnalçık, “Application of the Tanzimat.” The relationship between the landlords and the State elaborated in the third chapter is equally essential.

⁵⁵ McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 71.

⁵⁶ Keyder, “Introduction”, p. 2.

of the phenomenon in the entire Ottoman real was severely constrained. What the *reaya* of these aforementioned regions experienced, however, and their subsequent opposition to the local notables, which ultimately culminated in the nationalist uprisings that raged throughout the century, seems to have occupied a central role in the transformations of the Balkans and their consequence upon the socio-economic characteristics. Where the “abolished” visibly persisted, the Sublime Porte stated that the abusers should be warned, and for the well-being of the *reaya*, the deeds of the Tanzimat should be executed without any hesitation. Similarly there was always the threat of “confiscations”, a means of the State to curb the local wealth, which in turn was essential to impeding the transformations of the large estates. Under the guidance of these findings, whether these measures remained “on paper” will be the fundamental question of this study while at least attempting to draw a comprehensive portrait of the feudal-like demands in the Ottoman Balkans.

In order to understand the service dues stemming from the sharecropping contracts in the Balkans, primarily the status of the *reaya* is presented – and compared to its counterparts, where and when possible – which occupies a central theme in the pioneering works involved with *çiftlik* formation. Seemingly, the general approach is the mode of production, which accordingly contributes to draw the common tenets of the “feudal remnants” in relation to the status of the *reaya* and the service-like dues to which they were subject. Once the classical land regime was then obsolete, the transformation of the land regime was illustrated with a view to elucidating the imminent emergence of *çiftlik*s, which occurred after distinctive steps: usurpation, dispossession, and the formation of

the large estates. These steps actually corresponded to the “how” question, the remaining “why” question was answered in line with the Wallerstein’s world-system theory, while underlining its weak spots at the same time, which chiefly stipulates that the expansion of the capitalist world-system and thus the trade opportunities emanating from this new mode of production were an essential force to change the existing agricultural relations of production in the Balkans, although not necessarily the units of production. Finally, the abolition of the corvée labour along with the feudal-like obligations do not seem to fit in this picture, since the market demand coming from Western Europe emphasised harsher conditions for the cultivators, such as their loss of independence, and their right to the land, and furthermore when the State was either relentless or oblivious to the ongoing abuses, it became apparent – at least to the reaya of the Balkans – that angarya and the respective agricultural reforms had been abolished merely on paper. The aftermath was only a contestation of power, involving the producers, the local notables and the State that was to continue throughout the century in which the peasantry was subject to the deterioration of their material status.

CHAPTER 2

THE ÇİFTLİKİS OF THE NORTHERN GREECE: REDISTRUBUTION AND LANDHOLDING PATTERNS

The çiftlik – as the final form it took on in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries - has remained a controversial topic in the Ottoman scholarship. What contributes to this controversy is the characteristic of this agricultural unit which have been thought to have been the very identical counterparts of the large estates which emerged throughout the “second serfdom” in Eastern Europe. In other words, çiftlikis were – for a long time – considered to be the centres of export-oriented production in agriculture. However controversial, the question of how the relations of production shaped the çiftlikis should be answered in a way which will leave no ambiguous points regarding its nature.

Only then will it be possible to trace the practices of extra-dues emanating from sharecropping, for the latter without any hesitation took place in these units – as shown in the previous chapter, the çiftlikis’ owners who dispossessed the peasantry, which previous to usurpation had had these lands in their possession – sometimes resembling the large estates in the centre of which had a building and sometimes merely villages that had fallen into the hands of some local notables, the origin of whom differed in the period under question here. In short, çiftlikis arouse interes of the scholars not merely due to the incorporation to the Western capitalism, but also the primary places that corvée labour and various abuses took places in the late Ottoman era. In a similar vein, these lands also witnessed a crude struggle among the various provincial elites with a view to establishing their

sphere of influence. Thus, the intertwining of the çiftliks and correspondingly the struggle for the possession of them and the persistence of corvée labour should not be considered as a distinct ambiguity. Having said this, the previous chapter attempted to draw a comprehensive overview of these large estates in terms of their genesis and of the transformation of the old regime. While a theoretical background was drawn in the previous chapter, this chapter will attempt to concretise the basic tenets of those findings with a view to incorporating its nature to accompany the changes in the relations of production in agriculture in general and to sharpen the boundaries of the spaces in which corvée labour predominantly took place. While doing this, accordingly some new findings will be revealed concerning the large estate formations as well as their level of exchange in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Therefore, since the period and methods concerning the genesis of the çiftliks was comprehensively discussed in the previous chapter, what will be elaborated here will be primarily a definition of what the çiftliks meant for the relations of production in particular and their reflections on the social base of the Empire in general and, consequently, to reveal a few veiled points related to these large estates. Such a definition is essential for stressing the qualitative aspects of those practices that took place in northern Greece throughout the nineteenth century. In line with the arguments above, it is now obvious that the çiftliks – as large agricultural units in the Balkans – pose an essential threat against the decay

of the Ottoman social formation, for the former was primarily characterised by the private usurpation of landed property.⁵⁷

As this case was merely confined to the land tenure relations in particular and to the property relations in general, the very same large estates were important in the sense that the State did not intervene into the relations of production – in any form –since the latter tended to consider the relationship between the former two as a relation between the owner of the land and the tenant, respectively.⁵⁸

As a novelty, this chapter will also attempt to shed light on the sales of those estates that took place in the second quarter of the nineteenth century just after the Tanzimat Edict was promulgated. In line with the questions posed above, the sphere of *çiftlik*s that spread towards the Northern Greece and Thessaly will be reviewed with a view to contributing to the existence of the *çiftlik*s under question here. By doing this, this chapter also will shed light on the property aspects of these *çiftlik*s which were exposed to various agents throughout the early nineteenth century, be it the central government, the local landholders, or the *reaya*. Hence, property relations and their subsequent changes are highly fruitful in effect to observe the consequences upon the relations of production in particular, and the power struggles.

⁵⁷ Keyder, “Introduction”, p. 2.

⁵⁸ McGowan addresses the lack of interest of the Porte in these contracts as a “conspiracy of silence” arguing that “these became in effect private agreements, seemingly beyond the concern of the government or its agents. Relations between the two strata were increasingly outside older institutional agreements, and reflected typical economic behaviour for which many parallels could be drawn in other parts of the world.” McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 71.

First, how these large estates are received and elaborated in the literature will be revised, underlining their remarkable points with a critical stance in order to conceive the changes that the çiftlik concept underwent in terms of theoretical evolution. Thus, bringing closer the agricultural unit into the current literature, then the section will dwell primarily on the archival findings pointing at the exchange of these large estates, especially in northern Greece and Thessaly in the early Tanzimat years. These findings are important since they significantly indicate that these lands were – not necessarily the dominant unit of production – characterised by large estate agriculture, which correspondingly was to pave the way for feudal-like labour exploitation as the central administration became oblivious to the developments taking place in these estates even after the Tanzimat was promulgated. The reason for the State’s disinterest is open to debate, but there is one fact that the peasantry on these kinds of large estates was exploited in a harsh way where the new promises of the Imperial Edict of Gülhane had probably never been heard.⁵⁹

Therefore, in a detailed manner, the sale of these çiftliks, the exchanging hands as well as the size of these estates will be presented to contribute to the field, while arguing that – regardless of the trade incentives created in the early nineteenth century – the relations of production, which were not always the

⁵⁹ For Ottoman northern Greece, and the Balkans in a greater picture, this “oblivion” was actually shaped by the lack of challenge against the âyâns of the Rumeli where these pashas virtually ran these lands as quasi-independent regions. For the prominent ones including Pasvandođlu Osman and Tepedelenli Ali, see; Nagehan Üstündađ, “Power Politics in the Ottoman Balkans: A Case Study of Pasvandođlu Osman” (MA Thesis, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 2004) and İlker Demir, “Tepedelenli Ali Paşa and the West: A History of His Relations with France and Great Britain 1798-1820” (MA Thesis, Bilkent University, 2007). I am greatly indebted to Birten Çelik for sharing the former thesis.

dominant mode of labour exploitation in these agricultural units, operated on a significant level of forced labour or *angarya*, and furthermore the surrounding conditions shaped by the local notables, *âyâns*, or *eshab-ı alaka* (the interested parties, owners) were manipulated in effect to continue the existing conditions where labour was scarce. Even though such a correlation at first seems disconnected, it is clear that the exchange of *çiftlik*s and the subsequent owners of these *çiftlik*s were – to a certain extent – essential agents shaping the relations of production employed in these units.

Accordingly, the socio-economic tenets of these findings will be presented on the basis of the prevailing land tenure relations and as well as the relations of production where possible. Emphasising the remark on the land-labour dichotomy, the relative abundance of the former as opposed to the relative scarcity of the latter, it will be argued that the relations of production – illegal or not – on these *çiftlik*s were heavily influenced by this dichotomy, given that the continuum of forced labour or *angarya* was supposedly a distinct product of this dichotomy in accordance with the considerable neglect of the central administration. Of course, these estates and the exchanges of these agricultural production centres bear a greater importance than the existence of *corvée* labour. That is, the existing property relations as well as the land tenure relations seem to have been quite essential with a view to grasping a closer picture of these still debated estates. In line with McGowan's study, "the struggle for land" seems here also to shed light on the developments that took place in this region in terms of both landless peasants as well as the local notables.

In the final section of this chapter the common wisdom in relation to land tenure relations will be reviewed to trace the increased burdens of the peasantry on these estates while remarking on the similarities to *gospodarliks* which were basically distinctive from the common *çiftliks*. In terms of the production and labour extraction methods, the resemblance of these units might bring a new perspective upon the *çiftlik* debate based on the labour question employed in these agricultural production centres.

Çiftlik Notations and Their Elaboration in Its Historical Context

The *çiftlik* and the field it attracted as a subject in the Ottoman literature goes back to Gandev's pioneering works in the mid-twentieth century as well as those of Busch-Zantner. As pioneering as they were, however, the views concerning the *çiftlik* concept as an agricultural unit of production was to supplement within a small amount of documentation. Furthermore, they were anxious to reach general conclusions concerning the concept under question here while in the very first place the significance of these large estates then experienced a decisive challenge in the aftermath of new findings. As shown in the previous chapter, these pioneering works were basically the Ottomanist versus Marxist theories, which fundamentally differed from each other in considering these large estates.⁶⁰ Enhanced by those theoretical view points, the *çiftliks* in the Balkans were therefore scrutinised in a different way in the course of time.

⁶⁰ Veinstein, "On the Çiftlik Debate".

One of the pioneering works, which remains an important reference point, belongs to Stoianovich, who argues that the Balkan *çiftliks* were “enterprises of colonisation” which were basically characterised by the emergence of second landlords, and the shift towards the cash-crops in the first place.⁶¹ He also accepts that the simultaneous development of serfdom and that large quasi-private properties existed in the Balkan provinces, while connecting this case to the Rumanian case.⁶² Obviously, the Marxist theoretical misconceptions underlying these views was to bridge Ottoman feudalism with the emergent capitalist relations in the Balkan peninsula in which the existing peasantry was supposedly to have been dispossessed and then exposed to the new occupiers of the land, which was then to have been shaped by wage-labour instead of the previous feudal-like dues. Yet, it is now apparent that, as has been argued so far, even the period under question here – namely the mid-nineteenth century – was not a satisfying example of the distinct capitalist relations in agriculture.⁶³ In line with the primary question of this study, if these capitalistic relations had prevailed prevail in the Balkans in such an earlier era then, it would probably not be rational to either ask or trace the existence of *corvée* labour in the relations of production in agriculture since the latter was supposed to be based on wage-labour relations.

⁶¹ Traian Stoianovich, “Factors in the Decline of Ottoman Society in the Balkans,” *Slavic Review* 21, no. 4 (December 1962), pp. 623-632; and “Land Tenure and Related Sectors of the Balkan Economy,” *Journal of Economic History* 13, no. 4 (Autumn, 1953), pp. 398-411.

⁶² Stoianovich, “Land Tenure and Related Sectors”, p. 407. For the different case in see the next chapter of this study and also Chirot, *Social Changes*.

⁶³ For a different author, Gandev with similar misconceptions, see Veinstein, “On the *Çiftlik* Debate”, p. 36.

Stoianovich is adamant in perpetuating these misconception in his accounts in terms of his own perceptions attributed to çiftliks, as he argues:

The *çiftlik* marks the transition from a social and economic structure founded upon a system of a moderate land rent and few labour services to one of excessive land rent and exaggerated service. As proprietor of a *çiftlik*-village, the new landlord requires that his peasants share their production with him and normally receives half of their produce after the payment of the land tax to the state. Field, transportation, and other labour services supplement the newly augmented rend in kind given to the landlord.⁶⁴

However, recent studies indicate that çiftliks were relatively few in number, if not marginal, and yet they did not alter the dominant mode of production, that is the tendency towards export-oriented production.⁶⁵ Accordingly, as a common Marxist misconception of the era, these units were mostly received as large estates being erected in Eastern Europe with their implications concerning the “second serfdom”. However, as the previous chapter discussed, these agricultural units emerging as early as the seventeenth centuries did not experience a radical change in the production pattern, but rather increased the level of exploitation of the peasantry or simply expanded the land to be cultivated. In this context, the role attributed to the commercial incentives posed by the later period scholars similarly shares the same fate. Braudel is among the leading scholars when he argues that “Cereal growing in Turkey, as in the Danube Provinces or in Poland,

⁶⁴ Stoianovich, “Land Tenure and Related Sectors”, p. 402.

⁶⁵ McGowan, *Economic Life*.

when linked to a huge export trade, created from the first the conditions leading to the ‘second serfdom’ observable in Turkey.”⁶⁶

So far, what was perceived by *çiftlik* has been commonly understood as interim-agricultural units which accounted for the transition from feudalism to capitalism in its loose sense.⁶⁷ Then, these so-called large estates, changing their production patterns, become oriented towards monoculture, or cash-crop production with a distinct emphasis on trade. Finally, Stoianovich finds the basic difference between them and the large estates prevailing in the rest of Europe in only one respect: “in its emphasis upon the use of thousands of armed guards to protect the estate of one landlord from the intrusions of another and to keep the peasant on the land.”⁶⁸ Given the fact that the large estates of the Balkans had some fundamental differences from those the rest of Europe, in a context in which the land-labour dichotomy was in the favour of the former and the security conditions were seemingly not very promising, the use of armed guards seems to

⁶⁶ Veinstein, “On the *Çiftlik* Debate,” p. 36.

⁶⁷ The case of transition from feudalism to capitalism as the Marxist scheme of successive stages of development has attained a greater significance in Bulgarian historical scholarship, which is crucial in terms of the features attributed to the *çiftlik*s in relevance to our study. Daskalov, tracing the historiographical roots of the “Bulgarian Revival,” remarks two mainstream views (National-Cultural and Economic-Social, respectively). The former was shaped almost with a Modernity approach with an emphasis on enlightenment, while the latter was similar to the argument conducted here. Furthermore, he underlines that the Marxist preconceptions concerning the transition – not necessarily that of the *çiftlik*s – was not confined to a few scholars. For a detailed discussion on the transition from feudalism to capitalism, see Roumen Daskalov, *The Making of a Nation in the Balkans Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004). I thank Gergana Georgieva encouraging me consider the Bulgarian side of the question under review.

⁶⁸ Stoianovich, “Land Tenure and Related Sectors,” p. 409.

have been quite rational. As will be argued later, the lack of labour force and the danger of pillaging in the countryside were the fundamental factors that contributed to the persistence of these *çiftlik*s, but relegating these findings to the only difference with the large estates in the Eastern Europe is misleading.

The discussion on *çiftlik*s was revisited with scholarly recourse to the mode of production literature in which the former was – as the Ottoman Empire was a case study of this view – conceived as an area in which the Asiatic mode of production had taken place.⁶⁹ The discussion, however, was not confined to the Asiatic mode of production. Rather, in particular, and in line with the above-mentioned views, the views upon the *çiftlik* emergence and its nature were more likely to be elaborated on the mode of production paradigm. As prolific as this method was, nevertheless, it persistently argued in terms of a linear transition from feudal to capitalist modes of production and thus had the innate tendency to treat the large estates as a product of emergent capitalist agricultural relations.⁷⁰ In this paradigm, the discussion was shifted to the means of production with a significant emphasis on the agricultural producers and their level of independence

⁶⁹ The AMP arguments concurrently did not merely include the *çiftlik* agriculture and yet included the Ottoman *çift-hane* system. Briefly, it can be identified in the Ottoman context as such: “The Asiatic Mode of Production is characterised by independent peasant production in which the peasants do not for autonomous units but constitute components of a larger unit, the limits of which are defined by the extent of the authority of the state. The peasant producer is integrated into the larger unit through the delivery of his surplus in the form of taxes to the state, and through the ideological-judicial apparatus that provide the matrix for the state’s extraction of agricultural surplus. Thus, the integration ensures a political determination of the division of labour within the system.” İslamoğlu and Keyder, “Agenda for Ottoman History,” p. 47.

⁷⁰ For one of the most prominent works concerning the discussion based on the mode of production, see Vera Mutafchieva, *Agrarian Relations*.

compared to the feudalist relations where the same producers had been tied to the land; however, the Ottoman peasantry had been – even though tied to the land – at least in juridical terms, independent in the classical *çift-hane* system. In this sense, the question of large-scale agriculture and/or plantation-like structures inevitably brings about the arcane nature of the Ottoman peasant. Questions such as whether an ordinary peasant was free or independent, bound to the land and to the landlord have been the subjects of debate in Ottoman social history. Accordingly, the “freedom” of the peasant is strongly linked to the structures to which he was employed, either by himself or by someone else.⁷¹

In any case, regardless of the controversy concerning the independence of the peasantry, this development was crucial since the “social formation” this mode of production entailed a more comprehensive tool with a view to observing the gradual degradations of the Ottoman peasantry underwent. In another case of the era, İslamoğlu and Keyder, even though primarily challenging the Ottomanist and Modernist perspectives, fall back on the emphasis of the emergent capitalist relations that eventually culminated in the peripheralisation process which, they thought, ended up in commercialised agriculture:

Çiftliks were examples of commercial farming where enserfed peasantry or sharecroppers were employed.

⁷¹ The question regarding the freedom of the Ottoman peasant and the persistence of feudal-like relations, thus, services and dues, can be traced back to Ö. L. Barkan. He identifies the distinctive status of the Ottoman reaya, but states that there was no serfdom except for the *ortakçı kul* practices which lasted until the 16th century. Feudal-like dues such as corvée labour and giving presents to sipahis, Barkan states, were enforced upon the Ottoman laws since the former was already acknowledged by the populace of the lands conquered. Ömer Lütü Barkan, “Türkiye’de Servaj Var mıydı?” and “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Çiftçi Sınıfların Hukuki Statüsü,” *Türkiye’de Toprak Meselesi* (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları), 1980, p. 735.

Aside from the novelty of the labour organisation, *çiftlik*s also altered the traditional crop pattern. Cash-crops replaced subsistence grains. Owners of *çiftlik*s accumulated commercial profits obtained through selling these crops to European merchants directly.⁷²

However, the earlier paradigm welcoming the emergent capitalist relations was inherent in these arguments as well, but only with a slight shift on the peripheralisation rather than the path towards socialism. İslamoğlu and Keyder were, nevertheless, justified in the sense that “the rise of the *çiftlik* was the most disruptive development” for the political system in the Ottoman Empire as well as the status of the peasantry since the latter was then exposed to harsher conditions of labour exploitations at the hands of the landowners.⁷³ Correspondingly, the arguments emanating from these perspectives come from a greater picture, that is, Wallerstein’s World-System Theory, the third volume of which devotes a greater section to the Ottoman Empire, underlining the former’s incorporation to the capitalist world system where its role remained peripheral after the integration.⁷⁴

⁷² İslamoğlu, “Agenda for Ottoman History,” pp. 59-60.

⁷³ What should be distinguished here, however, is that they attribute this gradual degradation of the peasantry’s status primarily to the process of peripheralisation. The degradation of the agricultural producers is described as “from the point view of the peasants, most of whom were under debt bondage, the *çiftlik* system meant a serious deterioration in their status. There was an obvious increase in the rate of exploitation in economic terms. Most of the taxes payable to the state did not cease and the dues demanded by the *çiftlik* holders comprised half of the produce after the payment of *öşr*, in addition to labour services required of the peasant. Moreover, peasants under the *çiftlik* system lost security of tenure.” They have also prejudicially argued that “in the early nineteenth century, the process of development of *ayans* was reversed through a wave of centralisations, but the growth of commercial agriculture continued without such reversals.” İslamoğlu, “Agenda for Ottoman History”, pp. 60-2.

⁷⁴ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System III*.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the nineteenth century agricultural activities, in the Balkans either in the production methods or land tenure relations underwent drastic changes. It was also an era of political conflicts leading to the Ottoman disintegration in Rumelia. Accordingly, this stance was articulated in the 1980s with Wallerstein's thesis based on the world-system theory in general and the peripheralisation of the Ottoman Empire in particular. As İslamoğlu and Keyder were somehow between the consecutive paradigms, the new one, exalted by the peripheralisation view, placed the shift upon the commercialisation of agriculture and therefore on the çiftliks where the agricultural production was supposed to have tended towards monoculture while, the dominant relations of production between the landowner and the tenant are thought to have prevailed as wage-labour.

Yet, as later studies have shown, the two tenets of the commercialisation in agriculture, that is, the specialisation in agricultural production and the prevalence of wage-labour were not to be regarded as the defining characteristics of agriculture in the Ottoman Balkans.⁷⁵ In other words, it is thoroughly defensible to claim that the ultimate tenet attributed to the çiftliks in the Balkans was not necessarily export-driven in particular or trade-stimulated in general. A number of

⁷⁵ Donald Quataert, "The Age of Reforms," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* vol 2, H. İnalcık and D. Quataert eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 833, 850; for an evidence as early as the sixteenth century undermining the notion that çiftliks were aroused by external trade, see Fariba Zarinebaf, "Soldiers into Tax-Farmers and Reaya into Sharecroppers: The Ottoman Morea in the Early Modern Period," in *A Historical and Economic Geography of Ottoman Greece : The Southwestern Morea in the 18th Century*, F. Zarinebaf, John Bennet, and Jack. L. Davis eds. (Princeton, NJ: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2005), p. 40-1.

recent studies on the nature of the çiftliks in the Balkans reveal that these large estates were not essentially operative on the demand coming from foreign countries. McGowan's study on Manastir shows that these large estates in the seventeenth century might have been formed by the relative strength of the local notables, âyân, against the central administration with the stimulus not shaped necessarily by capitalist relations.⁷⁶ Accordingly, another recent study indicates that beginning from the sixteenth century reaching as far as the nineteenth century the çiftliks in western Thessaly (especially in Trikala), were more likely to have been involved in the internal demand rather the external one. As such, the disengagement of the çiftliks from external trade follows:

However, taking into consideration that in the Western Thessaly: a) the çiftliks must have been smaller than those in Eastern Thessaly, b) many of them were specialised in stock-breeding or their production was diversified, c) the increase of the number of the çiftliks in the end of the seventeenth century cannot be related with a significant increase of the external demand in such an early period, d) the areas of Kalabaka and Trikala are in a considerable distance from the port of Volos, e) there was lack of work force.⁷⁷

In line with the crude hypotheses cited above, Laiou argues that until the mid-nineteenth century, the claims made above significantly hold for western Thessaly.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is highly defensible to argue that the çiftliks – as a notation culminating their evolution with the recent findings for now – were

⁷⁶ McGowan, *Economic Life*, pp. 121-170, especially p. 135.

⁷⁷ Sophia Laiou, "Some Considerations Regarding Çiftlik Formation in the Western Thessaly, Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries," in *The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, the Greek Lands: Toward a Social and Economic History Studies in Honor of John C. Alexander*, ed. Elias Kolovos et al. (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2007), p. 275.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

remarkably small compared to the those projected by the earlier scholars, and instead of wage labour, the commonality was sharecropping. Finally, the stimulus created by the external demand was not that significant since it is known that these large estates did not undergo a drastic change in production methods, or were not inclined towards monoculture.

What should be noted is that, however, the picture of *çiftlik* drawn here should not be regarded as seemingly peasantry-friendly, for the landowners of these large estates, though not tempted by foreign trade opportunities, did not cease to decrease the level of labour exploitation upon the agriculture producers, the *reaya*. Since sharecropping was the most common relationship between the landowner and the cultivator, it is argued that the nature of this relationship and the stance of the Ottoman government, that is, the preference not to interfere between the two parties, might have lead to the abuses of the labour of the peasantry, since the latter did not have a strong hand to stand against the landowners. Given this speculation, it can be argued that the labour employed on these plantation-like structures – excluding the *enserfed* peasantry, if any – resembled the *corvée* labour. Even if not the *corvée*, the ordinary peasantry was vulnerable to various abuses that similarly emanated from these partnerships conducted between landholder and cultivators. In addition to this, the Balkan countryside was ravaged by organised banditry accompanied by wars not on an international basis, but intra-provinces which culminated further the weakness of the peasantry. In order to grasp the geography under question, one should be aware of the power that Ali Pasha of Tepedelen held over the region and his policies against agriculture in particular and the peasantry in general.

Mainland Greece and the Lands of Ali Pasha of Tepedelen

The Greek lands under Ottoman suzerainty made up some of the most concentrated areas shaped by the *çiftlik*s in the eighteenth century. This fact did not undergo any serious alteration during the early nineteenth century, but with the slight exception of the consolidation of these within the mini-empire of Ali Pasha.⁷⁹ As part of the common consequence of the defunct sipahi system, these agricultural lands existed throughout the Thessaly plains as long as the security of the very same estates was ensured. The Ottoman central power, awkwardly absent throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth century, was therefore far from attempting any protective measures against the agricultural estates, let alone the cultivators. Security was thus in the hands of the *âyân*s, who in effect ensured the protection of the cultivator as well as the property, most conventionally via sharecropping contracts.⁸⁰ Apart from the agricultural relations, the very same pashas were unchallengeable in the power struggles where the “real power had slipped out of the hands of the Sultan and the central administration into the eager

⁷⁹ For the considerable presence of *çiftlik*s in Northern Greece especially in Ioannina and Trikala and Larisa, see McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 77.

⁸⁰ Yuzo Nagata, “Ayan in the Anatolia and the Balkans,” in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire Halycon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003*, A. Anastasopoulos, ed. (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), pp. 282-3.

grasp of men of daring and ambition in the provinces who carved out personal domains for themselves and their families.”⁸¹

However, the agricultural lands reaching as far as Trikala, Larissa, and Ioannina did not entail any more “struggle for land” for Ali Pasha of Tepelen who was to consolidate these lands under his dominion towards the end of the eighteenth century. This mini-Empire, initiated via Ali Pasha’s banditry activities during his early career, which later flourished with the appointment of official *derbender başbuğu*, or head of the police of the mountain passes. This system probably was more centralised than the Ottoman Empire in terms of economic activities. The very same semi-independent kingdom of Ali Pasha expanded from the Tosk plains of Albania to the Gulf of Corinth.⁸² According to the non-academic work of W. Plomer, however, the lands of Ali Pasha and his sons stretched towards Durazzo and Manastir in the north, and included all the Morea Peninsula – except Attica – in the south, while the Seven Islands in the Adriatic were beyond his reach.⁸³

Both politically and economically, the mini-empire of the “Muslim Bonaparte” obviously was not due merely to the relative weakness of the Sublime Porte. Apart from his political success – that is, his quasi-independent, if not

⁸¹ Denis N. Skiotis, “From Bandit to Pasha: First Steps in the Rise to Power of Ali of Tepelen,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2, no. 3 (July 1971), p. 219.

⁸² Bruce McGowan, “The Age of the Ayans,” p. 669.

⁸³ William Plomer, *The Diamond of Janina Ali Pasha 1741-1822* (New York: Taplinger, 1970), p. 15. The literature covering the life and activities of Ali Pasha seem highly dependent on the travel literature among which Plomer’s work seems quite valuable.

independent at all, political acts in the international context *vis-à-vis* the British and the French – Ali Pasha succeeded in establishing a sound economy within his borders.⁸⁴ This economy, in a relatively short period of time, ran smoothly during the pasha’s reign and towards the end of which the richness of his lands reflected upon his personal wealth. Apparently, the prosperity of the Pasha and his sons was a product of the zero-sum game which in the end affected the ruled, or the reaya.⁸⁵

Apart from the arbitrary exploitation of the peasantry of the vast Greek lands, Ali of Tepedelenli realised and thus succeeded in the basic premises paving the way for a more centralised economy, and which he did not hesitate to employ ultimately. These followed as such, according to Fleming’s account: Ali Pasha was very aware of the importance of internal security, which was a key component of building an empire, thus an economy. In the same vein, against the inefficacy of absentee landlords, he was cautious in terms of maintaining complete and direct control over his remotest territories, having realised the very

⁸⁴ Ali Pasha of Tepedelen has long been associated with his political acts and moreover has been portrayed as a typical example of the “Oriental despot,” but actually in a period in which the Ottoman revenues were at the lowest ebb, the finances and economy of the Pasha was indeed very strong which was – as we will later elaborate – due to his strict economic policies. For a recent, brief, as well as comprehensive diplomatic history of the Pasha, see Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha’s Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), especially pp. 3-95.

⁸⁵ For the sons of the Pasha, see Hamiyet Sezer, “Tepedelenli Ali Paşa’nın Oğulları,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 17, no. 28 (n.d.).

same territories had a labour scarcity during the period, his concentration turned towards repopulating the lands and thus re-establishing agriculture.⁸⁶

When these plans were about to come true, the methods Ali Pasha employed, however, were not entirely peaceful. These practical terms, which had strongly carried the banditry activities of the pasha were comprised of extortion, forced confiscation, purchase and predictably bribe.⁸⁷ For a local figure that had raised himself from banditry to the policeman in regions where the difference between the two was undistinguishable, these activities thus did not seem strange considering the ambitions that Pasha must have had. Thanks to these available options, Ali Pasha accumulated a personal wealth in landed estates including çiftliks, orchards, gardens, mansions, khans coupled with precious goods and some portion of cash; without a doubt, the most important item was the çiftliks.⁸⁸

In relation to this study, these çiftliks and corresponding accumulation in the Pasha's hands as well as the relations of production employed seem therefore quite successful in effect to elaborate their legitimisation *vis-à-vis* the Sublime Porte, which was eager to confiscate these territories once the Pasha had been eliminated.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, Ali Pasha of Tepedelen acted as if the maintenance of

⁸⁶ Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte*, p. 44-50.

⁸⁷ Hamiyet Sezer, "Tepedelenli Âli Paşa ve Oğullarının Çiftlik ve Gelirlerine İlişkin Yeni Belgeler-Bulgular," *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* 18 (2005), p. 335.

⁸⁸ Ali Pasha of Tepedelen was estimated to possess an approximate number of 900 çiftliks which were concentrated in Ioannina, Delvinë, Trikkala, Vlorë and Gjirokastër (*Ergiri*). *Ibid.*, pp. 335, 339

⁸⁹ The Sublime Porte was not completely desperate about the Pasha, yet was indeed successful in terms of employing the Pasha in line with its own interests.

his lands – in terms of inheritance, at the very least – resembled those practiced by the Ottoman Empire. That is, along with his usurpation of these *çiftlik* lands from the Turkish *beys* in the region, Ali Pasha also declared possession of lands which had no inheritors unilaterally;

These private lands were usurped in various ways: in some areas the impositions made on the Turkish landholders were so great that many sold of their *çiftliks* (plots of land that provided the basis for a sharecropping system) to Ali and fled to Larisa and other territories where they hoped to be beyond his reach. In other, instances, Ali would buy the land of individuals who left no inheritors upon their death. In several territories, in fact, he instituted regulations whereby all land not claimed by inheritance would automatically revert to him. By all accounts, Ali, in the course of a few decades, seems to have brought about the complete dissolution of the Turkish landed gentry of his domains.⁹⁰

This usurpation supposedly did not merely undermine the dominance of various minor notables in the region – as the agriculture was oriented towards a more centralised structure – but also the cultivators who were employed were the more direct agents of this re-establishment of agriculture. Evidently, the economy flourished – especially agriculture – during the reign of the Pasha, but it had some consequences upon the producers. In this sense, this *çiftlik*-building process which was a key in raising revenues in the region, nevertheless involved with the transformation of the so-called *reaya* villages into *çiftliks*, thus impairing the

⁹⁰ The Rise of the Pasha thus, was not merely a clash with the central State, but also the other local figures in the mainland Greece and Epirus. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte*, p. 55.

independence of the peasantry.⁹¹ Ali Pasha, not hesitating to use various methods in his usurpations, therefore did not merely relegate the status of the peasantry in northern Greece; evidently, the methods he preferred to have employed were explicitly degrading for the cultivators of the plains. That is, at least in terms of the fiscal burdens, the contracts of sharecropping involving the Ali Pasha's agents versus the *reaya* meant, if nothing, a greater portion of the cultivators' surplus was ultimately transferred to the Ali Pasha's State.⁹²

In practical terms, this "farming out" of the *çiftlik*s to regional beys ended up with a presumed over-taxation which was the most obvious impediment to agricultural production. In an agricultural setting in which production had been severely wounded by the intermediary tax-farmers, there was no rationale for the producers to further production.⁹³ Fleming, elaborating a fivefold increase in the tax burden of Arta's citizens, described the ultimate consequence of Ali Pasha's taxation as such:

The net result was that citizenry was exposed to a tax burden consisting of at least three-tiers: the Porte sum had to be raised; Ali's additional demands had to be met; and the tax collector had to raise an additional amount so as to cover the costs of leasing right to collect the revenues.⁹⁴

⁹¹ H. Sezer, "Tepedelenli Ali Paşa", p. 335-6. Sezer gives examples of the *çiftlik*-building process in Veroia and Vidin which took place during the reign of Ali Pasha.

⁹² Unfortunately, the details concerning the relations of production on the *çiftlik*s of Âli Pasha's Greece are seemingly deficient; sharing-arrangements are not portrayed clearly; it is evident that these *çiftlik*s were organised along the sharecropping pattern.

⁹³ It was again highly probable that, along with the over-taxation, the very same producers were exploited further by the arbitrary labour demands of the tax collectors, which can be counted as another impediment.

⁹⁴ Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte*, p. 52.

Therefore, the absentee landlordism, which had been two-tiered in the heyday of the Ottoman decentralization, was enhanced in the particularity of Ali Pasha's Greece towards the end of the century. More importantly, the earlier infrastructural reforms the Pasha initiated were thwarted by the over-taxation of the cultivators, which resulted in the idleness of these estates with serious infrastructural damage. This devastation became apparent once the Pasha was eliminated in 1822. The lands once in his possession were immediately confiscated and granted to the direction of the Imperial Mint. Furthermore, imperial inspectors were dispatched to the territories of the Pasha to assess his wealth.⁹⁵ These *çiftlik*s were immediately divided and then granted to trustworthy persons either temporarily (*emaneten*) or in return for the payment of *iltizam*. The *çiftlik*s which the central government paid particular attention were concentrated in the *sancak*, or district, of Paşa, as well as those ones in Trikala, Larisa, Almiros (*Erimiye*), Ioannina, Delvinë and Thessaloniki and Lepanto.⁹⁶

No matter how important the repossession of the *çiftlik*s once belonging to Ali Pasha of Tepedelen by the Sublime Porte was, what is more interesting here from the point of the view of this study is that these immediately possessed lands remained in existence until the early Tanzimat years. In this context, the state of the *reaya* employed in these large estates became more crucial since the very first attempt at the central government aftermath of the regain of these territories tended towards the improvement of the current state of both the infrastructure and

⁹⁵ Sezer, "Tepedelenli Ali Paşa", p. 337, 340.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 340.

the peasantry.⁹⁷ Distinguishing the çiftliks that were demanded immediately after the Pasha had fallen, the rest seemed to remain under the control of the central administration. They were probably too desolate, thus requiring greater investments in terms of both labour and capital. The principal concern of the Porte, however, seems to have been the relative decrease in the revenues emanating from these çiftliks as well as the desolate conditions surrounding the very same estates. For this reason it seems the former possessions of Ali Pasha (*Tepedelenli Emlakı*) seemed to hold an important place at the Porte while resolutions were sought in effect to raise their revenue levels to their earlier levels, that is, when possessed by Ali Pasha.⁹⁸ The dissolution of the mini-empire of the Pasha thus witnessed a further desolation of the lands devoted to agriculture and those dependent on the latter which required the intervention of the central administration with view to improve the agricultural production in northern Greece.

Exchange of Çiftliks in the Early-Tanzimat Period: A Privatisation Effort?

The Çiftliks of the Ottoman Balkans emerged as early as the sixteenth century in a setting in which the local notables, âyâns, somehow subverted the lands under the *mîrî* system, eventually making these lands with the facilities on them possessions

⁹⁷ The very apparent fact challenging the power of the provincial elites while establishing the central authority over the regions is obvious, and not relevant to the discussion here.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

of themselves. The previous possessors, reaya, were then relegated to the status of tenant, which concurrently signifies that there was an acute threat to the Ottoman social formation, which was constructed upon the çift-hane system. As elaborated above, the newly dispossessed peasants were to either remain on their lands as tenants, or look for other job opportunities in other agricultural production centres in the hands of landowners, based on varying sharecropping agreements.

In the aftermath of the promulgation of the Gülhane Imperial Rescript in 1839, there were, however, a great deal of çiftlik sales primarily in northern Greece, especially in Ioannina and Trikala. What this section attempts is to document the sales of these çiftliks in a comprehensive manner, and elaborate the fundamental reasons underlying this privatisation-like policy with a view to tracing its impacts upon the Ottoman social formation, and to identify the parties involved in these exchanges of agricultural production units.⁹⁹

Pioneering Findings about the Years of Redistribution

First and foremost, it should be noted that this “era of redistribution” preceded the Tanzimat Period, since the archival material from which the data accumulated is confined to a Tanzimat-led institution, which was classified as *İrade Dahiliye*, or Internal Imperial Orders.¹⁰⁰ As the forthcoming tables and figures indicate there

⁹⁹ Even though the documents do not reveal the sizes of the çiftliks sold apart from their quantities, the nominal value of the down payments will be employed as a tool for estimating the approximate size of these units.

¹⁰⁰ Sezar’s works seem to confirm this process, see the previous section.

was a great concentration of çiftliks sold in two sancaks of the Ottoman Empire, which were two of the most concentrated areas of çiftlik existence. Therefore, the initial questions to ask are, why these çiftliks were sold to third parties; and what the main initiative was behind these sales. Having presented a preliminary answer to these questions, then we will attempt to reveal the common characteristics of the documents as well as the unearthed findings.

The question underlying the reasons in terms of these sales of çiftliks seems to be quite complicated whereas the delineating initiative seems to have been economic-led concerns. Unfortunately, only two similar arguments in relation to these sales have been made. In this sense, Palairret, who has accomplished an overarching revisionist work on the Balkan economies, asserts that – albeit his emphasis is on the mid-century – the absentee landownership was increasingly bore decreasing returns due to the loss of advantageous labour employment and tithing rights, and, furthermore emphasising the shrinking labour market adds that labour was becoming increasingly expensive.¹⁰¹ Evidently, the centralising policies of the Sublime Porte were to alter the arbitrariness of the çiftlik owners which hitherto they had enjoyed for a long time, but its extent was quite restricted, this rises concerns apart from economic initiatives having been the main

¹⁰¹ Palairret, paying too much attention to the centralising efforts of the Porte on the çiftliks, relates this fact also to the commercial agriculture taking place in Danube which diverted migrant labour in large quantities. Yet, evidently, the sale of these large estates appears to bear a political decision as well. Michel Palairret, *The Balkan Economies, c. 1800-1914, Evolution without Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 46.

motivator. In a similar vein, Laiou mentions the preceding parts of the çiftlik sales, which will to be elaborated below as having taken place in Trikala, where she emphasises the tendency to sell çiftliks in Thessaly exploited by Ottomans to wealthier persons at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Accordingly, she relates this phenomenon to economic concerns by which she explains “their exploitation had proved unprofitable.”¹⁰² Even though, the economic concerns seem to be the logical conclusions upon these sales of large estates, it should be recalled that these acts of exchange was conducted by the very hands of the government and thus, the “visible hand” probably suffices to assert that the actions considering these exchanges transcended mere economic rationale.

Apart from reasoning behind these sales, what should be emphasised here is that these “sales” were not literally exchanges of property between related parties. In an era in which tax farm practices (*iltizam*) were abolished, this policy was undertaken to refrain from pronouncing the abolished term and thus contradicting the recent reforms. That is, even though the verb “sell” (*fürüht*) is used without any exception, this term might have been used in probably a loose manner to indicate the nature of the exchanges, for it appears that the çiftliks mentioned in the documents were rather tax-farmed rather than being actually sold. In a similar vein, since the çiftliks once subverted from the *mîrî* status were less likely to be deemed as a part of the çift-hane system in the long run, eventually these so-called sales may have been permanent life-leases in line with the tax farm regulations.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Laiou, “Some Considerations”, p. 271.

¹⁰³ McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 60-2.

Evidently, most çiftlik sales were conditioned for a given period of years, i.e., eight or nine years, but there was a considerable number of çiftlik sales in which duration was not addressed visibly.¹⁰⁴

These unaddressed conditions, however, were determined by a previous imperial decree (*irade-yi seniyye*) with a view to explaining the terms of inheritance as well as the necessary improvements upon the çiftliks as well as the cultivators. The very same decree, covering the çiftliks in Trikala, Ioannina and Salonica, at the same time, sheds light on the rationale behind these sales at least on paper. The initial reason seems to have been purely economical where the concern was addressed as such:

Those çiftliks which were registered for the Finance Treasury and belonging to the Imperial Estates located in Trikala, Ioannina and Salonica, had been under the hands of the tax-farmers which had thus led to neglect of their public works, and this state leading to partition and deficiency...¹⁰⁵

The desolation emanating from the Pasha's policies, therefore, appears quite clearly by this account in the sense that the extortion as well as the over-taxation

¹⁰⁴ Many documents concerning the sale of çiftliks under question here did not refer to the duration of the lease, which raises doubts that whether these agricultural lands were really sold or not. On the other hand, this case is basically due to a certain statement initially acknowledged, that is the *şerait-i mâlume*, which therefore did not necessitate the duration of leases to be written on every document. Nevertheless, since these çiftliks had been previously in the possession of prominent persons in the countryside and deemed as freehold property, these details reveal a hint about the nature of these exchanges. For sales of çiftliks without any indication of lease-duration, see İ. DH. 37/1757, 15 Safer 1257 (8 April 1841); İ. DH., 47/2344, 28 Ramazan 1257 (13 November 1841).

¹⁰⁵ “*Emlak-ı Hümayun-ı Şahane'den Tırhala ve Yanya ve Selanik ve sair bazı sancaklarda kain olup Maliye Hazinesinden mazbut olan çiftlikat şimdiye kadar mültezimler yedinde olduğundan îmarına dikkat olunmayarak bu keyfiyet bedelatının kesr ü noksanını mûcib görünmesiyle...*” İ. MVL., 1/14, Document 1, 3 Safer 1256 (6 April 1840).

of the *çiftlik*s under question led to the result where these large estates were stripped of their productivity concerns.¹⁰⁶ The *çiftlik*s were thus seemingly desperate in terms of revenue, thwarting the re-possession of the Porte, which was in need of constant cash inflows during the early Tanzimat years. When this desolation was intertwined with the duration of the auction process, it is seen that presumably the re-establishment of the *çiftlik*s and the accompanying costs were considerably great in the sense that the *çiftlik*s following the fall of Ali Pasha still remained under the state control lasting almost twenty years.

On the other hand, the basic reasoning mentioned above also was accompanied by land tenure relations that specifically concentrated on inheritance issues. In the same vein, the duration of the possession of the *çiftlik*s was hereditary, which was reminiscent of the distinction between *iltizam* and *mâlikane*. The stipulations read as such:

In the *sancaks* of Trikala and Salonica, the registered cost of the *çiftlik*s with (...) is to be submitted (...) to the Finance Treasury (...). Each *çiftlik* should be sold for a nine-year period and for a ten-year period according to abundance and partner; and upon the death of the possessors [of the *çiftlik*s] the *çiftlik*s under their responsibility merely being inherited to the children, not to other inheritors; via the restraints of the Finance Treasury, should be sold to the ultimate bidder; and a fine-good arrangement of the transportation and re-settlement of the miserable peasantry in their original homelands in effect to be taken care of while the aforementioned *çiftlik*s necessitate the improvements; however, since the sale of all of them is impossible in such a short time, until the bidders show up, they should be maintained in line with their current state of being and besides the necessary cattle and seed and other equipment, by means of *muhasıls* (tax collectors)

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. The state of the peasantry was not entirely different, for the document defines the *reaya* of these *çiftlik*s as “miserable” (*perişan*) in various parts.

should be supplied and thus [the çiftliks] be maintained temporarily (...) ¹⁰⁷

The term included in the document also indicates the terms of possession of these çiftliks “*ber-vech-i mâlikane*” or by means of permanent life-lease estate, therefore, the relatively “freehold” aspect of these estates. In this context, an effort was made to improve the miserable state of the reaya, presumably due to the over-taxation and extortion of the policies of Ali Pasha, by means of the central government, as in the case of the shift from iltizam to mâlikane in other particular examples of the Empire. Accordingly, the desolate state of both the reaya as well as of the buildings on these estates was recognised by the Porte, this concern was again raised by economic terms. The government was aware of the fact that the current state of the çiftliks, on which their reaya were miserable and the buildings were desolate, if left intact, would lead to further the desolation and to gradual

¹⁰⁷ The full excerpt reads as: “... *muhassılıkları icra olunmayan sancaklardan ma’ada Tırhala ve Selanik’in sancaklarında çiftlikatın bedel-i mukayyedesı mal-i âdile ile beher sene Maliye Hazinesine teslim olunmak ve Devlet-i Azam’a aid tahakkuk edecek semerat ve temettu’at fa’iz-i itibar olunarak beher çiftliğin dokuzar seneliğine veyahud arazisinin kesret ve şerikine göre onar seneliğine fûruht olunmak ve mutasarrıfları vefatında uhdelerinde olan çiftlik yalnız evlad-ı zükur ve enaseye intikal edip verese-i saireye intikal etmeyerek Maliye Hazinesi’nden zabt ile âhir talibine fûruht kılınmak ve perişan olan reayasının dahi vatan-ı asliyelerine nakl ü iskanları çaresine bakılmak üzere hüsn-i tesviyesi ve çiftlikat-ı mezkurenin îmarını mûcib olup fakat cümlesinin birden tez elden fûruhtu mümkün olamayacağından müşterileri zuhuruna kadar hali üzere bırakılmak için icab eden öküz ve tohum ve malzeme-i saireleri mahalleri muhassılları ma’rifetile bi’t-tedarik emaneten idare ettirilmesi ve bir de bi’l-cümle mesarifatı yani öküz ve tohum ve malzeme-i saireleri kendü bedenlerinden olub hasılat-ı vakia’sının gayr-i-ez mesarifat nısfı kendilerine ve nısf-ı diğeri muhasıllar taraflarından ahz ve (...) ile Hazine-i Amire’ye aid olmak üzere çiftlikat-ı mezkurenin icarına talib olanlar dahi kavi sened ve kefile rabt olunarak...”. İ. MVL., 1/14, Document 1, 3 Safer 1256 (6 April 1840).*

decrease in the registered values.¹⁰⁸ Having thus elaborated the basic premises underlying the sale of çiftliks in northern Greece, ultimately, the preferred conditions of these sales can be listed as such:

- The çiftliks under question were supposed to be sold for a duration of nine years, and often ten years depending on abundance and partners;
- The registered value, produce and profits of the çiftliks were considered *faiz-i îtibar*;
- The inheritance is confined to the sons and daughters of the actual possessors excluding other heirs;
- The çiftliks not demanded by any bidders were supposed to be maintained temporarily by means of muhassıls.
- The very same agents also were responsible for supplying the necessary cattle, seed, and other equipment, the payment of which would be divided into two parts; muhassıls paying the half, while the other half was recouped by the Imperial Treasury.
- The çiftliks bid during auctions were supposed to be improved in terms of the buildings thereon.¹⁰⁹

These conditions later on referred to as the “acknowledged conditions” (*şerait-i ma'lume*), were not mentioned again in the forthcoming documents validating the sales of the çiftliks. Even though it is doubtful that the potential çiftlik bidders actually met the responsibilities which were confined to production and infrastructure, these were the ostensible requirements in order to be eligible for acquiring the possession rights of çiftliks. Mention of these general requirements became less frequent gradually in the documents and were shortened to merely

¹⁰⁸ “...edm-i dikkat cihetle ebniyesi harab ve reayası perişan olmuş ve bu hal ile bırakılması bir kat dahi harablığını ve bedelat-ı mukayyedesinin refte refte kesr ü (...) mûcib olacağı tebeyyün etmiş olacağından ...” Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ İ. MVL., 1/14, Document 2, 3 Safer 1256 (6 April 1840)

“acknowledged conditions,” which is distinctive in terms of tracing the pattern of “the years of distribution.”

In this context, to start with the “introductory” lines of the documents, they characteristically began as such: Those from the *çiftlik*s of the Imperial Estates of the sale of which were required by the *irade-yi seniyye* to the ultimate bidder, thus the would-be possessor of the *çiftlik* mentioned, was usually noted with further details of payment. In this context, the down payment was to be paid either in advance or with a bill of exchange (*poliçe*) and sometimes the advance payment was divided into yearly installments.¹¹⁰ Once the plan of payment was articulated and thus the ultimate possessor of the *çiftlik* in question was determined if there was not a final problem concerning the sale of the *çiftlik* from the Treasury department or anyone else, the date that the new possessor was to hold and control the afore-mentioned *çiftlik* was noted with the final order of enforcement of the necessary processes by the Treasury.

The above-mentioned payment characteristics were not, however, completely present for the documents under question here. Still, the value of the down payment as well as the installments were recorded in an exhaustive way, since it appears that the primary concern of the Ottoman government was the cash payments to be recouped from these sales. That is, since complementary information is not available elsewhere about the *çiftlik*s which were not detailed with their exact location and name – and sometimes the name of the ultimate

¹¹⁰ For a particular case of payment realised with a bill of exchange (*ba-poliçe*), İ. DH., 88/4405, 10 Cemaziyelahir 1260 (27 June 1844).

Table 1: Administrative Distribution of the Redistributed Çiftliks between 1840 and 1847

Locations	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847
<u>Selanik (Salonica)</u>								
Karaferye (Veroia)			3					
<u>Tırhala (Trikala)</u>								
Tırhala		26	1	2				
Yenişehir (Larissa)	Various	10	11	2				
Alasonya (Elasson)		2	3					
Lestin		1						
Çatalca (Pharsala)				Various				
Urmiye				5				
Dilestin					1			
<u>Yanya (Ioannina)</u>								
Yanya					5			
<i>Korindos</i>					3			
<i>Çernovişte</i>					4			
<i>Çirakošta</i>					3			
Narde (Arta)						3	30	
<i>Gerdansaray</i>					1			
<i>Halkarsi</i>						1		
Preveze (Preveza)								
<i>Lemari</i>					8			
Endonan and Margliç						9		
<u>Delvine (Delvinë)</u>								
Delvine					3			
Nefs-i Delvine					2			
<u>Avlonya (Vlorë)</u>								
Avlonya								
Tepedelen (Tepelenë)					9			
بـالبيو غون					3	1		
Berat							3	
<i>Mendakiye</i>							17	
<u>Rumelia*</u>							5	
Nasliç							2	
Florine (Florina)								4
İstrove								1
Vodine, Yenice-i Vardar (Giannitsa)	Various		1					
Serfiçe (Servia), Çarşamba	10							

*: The undiversified çiftliks in both provinces (Ioannina and Rumelia) were included in the Rumeli Province. The unidentified/autonomous regions were included in this subcategory.

Note: The underlined lines refer to *sancaks* which were followed by *kazas*. Similarly *nahiyes* are placed under the *kazas* they are subordinated to, in italics.

Note: The single çiftlik in the district (*kaza*) of Lofça is not included in the Table.

bidder who therefore acquired the possession of these large estates – the conclusions to be drawn are likely to be very incomplete, but still suffice to trace the phenomenon.¹¹¹

The Parties Participating in the Çiftlik Auctions

What is more interesting concerning the sales comes along with the party of the claimant. In particular, these documents reveal the fact that the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire in reality had the right to become a possessor of çiftliks, at least as long as they had the necessary cash to do so. In a similar vein, the Muslim women of the Empire were additionally documented in these materials, actually possessing the çiftliks they bid for in the ultimate auction. This virtual indifference about the gender or the religion of the claimants, no doubt, indicates something crucial, but since the study deals only with brief details of the related parties, the rest of the story awaits further research. However, at least one clear observation can be made without any doubt. These recent findings decisively necessitate the Balkan historians' stereotypes of the Ottoman property relations which were shaped as the Muslim *aga* versus the non-Muslim peasantry in a setting where the latter was severely exploited and stigmatised with a considerable inferiority desperately stuck with a static class membership. These sales to the

¹¹¹ It should be also noted that, the sale of *çiftliks* covered in this section might still lack the chance of portraying a complete picture of the period and of the region. The reason behind is that the documents covering these sales also includes information on other internal affairs of the Porte which, therefore, leaves the researcher to elaborate the ones which included the *çiftlik*-sale issues on their summaries presented by the Prime Ministry Archives.

non-Muslim subjects of the Empire were shaped, however, by a clear distinction to which the documents under question referred when relevant. Although the existence as well as real application of this condition is comprehensible only to a certain extent, it only allowed such sales to reaya when there was no Muslim population (*ehl-i İslam*) in the vicinity of the çiftlik under question. Consequently, at least in a relatively narrow sense, there was the possibility that the reaya became landowners in the çiftliks in the Balkans and actually they did, as the sale documents reveal. Still, the condition restricting – or allowing, depending on the point of view – is worth stating in full:

Earlier, two notes of (...) concerning the sale arrangement of the çiftliks which belong to the Imperial Estates with the pre-known quantity in the *kazas* of Serfiçe and Çarşamba in the *sancak* of Trikala assured that the above-mentioned çiftliks had been reconciled upon some reaya, however, the fact that there is a Muslim [population] in the location of these kind of çiftliks stands against the Order, (...) which necessitates the alteration of the above-mentioned notes which were returned in an enclosed way...¹¹²

What this statement acknowledges is amazingly indicative of the transformation of the Ottoman property relations which were commonly recognised with their discouraging stance towards the idea non-Muslims acquiring land. Yet, even with restrictions, the nineteenth century or the Tanzimat era Ottoman policies tended to favour these sales to the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. Accordingly, the

¹¹² “Emlak-ı Hümayun’dan Tırhala Sancağı ile Serfiçe ve Çarşamba kazalarında olan ma’lume’l-aded çiftlikatın fûruhtu tesviyesine dair olan iki kıta’ takrir müşiriyyelerinde çiftlikat-ı mezbure mahallinde bil’ müzayede bazı reaya üzerlerinde kararlaşmış olduğunu gösterilmiş ise de bu makule çiftlikatın mahallinde İslam bulunduğu hallerde reyaya fûruhtu mugayir-i nizam olmasıyla nizamata tatbiken mezkur takrirlerin tebdili lazımeden olacağından leffen iade kılınmış olmakla nizamet tevfiiken takrirlerin tebdil ile iadesi behiyeleridir.” İ. DH., 47/2344, 28 Ramazan 1257 (13 November 1841).

statement above might seem to be a rare exception. For the period between 1841 and 1847, there are a few accounts of the sales of çiftliks culminating in reaya possession. In a particular case in December 1841, there is a significant participation of the reaya in the auction process of a çiftlik called *Coneler*, located in the *kaza* of Lestin, Trikala. Firstly, the sale of this çiftlik with a down payment and the other payments amounted to 110,500 *guruş* was agreed upon a non-Muslim (*zımmî*) called Endovan who lived in the locality of the çiftlik. Then, Endovan opted to withdraw from the act of purchase for reasons undisclosed in the document. After the withdrawal, apparently there was another auction then amounting to 85,000 *guruş* which culminated in the claim of a couple of *reaya* (*mezkûrî's-sami çend nefer reaya*) on the çiftlik. Just as the auction was about to conclude with these reaya's possession of the çiftlik, the muhassıl of Trikala intervened and a new claimant came along – with an increase of 1,000 *guruş* upon the previous auction value – and due to this çiftlik's proximity to his own çiftliks, the çiftlik of *Coneler* was finally granted to him, a Fehamettin Beyzade İsmet Bey Efendi.¹¹³

At the beginning of March 1842, three named çiftliks in the *kaza* of Larissa were auctioned amounting to 226,456 *guruş* to Vasi Ağa, who was a *derbendat me'muru* (mountain passes officer) from the Albanian dynasty and certain Hadice and Şefike ladies. Later on, the two ladies – whose origins are not given in the document – opted to withdraw from the auction, while they were replaced by a *zımmî* called Nikola Gaco who was charged with the same down payment to

¹¹³ İ. DH., 48/2369, 16 Şevval 1257 (1 December 1841).

which the two ladies had been entitled. However, the document reminding of the existence of Muslim population in the area, ultimately calls for a sale shaped by a two-sided solution, in which the half of the estate under question was granted to the afore-mentioned Vasi Ağa whereas the other was granted to Nikola.¹¹⁴

Unfortunately, the controversy brought about in terms of the restriction of çiftlik sales remains ambiguous and furthermore raises questions as to whether this was an exception or was exposed to manipulation in various cases.

Nevertheless, apart from the case of exception above, it seems that there was no prejudiced stance against the participation of these non-Muslim subjects of the Empire while they involved with these auctions. In this context, there were also cases in which ultimately the reaya acquired the possession of the çiftliks. In another auction case, the reasons underlying the reaya's participation in these auctions are given. That is, there were certain çiftliks that were not possessed by any local notables and eventually the cultivators of these estates came to deem these lands as their own possessions, and when the opportunity came along they presumably opted to acquire the lands they had been cultivating for a long time. In an Albanian sancak, Vlorë, the reaya of a certain village participated in an auction for three çiftliks which they had, as the document reveals, cultivated for a long time. Having bid 180,000 *guruş* for the çiftliks, the values of which had been determined as 150,000 *guruş*, they acquired the possession rights due to the fact

¹¹⁴ The case explaining the reason why Nikola cannot acquire the possession of the çiftlik s follows as such: "... *Nikola Gaco nam zımmi talib olarak tahkik olduğuna göre çiftlikat-ı mezburede el-yevm ehl-i İslam olduğu tebeyiün eylemiş olduğuna binaen zikrolunan çiftlikler nısfının mumaileyh Vasi Ağa'ya ve nısf-ı diğerinin dahi mumaileyhimanın (...) mersum Nikola zımmiye fūruht ile...*" İ. DH., 53/2634, 18 Muharrem 1258 (2 March 1842). For the active participation of the Muslim women in çiftlik auctions, see below.

that “the above-mentioned çiftliks have been assumed (*deruhde*) and tax farmed by their reaya all along; and were worked with a continuous effort to improve their utilities by spending *akçes* [for these estates] as their own property and since these çiftliks had lost their owner (*zayi’l-yed*).”¹¹⁵ Leaving aside the payment conditions and charges, these çiftliks were ultimately leased to six *reayas* from the same village, without any reference to the existence of a Muslim population in the village. Therefore, what this document reveals is that even the çiftliks which had been left to oblivion in terms of landownership were leased to claimants if they came along.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, beyond the non-Muslim’s participation, this case represents a specific instance for the reasons underlying the çiftlik sales – or the redistribution – where the primary stimulus was to increase the amount of lands under possession that hitherto had been left idle.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ İ. DH., 95/4763, 17 Zilhicce 1260 (28 December 1844).

¹¹⁶ Anastasopoulos accurately describes the cooperation between the Muslim and non-Muslim members of the elite, underlining their common interests and attitudes. He elaborates the case in the mid-eighteenth century Karaferye (Veroia), while emphasising the considerable differences, saying “Muslim and non-Muslim elite figures co-operated in business ventures ranging from trade to tax farming, amassed land through legal and illegal means, extended credit to the weaker members of society, rendering them dependent on them, shares similar luxury tastes, clothing and lifestyle, hired the services of or collaborated with mercenaries and outlaws.” For further details, see Antonis Anastasopoulos, “The Mixed Elite of a Balkan Town: Karaferye in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century,” in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire Halycon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003*, A. Anastasopoulos ed. (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005).

¹¹⁷ Again in a nahiye of Vlorë, a few days after the above sale was carried out, a çiftlik called Kakulakov (?) was auctioned for 3,944 *guruş* with an account of ten and a half years to some Abdüselim and Ahmed. Later on, other ultimate claimants came along, called Yorgi and Kosti, increasing the auction charge to 4,444 *guruş* and eventually acquiring the possession of the çiftlik. İ. DH., 95/4774, 25 Zilhicce 1260 (5 January 1845).

Another party participating in the çiftlik auctions was the Muslim women of the Empire. This, however, seems to precede the Tanzimat era to the eighteenth century. Zarinebaf, after noting the bidders of the çiftliks in the Morea region, ascertains the activities of women as such, “women of the palace also began to participate in increasing numbers in bidding for short-term tax-farms and *malikanes* in Istanbul, Anatolia, the Morea, and Egypt, a development that in general reflected the growing public visibility of palace women and Ottoman princesses during the 18th century.”¹¹⁸ This visibility was noticeably present in the case of a sale of the çiftliks under question here where these ladies, presumably prominent persons of their residential districts – actually bid for çiftliks and ultimately acquired the possession of these estates. Yet, it should be noted that the names of these women cannot be trusted as their having participated in auctions, rather they might have represented their fathers, husbands, or brothers. This requires further research but these pioneering findings suffice to claim that the presence of Muslim women in the public sphere in terms of çiftlik auctions was considerable.

In a particular case, a çiftlik from those to be sold, located in the *kaza* of Urmiye (Lake Ohrid) in the *sancak* of Trikala; and seven çiftliks and a mansion (*konak*) were to be sold to a certain Ahmed Şükrî Efendi, with a down payment amounting to 197,968 *guruş*. Later, other bidders came along comprised of Afife Hanım and Ali Bey, who were inhabitants of Salonica, – the relation between

¹¹⁸ She also attributes a prominent role to the Mamluk women in the tax farms of Egypt in the eighteenth century. Zarinebaf, “Soldiers into Tax-Farmers”, p. 37.

them unknown – they increased the bid to 222,460 *guruş* for the five *çiftlik*s and the mansion, which then were leased to them.¹¹⁹

Culminating these particular cases, the overall picture after the redistribution, or sale according to the documents, reveals the distributional pattern of the statuses of the *çiftlik*s purchasers. Presumably, most of the ultimate bidders in the auctions for the *çiftlik*s in Ottoman northern Greece were somehow affiliated with the Sublime Porte. That is, the nature of the auctions were indeed to validate this case since the auctions held in the region where a given *çiftlik* was located were not put in effect to see whether an ultimate bidder from outside, i.e. Istanbul, could attend the auction process and thus increase the bid.

In a setting where the final decisions were shaped by the amount of wealth, it was thus explicable that the majority of the purchasers of the *çiftlik*s belonged to the higher classes of the Ottoman hierarchy, either local in the countryside or central at the Porte. In this context, there was a perceivable struggle over the *çiftlik*s that were more productive or regarded as more strategic for those attempting to assure their presence in the very environs of the *çiftlik*s mentioned. Accordingly, the *çiftlik*s which the earlier cultivators had possessed and cultivated were considerably cheaper and less significant in terms of land value. However, regardless of the different attributions attached to the lands under question these sales mostly ended up in bureaucratic or military personalities who were incorporated into the Ottoman sphere with the winning bids. As the earlier minor struggles over land showed more clearly, the newly redistributed lands were again granted to the possession of some influential figures who were actually the

¹¹⁹ İ. DH., 79/3930, 29 Şaban 1259 (24 September 1843).

continuity of Tepedelenli Ali Paşa, but rather in a decreased and undermined setting.

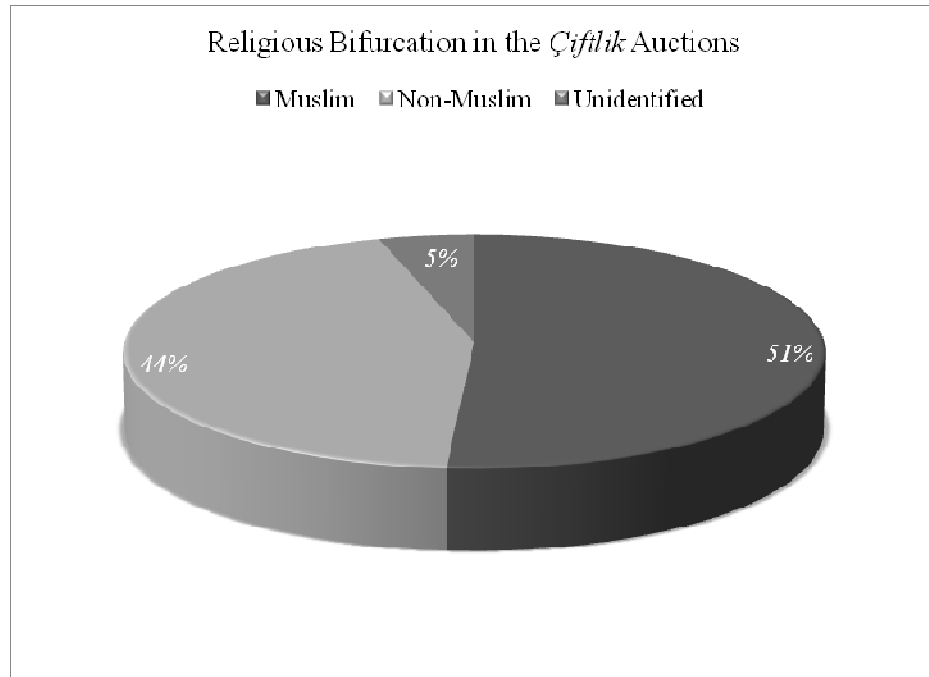


Figure 1: Religious bifurcation in the çiftlik auctions.

Note: Çiftlik auctions ending up with two partnerships including one Muslim and another non-Muslim were classified in both categories. One-sided sales were marked along the both classes; irrespective of the number of persons participated in the auctions.

When the ultimate possessors are classified as in the case of Figure 1, that is, instead of per capita computation, a two-tailed approach interested only in class demarcation, “the years of redistribution” ultimately made sure that these sales were not confined to the economic rationale as the “acknowledged conditions” prescribed in the first place, but also revealing a covert way of wealth exchange in Ottoman Greece. Since the former conditions were undertaken to improve the infrastructure and cultivators of these northern Greece çiftliks, it is therefore justifiable to a certain extent that the majority of the purchasers came from the landlords as well as Ottoman bureaucracy. The question of whether the very

necessary improvements took place, however, seems to be controversial. Considering the status of the reaya employed on these çiftliks, mostly on sharecropping contracts, the improvements, if accomplished at all, seem thus to have been trivial.

In this context, the data emanating from the Figure 1 clearly show two distinguished facts. The first one is the deliberate option of the Porte in terms of preferring the Muslim elements at these auctions. The condition requiring the absence of a Muslim population in the environs of the given çiftlik thus indirectly impeded the struggle of the cultivators of the very same çiftliks, that is, mostly being non-Muslim, which resulted in a relatively lower success rate of the non-Muslim elements of northern Greece in terms of achieving possession rights of the çiftliks. Accordingly, this distinction along with the religious concerns, or the *millet* system, was further also shaped by the distinction between the Muslim elements. That is, the materials witnessing the phases of the auctions first underline the auction was held at the local level, i.e., the environs of the given çiftlik. Once the auction was completed at this level, the ultimate phase this auction was transferred to the Porte, with the expectation of the involvement of an ultimate bidder close to the various Porte circles. This case may not be the common feature of the çiftliks studied here, but it was observed repeatedly that most of the çiftliks undergoing auction were addressed towards the Porte – whether an ultimate bidder showed up in Istanbul or not – with the final word to be sealed. What this option reveals is obvious, the prospective possessors of the çiftliks were thus to be picked from the higher echelons of the Ottoman bureaucracy, if they were interested in the given auction.

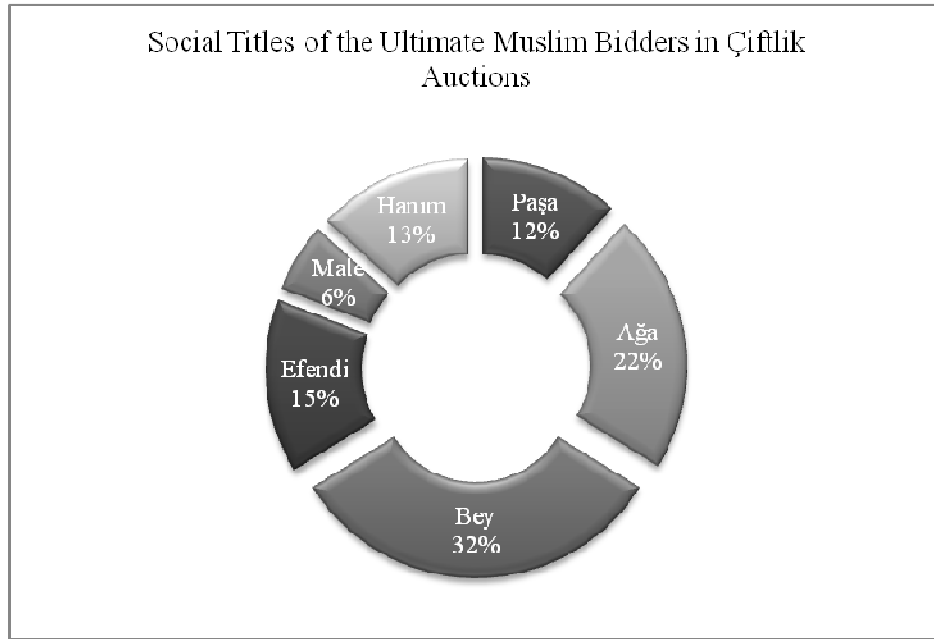


Figure 2: Social titles of the Muslim ultimate bidders in çiftlik auctions.
Note: The category remarked as Male refers to the Muslim males with no hierarchical title, but merely their names.

By looking at Figure 2, the relative range of the newly proclaimed possessors of the çiftliks under question therefore becomes evident. Instead of a single influential character on the relatively vast plains of Thessaly, the Porte, via these redistributions, accomplished one of the major requirements of the era, undermining the strength of the provincial elites. This does not mean that the success of the government was a complete triumph. These personalities, most of them being close to Istanbul and the others being Albanian notables roaming through the countryside, were still resistant to the Ottoman central authority albeit with the diminishing power compared to that of Ali Paşa.

Even though there was a great possibility that the titles with which the documents were entailed could have been employed in rather a loose sense, the dispersion that Figure 2 denotes was still accountable with a view to shaping a preliminary view of the different classes of Muslim elements participating in the

auctions. For instance, persons who were probably of non-Muslim origin apparently were aligned with the title *ağa*, the most prominent case being the cooperative actions of Vasi Ağa, who in those years was known for his entrepreneurial activities. Being aware of such facts, Figure 2 nevertheless highlights the social consequences of this redistribution effort of the Porte. In this vein, the existence of the *paşas* was severely limited for reasons unknown but can be speculated. However, an interpretation can be made that either the relatively low values of the *çiftlik*s did not attract many of the members of this class, or there was a probable deliberate action on the part of the Porte which sought to impede these individuals from accumulating such lands most probably due to the need not to recreate Tepedelenli Ali Paşa.

This state was also approved by the lower echelons that possessed the *çiftlik* after the auctions, those being *ağas*, *beys*, and *efendis*. Though the above-mentioned warning is still in place, the extending range of the possessors seems to have ensured the pre-desired policy of the government with a view to accomplishing the redistribution, ending up with the lands accumulated in a more dispersed pattern. Accordingly, these titles, also revealing bits of information concerning the level of wealth of these persons, are in line with the sizes of these *çiftlik*s. The matching between the titles and the possible values of the *çiftlik*s seems somewhat constrained but in any case, the case of the *reaya*'s relative lack of challenge to the prospective landlords of higher hierarchical status appears from the values of payments exchanged during the auction processes *vis-à-vis* the Porte.

Table 2: The Purchasers of and the Payments for the Redistributed Çiftliks between 1840 and 1847.

Document No.	Name of the Çiftlik	Name of the Purchaser	The Value of Down Payment (<i>Mu'accele</i>)	The Value of Installments (<i>Müeccele</i>)
20 973	n. a.. (Various)	Head of the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances Hasib Paşa	n. a.	n. a.
24 1165	n. a.. (10 çiftliks)	Kuyumcuoğlu Yorgi of Kozane and his three brothers	571,602	n. a.
26 1237	n. a.. (Various)	n. a..	2,089,472	n. a.
32 1521	n. a.. (8 çiftliks)	n. a..	745,000	n. a.
37 1757	n. a.. (24 çiftliks)	Tifor (?) Bey and Hüseyin Ağa of the <i>hanedân</i> of Yenişehir (only 3 çiftliks)	1,174,015	n. a.
39 1809	Meriçde	n. a..	90,000	n. a.
40 1879	Kalkon (?)	Şefik Bey of <i>hanedân</i> of Yenişehir (from <i>Mevâli</i>)	230,250	n. a.
41 2008	Aya Keryaki (?)	n. a.	94,008	n. a.
	Zevlani (?)	n. a.	55,100	n. a.
44 2192	Dilnesne	Reşid Paşa, Said Paşa	74,000	1500
48 2369	Coneler	Fehamettin Beyzâde İsmet Bey Efendi	86,000	1750
48 2386	Kondryonca (Yonca)	Âli Bey of the <i>hanedân</i> of Selanik and his relative Yusuf Efendi	122,498	4250
49 2446	Peze	Inhabitant <i>reaya</i> of the environs.	6644	250
	Kuktolosi (?)	Inhabitant <i>reaya</i> of the environs.	36,760	1250
33 576	mâa Konile	5 <i>Reaya</i>	120,000	n, a,
51 2537	Almersi, Levtorosi, Kevenarsi	Officer of <i>derbends</i> of Çetleçe and Hermeke (?) Vasi Ağa of the <i>hanedân</i> of Albania and Nikola Gaco	226,456	14,650
	Lesnpazarı (?)	Aleko and Emin	50,388	1800
53 2631	Golreçe (?)	5 <i>reaya</i>	13,000	300
	Gayşene (?)	5 <i>reaya</i>	53,000	2000
53 2636	Vetrema mâa Büyükköy	Ahmed Şükri Efendi from <i>Hocegân</i>	138,095	5800
55 2694	Kornos	Hüseyin Halis Efendi	48,543	2513
	Ayan-Kebir (?)	Seyid Mahmud Efendi and Şerife Ayşe Hüsna Hanım	55,003	2847
55 2713	Mikoliçe İbrahim Bey	n. a..	122,283	6500
	Zirava, Laksede	n. a..	47,782	6500
57 2830	Virendos	Âli Bey of the <i>viicuh</i> of Selanik and Yusuf Efendi	48,000	1350
62 3051	Çakre	Chief of palace gatekeepers Hasan Bey and his brother Şakir Bey of <i>hocegân</i>	13,596	n. a.
64 3157	Tesane	Hacı Âli Ağa	43,000	n. a.
64 3190	Kokove	Retiree of Regular Cavalry Troops, lieutenant Hürşid	40,000	1475

		Ağa		
71 3525	Belyodi (?)	Vasi Ağa and Nikola Gaco	9,807	5800
71 3544	Tavşan, Sığır ve Kavak (?)	(...) Ağa ve Anatositi	12,100	250
74 3668	Zolani	Resident of the environ Hacı Mehmed Bey and Hanife Hatun	27,135	1350
79 3930	n. a.. (5 çiftliks)	Residents of Selanik Afife Hanım and Âli Bey	222,468	10.167
79 3938	Seluş	Anastas and Kostandi	34,000	n. a.
81 4068	Kısıklı	Chief of palace gatekeepers Hasan Bey of <i>hanedân</i> of Yenişehir	108,000	7100
88 4405	Rodotop	Wife of Muhiddin Paşa, Ayşe Hanım	7323	4200
	Av Yorgi (?)	Wife of Muhiddin Paşa, Ayşe Hanım	30,689	57,500
88 4411	Kubana	Osman Ağa of the <i>hanedân</i> of Çamlık and his brother	27,363	12,000
	Kaylet (?), Köknesne (?), Ravosende (?)	Osman Ağa	7646	1300
	n. a.. (8 çiftliks)	Chief of palace gatekeepers Ahmed Dino Ağa of the <i>hanedân</i> of Çamlık	76,720	51,500
89 4457	Kevkolosi (Kukulosi ?)	Kalo Bey of the <i>hanedân</i> of the <i>kaza</i> of Ergiri	20,924	13,000
91 4582	Klamura	Resident of Preveze Kırçali Hüseyin Ağa	5864	2200
92 4603	Likodasi, Çukavebali (?)	Selim Beyzâde Abdül Bey of the <i>hanedân</i> of Delvine and his brother Süleyman Bey	7725	4100
92 4625	Çıracı (Çıraç ?)	Chief of palace gatekeepers Yakub Ağa, his wife Fatma Hanım and Talat Efendi	92,570	2500
92 4626	Yelvehud, İvhor, Romanov (?)	Hurşid Efendi of <i>hocegân</i> and Anastas	20,280	15,000
94 4700	n. a. (9 çiftliks, 13 <i>yaylaks</i> and <i>kışlaks</i>)	Chief of palace gatekeepers Abdülcelil Ağa and Abdullah Efendi	180,000	28,100
94 4723	Gardik	Murtaza and Mustafa Beys of the <i>vücu</i> of Yanya	25,215.50	1600
95 4757	Duşankasi, Lepyë, Kukuloş, Meşvinçe (?)	Said Bey of the <i>vücu</i> of Yanya and Muhiddin Bey	28,520	15,500
95 4763	n. a.. (3 çiftliks)	6 <i>reaya</i>	180,000	22,200
95 4774	Kakulakov (?)	<i>Reaya</i> of the <i>nahiye</i> Yorgi and Kosti	4444	2600
97 4895	Kansuşi	Sadık Efendi of the <i>vücu</i> of Narde and Panayot of Yanya	36,214	25,000
98 4936	Halkarsi, Sulubergos, Rahi	Yusuf Efendi and Aleksandır	42,491	35,000
99 4990	n. a.. (9 çiftliks)	Chief of palace gatekeepers Ahmed Dino and his	100,000	47,300

		nephew Osman Ağa and Galbizan (?) Ağa		
102 5135	Kolehavan, Melvabende, Erbecebasi (?)	Mehmed Ağa of ولجباتلى	4240	3000
112 5633	Ömeroba	Hafız Âli of Lofça community and <i>varoş kocabaşı</i> Saco	52,500	500
121 6155	n. a.. (4 çiftliks)	<i>Müşir</i> Pasha of Girid	308,500	n. a.
	Selniçe (?)	Reaya of the çiftlik	222,500	n. a.
77 1502	Çerşove	Rüstem Bey of the <i>hanedân</i> of Lesko...	49,433	6040
	n. a..	Rüstem Bey of the <i>hanedân</i> of Lesko...	31,084	4040
125 6410	Selades	Residents of Yanya Âli and Abdullah and Zübeyde Hanım	15,250	4500
126 6431	n. a.. (17 çiftliks)	Kahraman Bey	92,731	70,600
126 6452	n. a.. (27 çiftliks)	Reis Pasha and Nazır Paşa	380,605	265,300
	Kosnakosi (?) Kombut (?)	<i>Müşir</i> of Rumelian Imperial Army Reşid Pasha	89,385	71,300
137 7032	Yanla, mâa Sazlıgöl Tebrice, Cerde, n. a. Nevrekod	Hüsrev Paşa, Hadice (...) Hanım, Fatma Hanım, Director of the Imperial Stables Muhammed Bey	234.900	n. a.
	Total (<i>guruş</i>)		9,183,119.5	845,281.5

Revealing the ultimate down payments which ended the auctions as well as the monthly installments, Table 2 shows the results of a preliminary study with a view to comprehending the areal size of the çiftliks. Unfortunately, the materials validating the redistributions lack any substantial information regarding the size, production or employment patterns of the çiftliks under study. However, the values attributed to çiftliks as well as the increasing auction payments are essential in terms of at least visualising the hypothetical size and productivity of these estates. In the same vein, the çiftliks which the reaya, the cultivators of the very same çiftliks usually attempted to purchase can be said to have cost relatively less, indicating the probability that the lack of interest on the behalf of the elites of the Empire made it possible for the former's triumph in terms of possession.

Looking once at Table 2 clarifies the auctions where the reaya acquired

possession of *çiftlik*s, none of which exceeded – in terms of down payment – 60,000 *guruş*.

Having accumulated the preliminary information concerning the new landlords of the *çiftlik*s under study, what can be argued without any hesitation is that the Porte was successful to a certain extent in its initial concerns of the redistribution of land. The lands were thus transferred to those who were supposedly financially capable of undertaking the necessary improvements of these estates in effect to increase agricultural productivity. Yet, given the nature of the particular region as well as the sharecropping contracts between the landlord and the cultivators, the completion of these improvements is highly doubtful. Speaking through the idiom of the material, the “desolate” conditions of the infrastructure of the estates were most likely sorted out whereas the “miserable” conditions of the cultivators did not attain a more improved bargaining position *vis-à-vis* the new landlords. That is, the sharecropping contracts were still shaped by the very same two parties, one of which had apparently the upper hand during these negotiations, enabled by the ignorance of the Porte that these semi-feudal relations remained intact.

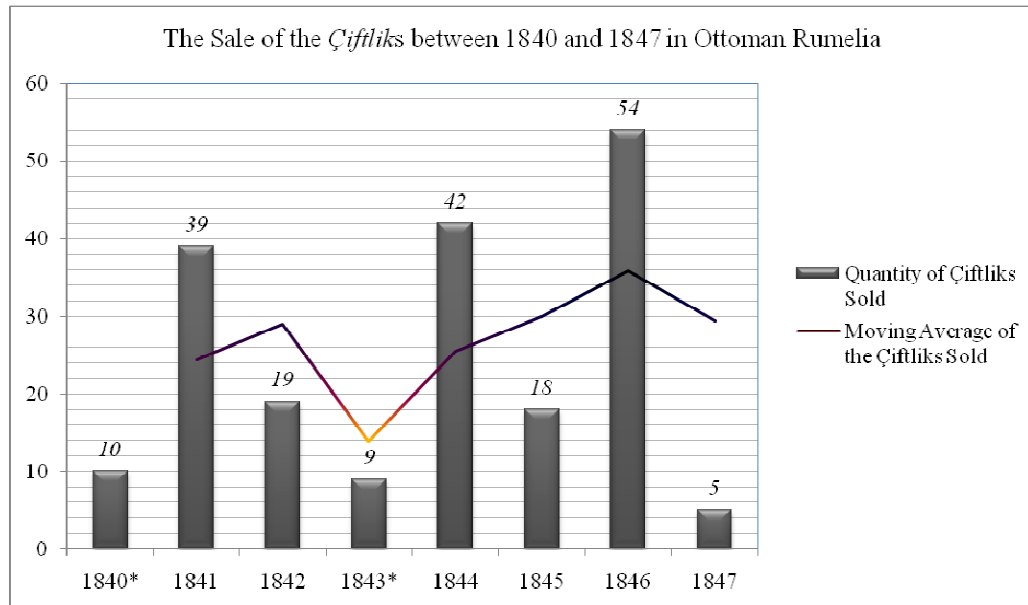


Figure 3: The sale of the çiftliks between 1840 and 1847 in Ottoman Rumelia.

*: These years include sales the quantities of which were not quantified as documented in Table 1.

The Historical and Geographical Distribution of Çiftliks

Having presented the pioneering facts in terms of the participants in çiftlik auctions, now we turn to the historical and geographical allocation which presumably might offer points worthy of note. Firstly, as Figure 3 above indicates the sales of the çiftliks do not seem to have followed a linear trend, but rather seem to have been shaped by peculiar factors. Still the lack of explanatory means elaborating the latter factors impedes even drawing a partial conclusion concerning these sales. Even though the numbers distributed among years do not reveal a certain tendency, the geographical distribution of these leases appears to reveal relatively sound facts. As Table 1 in the previous pages indicated, the sales

of these çiftliks follow a provincial order, albeit with the possibility of mere coincidence.

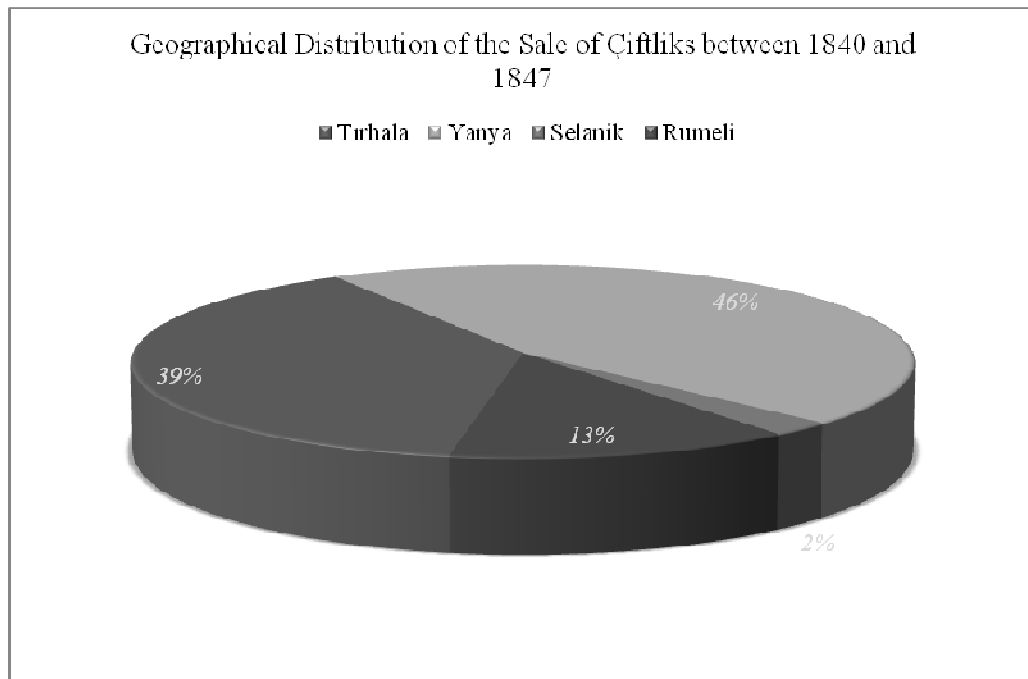


Figure 4: Geographical distribution of the sale of çiftliks between 1840 and 1847.

Notes: a) The çiftlik in the Vidin region was discarded due to insignificant data.
 b) The unquantified çiftliks in the former figures again were not included.

Looking at Figure 4, this geographical distribution makes itself quite clear and if it is assumed that these çiftliks previously had been in the possession of the *vücu* of these environs – in a more accumulated manner – which had been confiscated by the Ottoman government, since it is known that these regions, i.e., Trikala, Ioannina and Salonica, were characterised by the existence of *vücu* with massive estates appropriated in the course of time, Tepedelenli Ali Paşa being the most notorious figure in this context. This geographical distribution thus also can be read as an attack of the centralisation efforts of the Ottoman government which ended up on the battlefields where the major assaults took place. Accordingly, returning to Table 1, it appears that these attacks were also organised along a

time-order; that is, as the

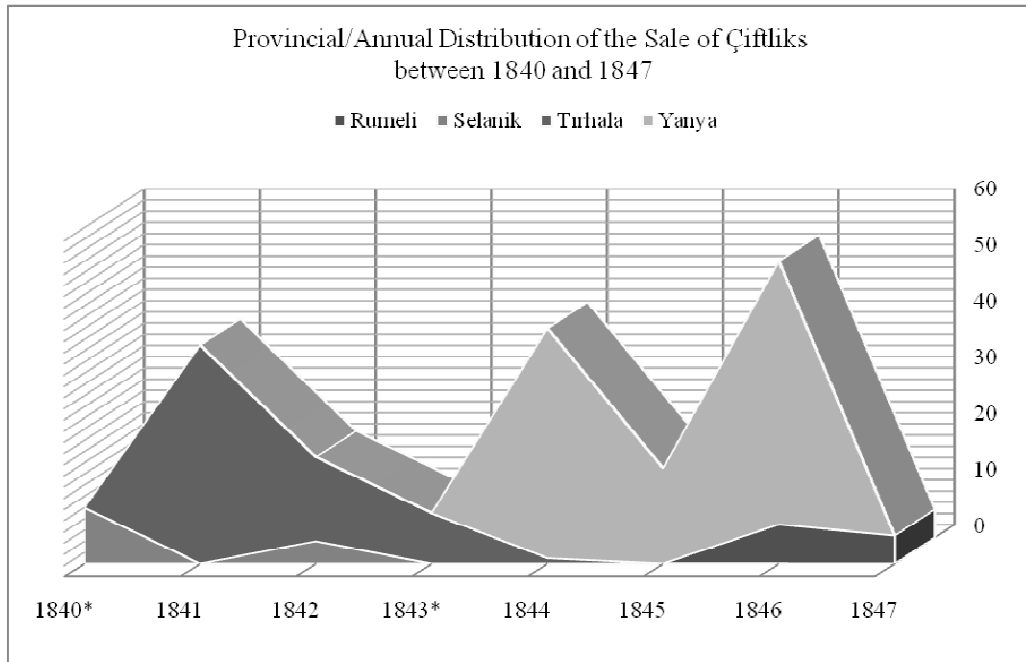


Figure 5: Provincial/Annual distribution of the sale of çiftlik between 1840 and 1847.

region – on a decreasing level – which might indicate that prior to this period substantial numbers of çiftlik in the same region had been leased. Furthermore, once they were eliminated and leased to some other minor local notables, the emphasis was shifted to another region; in this case, Trikala and Ioannina, respectively. Figure 5, actually reveals these shifts precisely in the sense that the consecutive years predominantly were entitled with the sale of the çiftlik usually concentrated in a region. Hence, when the sales of çiftlik came to an end in a region, it appears that the next phase was about to be initiated in another region, another province in this particular case. Accordingly, it is possible to claim that a greater number of sales in the Salonica province had taken place in the preceding

years, and in the same vein, the rise of sales in Rumeli province was possibly encountered in the forthcoming years.

The auctions involving the multiple claimants seem to indicate that there were joint partnerships among those who participated in these sales. That is, although it is difficult to generalise the presence of such partnerships, one case stands out in an astonishing way. Returning to Table 2 and recalling the entrepreneurship concerning the above-mentioned three çiftlik sales in Larissa conducted by Vasi Ağa and Nikola Gaco, it appears that these two persons were apparently not content with a çiftlik they had acquired at the beginning of 1258 A. H. for at the end of the same year these two persons participated in another çiftlik auction again located in the *kaza* of Larissa.¹²⁰ This time, without any reference to the restriction concerning the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire, these two entrepreneurs made a bid amounting to 9,807 *guruş* including the down payment and the rest of the minor charges and afterwards – while no ultimate claimants showing up – acquired the çiftlik of Belyodi (?).¹²¹

Obviously, this partnership might have been a mere product of coincidence. This particular instance, however, somehow suggests that these joint partnerships were likely to have gone beyond sporadic occurrences which presumably extended into a common medium for the local notables in the countryside by which they expanded their lands and thus enhanced their local power, culminating in commercial and entrepreneurial concerns. That is because the entrepreneurial adventure that Nikola Gaco started out was not the first or presumably the last

¹²⁰ For the previous action they participated, see note 114 above.

¹²¹ İ. DH., 71/3525, 18 Zilhicce 1258 (20 January 1843).

one. Apart from participating in the çiftlik auctions he was also interested in silk production in the later years. In March 1846, that is, a few years later, he became co-possessors of the four çiftliks in Larissa (the exact dates being March 1842 and January 1843), the petition he had earlier requested from the Finance Ministry with a view to acquiring the license (*ruhsat*) for his new factory was discussed in the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances. Even though the verdict of the government and the earlier information is absent, it appeared that Nikola Gaco started out to establish a six-weaving-loom factory in the environs of Larissa, where he lived.¹²² It is therefore possible to argue that the possession of çiftliks along with the prospective profits to be recouped later on was coupled with the preliminary steps for commercial enterprises.

On the other hand, even though the necessary information connecting the possession of çiftliks with crop production is lacking it is evident that the cooperation that took place between Nikola Gaco and Vasi Ağa was employed as one of the major revenue-making options. Thus, this cooperation of the two non-Muslim persons seems to underline the significance of the çiftlik possession in terms of the commercial activities. Furthermore, a couple of years later Nikola Gaco seemed to have acquired the privileges of the European merchants; for

¹²² İ. MSM. 24/165, 20 Rebiulevvel 1262 (18 March 1846). Even though the link between the silk production in this factory and the previously purchased çiftliks in terms of silk-worm breeding is highly alluring, unfortunately there is not any connection as far as this study concerned.

another document asserting the international trade activities he had been engaged with as a merchant indicates his debts in due.¹²³

Therefore, the link between the possessors of the *çiftlik*s and the commercial activities of the former seems not to have been sporadic but rather quite dynamic. Though it does not directly lead towards the commercial agriculture with a view to setting out capitalist relations on these *çiftlik*s, this particular cooperation is meaningful in terms of accompanying the commercial activities of the landlords, who preferred commercial entrepreneurs. Being thus an option, when the principal hypothesis underlying the reasons for privatising these large estates is taken into consideration, it would not be incorrect to expect and hence observe such cases of collaboration among the various actors who were prominent figures of the areas where they lived.¹²⁴

Conclusively, conferring the basic verdicts about the “years of redistribution” in relation with the parties mediating the exchange, it appears that these *çiftlik*s were again sold to prominent figures of both the central government and the countryside on the basis of *iltizam*. Correspondingly, the respective listing of the parties who finally acquired the possession of these *çiftlik*s, now stands out

¹²³ HR. MKT. 60/46, 9 Ramazan 1269 (17 June 1853). The summary of the document follows as such: “The collection of debts of Nikola Gaco who is a European Merchant, due to the commerce taking place with the customs-tax.” The document is important in the sense of identifying Nikola Gaco with the privileges attributed to *berath* merchants.

¹²⁴ It appears that the non-Muslim possessors of *çiftlik*s go back to the eighteenth century; in the case of Manastır, Ursinus states that they include “more occasionally, dervish *şeyhs*, women and even non-Muslims”. Michael Ursinus, “The *Çiftlik* Sahibleri of Manastır as a Local Elite, Late Seventeenth to Early Nineteenth Century,” in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire Halcyon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003* A. Anastasopoulos ed. (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), p. 250.

in a more clearly fashion since the distribution of the new landowners seems to have highlighted the limits of the sphere of influence of these provincial elites in these provinces *vis-à-vis* the centralisation efforts at the core of the Empire.

On the other hand, in line with the “years of redistribution,” its meaning for the status of the peasantry stands out in a way that is more fascinating. In other words, the question of whether these sales of agricultural estates – not necessarily large – meant for the peasantry cultivating them solely a “change” of landowners, meaning their status prior to the sale remained intact or if it meant deteriorating conditions for the peasantry employed on these *çiftlik*s since the nineteenth-century is known to have had the increasing levels of exploitation of agricultural labour – regardless of the trade-led-incentives. That this exploitation was done by the hands of the very same landowners mentioned above is intriguing, for the same question might be a substantial instrument with a view to elaborating the continuum of labour abuses as well as of the forced labour in agriculture in the Balkans.

Within this context, the original vision of the Sublime Porte, including the amelioration of both the “miserable” peasantry and “desolate” infrastructure,” was unfortunately not successful, for the redistribution of these agricultural estates did, in the first place, not alter the relations of production employed in these units. The policy of the State, thus, merely transferred wealth from major figures, i.e., Tepedelenli Ali Paşa, to minor figures with the above expectations. The failure of this policy is another instance where the deeds of the Porte remained on paper. Hence, along with the reforms of the Tanzimat, what the reaya succeeded at

acquiring in terms of rights as well as real benefits seems to have been little after the sales of the *çiftlik*s.

Table 3: The Registry of the *Çiftlik*s of Imperial Estates in April 1847

	<i>Çiftlik</i> s	<i>Kışlak</i> s	Other
<i>Sancaks</i> of Ioannina, Vlorë and Delvinë			
Sold	110	15	44
Currently unsold	439	77	2
<i>Sancak</i> of Trikala			
Sold	132		
Currently unsold	70		
<i>Eyalet</i> of Rumelia			
Sold	27		
Currently Unsold	14		
<i>Total</i>	930	92	46

The deficiencies of the “redistribution” policy of the Porte as well as its very slow pace were admitted by the central government itself in 1847.¹²⁵ One of the bitter consequences of the “years of redistribution” was the relative significance of the *çiftlik*s unsold in three regions of the Empire, as Table 3 indicates.¹²⁶ The *çiftlik*s and *kışlak*s in the environs of Ioannina, Vlorë and Delvinë which were still unsold are worthy of note when the starting date of the redistribution process, as early as 1840, was taken into account. Yet, there were more severe difficulties attributable to the redistribution process, than the lack of demand for *çiftlik*s. The striking detail was the confession of the Porte in the sense that it lacked accurate information concerning the *çiftlik* sold to third parties. Accordingly, a similar

¹²⁵ İ. MSM. 20/491, 5 Cemaziyelevvel 1263 (21 April 1847). The material, composed of five documents, includes the preliminary version of Table 3 above, then deals with the *çiftlik*s issue in the *kaza* of Goriçe (Korçë) with a view to overcome the problems emanating from the sales in detail both in the *kaza* and in the rest of the aforementioned regions.

¹²⁶ Table 3 is also essential for it draws the constraints of this study in terms of the *çiftlik*s elaborated in detail.

problem following the sales of *çiftlik*s in the *kaza* of Goriçe addressed the discomfort emanating from the persistence of the lack of investment in the infrastructure of the estates. This issue when added to the earlier land tenure problems is summarised as such:

... Because the afore-mentioned *çiftlik*s were changing hands in the preceding administration; those who tax farmed, spending no effort for the improvement [of *çiftlik*s], along with their personal interests had led to desolation. And, later on, during the Tanzimat, by means of *muhassıllık*, briefly, [their] achievement of infrastructure and registered cost became more than the revenues; by the order which was decided upon with the intention of creating more benefits, the *çiftlik*s started to be sold to claimants emanating from the Muslim and non-Muslims. Whereas the afore-mentioned *çiftlik*s were purchased by three or five *reaya*, the down payments and the installments were allocated to all *reaya* by the former purchasers who in turn collected and paid. And, the community was discouraged from agriculture by the *kocabaşıs* and the other leading *reaya* leading to the inadequate levels of *mahlulat* along with the mistreatment of the *reaya*...¹²⁷

Nevertheless, the resolution that the Porte immediately offered was not that elusive. Having learned the disadvantageous conditions stemming from these sales in Goriçe, the government resorted to an immediate delay concerning *çiftlik*s

¹²⁷ İ. MSM. 20/491, 5 Cemaziyevvel 1263 (21 April 1847), Document 2. Having summarised the legitimisation of the previous sales of *çiftlik*s, the lines of the material admit the attitude of the cultivators who acted on the contrary to the wishes of the Porte. “...*çiftlikat-ı merkume mukaddemki idarede elden ele geçtiği cihetle iltizam edenler menfâ’at-ı mahsusâ gazezile imârına asla sarf-ı efkâr etmeyerek müşerref harab olmuş ve muahharen (...) Tanzimat’ta muhassıllık ma’rifetile idaresinde fi’l-cümle eser-i ma’mûriyet ve bedelat-ı mukayyedesinde fazla-ı hasılat olmasıyla daha ziyade husul-i menfâ’at mütâla’asıyla karargâr olan nizam-ı mâ’lumu vechile İslam ve reayadan zuhur eden taliblerine fûruhtu olunmakta olduğu halde çiftlikat-ı merkume reayası üçer beşer neferinin ismine olarak mübayâ’a edip müeccele ve mu’accelatını reyanın cümlesine bi’t-tevzi’ ahz birle te’diye etmekte olduklarından ve kocabaşı ve sair ilerü gelen reaya tarafından ahali iâne ve zirâ’ata teşvik olunmamakta olmasından dolayı çiftlikat-ı merkumenin edm-i (?) ma’mûriyetile beraber reyanın mağduriyetini ve mahlulatın layıkıyla meydana çıkmamasını mûcib olacağından...”*

unsold in the *sancaks* of Ioannina, Vlorë, and Delvinë and in the *eyelet* of Rumeli. As such, the inspiration, according to the document, came from the çiftliks located in Trikala, the tithe-farming of which appeared to give beneficial consequences. Considering this case, the Porte appropriately opted to apply this method to the çiftliks still unsold.¹²⁸ In this context, the remaining unsold çiftliks, which were 453 estates in total, were kept for delay prior to their sales with a view to materialising an appointment of an officer (*emlak me'muru*) who would be responsible for monitoring the state of the çiftliks and the affairs of the amelioration. He in turn was expected to consult and consent with the authorities (*erbab-ı vukuf*) in terms of the direction of the improvement of çiftliks.¹²⁹

The appointment of an officer to these agricultural estates might seem quite promising at the very first sight, and yet, though lacking the prospective developments, it is plausible to argue for the result ending up thwarting the initial yearnings of the Porte. The intervention of the Porte into the sales of the çiftliks,

¹²⁸ The çiftlik s in Trikala and their respective state of being were remarked as such: “Çiftlikat-ı merkumeden leffen takdim-i hâk-i pâ-y-i sâmilîleri kılunan pusla nûk olunduğu üzere Tırhala sancağında olup fûruht olunandan mâ'ada yetmiş kıta' çiftlikat bu def'a aşar ihalesi hakkında (...) irade-yi seniyye misillü imârına kemâlile dikkat olunmak şartı ve şerait-i saire ile almış senesinden itibaren beş senelik olarak maktu'en deruhde olunmakla çiftlikat-ı merkume bu vechile ihale ve iltizam olunmasından nâşî kesb-i imâr ederek hatta çiftlikat-ı merkumenin (...) müddette bedelât-ı sabıkasına haylice zemaîm (?) ile beş senelik olmak üzere deruhdesine şimdiden taliblerine hazır olduğuna dair bazı rivayetin üzerine bu def'a Dersaadet'e gelmiş olan Yenişehirli mîr-i mîrandan saadetlü Hasan Paşa bendeleri dahi tasdik etmiş”. İ. MSM. 20/491, 5 Cemaziyevvel 1263 (21 April 1847), Document 3.

¹²⁹ “... Yanya ve Avlonya ve Delvine sancaklarıyla Rumeli Eyaletinde olup henüz fûruht olunmamış dört yüz elli üç kıta' çiftlikatın biraz vakit fûruhtu ... hayr ber-mûcib-i irade-yi seniyye-yi Hazine-i Celile tarafından çiftlik umuruna âşına birinin tâ'yinile ber-vech-i muharrer henüz satılmamış olan çiftlikatın keyfiyet-i ı ve ma'mûriyet-i haliyesi mu'ayene ve bundan böyle dahi cihet-i imâriyesi esbabı erbab-ı vukuf ile müzakere ve mütâla'a ederek mâ'lumat ve tahkikatı mübeyyin bir kıta' layıhasını tanzim ve takdim birle Tırhala çiftlikatı hakkında tutulan usul hayırlu görüldüğü surette bunların dahi anlara tatbiken tesviyesi sureti icra buyrulacağı halde...” Ibid.

hence, implies that the initial projections directed by the former were far from being materialised. Rather, for a period of seven years, the policy of redistribution seemingly ended unpromising for in the first place the basic concern of the government was to improve the status of both the peasantry and the infrastructure of çiftliks. While these two were deemed futility without any doubt with regards to improving the status of the peasantry employed on the çiftliks vis-à-vis the independent small-scale peasantry. Even though the sales of çiftliks were considered as an achievement, it was hence a triumph for the elite figures of the Empire, both located in the core and the periphery, while not bringing drastic improvements for the peasantry. Given with the common relations attributed to sharecropping contracts and a relatively more independent landlord class, therefore, the redistributions were, in majority, in favour of the landowners as well as the State itself.

Land Tenure and Relations of Production in the Balkan Çiftliks

Recent scholarship agrees upon the idea that çiftliks either located in the Balkans or Anatolia were predominantly operated on the basis of sharecropping, which was thus the “widespread custom” albeit with the considerable existence of slavery as well as wage-labour.¹³⁰ In this context, it is evident that these

¹³⁰ Yuzo Nagata, “Ayan in Anatolia and the Balkans during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Case Study of the Karaosmanoğlu Family,” *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire Halycon Days in Crete V: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10-12 January 2003*, (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), p. 282; McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 171.

geographically varying sharecropping agreements were to be settled between the landowners and the peasantry, most probably the reaya in particular. Recalling Wallerstein's three-way procedures concerning incorporation to the capitalist world system, it is clear that there was an increase in the level of labour force required – if not increasing exploitation levels – by these çiftlik in the Balkans region. Accordingly, even if these trade-led developments do not represent the overall picture in the region, it cannot be denied that the very same lands were still characterised by a relative scarcity of labour compared to the relative abundance of land.¹³¹

Similarly, once the peasantry was dispossessed or deprived of their tenure rights, it proved challenging for them to maintain their bargaining advantage. That is, as the basic demand-supply analysis of labour in this context would necessitate a relatively enhanced state of wellbeing, it is evident that this was not case but rather the very same class experienced a process of degradation in terms of labour exploitation.¹³² Pamuk, underlining the improvement in the bargaining power of small peasant producers, describes these agricultural workers:

Those households which did not own a pair of oxen,
frequently the most critical of the means of production,
or those which were forced to sell their oxen because of

¹³¹ Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820-1913* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 87; Tefik Güran, "Zirai Politika ve Ziraatta Gelişmeler, 1839-1876," in *19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Tarımı Üzerine Araştırmalar* T. Güran (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1998), p. 54.

¹³² In fact, the independent peasantry – that is, possessors of the land they cultivated – enjoyed improvement in its bargaining position in the same period; however, this case was not applicable to those who were employed in these plantation-like-structures of the Balkans.

poor harvests and permanent usury, offered their labour services to large landlords as sharecropping tenants. Although the landlords had the right to cancel a tenancy agreement, evictions were infrequent.¹³³

Along with the disadvantageous status of the sharecroppers, the infrastructure of these estates did not witness a substantial improvement in the nineteenth century. Petmezas, who is one of the most influential scholars dealing with agricultural productivity in Greece particularly the Peloponnesus peninsula, notes the underdeveloped case of the Northern Greece, emphasising that “The rigid land tenure system remained intact until early in the XXth [sic] century and was the main element of the so-called “agrarian question” in independent Greece”¹³⁴

While the land tenure system, i.e., sharecropping, did not undergo drastic reform during the early Tanzimat years, the case was more salient in terms of infrastructure. The latter, also not undergoing a significant improvement, was acceded later to the Greek Kingdom. Petmezas, again underlining the barren state of the Thessalian plains in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, therefore contributes to thwart the amelioration expected by the Porte during the early Tanzimat Years. Speaking for the year 1881, he describes Thessaly as such:

Its extended, but malaria-stricken and badly drained, rich plains were loosely populated (12 inh./km²) by a sharecropping population living in the numerous tsiftlik-villages [sic] (large landholdings). Large stripes of land were intentionally left uncultivated and rented-out to transhumant pastoralists. In all respects, this was a relatively less developed country. It needed extensive capital investment on land amendment and drainage

¹³³ Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire*, p. 88.

¹³⁴ Petmezas, “Patterns of Protoindustrialization,” p. 600.

before it could sustain larger population densities and materialize its potentialities.¹³⁵

Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue for the failure of the prospective infrastructural ameliorations after observing the case in the forthcoming years before the very same lands were ceded to Greece. As such, the redistribution of these large estates to the relatively wealth persons of the Empire, either in the countryside or at the core of the Empire, seems more likely to have been a redistribution of wealth to the minor elements of local notables in the aftermath of the era of Tepedelenli Ali Paşa. This ultimate situation can be addressed as a failure of Ottoman agricultural policy but, on the contrary, the attitude of the Porte was deemed to be thwarting the former improvements.

In this context, what made these sharecropping agreements further disadvantageous for the employee on these *çiftlik*s was the considerable ignorance of the Ottoman administration in relation to the relationship between both classes. That is, it is evident that the Sublime Porte was reckless concerning the withdrawal of the tax payers from its tax base and furthermore, even though the exploitation of the peasants was a critical threat towards the bases upon the Empire was constructed, Istanbul remained oblivious.¹³⁶ The idea that its failure of challenging power against the provincial notables should be excluded as a

¹³⁵ Socrates Petmezas, “Agricultural Change and Export Trade in Greece, ca.1830-1914,” paper delivered in the workshop on Agricultural Transformation in 19th century Mediterranean Europe organized by J. Reis, Florence, November, 1998, p. 19.

¹³⁶ For a nine-article contract (138th to 144th articles) between the landowners (*eshab-ı arazi*) and the peasantry (*ahali*), concluded in Wallachia see A. DVN. MHM., 9/2, 6 Rebiülahir 1267 (8 February 1851). The location might seem to necessitate an elaboration with a different context, but the language of the document seems highly in favour of the landowners, while incorporating the corvée labour into reality. The 141st article necessitates these labour services in relation with the animal usage.

possibility for it is obvious that even though the Empire was despondent in the case of *çiftlik*s being removed from its base, that is, the *mîrî* lands. The case of the contractual agreements between the landlords and the cultivators however seems not to have been beyond its reach but rather was a matter of indifference.

McGowan exhibits this state of affairs as follows:

The judiciary which ignored the usurpation of *reaya* tenures, and which appears to have maintained almost a conspiracy of silence about land transactions between persons, also ignored the economic and contractual agreements between *çiftlik* holders, and *çiftlik* cultivators (*çiftchis*). These became in effect private agreements, seemingly beyond the concern of the government or its agents. Relations between the two strata were increasingly outside older institutional agreements, and reflected typical economic behaviour for which many parallels could be drawn in other parts of the world.¹³⁷

Of course, all of what happened is beyond being attributable to the central administration, although with the former's lack of challenge, the local notables were, however, vigorous in employing their means to sustain the dependence of the peasantry on the land. Thus, bothered acutely by the relative scarcity of labour, the *çiftlik* owners resorted to permanent indebtedness, which was the common way to reach their ends, in which the former usually doubled as usurers. The peasantry was irrevocably tied to the land, and hence exposed to the abuses of the exploitation of labour where the image of the Sublime Porte was awkwardly absent.¹³⁸ Presumably, there were several ways of serving the same end which

¹³⁷ McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 71.

¹³⁸ Not surprisingly, the interest rates those were peasants indebted considerably high, varying between 20 to 120 percent. Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire*, p. 89-90.

overall indicates the reversal of the outcomes that emanated from the scarcity of labour at the expense of the peasantry employed on the Balkan çiftliks. In this vein, it appears that the struggle waged by the landowners largely were shaped by class interest which – although not being a property owner in the strict sense of the term – did not impede the former from accomplishing their ends against the peasantry, where the indifference of the Sublime Porte not being an aristocratic state was attributable to changes in its ability to challenge these landowners with a view to hindering the feudal-like relations existing in these lands.¹³⁹

The remnants of feudalism, in the same vein, coexisted with the emergence of çiftliks in both a historical and geographical context. In other words, the arbitrary conditions set by the large landholders can be traced back to the previous centuries, as the various abuses had been heard by the central administration during those centuries, unfortunately leaving us without sufficient information concerning the necessary measures taken.¹⁴⁰ Even though, these çiftliks in this part were located in different geographies, it is possible to draw a preliminary portrait in terms of what was to come along with the contracts between the landlords and the peasantry. In particular, even though not confined to the characteristics of the study conducted here, the çiftliks located in Morea between

¹³⁹ For a different case of Rumania, peasantry of which was subordinated by the aristocratic class once ceded from the Ottoman Empire, see Chirot, *Social Changes*.

¹⁴⁰ Constructing the bifurcate plain/mountainous dichotomy in terms of the proto-industrial model, Petmezas underlines the state of the relations of production taking place in Thessaly which was composed of plains for agricultural surplus and of mountainous regions for rural domestic industries as “the agricultural surplus was produced under precapitalist relations of production and that its commercialization was to a large extent assured through extra-economic constraints.” Petmezas, “Patterns of Protoindustrialization,” p. 586.

the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a significant number of complaints raised by the peasantry. Zarinebaf, revealing the evidence about how the çiftliks emerged in the Morea region, remarks on the accompanying level of oppression under which the cultivators worked during that time:

An imperial order dating to 7 Ramadan 975/April 1568 was sent to the *kadi* of Modon describing a complaint of the agent (*kethüda*) of the fortress of Manafşe (Monemvasia) against Ali Bey, the district governor (*sancakbey*) of Mezistre, for illegally taking 28,000 kuruşes from the residents and for forcefully transferring the timars of sipahis to his own men. He had also forced 60 reaya to work for him for 40 days and had illegally taken 43,000 *akçes* from them. The imperial order demanded, upon the arrival of the herald (*çavuş*) who bore the order to Modon, an investigation and a report based on the *timar defters*.¹⁴¹

Beyond the struggle over timars, the newly emergent çiftliks in Morea in the forthcoming centuries – that is, the mid-seventeenth century – instigated an increasing level of complaints to Istanbul;

The living conditions of the local inhabitants of the Morea worsened during military campaigns in this period, and under these circumstances, it is hardly a surprise that the Ottoman government could not anticipate the loyalty of the Greek reaya during the Holy League war of 1685-1699. In a petition dating from mid-*Zilkade* 1085/January 1675, the peasants of a village complained about illegal dues (70-80 *guruş* per person), demands for corvée, and an exaction of four to five *kiles* of barley and wheat per person imposed by Hasan Sipahi. In a petition at the end of *Sevval* 1085/December 1674, residents of a village in the district of Karitena-Hasan, Ali, and two men named Osman-refused to pay extraordinary (*avariz*) dues,

¹⁴¹ For the rest of the investigations and similar struggles in the region, see Zarinebaf, “Soldiers into Tax Farmers,” p. 30.

claiming descent from Janissaries, although they could not document this.¹⁴²

As remarked in the previous chapter, the case in Vidin even in the nineteenth century was no different, even the *gospodarlık* necessitates a differing approach in terms of elaboration as opposed to the *çiftlik*s.¹⁴³ These villages had been granted to timars of the classical period basically due to their proximity to the frontier and in the course of time these lands were recognised as *ağa* villages as their owners in the first place were granted by hereditary ownership. In addition, feudal-like dues and services were norms on these estates rather than being exceptions.¹⁴⁴ However, what makes such villages relevant to the question here is that – the problem associated with the constantly increasing exploitation of the peasantry in the region being already recognised by the Sublime Porte – the grave problems they caused were apathetically delayed without any radical resolution which would satisfy the peasantry. Even the rebellion of 1850 did not change this picture. Although *corvée* and *gospodarlık* were abolished, at least on the paper, the rest of the details were left to the local councils, which presumably were dominated by the very large landholders. Accordingly, the changes were conducted that were in favour of the *çiftlik* holders – *eshab-ı çiftlikat* – thus

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁴³ *Gospodarlık* seems – albeit with its confinement to the Vidin region – most likely resemble the large estates erected in the Eastern Europe during the “second serfdom.” However, what distinguished them from these was that the *çiftlik*s in the Ottoman Balkans was created in the frontier zones for military reasons, rather than being the common agricultural unit.

¹⁴⁴ As İnalçık indicated in his doctoral thesis, these villages were the agricultural production units – not necessarily with manor-type buildings – where various taxes on produce were extracted along with *corvée* as if it was a regulation. , Halil İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1943), p. 83-107.

leaving again the peasantry in the hands of the landowners. In the end, after the rebellion, corvée labour was eradicated whereas the corvée regarding the transport of wood was left intact, and the rest of the in-kind taxes were regulated without any considerable favour for the cultivators. İnalçık, completes the picture when he stated that even these modifications were not put into effect.¹⁴⁵

In the same vein, the afore-mentioned çiftliks which were sold during the early Tanzimat years predominantly resembled these *gospodar* villages, at the very least in terms of the labour services charged upon the peasantry, and the reforms introduced by the Tanzimat decree. Even though, the verification of these views needs further research, in preliminary terms, the two claims in particular – that is, the relative abundance of labour in reaction to the relative scarcity of land as well as the very indifference of the Ottoman central administration concerning the affairs taking place in the core of the çiftliks – suffice to raise scepticism about the probable labour exploitation occurring in these large estates, albeit the voice of the peasantry seems to have been unheard. Accordingly, the locations of these çiftliks also seem to reveal that these were not basically çiftliks which were eventually accumulated by the local notables merely due to their political and economic power, but indeed signify the very probability of commercial interests. It is, therefore, defensible to speculate that these çiftliks – while the sale or tax farm of which did not seem to bother the central administration which were, yet, a fatal assault against the Ottoman social formation – tempted by the commercial incentives aroused in the mid-nineteenth century might have resorted on the increase the efficiency of the labour force they employed, thus bypassing the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 97.

Tanzimat reforms, continued the labour practices that had been used in the earlier periods.

It is also known that what seems to be understood about these *çiftlik*s is a separation of lands into two pieces, one being reserved for the sharecroppers and the other one granted to the landowner and again worked by the very same sharecroppers who were actually to cultivate the land nearby.¹⁴⁶ Considering the decreased use of slave labour in the nineteenth century, the question how these lands under the landowners' domain were cultivated stands in an interesting fashion with a view to tracing the remnants of the *corvée* labour on these very same *çiftlik*s. Particularly, it can be argued that these feudal-like services and dues were included in the contracts between the two parties, thus legitimising the increase in the labour exploitation vis-à-vis the Sublime Porte, and furthermore that these extra dues were acknowledged by the peasantry. However, then the rebellions following the promulgation of the Reform in 1839 clearly indicate that the peasantry – legal or illegal – were not content with these dues in the very first place. Nagata, considering the case in the region of Izmir, addresses this issue:

Therefore, it is probable that Hüseyin Ağa leased to these Greeks (*reaya*) the second type of arable land on his *çiftlik*s, thus guaranteeing their livelihood in exchange for cultivating the first type without any direct compensation for that work. Although the documents do not directly confirm such a scenario, the English consul Francis Peter Werry, reported in 1801 that "... tenant farmers, who, after working the *ayan*'s land for a certain number of days each week, were then free to cultivate their own plots". In Bosnia there was the custom that tenants worked on *çiftlik*s several days

¹⁴⁶ This kind of stereotype attributed to *çiftlik*s was likely to be existent in Western Anatolia, yet it was probably the same for those located in the Balkans. Nagata, "Ayan in the Anatolia", p. 282.

without any pay, and the number of these days determined the rents they paid in kind as *reaya*: 1/9 to 1/5 of the harvest. *This form of working arrangement might be what is called 'angarya' in Turkish. However, in this case it would be difficult to equate angarya with what is usually referred to as corvée; the term rather indicates a simple contract concluded between landlords in search of manpower and reaya looking for work.*¹⁴⁷

In this context, the relegation of the struggle waged by the two classes to merely an article of a contract is obviously insufficient, for *angarya* – though having its special characteristics vis-à-vis corvée labour basically due to the fundamental differences of property relations in the Ottoman realm – should not be regarded as differing from corvée labour, and yet as an acknowledged fact by the two parties. As the next chapter will elaborate in more details, it is already apparent that the existence of *angarya* in particular and of vulnerabilities to the abuses of agricultural labour in general was crucial not only for the peasantry but also for the Ottoman central administration.

Accordingly, the redistribution of these large estates during the early Tanzimat years were accompanied by insignificant changes undertaken in the relations of productions and in infrastructural ameliorations in these units underlines the actual reasoning of the redistribution process. That is, the lands, while being distributed to wealthy notables, were not undertaken an ample reorientation in terms of labour exploitation. Therefore, in an era extolling the reforms of the Tanzimat Edict, the status of the *reaya* employed in these large estates was somehow discarded.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 283. Emphasis added.

What can be deduced from the initial questioning is that the relative abundance of labour was no help to the peasantry of these çiftliks, while the oppression of labour in the nineteenth century was not seriously challenged by the Ottoman administration, as shown in the documents. Of course, the question of whether the Sublime Porte was merely indifferent to this oppression or was aware of its own lack of challenging power remains. Even though the former seems more plausible, the latter has its convincing arguments as well. It should be noted that these lands, that is Northern Greece extending from the Epirus shores to the Aegean, were strongly characterised as the fields of Albanian notables who started their careers as ordinary bandits and finally were incorporated into the Ottoman bureaucracy in a setting in which the terms of conditions were usually set by the militia leaders.

In such a complicated period and geography, çiftliks in northern Greece have been described here with a view to revising the pre-conceptions attributed to the term “çiftlik”, as well as to place it in its historical context and to elucidate its relation with the relations of production in general and the probability of corvée labour in particular. While doing this, documents showing sale of çiftlik were discovered in the region. The period on which this study focuses in for the former was to pose a new insight on these çiftliks and to validate the earlier sale-like tax farms prior to the Land Law of 1858. Despite not dealing with the property relations in a comprehensive manner but rather shifting the emphasis towards the relations of production and the land tenure patterns in these large estates, connection has been made between these sales in particular and the general çiftlik concept.

CHAPTER 3

THE STRUGGLE ON NORTHERN GREECE *ÇİFTLİK*LS, LABOUR ABUSE AND TANZIMAT REFORMS

The promulgation of the 1839 Rescript of Gülhane, which was predominantly an effort at centralisation attempts by the Sublime Porte with a special emphasis on taxation and conscription in particular, was to initiate the “the age of reforms” that lasted until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁸ The very same reforms were also diverted to break the local powers prevailing in the various parts of the Empire where they *de facto* maintained their affairs with very little subordination to the Sublime Porte. The study here focuses on the reforms’ stress upon the state of the *çiftlik*s in the Balkans in general and the prevailing relations of production employed in these estates in particular.

As the previous chapter revealed, the *çiftlik*s were apparently sold or redistributed strikingly in contrast to the heyday of the centralising policies of the Sublime Porte. Along with the redistribution of *çiftlik*s to the elites of the Empire, in the very same vein, the abolition of *corvée* labour was a new phenomenon concerning the peasantry employed on the Balkan *çiftlik*s and also was included in the Rescript while the relative importance of the former was to ascend in the following years.¹⁴⁹ However, it seems that this abolition did not materialise, at

¹⁴⁸ For a brief discussion of the period, see D. Quataert, “The Age of the Reforms,” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, H. İnalcık with D. Quataert eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 761-776.

¹⁴⁹ The abolition of *corvée* labour, according to Issawi’s account, goes back to 1818 when “Mahmud II struck a blow at the feudal system by prohibiting the *corvée* in some European provinces, a measure that was only partly implemented”. Charles Issawi, *The*

least to a certain extent, for the rest of the century was to witness the continuous employment of *corvée* labour. It was stated as illegitimate by the Sublime Porte but not bothering the *çiftlik* holders in the countryside. Accordingly, in tandem with the existence of the *çiftlik*s, the use of this illegitimate labour exploitation may not correspond to somehow dominant significance, as experienced in the “second serfdom,” nevertheless it does not mean that this practice was completely wiped out in the Balkan lands. Rather, as the previous chapter attempted to connect the relation between the state of the *çiftlik*s and the accompanying land tenure relations and the tradition of *corvée* labour, the peasantry of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Balkans – albeit with the Rescript of *Gülhane* – would have been directly exposed to the probable labour exploitations, as remnants of feudalism.

Departing on this premise, it is thus highly doubtful that either on the level of “minor spots of anguish”, thus remaining as an “abuse” or on the level of a method of labour extraction on the very same *çiftlik*s, the continuum of *corvée* labour was to remain on the very same lands where the Rescript virtually prohibited it. Accordingly, this state leads the discussion here to a field of contestation waged by the centralising state vis-à-vis the *vücut* of the countryside, which will provide the background while the actual emphasis will be devoted to the peasantry who actually were impoverished due to the policies of the former two strata.

In this context, the first section of this chapter will, correspondingly, revise what was attributed to *angarya* in terms of the context of the Ottoman Balkans,

Economic History of Turkey 1800-1914 (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 202.

and respectively will attempt to mingle the findings and views concerning the former. It is clear that angarya has been neglected in the discussions concerning Ottoman agriculture and the relations of production, if not virtually ignored; furthermore, setting out from this relative negligence of the field, the first section will consolidate a coherent criticism of the literature for the latter's lack of interest in the very term angarya even if it did not have a substantial grounds in terms of Ottoman agriculture. Quite to the contrary, this chapter first will shed light on corvée labour in relation to the çiftliks mentioned in the previous chapters with a view to elaborating that the former was actually a serious basis of concern for the Sublime Porte, referring to the European provinces, for it was not the one of the causes leading to the mobilisation of the non-Muslim peasantry then who had by then absorbed nationalistic sentiments but also indicated the degree of power in terms of struggle against the local notables. Therefore, the central concern in this chapter will not be the conceptualisation of corvée labour in the Balkans, but rather to present an introductory phase to the field, a case actually portrayed as the battlefield of the centralisation efforts of the Empire. Accordingly, the unrest which the cultivators of çiftlik encountered repeatedly in the Ottoman Balkans emanating from the redistribution policies and the following various abuses will be in line with the persistence of the corvée labour in the European çiftliks of the Empire.

In the next section, in line with the point of view above, cases of illegitimate labour extraction will be exhibited with a view to tracing both the locality and methods of this phenomenon throughout the Ottoman northern Greece. Though dispersed and discontinued, these cases will at the very least suffice to argue that

the very abolition of the *corvée* labour did not actually take place but rather seemed to continue without heeding the innumerable warnings dispatched by the Sublime Porte. Along with these particular cases, how the subsequent reforms which eventually, instead of abolishing completely, changed its form from being in service to being in money will be emphasised. Surviving well into the last quarter of the nineteenth century, this feudal remnant was presumably essential in terms of the peasantry employed on *çiftlik*s who constantly experienced an increasing rate of labour exploitation at the hands of the large landholders, whether due to trade incentives flourishing in the region or merely a means of increasing revenues. In this context, the rest of the section, accordingly, will deal with particular cases where the *reaya* of the *çiftlik* encountered challenging treatments emanating from the administration of the landlords and of the policies of the Sublime Porte. That is, apart from the particular illegitimate labour exploitation cases the consequences of the redistribution of *çiftlik*s will be imparted with regards to exposing the vulnerabilities of the cultivators of *çiftlik*s either in the redistribution process or the following degradatory conditions shaped by the new landlords.

The Missing Parts of Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Historiography

The 1839 Rescript of *Gülhane* and the relevant discussions have, for a long time, been confined to the modernisation perspective and its opposing counterparts, and accordingly the consequences that the Rescript brought about particularly

concerning the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. The Rescript and the era it initiated, of course, were full of gradual reforms which were respectively reflected upon the socioeconomic constituents of the subjects of the Empire. On the other hand, this period corresponded also to the years paving the way towards the zenith of liberalism in not only economic but also social terms.¹⁵⁰

In this sense, the increasing openness to European capitalism as well as trade was felt strongly in the realm of the Empire, especially in the Balkans. However, those studies dealing with the two concepts seem to be insufficient when it comes to the changes in the agricultural production units in the Empire, that is, literature concerning either the Balkan economies during the nineteenth century, regardless of the Ottoman context or other studies with special emphasis upon the Tanzimat era lack a satisfying level of elaboration upon the relations of production on the Balkan çiftliks.¹⁵¹ In other words, there seems to be a certain trade-off between the interest in the Tanzimat reforms and the economic structures of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire; while shifting the emphasis towards the reforms and their subsequent – and yet, imminent – failures impede the observation of the changes taking place in the agricultural production, respectively, perceiving instead a larger picture of the Ottoman agriculture. To the

¹⁵⁰ Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire*, p 13.

¹⁵¹ The rebellions taking place just after the promulgation have been usually attributed to the promises emanating from the Rescript, indeed to the failure of the implementation of these promises. These promises were usually comprised of the reformed taxation system, the abolition of corvée, and equality before the law, yet it did not take long for the peasantry to realise the futility of these reforms. Those studies dealing with the rebellions, albeit their lack of interest in the elaboration of the relations of production, seem today the most fertile sources with a view to completing the portrait from the eyes of the peasantry. For the prominent studies of this kind, see İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*; and Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler*.

same extent, it seems to impede observation in the particularities emanating from the Tanzimat reforms.

In both cases, however, it is apparent that there has not been comprehensive elaboration of the corvée labour and its following abolition, which actually leads to realise the “missing lines of labour exploitation” in the Tanzimat-era Ottoman agricultural production. As the previous chapter suggested, the *çiftlik*s were commonly divided into two plots, the first of which was usually rented out to the sharecroppers and the second of which was kept for the landholder, and thus cultivated by the very same sharecroppers with no remuneration.¹⁵² Therefore, the relegation of this phenomenon to a few lines in studies which are supposedly to comprehend the necessary information is the essential motive of this section.

In this sense, Barkan’s pioneering work considering the land and the employment organisations on the land, erroneously places the existence of corvée labour in the context of the serfdom-like *kulluk* workers, who were obviously inferior to the ordinary reaya in terms of legal status and seemed to have existed only during the sixteenth century.¹⁵³ Moreover, he argues that this slavery-like employment was confined to the regions close to Istanbul and the rest of the Balkans, and thus neglects the relative importance that *çiftlik*s held in terms of corvée labour while. Hehe does this while attempting to elaborate this fact that took place in the Balkans merely due to the feudal remnants surviving from the rule prior to the Ottoman conquest, and eventually emphasising the distinction

¹⁵² Zarinebaf, “Soldiers into Tax-Farmers”, p. 24; Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey*, p. 226.

¹⁵³ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Türkiye’de Servaj Var mıydı?” p. 721-723.

between the classical Ottoman land regime vis-à-vis the early modern Europe.¹⁵⁴

It is, however, understandable that the period to which he belonged was still the introductory era of Ottoman history, at least in terms of the çiftlik formations, thus his inaccurate statements referring to the corvée in particular and the agricultural land tenures in general in the subsequent centuries is understandable. It is now evident that his projection upon the Ottoman *kanunnames* and further his regarding these texts as reality without dealing with the possible abuses were clear misjudgements due to his Ottomanist views.¹⁵⁵ In doing this, he eventually did not attribute a role to the timar owners who indeed would begin to act in line with their interests in the following centuries once the timar system was became obsolete, and as a matter of fact would be the sole agents who would increase the exploitation of peasantry, either in labour services or in skimming revenues.

In another particular study, that of İnalcık's pioneering study on the Tanzimat reforms and the subsequent rebellions in Balkans, he acknowledges the existence of angarya, and furthermore relates it to economic reasons underlying the rebellion in Vidin, yet he confines this "typical situation" to merely this

¹⁵⁴ It is obvious that Barkan elaborates the corvée merely referring to its presence in the early modern period, and thus, justifiably, bypassing its rise in the following centuries when the çiftlik formation in the Balkans was in its heyday. Ö. L. Barkan, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çiftçi Sınıfının Hukuki Statüsü," pp. 752-6.

¹⁵⁵ He argued, in the same vein, that these articles of the *kanunnames* were in fact a great effort to prevent the revival of the arbitrary services, dependency, and corvée which were traditions of the feudalism of the lands that the Ottomans occupied, namely Balkans. Similarly, he did not even attribute such an opportunist manner to the *sahib-i raiyet* or *sahib-i arz* but rather remained in the traditional view of the timar's responsibilities, and restrictions towards the abuse of the peasantry. Barkan, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çiftçi."

region.¹⁵⁶ Departing from the premise that prior to the Ottoman conquest the peasantry of the Balkan Peninsula, was relatively more disadvantaged, he asserts that the abolition of the *boyars* facilitated the conditions of the peasantry along with their emancipation from the arbitrary taxation or labour exploitation.

Carrying out the original ideas exalted by Barkan, İnalçık reproduces the Ottomanist view describing the degradation of the peasantry as well as excluding the corvée labour in the Ottoman domains in this particular case, Vidin.¹⁵⁷ Accurately placing the arbitrariness of taxation as well as the labour exploitation taking place in the Vidin region, he unfortunately regards these phenomena as a product of the “*gospodarlık*” system, attributing them to have been the major causes of the rebellion. As such, probably during the very same years, parts of the peninsula experienced such discontent, based on identical grounds, which were led by the peasantry probably employed on the *çiftlik*s of the Balkans, and therefore transcending the particularities that İnalçık confines to the Vidin *ağas*. It is evident that corvée labour, despite its abolition, still came to hold a major place underlying the peasant discontent.

On the other hand, what is seen here is clearly not negligence concerning the existence of corvée labour in the Balkan domains, but is the distinctive attempt to attribute the phenomenon to another paradigm which culminates in the very

¹⁵⁶ İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar*, p. 83-4.

¹⁵⁷ İnalçık, assumed that “it is really difficult to explain some spectacular and noteworthy particularities such as corvée in return for *ücret-i arazi*, *hirizme* and *budarlık* which were observed in the Vidin *gospodarlık* regime, with the essential Ottoman institutions”, and thus confined, at the very first place, to the particularities of the Empire whereas he failed to notice that the very same regulations were beyond Vidin, in the same period. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

idea that these practices were not the products of the Ottoman system, and therefore, in the guise of the Ottoman uniqueness.¹⁵⁸ In short, resembling Marxist preconceptions cherishing the commercialisation of agriculture in the nineteenth-century Balkans and, thus, welcoming the forthcoming of socialist states, this perspective regards the “feudal remnants” inherent in the Ottoman Balkans as particularities, thus underlining the institutional uniqueness of the Ottoman Empire.

Apart from these historiographical views about the practices of *angarya*, this void is likewise present in the studies dealing with the Ottoman Balkans economies, and agricultural production in particular. First of all, it should be noted that, while the very existence of *corvée* labour remains doubtful in the nineteenth century Balkans, it however does not correspond to the virtual preconception which holds that the dominant relation of production was sharecropping in agricultural production with a view to annulling the ongoing practices of *corvée* labour. To put it other way, recently, conventional wisdom suggests that the *çiftlik*s of the Balkans operated mainly on a sharecropping basis while the majority of the agriculture was still shaped by the small producing peasantry; albeit with these findings – in line with the main arguments of this study – there was a considerable degree of labour exploitation embodied in the practices of *corvée* labour.

One of the milestone studies in Ottoman history, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* by S. Shaw and E. Shaw, does not mention even the

¹⁵⁸ For a continuation of this point of view, see Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler*.

pronunciation of *angarya*.¹⁵⁹ Such a comprehensive study on the institutional history of the Empire as it is, it does not give any noteworthy emphasis to the Balkans or respective economies, let alone reflections of the aftermath of the Tanzimat reforms. Of course, their tendency towards political history make Shaw and Shaw avoid socio-economic factors, and the respective criticism should be highly cautious. In any case, they consider the material reorganisations resulting from the reforms that took place in the governmental bodies, both at central and provincial level, as their locus of interest, hence excluding the repercussions in the countryside.¹⁶⁰ This fact is seen when they refer to “forced labour” taking place in the Ottoman domains, in Egypt particularly, with correspondence to “unfree labour.” In this effect, they entertain the notion of “forced labour” attributable to the construction of an infrastructure including “fortifications, roads, or forests or men for the army and navy” while neglecting the role *angarya* played in this “forced labour”.¹⁶¹ However, as the *raison d'être* of this study suggests, the use of forced labour also included arbitrary exploitation in agricultural production,

¹⁵⁹ Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey 1808-1975*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 [1977]).

¹⁶⁰ It appears clearly when they dealt with the promulgation of the Tanzimat, for they merely discussed the aspects such as personal security, taxation, and conscription. When it came to the problems in the new taxation system, they argued “while the tax farmers thus were not eliminated in the early years of the Tanzimat-ı Hayriye, the new tax system protected the peasants from injustice far more than before”. Not making a clear distinction between the peasantry according to their location of employment however, they basically misconceived the peasantry whom obviously they had not preferred to emphasise in any case. *Ibid.*, p. 59-61. Quotation is referred from p. 96

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

transcending the sphere merely confined to affairs of infrastructure. What is understood by “forced labour” seems is as follows:

A Road Reforms commission was established in 1866, but its work was limited mainly to the widening and repairing Istanbul’s streets, while a separate Roads Regulation (1867) put all provincial road work under the general direction of the Ministry of Public Works. To overcome shortages of funds for road building, the *corvée*, or road labour tax, was used to secure the necessary labour without cost.¹⁶²

The very same regulation they mentioned had actually legitimised the use of *corvée* labour. If the reference point was the legitimisation, then the reforms that Rescript of *Gülhane* brought about were still valid. In other words, the *corvée* employed in the infrastructure works were legitimate while the very agricultural labour employed on the *çiftlik*s of the Empire was still illegitimate. Since the next section will dwell on this distinction with much more emphasis, it suffices to argue that the role that is attributed to *corvée* was not merely historiographically erroneous, but also is quite narrow which culminates, as this particular evidence has revealed, in the relative neglect of its counterpart in the agricultural production.

The absence of *corvée* labour – at least, in theoretical importance – and thus its elaboration was also present in the Keyder’s arguments. Even though he specifically emphasises the vitality of the “social formation” which was under severe challenging emanating from the provincial elites at the expense of the legitimacy of the Sublime Porte, he essentially did not give much emphasis to the practice except to assert “extra impositions on the peasantry, such as arbitrary

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 121. For this kind of “forced labour”, see the next section with the distinctions made.

taxation or corvée, do not simply threaten the independence of the direct producers, they also violate the law of the realm.”¹⁶³ By and large, putting the emphasis on the çiftlik debate with its relations with the commercialisation of agriculture and those established in eastern Europe, Keyder thus misses the very point that the pre-existence and the illegitimate continuity of the corvée labour employed on these very same çiftliks sheds light on the undermining of the social formation from, however, a different perspective.

What needs to be emphasised here is that, as the recent studies suggest, these çiftliks that emerged in the Balkans were to a limited extent vis-à-vis the independent peasantry production as the çiftliks were very often shaped by sharecropping. Unfortunately, the rest of the developments seem to be lacking although these facts are acknowledged and furthermore it has been revealed that the sharecropping contracts inherently called for the demand for labour services – not necessarily, corvée labour all the time – one would thus fail to observe the completion of the picture. As such, this is indeed the case for the study mentioned just above.¹⁶⁴ In other words, the relations of production in these agricultural estates were deprived of a productive elaboration, but rather the former was

¹⁶³ Keyder, “Introduction”, p. 1-2.

¹⁶⁴ In other parts of the volume, İnalçık merely reproduces his doctoral dissertation, while paying attention to another factor, *mevat* lands, contributing to the *çiftlik* formation, by concluding that the Vidin rebellion to socio-economic tensions between the peasants and *çiftlik* owners. Veinstein, elaborating the genesis of the *çiftliks*, distinguished the external and internal factors. However, all in all, one of the pioneering studies on the *çiftliks* in the literature, seem to lack the relations of production employed in these *çiftliks*, generally sharecropping and particularly corvée labour. Ç. Keyder and F. Tabak eds., *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East*, especially p. 1-53.

confined to sharecropping and wage-labour, respectively. While it is evident that sharecropping contracts varied according to the different regions of the Empire, these details along with the potential causality leading towards corvée labour have been neglected. In particular, since the primary concern of the studies has been the commercialisation of agriculture and its consequent repercussions, it is thus understandable to observe the absence in the details in the relations of production that took place on the Balkan *çiftlik*s, which still requires further research.

The case is not considerably different in the studies on the Ottoman Balkans economies, that is, the corvée is presented only when the reforms of the Rescript necessitated, along with comments with a view to explaining its elaboration. It lacks the interpretation of what these meant for the nineteenth-century Balkans.¹⁶⁵ As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *çiftlik* debate has been conducted upon the question of commercialisation – or peripheralisation – and therefore the contracts made between peasants and landowners, where possible, have been elaborated in this scheme; therefore the relegation of the “feudal remnants” to merely background was inevitable. Accordingly, the emphasis on trade is present with a view to showing the changing relations of production in the Balkans

¹⁶⁵ The pioneering work in effect to revise the Balkan economies and their given misconceptions by Palairet seemingly addresses the conventional wisdom in terms of the *çiftlik* formation per se the emergence as well as transformation eventually attributing to the industrialisation on the grounds of employment patterns but did not place the relations of productions in these agricultural estates. On the illegitimate activities of the *çiftlik* owners, he writes that “The suppression of the *spahiluks* was a milestone, too, in the process of modernizing the structure of property rights. The *chiftlik*s remained untouched though their owners had to pay the tithe. They had no legal right to tied labour, since this flowed from the feudal privilege of *spahiluk*, but in practice, many treated their peasants as serfs.” but this ‘serfdom’ was not to be noticed in the rest of his work in a comprehensive manner. Palairet, *The Balkan Economies*, p. 41.

agriculture whereas the second attribute is characterised as the class struggle between the landowners and the cultivators in this semi-feudal production sphere.¹⁶⁶ Partially Pamuk, departing from the premises of “debt peonage,” has distinguished the phenomenon between the Balkans and Anatolia as such:

In contrast, large holdings and the *çiftlik* system prevailed in the Salonica and Monastir provinces of Northern Greece throughout the century. In 1859, it was estimated that three-fourths of all land in the province of Monastir was in the hands of large landlords. For the province of Salonica, one estimate states that 40 per cent of all farms were larger than 200 hectares in 1863. *In comparison, to the Western Anatolian provinces of the Empire, lord-peasant bonds were quite strong in Northern Greece. Despite the official abolition of corvée in the European provinces of the Empire in 1818, and once more with the Tanzimat Decree of 1839, it did not disappear in this area until after mid-century.*¹⁶⁷

It is obvious that it would not be a “must” for the scholarship to elaborate the corvée labour in these studies, but as it concerns this study, it seems that, despite its scattered presence in both spatial and historical contexts, this kind of labour exploitation was not merely non-existent. By and large, its practices might have remained “minor spots of anguish” but even this continuity is prolific as it brings about a new perspective for comprehending the changes taking place in the

¹⁶⁶ The vulnerability of the peasantry to the potential abuses of the landholders is addressed by Pamuk as such, “In areas where semi-feudal relations of production and/or powerful landlords prevailed, the latter usually doubled as usurers. For the landowners usury not only provided a means of appropriating a larger share of the surplus but given the relative scarcity of labour permanent indebtedness of peasants also secured tenants of their land.” Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire*, p. 90.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 100. Emphasis added. It is also surprising that “corvée labour” did exist – probably along with the changes in terms of notation – until the twentieth century. See the next section for the particular cases of this practice, or HR. HMŞ. İŞO, 209/13, 23 Safer 1333 (10 January 1915). The document states that the Serbian Government enforced corvée upon the Muslim population, presumably due to the wartime conditions.

transformation of the Balkan agricultural economy in the nineteenth century in general, and the antagonisms that the former stimulated between both the state and the provincial elites, and the latter versus the peasantry.

Having asserted such an observation, the citation above seems to be lacking this expansion which eventually might offer some evidentiary findings in effect to enlighten the former two antagonisms. Hence, the citation above becomes, how fruitful it has been, a stereotypes of the “missing lines” which have been discussed in this section. In other words, it is essential to elucidate the actual importance it had in the Ottoman Balkans in the Tanzimat period, and the above incidents, being on the other hand the ultimate motive of this study, appear to be incomplete in the sense that how particular the practices attributed to corvée labour might have been, the very same practices should be saved from these few lines, touching upon the already known facts and not expanding its significance.

With a view to understanding the events which took place in the Balkans, be they nationalist uprisings, or the commercialisation of agriculture. Decisively, the significance of, or probably the causality of this phenomenon is addressed by McGowan, contrary to those scholars mentioned above, which therefore indicates the very fact that this practice – irrelevant of its attribution to commercial agriculture, while not excluding the latter as an opportunity though – was solely the product of the struggles of classes against each other. In relation to the practices in the Middle Danube, he accurately underlines the significance of them transcending the boundaries of the Balkans which were to persist throughout the nineteenth century:

One obvious premise, i.e., that peasant disabilities of the ‘second serfdom’ type coexisted in all the areas just

discussed, with a slack or even slight allodial agriculture, may disturb those who would place such disabilities in lockstep with the development of commercial agriculture, especially export-oriented agriculture. There is no contradiction here. Disabilities such as the *tlaka*, on the Habsburg side of the border, or usurpation of tenures and restrictions on movement on the Ottoman side, reflect above all the political power of one class over another. The advantages possessed by a landholding or land-usurping class *can* be made to serve such commercial agriculture if such opportunities exist.¹⁶⁸

The Promulgation of the Rescript and Repercussions Afterwards

The Tanzimat or *perestroika*, both in terms of the era and the relevant reforms, is conventionally regarded as the intensification of the centralising state in all spheres of social life; accordingly, agriculture was no different with regards to these postulates. That is, what the bureaucrats of the Sublime Porte attempted to accomplish with a view to consolidating the centralisation was thus a simple reflection which became concrete in the Ottoman agricultural production and relations of that in particular. The centralisation, at least an attempt, was to regulate taxation in order to curb the power of the provincial elites prevailing in the countryside by incorporating them into the tax base of the Empire as well as eliminating the very same class, which was regarded as an obstacle between the

¹⁶⁸ B. McGowan, "The Middle Danube *cul-de-sac*," in *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy* H. İslamoğlu-İnan ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 177.

State and the direct producers due to the former's intolerable mediating activities.¹⁶⁹

In this sense, leaving aside the institutional changes taking place in the agricultural production that was maintained by the emergent assemblies in the Sublime Porte, then, presumably the most notable reform in this context was the abolition of the *corvée* labour.¹⁷⁰ In the Rumelian provinces, it was abolished as early as 1818, but the practice apparently seemed to persist *de facto* since its inclusion in the Tanzimat confirmed the very lack of its implementation.¹⁷¹ The abolition remained a dead letter, merely confined to the text of the Rescript, like the rest of some of the Tanzimat reforms which did not survive on many of the *çiftlik*s scattered throughout the Balkan Peninsula. No matter how much the importance attributed to the abolition of this practice, it was, of course, a unilateral act of the Sublime Porte; with regards to its implementation, however, the State lacked the necessary encouragement and probably the ability to challenge the provincial elites, who seemed to have disregarded the reforms

¹⁶⁹ For the general – and conventionally constructed – changes in agriculture emanated from the Tanzimat reforms, see Tefvik Güran, *19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Tarımı Üzerine Araştırmala* (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1998); and Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life Reflections from Salonica 1830-1850* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2003), especially p. 135-153; and of course Halil İnalçık, *Application of the Tanzimat*.

¹⁷⁰ For the institutional changes which Tanzimat brought about in the central government, and especially the ever-changing Ministry of Agriculture, see Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 71-6.

¹⁷¹ The abolition of *corvé* labour was officially pronounced in the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vâlâ-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*), on 12 June 1840, while the document was rather interested in the abolition of the *kayıkçı* guild whereas the abolition of the former was addressed merely with a sentence. İ. MVL. 4/66, 11 Rebiuahir 1256 (12 June 1840).

introduced by the Porte.¹⁷² The central government, which was short of accurate and reliable information concerning the *çiftlik*s scattered in the Balkan plains, does not seem to have been convincingly ambitious in its efforts to deal with the practices of forced labour. The documents related to the abolition did not seem to be closely interested in the prior consequences of this kind of practice and hence it is futile to expect an abrupt abolition with detailed elaboration. Indeed, this was another comment of the Porte with respect to the actual circumstances on the *çiftlik*s of the Balkans, for, in the very first place, no satisfactory information was available with respect to the European *çiftlik*s of the Empire and the relevant absence, which resulted in further negligence therefore deprived the Porte of effective policy instruments with regards to the implementation of the reforms. As such, the attitude originating from the “years of redistribution” was thus, in an accumulating manner, to the disfavor of the cultivators employed on *çiftlik*s.

Surrounded by these basic impediments, the Porte’s efforts to cope with the continuing practices of the *corvée* labour gained significance in tandem with the peasantry discontent. Even though the task of tracing all the complaints in relation to the practices of forced labour seemed daunting, preliminary instances were central, at least to observe the continuum of the “illegitimate” labour-exploitation method. After just a couple of months, complaints that emerged especially in the areas the *çiftlik* existence were significant. Not all the complaints turning into bleak grievances, one of the earliest complaints took place in the *kaza* of Drama.

¹⁷² The abolition also was applicable to the guild system but likewise the statements abolishing the practice remained again short without significant details. C. İKTS., 35/1719, 29 Zilhicce 1255 (4 March 1840)

The leading figures of the places on the Rumelian side, keeping the *reaya* as if they were slavery slave-like customers, employed them forcefully without pay in the services of the *çiftlik*s and other cases. And (...) that they resorted to enforcing their affairs by means of intervention and aggression was informed and investigated, in effect to suppress and abolish that kind of atrocity...¹⁷³

The Porte, appointing a certain gatekeeper (*kapıcıbaşı*) Osman Ağa who was the *nazır*, or the governor, of the *kaza* of Drama, deliberated an announcement which underlined the abolition of the practice of *angarya* by means of this *ağa*. Yet, Osman Ağa, including himself aligned with *vücu*h and *eshab-ı alaka*, or interested parties, insisted that none of them had ever employed without pay the Muslim or non-Muslims of the aforementioned *kaza* in their works and this kind of employment and its respective harassment was therefore improbable. He assured that the necessary care and attention would be taken.¹⁷⁴

However, the petitions that *metropolit*, or religious representatives of non-Muslim subjects, of the *kaza* and *reaya* presented to the Porte represented a picture different from that which Osman Ağa portrayed. As the petition underlined, as part of the harassment stemming from the sharecropping contracts,

¹⁷³ The complaint reached Istanbul, which would be disavowed later by Osman Ağa, seemed quite rational. Even though, in the coming years, this kind of complaint was repeatedly employed in effect to draw the attention of the Porte, this particular complaint, though lacking the original text of the complaint, seemed to be true. “*Rumeli canibinde olan mahallerin iktinah (?) vücu*h (...) *memleketlerinde bulunan reayayı kendi abd-i müşterileri hükmünde tutup çiftlik hizmetlerinde vesaire emir hususlarında cebren bila- ücret kullanmak ve bazı emir-i ... vesair hallerine müdahale ve ta’arruz etmek misillü icbar eyledikleri istihbar ve tahkik buyrulduğundan o makule mezalim ve (...) men’i ve def’i babında...*” C. DH. 196/9764, 16 Rebiülevvel 1255 (30 May 1839).

¹⁷⁴ “...*kaza-ı mezbur ahali ve reayasını bu ana kadar gerek kendisi ve gerek vücu*h ve *ashab-ı alakadan hiç ferd bila- ücret cebren kendi hizmetlerinde istihdam vesaire güne ta’adi eylediklerine vuku’u olmayıp bundan böyle dahi vuku’uya gelmemesine i’tina ve dikkat olunacağını...*” Ibid.

Osman Ağa had employed both the Muslim and non-Muslim people who actually cultivated the çiftliks of the Imperial Estates in Pürsıçan, located in the aforementioned *kaza*, on his own çiftliks, without pay. Furthermore, as the sharecropping would necessitate, he was supposed to share the supply with the cultivators whereas the *ağa* refrained from giving half of the supply to the non-Muslims. Osman Ağa was also accused of collecting extra *akçes* per *dönüm* of tobacco-lands as well as adding excessive items on the tax-allocation (*tevzi'ât*).¹⁷⁵ Following the instances of these illegal acts, the non-Muslims preparing the petition asked the Porte to put an end to the harassment of the *ağa*. The rest of the document is not available for interpretation, yet the very first instances of a landowner just after the promulgation of the Tanzimat suffice to shape an overview of the conditions surrounding the cultivators of the çiftliks.

The later years, presumably, did not witness any significant improvement with respect to the illegitimate practices which had been abolished by the Tanzimat decree. Instead of enhancing the particular situations, as in the case above, the pattern became acutely observable. Approximately ten years after the promulgation of the Rescript, the government in an arcane way was in need of articulating the retribution stemming from the continuity of corvée labour. Although the government was seemingly content with the progress achieved, there were still çiftlik owners undermining the basic premises of the Tanzimat era.

By investigation whether some owners of the *çiftliks* in the province of Rumelia employed the -Muslims by means of corvée or not it was understood the occasional occurrence of the latter took place (...) even though it was prohibited (...) upon the statement concerning the

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

execution of those daring ones which came off on my behalf, the circumstance, by the *paşa* who is the *mutasarrıf* of Rumelia, to be announced by the bills to adjacencies.¹⁷⁶

The common statement concerning occasional repeats of the practices of *corvée* was thus to demonstrate the absence of the effective stipulations against the conditions surrounding the cultivators employed on the *çiftlik*s. Not necessarily resorting to the particular cases in effect to elaborate these illegitimate actions, the above document might be deemed sufficient since the “occasional occurrences” was admitted by the very authorities in Istanbul. Admitting frequency with which clauses were disregarded on the *çiftlik*s of the Rumelian side – though on a decreasing scale – the action of the Porte was nevertheless, confined to the mere publication of various bills which, in turn, were expected to raise the consciousness of the reaya. The ones who needed to be warned did not simply surrender. The *çiftlik* owners, or *eshab-ı alaka*, were understood to be quite resistant, if not challenging, with regards to the implementation of the deeds of the Rescript. In particular cases, the latter class might have been penalised with more severe sanctions, but on a more general level, the fundamentals underlying these challenges were not addressed explicitly, which in turn led to possible conspiracies between the Porte and the landowners, even though, the latter, especially in northern Greece comprised of leading figures of Albanian origin,

¹⁷⁶ “*Rumeli eyaletinde bulunan bazı çiftlikat-ı ashab çiftliklerinde bulunan reayayı angarya işletip işlemedikleri bi't-tahkik bazı ara sıra vuku' bulduğu anlaşılmış olmasıyla her (...) memnu' olduğuna ve ba'de'z-zîn mütecasir olanlar hakkında mecazet-i icra olunacağına dair taraf-ı benganemden vaki' olan ifade üzerine kifayet Rumeli mutasarrıfı saadetlü Paşa bendeleri tarafından etrafa i'lan-nameler neşr ile...*” A. MKT. UM., 66/36, 11 Ramazan 1267 (11 July 1851).

was quite solid with their own militia as well as financial resources they were not likely to be invincible.

Instead of challenging this disobedience, the policies of the Porte were more gradual towards these illegitimate cases, for the central government was supposedly satisfied with the latent acknowledgment the continuity of *angarya* even in 1857. Resembling the document above, this time, the major concern was to “spread the word” in the countryside. Dating back the abolition in its historical context, the material emphasised the case as such:

Concerning the cases of *angarya*, it was reported and stated by the statements of the Sultan that some persons (...) were to exploit some Muslim but mostly non-Muslim people, either in gratis or in pay, in the corvée services. Herein, the *irade-yi seniyye* including the entire prohibition of the article of corvée and the explicit explanation of the circumstance would be announced in a language the community could comprehend, preventing the counter-acts...¹⁷⁷

Upon the definite statements coming from Istanbul, apparently, the authority that the Porte dealt with, apparently denied such accusations adding that the state of people there was relieved and every person was occupied with his own works and therefore even daring to exploit a person in corvée services was out of question. The same authority, then, appended that the request of the Porte was accomplished and assured the government in the sense that this kind of counter-

¹⁷⁷ “...*bu angarya kapısı için kalıp el-halet-i hâzihi bazı kimseler mutazammın ... müitala’ a ederek bazı İslam ve ekseri Hıristiyan ahali meccanen veyahut ücretle angarya hizmetlerde kullanılmakta olduğu bazı taraftan rivayet ü ifade kılınmış olduğu beyan-ı âliyesiyle işbu angarya maddesinin külliyen men’i ve keyfiyetin ikrarı ahalinin anlayacağı lisan üzere kura ahalisine îlanıyla hilaf-ı hareket vuku’ bulmaması irade-yi seniyye-yi şamil...*” A. MKT. UM., 286/34, 4 Zilkade 1273 (26 June 1257).

acts against the legal orders would not take place and thus necessary care attention would be paid.¹⁷⁸

What can be deduced from these varying accounts both in terms of time and space is, ostensibly, that the harassing conditions that were set against *çiftlik* cultivators persisted, albeit in a decreasing manner. Nevertheless, the attitude of the Porte towards these abuses was accordingly reckless whereas the local notables of the countryside apparently thought it unnecessary to heed to the sanctions of the Empire. This does not mean, however, that all of the areas in the Rumelian region of the Empire was shaped in this way; areas closer to Istanbul might have been more collaborative in terms of submitting to the reforms of the Sultan, but it is clear that the harassment stemming from “illegal” labour-exploitation continued, thus keeping the “minor spots of anguish” in place. Although it cannot be expected that these century-long feudal remnants would be wiped out over night, it appears that the abolition of *corvée* proceeded at a snail’s pace.

In the following years, petitions of complaint signed and submitted by the non-Muslim population regarding the arbitrary harassment which was conducted by *ağas* continued. In July 1863, the communities of Şuma, Boyana, and the Hungarian signed a petition that stated the immediate concern of their communities was the absence of their testimonies in shari’a courts. Their second concern followed as such:

Secondly, apart from the poor (...) cultivating the lands of the *ağas* were also employed by means of *corvée*, except for the taxes, the aforementioned *ağas* collect as

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

much wood, egg, sheep (...) as they need and whenever they rest on their own *çiftlik*s they make their every expenditure without pay; and they sell their grazing lands to the Austrians and thus leaving our cattle without grazing lands (...) Apart from these, the greatest harassment here is (...) their theft of our animals after coming to our villages without reason and wanting to feast without pay. And when we complain about that, they arrest two or three releasing afterwards and they come back for vengeance, while killing us and burning down our houses and harassing and insulting the poor people and even though we sue against the Muslim, our case is never justified and our testimonies are never recorded...¹⁷⁹

Regarding the degree of complaints suspiciously, in the Bosnian lands the non-Muslim cultivators employed on *ağa çiftlik*s do seem to have been subjected to the arbitrary conditions of the very same *ağas*. Having alleviated the agitative aspects of the petition, accordingly, the reaya of the region appeared to be suffering not only at the hand of the local notables, but also from the ignorance of the Porte, the influence of which was beyond reach. In this context, it is also worth remarking that forced labour did not disappear as yeards passed; that is, even though the number of occurrences decreased, *corvée* remained a part of life on the *çiftlik*s of some certain regions.

¹⁷⁹ “*Sânîen ağaların yerlerini zira’ eden fukara (...) vergüden ma’âda ağa-ı merkuman taraflarından her türlü angarya çekmekte olduklarından mâ’ada virgüden hariç olarak mebni mahsulatın nısfından ma’âda kendilerine lazım olan hetb ve (...) ve yumurta ve kuzu kebabı ve’l-hasıl çiftliklerine kaldıkları vakit her bir mesariflerini meccanen yapmağa mecbur ederler ve ağalar dahi mera’larını Nemçelilere fûruht edip sürülerimizi mera’sız bırakıyorlar (...) bundan başka en büyük zulm buradaki (...) bila-sebeb karyelerimize gelip meccanen yiyip içmek istedikten sonra hayvanatımızı sirkat ediyorlar ve bunun için ... ettiğimiz vakit iki üç için habsedip muahharen salıveriyorlar ve bunlar ahz-i intikam için tekrar karyelerimize gelüb bizi katl ü hanelerimizi ihrak ve fakir fukaraya her türlü zulm ve hakareti ederler ve İslam aleyhinde da’va ettiğimiz halde hiçbir vakit ihkak-ı hak olmayıp şahadetimiz mazbut değildir...” TŞR. BNM. 1/132, 29 Muharrem 1280 (16 July 1863).*

As such, in another Bosnian settlement, Mostar, approximately one year later, another complaint in relation to the arbitrary tax demands and the *corvée* services, the government was successful in appointing an officer in order to investigate the situation and in turn to administer the relations between the landlords and the cultivators finally binding the former by contracts.¹⁸⁰ Not requiring any promising expectations concerning the act of the Porte, this particular case however is significant in terms of stressing the continuity of the arbitrary conditions surrounding the cultivators during the century in different parts of the Ottoman Europe.

Considering the redistributed *çiftlik*s in the early Tanzimat years, with the conditions experienced by the cultivators, mostly of non-Muslim origin, result in a picture of the disadvantageous state of the cultivators of *çiftlik*s who were exposed to arbitrary conditions set by the landlords directly, and aftermath of the redistribution of the idle *çiftlik*s by the Sublime Porte itself indirectly, for the latter's policy explicitly favoured the landowners class or those capable of investing financial resources at auctions whereas its aims remained immaterialised. Northern Greece, characterised by a more challenging *vücut* existence, was ultimately worse than the cases represented above, for the reforms of the Rescript probably were never actually implemented in these lands without any opposition. Hence, while the rest of the Balkans was shaped by the arbitrary harassment stemming from the landlords throughout the century, the case of the northern Greece was not that different, if not worse.

¹⁸⁰ TŞR. BNM. 24/30, 22 Muharrem 1281 (26 June 1864).

As place of origin of prominent figures of the early Tanzimat period who in turn blatantly defied the authority of the Empire these lands, once the prior rulers had been eliminated, were still not convenient in terms of implementing the agricultural reforms of the Rescript. In such a setting, redistributing the çiftliks without owners was therefore to mean ultimately to recreate the once-eliminated figures of the very same lands, but this time reducing their powers. That the consequences of these redistributions for the direct producers remains dubious; and moreover, there is severely less evidence to disprove the fact that the new landlords erecting their minor agricultural estates acted in ways different from the other landlords of the Ottoman Europe. The state of direct producers in çiftliks vis-à-vis the landlords and the State probably became clearer revealing the mediatory role that Porte attributed to itself which in the end, in a conspiratorial way, was aligned with the çiftlik owners.

The Struggle in the Çiftliks and the Ascendency of the Landlords:

Kalkandenelenli Esad Bey against the Porte and the Reaya

During the Tanzimat years, as the previous section discussed, some of the reaya opted to petition the government in effect to preclude the degrading conditions stemming from the landlords; unfortunately, these efforts were fruitless. Yet, the particularity of Ottoman northern Greece also made it more difficult for reaya employed on the çiftliks of these lands. For in these cases, instead of *reaya*, the landlords, mostly of Albanian origin, acted more actively in line with the State in

a mediating way. What was mediated will be the central theme of this section, demonstrating a prominent figure raised in Tetovo *vis-à-vis* the Sublime Porte in a challenge, the winner of which was enigmatic. In other words, having shed light on the conditions besetting the reaya of çiftliks in the previous section, this section attempts to draw the basic tenets of the antagonism between the landlord and the central government with respect to a particular case.

Many of the landlords who were also influential elites in the Ottoman Greece, expanding from the Thessalian plains to the southern edges of Macedonia, were commonly Albanian pashas with their own militia forces, employed by the Porte in case of immediate need. They, in turn, usually ran the administration of districts close to their sphere of influence. Distinctively, their governorship of these districts was designated as hereditary and quasi-independent from the sovereignty of the Empire. In an enigmatic symbiosis, financial and political autonomy was granted by the Porte directly to these would-be pashas, whereas the Porte exploited the ever-ready militia forces of these self-proclaimed governors.¹⁸¹ Tepedelenli Ali Paşa and Pasvandoğlu Osman Paşa were the prominent figures of the era and of locality. Not all of these defiant governors were powerful in such extent.

¹⁸¹ For a different particularity of the case, see Cengiz Kırılı, “Tyranny Illustrated: From Petition to Rebellion in Ottoman Vranje,” Unpublished Article. The relationship between the two antagonists was distinctively remarkable; and in this sense Kırılı implied the circumstance on the behalf of the pashas as “Their relations with Istanbul were based on an uneasy reciprocity. They secured a great deal of autonomy and financial security as tax farming contractors of the provinces they ruled in return for providing hordes of Albanian soldiers who were practically mercenaries at the service of Ottoman army. But this was also an uneasy relationship because at times both sides with an ever growing mistrust felt they could do better without the other.”

Being such a defiant figure, Kalkandelenli Esad Bey first attracted the attention of the Porte in 1860 when he escaped to Istanbul after having committed “displeasing acts” in Kalkandelen.¹⁸² Even though the reasons concerning his escape to the Sublime Porte are unknown, it was probably due to his attempts to form alliances for his illegal acts.¹⁸³ The government, aware of this flight, ordered that he be captured and delivered to the *vali* of Skopje and furthermore wanted to be informed of the circumstance.¹⁸⁴

Three days later, the authorities in Istanbul received Mehmed Esad Bey and affirmed, thus, the execution of the previous order. After questioning, his caption in Istanbul was declared complete, the fact of which in turn was relayed to the Marshall of Police and also to the governor of Skopje. His return to Skopje, in custody, would require the involvement of the governor of Skopje, for Mehmed

¹⁸² There is unfortunately no prior data concerning the ascendancy of Kalkandelenli Mehmed Esad; however, the preliminary findings concerning his acts against the State are decisively satisfactory. What we can be certain of is that he was the leader of the mercenary troops (*Sergerde-yi Asakir-i Muvazzafa*) in his locality. Accordingly, the district of Kalkandelen, modern Tetovo, was only reported once due to “tyranny” of its governors just after the promulgation of Tanzimat. Reminding of the hereditary governorship prior to the rule of Mehmed Esad Bey, Recep Pasha and his uncle Ahmed Bey had resorted to “tyrannical” acts against the people of the district in 1840. C. DH., 220/10993, 29 Zilhicce 1255 (4 March 1840). There is, nevertheless, no direct lineage between these two and Mehmed Esad Bey as far as the preliminary survey concerned.

¹⁸³ “*Kalkandelen’de hareket-ı makduhası zuhura gelen Esad Bey namında birisi Dersaadet’e savuşmuş olduğundan bunun buldurulup...*”. A. MKT. MHM., 196/3, 7 Rebiülevvel 1277 (23 September 1860).

¹⁸⁴ “... *tahrirat-ı lazıme ve mukteziyenin icrasıyla merkum buldurulup tahte’l-hıfz vali-yi müşarünileyh (...) iade ve keyfiyetin Bâbiali’ye dahi beyan ve ifade ile hususuna heman buyrulmak...*” Ibid.

Esad Bey would be tried in the court of the Council of the Province upon his arrival.¹⁸⁵

Approximately one month later, reaching his homeland, Esad Bey, who was considered a fugitive due to his criminal acts (*cünha-yı vakı'a*), awaited his trial to end for about a month and accordingly the governor of the province of Skopje was made responsible for the retribution that his crimes required.¹⁸⁶ The significance of his crimes in his hometown would yet be revealed, however, it was – as the case suggested by this plain investigation and inquiry – quite apparent that the Porte acted in a very vigilant way while making sure to block the chance that this kind of *persona-non-grata* would get away with his offensive acts.

No satisfactory information is available on the trial process, but, nearly one year later the offensive acts and crimes that Mehmed Esad Bey had committed were finally revealed when the trial came to a close. By this time, he presumably had been kept under arrest, since at the end of the trial, finding him guilty of three different articles, thought his duration of conviction was enough, in relation to his time under arrest, according to the Criminal Code.

The case, which had been investigated through petitions and records presented by the Muslim population, was delivered by the Council of Skopje to the Trial Department of Supreme Council (*Meclis-i Vâlâ Muhakemât Dairesi*) on 3 October 1861. The same department, formulating the offensive acts in a

¹⁸⁵ “... Zabtiye’ye tevkifen tahte’l-hıfz (...) gönderilmiş olmakla vusulünde Meclis-i Eyalet’te muhakeme-i lazımesinin icrasıyla hakkında terettüb edecek mecâzetin icrası zımında keyfiyetin izha ve iş’arı hususuna himmet buyurmak...”.A. MKT. MHM., 196/102, 10Rebiülevvel 1277 (26 September 1860).

¹⁸⁶ A. MKT. NZD. 328/4, 4 Rebiülahir 1277 (20 October 1860).

coherent manner, demonstrated these three matters in detail. According to these records, the crime that Esad Bey was supposed to have committed was described as such:

... the aforementioned complaints, comprised of three articles follow as such; first one is his involvement in the case of the execution of Simon, who was murdered two years ago, and the second one is that he had been employing some men and other people on his *çiftlik* during the harvest times by means of corvée by call, for seven years. And the third one is his molestation of the girls under his employment who were with the men being called by means of his servants and, some of which were dismissed even on the road and the rest were dismissed on the *çiftlik*...¹⁸⁷

Lacking further details concerning the trial process, the first item, seemingly, was concluded in favour of Mehmed Esad Bey after the investigation of questionnaires and of other inquiries. He was thus found not guilty of committing murder during the ultimate investigation. The second item, in terms of the relations of production in çiftliks, is meaningful to elucidate the viewpoint of the State. Esad Bey's claim that the employment of people without pay was actually in return for pasture in his own grazing lands was regarded as somewhat legitimate (*bu maddede biraz hakkı görünerek*) after such grazing activities were also acknowledged by these cultivators. The State, nevertheless, was quite aggrieved with the violation of such

¹⁸⁷ The earlier petitions and records were recapitulated as such: "...şikâyet-i mezkure üç maddeden ibaret olup birincisi iki sene mukaddem katl olunan Simon'un îdamı maddesine müdahale olması ve ikincisi yedi seneden beri çiftliğine zükûr ve enâseden bir takım kesanı hasat vakitleri celb ile angarya olarak istihdam etmiş ve üçüncüsü dahi hizmetkârları vesaitile celb eylediği adamlardan erkeklerin birtakımı yoldan ve küsurunu dahi çiftlikten def' edib alıkoyduğu ve çalıştırdığı kızların ırzına tasallut eylemiş olarak..." A. MKT. MVL. 136/43, 23 Cemaziyelevvel 1278 (27 November 1862).

an employment method since it contradicted the imperial equality (*mu'adelât-ı seniyye*). Awkwardly, having favoured the method in terms of daily-pay, the Porte was not able to reach a legal-solution (*tarîk-i hükm*) due to the cultivators' inability to determine or to state the value of their labour and to the grazing activities on Esad Bey's lands free of charge.¹⁸⁸ The ultimate verdict was thus content with the enforcement of the warning (*icra-yı tenbihat*) with a warning discouraging its repeat while it clandestinely favoured the interests of landowner Esad Bey compared to the seven-years of labour of the cultivators of the çiftlik.

The third issue, in this sense, was not drastically different from the second item, in essence. Concerning the molestation accusations, the Department was to acknowledge the case whereas underlining the aspects of the offense which were followed by the escape of the Bey to Istanbul after the earlier clamour and complaints of the women, and by the recognition and assertion of the husbands of these women in terms of the existence of the molestations. Puzzling as it might be, the Department then indicated that the aforementioned women had the habit of staying at the aforementioned çiftlik where they worked, and were women who belonged to the "free ones" (*serbest takımından*), which was apparent by their

¹⁸⁸ "...ahaliyi bila-ücret çiftliğinde istihdam etmesi dahi kendisinin çayırında meccanen hayvan ra'y etmelerine mukabil olduğunu söyleyip bu hayvan ra'yı (...) müddeîleri (?) tarafından tasdik olunmuş olmasına nazaran mîr-i mumaileyh bu maddede biraz hakkı görünerek mâ'mafih böyle imece suretle amele istihdamı mugayir mu'adelat-ı seniyye olmasıyla ücret-i yevmiyelerinin istihsali lazım gelir ise de ahali-i merkume işledikleri (...) ve ücretin mikdarını ta'yin ve beyanda izhar-ı âcz eylemelerinden ve mîr-i mumaileyhin çayırında meccanen hayvan ra'y etmelerinden dolayı tazmin-i ücret maddesine bir tarîk-i hükm bulunamadığından..." Ibid.

attitude and other inquiries.¹⁸⁹ Upon these developments, the judge declared that it was difficult to regard this coercive offense in a reliable way; and then finding the nine-month imprisonment enough according to the 202nd article of the Criminal Code, released Mehmed Esad Bey on conditional terms about one year after he had fled to Istanbul.

His release conditioned, being attributed to a bailman, however, did not seem to assert the total triumph of Esad Bey. That is because the cultivators, who were deemed to be furious with the verdict, were considered as a potential threat to security of the *bey*. Consequently, the release conditioned by his temporary settlement in Prizren under bail was asserted, but then, due to his earlier imprisonment period along with his explanations of the events, this verdict was dropped and he returned to his hometown and, thus, to the duties of his actual official post on the condition of the assurance of not repeating such behaviours.¹⁹⁰ Finally, the murderer of the non-Muslim Simon was asked to be found as soon as possible.

¹⁸⁹ “...hususunda dahi çünkü bunların mukaddema vuku’ bulan feryad ve iştikalarında mîr-i mumaileyhin Dersaadet’e firar etmiş ve mu’amele-i cebriye ile mezburelere fi’il-i (...) icra olunduğu mezburelerin muharrerü’s-sâmî refikleri tarafından takrir ve tasdik kılınmış olması fi’il-i mezkurun vuku’una delalet eder ise de mezburelerin kadimden beri mezkur çiftlikte işlemekte olarak orada yatmak dahi mu’tadları bulunduğu kendü ifadelerinden ve zaten serbest takımdan oldukları ruşen-i (?) hâllerinden ve tahkikat-ı saireden anlaşılmuş olduğuna...” Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ “...bu makule çiftçi takımından bazı ahalinin mîr-i mumaileyhden emniyetleri olamayacağı anlaşıldığından bir müddet Prizren’de bulundurulmak üzere kefile rabt ile (...) tahliye kılınması ve vakıa’ mîr-i mumaileyhin şerh olunan hareketinden dolayı müddet-i habsi kanunen ceza-ı kafi olarak ol suretle saliverilmesi yolunda görünmüş olup ancak kefalet altında olarak bir müddet ahar mahalde ikamet ettirilmesi hükm-i kanun harcında bulunduğu cihetle memleketine âzimetine itâ-yı ruhsatla beraber esas vezaif-i me’muriyet olduğu vechile ba’de-zin bu misillü halet-i vuku’a getirilmemesine...” Ibid.

The extent to which Esad Bey increased his exploitation against the employee on his çiftlik remained ambiguous; however, what seems to be evident is that the labour-abuses emanating from sharecropping contracts were not satisfactorily guarded by the legislation of the Empire. In this context, seven-year exploitation albeit with the cultivators' grazing without pay was seemingly justified when the case was brought the landlord due to his other criminal activities. The legitimacy of the offensive acts of the landlord therefore brought about almost no retribution for Esad Bey but nothing for the degradation for the cultivators. In this sense, Esad Bey who presumedly was quite powerful in his locality vis-à-vis the Porte, which in turn affected his judgment process altering it in his favour; while the cultivators and their wives missed the opportunity of the ends of their justifiable rights. Not only did Esad Bey get off relatively easily but in the forthcoming years, what is more striking is three years later he was promoted to the rank of "gatekeeper" which in turn led to his promotion from "bey" to pasha. This rise is reminiscent of the early century Balkan *ağas*, Esad Paşa attained his rank with respect to the uneasy reciprocity.

The period between the end of his trial and his request for promotion took three years. There is no record of any events – as far as this study is concerned – concerning his acts against either the population or the State. Yet, in February 1865 Esad Bey wrote a petition to the Sublime Porte asking for the Sultan to promote his rank, which shows that the uneasy reciprocity of the early nineteenth century was still intact in the very same lands even in the middle of the century. The introduction of the petition Esad Bey inscribed followed is as such:

Until now, by means of the military service for which I was responsible and especially my efforts and struggle

in order to accomplish the services sincerely in a good manner in the *Mesele-yi Cebeliye* which attained me the request of joining the class of the governor...¹⁹¹

Expectedly, the petition reaching the lower departments of the Porte finally reached the Sultan, who in turn affirmed the rank of Esad Bey, who thus in turn accomplished his rise from leader of mercenary troops (probably of Albanian origin) to governor pasha. In this context, thanks to the troops he commanded and along with the decisive assistance of the district governor (*ka'immakam*) and with his actual success on the battlefield he obtained the rank which would ease his relations on his lands against the minor landlords or the cultivators, and subsequently further his financial means with respect to agriculture and trade.¹⁹²

Leaving behind the offensive acts against the agricultural labourers on his çiftlik, and becoming pasha after leading his irregular troops into a battle, he

¹⁹¹ The petition that Esad Bey had written originally followed as such: “*Şimdiye değin me'mur olduğum kâffe-i hidemat-ı askeriye ve hususiyle Mes'ele-i Cebeliye'de canperane ifa-ı hüsn-i hidmete sa'y ve gayret ettiğim cihetle istit'af-ı lütf ve merhamet-i Celile-i Vali takamına kesb-i istihkak etmiş olduğuma binaen saye-i ihsanvâye-i cenab-ı tac-dârîye hem vuku'a gelen hidemat-ı naçizaneme ber-mükâfat-ı aliyâne ve hem de beyne'l(...) tezayid-i şevk ve (...) âbidanemi müstelzim olmak üzere uhde-i bendegâneme rikâb-ı Şahane kapıcıbaşılığ-ı rütbesinin istihsalile ârızalarını ez(...) ihya buyurmaları niyazı babında ve her halde emr-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir.*” Unfortunately, there was no further information available concerning the “question” that Esad Bey was involved with, probably it should be a certain suppression of a local rebellion. İ. DH. 534/37011, 12 Ramazan 1281 (8 February 1865).

¹⁹² The *ka'immakam* also inscribed a petition emphasising the success of then Esad Bey, who probably governed the region close to the lands of the newly-promoted pasha. The petition followed as such: “*Asakir-i Muvazzafa sergerdelerinden Kalkandelenli Mehmed Esad Bey'in Mes'ele-i Cebeliye'de vuku'a gelen hüsn-i hüdmetine mükafeten uhdesine Rikâb-ı Hümayun-ı Şahane-i kapıcıbaşılığ-ı rütbesi tevcihi niyazına dair itâ eylediği varaka menzur-ı âli-i vekâlet penahileri buyrulmak üzere leffen takdim kılınmış. Ve fi'l-vaki' mîr-i mumaileyhin Kalkandelen'den müretteb gönüllü askerinin sergerdesi olduğu halde refakat-ı çakerânemile (...) Ferikiyyesinde bulunarak pek çok yararlık eylediği meşhud-ı âcizanem bulunmuş olmakla her halde emr-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir.*” Ibid.,

collaborated with the troops of the Porte, and Esad Paşa rose in the end with respect to the centralisation attempts of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Correspondingly, this rise, feeding his financial and political power over the lands under his reign, seemed to continue for a decade as far as the archival documents revealed. Assuring his post against the Porte, while taking the upper hand with regards to the minor notables of his environs, Esad Paşa administered the district of Kalkandelen with no more reports concerning labour or molestation abuses. As this was attributable to the his strengthened conditions in his lands which eventually discouraged the coercive influence of the Empire, the extent of the problems that the pasha could have encountered had also improved in extent. For, in September 1881, sixteen years after his promotion to the rank of pasha, the Porte seemed still eager to challenge the *de facto* existence of Kalkandelenli Esad Paşa. For reasons unknown, along with a couple of pashas, he and his family were sent into exile.¹⁹³ Apparently as the years passed by, the Pasha became more powerful in his environs, which in turn attracted the attention of the central government, which had attempted to phase out the feudal-like warlords in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The rise of Kalkandelenli Esad Paşa was, in the end, elaborative in terms of elucidating a particular case of the *çiftlik*s where the harassment that the cultivators witnessed against the unruly acts of the landlords-cum-pashas intertwined with the policies of the central government, which often opted not to engage with the landlords with the expectation of incorporating their military forces on its side. As successful as these policies might have been, their

¹⁹³ A. MKT. MHM., 486/79, 27 Şevval 1298 (21 September 1881).

consequences for the peasantry were unfortunately disastrous in the era of the Tanzimat. In this sense, considering the agricultural reforms in 1840 and the consecutive çiftlik distribution policies of the State, the reformist ends with which both the Tanzimat and redistribution policies were entailed, in the end, usually meant a mere reorganisation of the already powerful elites in the countryside while leaving the status of the peasantry intact, if not relegated. The abolition of corvée, in this context, persisted until the third quarter of the nineteenth century on many Balkan çiftliks administered by landlords like Kalkandelenli Esad Paşa. Correspondingly, the redistribution of the çiftliks with a view to improve the status of both the peasantry and the infrastructure materialised in terms of resource allocation while the initial improvements remained immaterialised, at least in the case of northern Greece; leaving the radical land tenure reforms for the Greek Kingdom to inherit.

In a similar vein, the issues which concerned the landlords had nothing to do with improvements to the land under their possession, which they regarded as not worthy of investment, thus leaving the infrastructures of these estates intact. Preferably not advancing to wage-labour, these landlords exploited these lands which “were usually profitably rented in cash as grazing lands to semi-nomadic pastoralists. Landlords’ main effort was oriented towards limiting the security of tenancy. Some landlords even limited the number of sharecroppers and expanded the area they rented as pastures.”¹⁹⁴ When, therefore, the relations of production

¹⁹⁴ Socrates Petmezas, “Agriculture and Economic Growth in Greece,” paper delivered in the 14th International Economic History Congress in Helsinki, August 21-25, 2006, p. 11.

were shaped by the pre-capitalist relations of production which in turn affected the tenancy of the peasantry; the extent that the latter was exposed to arbitrary service demands as well as to offensive acts did nothing but perpetuate the feudal remnants of earlier centuries. Although, the capitalist option was always available, it apparently did not attract the landowners of the Thesselian plains as Petmezas suggested;

We would add however that the agricultural surplus was produced under precapitalist [sic] relations of production and that its commercialization was to a large extent assured through extra-economic constraints.¹⁹⁵

Finally, the state of the Ottoman Empire against these landlords, or brigand-cum-pashas was neither daring, nor challenging albeit with the centralisation attempts at the beginning in the early nineteenth century. Rather, the State opted to employ the available sources of these minor local notables, especially of Albanian origin, in line with its immediate interests on the grounds of the “uneasy reciprocity” which seemed to have persisted until the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Who suffered from the depressing consequences of this reciprocity was apparently the peasantry who were employed on çiftliks in northern Greece, the degradation of which was fundamentally caused by sharecropping contracts in which the Sublime Porte was not likely to have been involved. The resulting agricultural production, decreasing in extent, ended up with the apparent exposure of the peasantry to the arbitrary acts of the landlords. Similarly the labour productivity

¹⁹⁵ Socrates Petmezas, “Export-dependent Agriculture, Revenue Crisis and Agrarian Productivity Involvement. The Greek Case (1860s-1930s)”, *Historie et Mesure* 15, no. 3/4 (2000), p. 324.

of these estates in northern Greece did not encounter a promising amelioration throughout the century.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Petmezas, acutely, stresses that even when the Greek Kingdom redistributed these lands, the new landlords were still discouraged with respect to investment in land, as he asserts, "It was hoped that the new landlords would invest on the modernization of their landed estates and would, as a consequence, intensify cereal agriculture and animal husbandry in Thessaly. This proved to be an illusion." Petmezas, "Agricultural Change," p. 8.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The concept of *çiftlik* and the attributions related to its existence have been a major source of discussion and controversy in the literature. While these discussions do not seem to conclude, the new findings demonstrated in this study, however, present a new direction for the concept and its respective arguments. Departing from the various *çiftlik* notations which prevailed in the Ottoman Europe, this paper argued that the imperial *çiftlik*s of northern Greece, which formerly had been possessed by quasi-independent pashas, were redistributed to others who were financially capable of investing in land. However, the very people who participated in the auctions were not attracted by the investment or improvement of any kind. Rather, after the age of *âyâns*, these new landlords, as in the previous century continued to resist the central authority in any opportunity possible, one of which was determined by the administration of *çiftlik*s.

In other words, the centralisation attempts and its controversial counterpart, i.e. redistribution, of the State did not appear to have been materialised on the plains of northern Greece. The central concern of this study was to demonstrate these controversies. That is, the Tanzimat Reforms as well as the initial reasoning underlying the *çiftlik* redistribution process barely contributed to the actual state of being of the peasantry in this region. It was argued that the redistribution policy of the State was not sincere; and, instead of improving the status of the infrastructure and of the peasantry the State actually resorted to a reallocation of wealth. Having eliminated the major prominent figures of northern Greece, the State did, actually, reproduce this scene only by a slight difference, the

sovereignty of these landlords after redistribution was to a great extent reduced, but still was significant in that it was regarded as an option by the Sublime Porte. In this collaboration-like setting, there was the status of the peasantry waiting to be ameliorated in terms of production. Accordingly, these antagonist classes and their interactions with them were enigmatic. Especially in the case of the Albanian pashas vis-à-vis the Sublime Porte, this antagonism was vivid. In an arcane manner, this antagonism was somehow converted to collaboration at certain times, which, in the end, left the peasantry on its own. Being deprived of their tenure rights, they were already vulnerable and this “disguised” collaboration was actually a direct threat to the peasantry on the çiftliks. Thus, the failure of agriculture reforms stemming from the Rescript as well as of the necessary investments in çiftliks redistributed are strongly related to these “disguised” collaboration.

Another novelty presented throughout the study was the overarching characteristics attributed to the çiftliks. Though speaking for the Thessaly plain, the work exposed the modest aspects of these agricultural estates. Compared to “enterprises of colonisation”, or “large estates” the çiftliks were actually sometimes small in size, administered by their own cultivators, and sometimes were purchased in order to support the financial entrepreneurships of the purchasers. In short, çiftliks, which are characterised as a stage in the passage from feudalism to capitalism or as the locomotives of the export-led production, were actually different from the theoretical preconceptions. As such, the çiftliks were of great importance in some places whereas in other places they were merely the means of subsistence for the direct producers. As different as their reception

was shaped by its possessors, the çiftlik remained outside of the reign of the central authority. When this was the case, the relations of production were, thus, determined by landlords and sharecroppers, disregarding the legislation of the State. Redistributions were successful in terms of making the peasantry possessors of the çiftliks they had cultivated, but this was rather limited in scope and yet these çiftliks were not valuable with respect to bid for by the higher strata officials. Correspondingly, this study also asserted the practical cases in relation to the “famous” çiftlik concept making it more tangible and discussable.

In this context, following the preface the first chapter elaborated these “concepts” in order to describe new directions in the çiftlik debate and in the literature. Being a literary review, these varying notions concerning the term “çiftlik” and the views in accordance with its genesis were elucidated and their drawbacks were presented. It is obvious that the harassment on the çiftliks and, moreover, the genesis of çiftliks cannot be discussed merely with respect to the decay of the Ottoman central power in the countryside, or to the increase in the external trade opportunities in turn sharpening class antagonisms. It was evident that the dominant classes, landlords along with the State, resorted to increasing the level of exploitation both in production and labour-extraction. However, arguing this fact in a biased way is explicitly misleading. Internal and external causalities were present in the genesis of çiftliks and more, even more in the degradation of their status. In this study, there were few incidents of the existence of wage-labour on these çiftliks whereas the corruption in çiftliks was not the sole explanatory phenomenon. In other words the genesis of çiftliks and its consequential effects were demonstrated by means of a synthesis of the class analysis and the

particularity of the region. It was evident that these çiftliks were highly affiliated with feudal institutions and that the labour that they exploited seemingly had been shaped along with the feudal mode of production. Additionally, the effects that the incorporation of the Empire to European capitalism as well as the Reforms were employed with a view to presenting a preliminary insight into the status of çiftliks in the nineteenth century. Therefore, it would not be wrong to assert that the çiftliks, in the nineteenth century, were quite common throughout the plains of Rumelia and they were particularly administered by sharecropping, which, due to lack of involvement of the State, was exposed to labour abuses by landlords.

In this sense, this study presents further insight into the notations of çiftlik. Revealing the drawbacks and misconceptions of the notations, and their evolution in the historical context, this study revised these connotations and presented a recent one. The çiftliks, as far as the findings in this study supported, became “minor spots of anguish” in Ottoman Europe suffering at the hands of the landlord pashas and from the ignorance of the State. The main concern of this chapter was postulated as such, for the idle çiftliks in northern Greece was redistributed to those who had financial means to buy them. Yet, after possession was acquired, the rest of the story was not disclosed to the Porte unless serious uprisings took place. In other words, the idle çiftliks were auctioned in a manner so that the most prominent figures of the elites, both in the countryside and in Istanbul could acquire their possession. Once this auction process was done, the relationship between the new landlord and the State experienced a gradual decline.

While the decline was inevitable, it is defensible to argue that the deeds with respect to the terms of redistribution were thwarted in the very first place. It is

evident that the Porte did not prefer to get involved with the sharecropping contracts and the discontent emanating from them. Under the guidance of these findings, the idle çiftliks can be said to have been reallocated to financially and thus politically powerful notables in the countryside, as had been the case in the previous century. Similar to the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century, therefore, witnessed decentralising attempts by these pashas against the centralisation of the Empire. In this sense, exchange of the çiftliks between the provincial elites and the State dramatically signifies a resource allocation from the central State to the countryside while the direct producers did not experience a drastic change with respect to their employment or production patterns, if not a degradation under the entrepreneurial adventures of the landlords.

The consequences of this collaboration between the prospective landlords and the State were demonstrated. On most çiftliks, the existence of the State was neglectfully absent with regards to the attitude about the peasantry. Underlining the deficient aspects of the Ottoman administration against the production process being conducted on the çiftliks, the case of the brigand-cum-pashas were illustrated in effect to demonstrate the actual practices taking place on the çiftliks. Apart from the particular incidents of labour abuse, the case of an Albanian pasha established the actual practice of the theses maintained in this study. The “uneasy reciprocity” between the prospective pasha and the State was ominous at certain times, and in the following period relatively more stable. Yet, the power struggle between these two antagonists indeed did disguise the status of peasantry. As maintained in the study, the State’s policies against the peasantry were of secondary importance with regard to the former’s relations with the landlord-

pashas, which were always at the breaking point. This tension, when added to the reforms and the retributions following the abuse of the peasantry, seemed to have persisted although the issues emanating from the administration of the çiftliks by these landlords did not acquire major significance. The resulting case was, albeit its very particularity, definite: A local notable with a ready militia troops defying the demands of the Empire and indeed its sovereignty would have been incorporated into the very cadres of the Empire as long as the reciprocity between the two strata remained fruitful.

In this respect, this particular case can be said to be misleading since it was only one event. However, further research, without any doubt, would bring about such cases between the brigand-cum-pashas and the employee on their çiftliks which, ultimately, would strengthen the thesis maintained in this study. Accordingly, the çiftliks depicted in this study seem still not to represent the whole picture. That is, though the distribution policies were discussed with definite details, the most important parts seemed unsatisfactorily plain. That is, the necessary information concerning their sizes, exact locations, and details concerning the relations of production are lacking. More importantly, even though it can be assumed that most of these çiftliks were located on the plains of the northern Greece, nothing is known about their production. Particularly, the actual facets characterising the relations of production on these çiftliks, the extent of the tendency to produce crops, the composition of production as well as the reigns of these prominent provincial elites are the leading items which, unfortunately, remain unanswered. Nevertheless, these fields constitute the edges encouraging direction to further research with a view to completing the political economy of

çiftliks in nineteenth century northern Greece. Accordingly, the lands under the control of such Albanian pashas with respect to their “reciprocity” with the State constitute another field of interest for further research.

The çiftliks attract scholars interested in several different aspects. Taking the production and the possession aspects from these, this study remarked on the significance of çiftlik when it was also employed as a means of resource allocation. When redistributing the land, the State previously had resorted to tax farming, but as this work underlined this act of the Porte was beyond tax farming confined to the needs of cash reserves. Instead, the central government seemed to have initiated an agricultural policy meant to encourage the agricultural production on idle çiftliks. However, the ends of this policy, as the State was not concerned with those, resulted in an unexpected situation. The novelty with respect to this study was the exposure of the çiftlik as a means of financial and political wealth, which in turn changed hands between the State and the *de facto* leaders of the regions where these estates were located at the age of reforms.

Once the *de facto* leaders were acknowledged by these “sale” contracts, this study accordingly revealed the actual state of the peasantry, who in fact were controlled by these landlords rather than the State. The reforms and the actual production processes were thus determined by the interests of the landlords or pashas whereas the State did not interfere with these interactions as long as its interests were threatened. The vulnerability of the peasantry on the çiftliks of northern Greece was, as maintained, thus due to the “uneasy reciprocity” between the two ruling classes.

In conclusion, this study revealed the distribution policy of the Sublime Porte on the eve of the Tanzimat era which constituted a further threat to the legitimacy of the Porte. Thus, the tensions shaping the relations between the three strata were represented by the expectation of contributing to the çiftlik debate, still controversial today. Yet, as mentioned above, there is a serious need for further research in terms of complementary data concerning the whole description of the *çiftlik*s in northern Greece. Fortunately, this study might be regarded as an introductory work into the field, which, ultimately, furthers the çiftlik debate, at least, with respect to their exchange between different parties in the age of the Tanzimat.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Sample Documents Demonstrating the Çiftlik Sales.¹⁹⁷

1. İ. DH. 20/973. The Sales of Çiftliks in Vodine and Giannitsa.

Maliye Nazırı devletli Saib Paşa hazretlerinin menzur-ı âli-i hazret-i şahaneyeye buyrulmak üzere irsal-i su-ı vala-ı müşiriyeleri kılınan bir kıta' takrir-i mealinden müstefid olacağı vechile Tepedelenli emlâkından Vodine ve Yenice-i Vardar kazalarında olan çiftlikler ile müştemilat-ı sairesinin bedel-i mukayyidi mal addolunarak ve beher sene Maliye Hazinesine teslim olunmak üzere bin beş yüz kuruşa fa'iz-i itibar ile on seneliği mu'accele takdir kılınarak işbu elli altı senesinden itibaren ba-mülk-name-i Hümayun Re'is-i Meclis-i Ahkam-ı Adliye devletlü Hasib Paşa hazretlerine furuhtu istizan olunmuş olmakla ber-mucib-i takrir tesviyesi muvaffak irade-i seniyye-i hazret-i şehinşahi buyrulur ise icra-ı iktizası Nazır-ı müşarünileyh hazretlerine havale olunacağı beyanat ile tezkire-i (...) terkimine ibtidar kılındı efendim.

2. İ. DH. 48/2369. The sale of Imperial Estate çiftlik Coneler in Tırhala.

Emlâk-ı Hümayun çiftlikatından Tırhala sancağında ve Lestin (?) kazasında ka'in Çoneler çiftliği senevî bin yedi yüz elli kuruş müeccele ve mâ'zam bir yük on bin beş yüz kuruş mu'accele ve saire ile mahalle mütemekkinlerinden Endovan zımmi üzerinde karar etmiş ise de muahharen mersum çiftlik-i mezburu iştiradan istinkaf etmiş olmasıyla tekrar mahallinde bi'l-müzayede seksen beş bin kuruş

¹⁹⁷ Most of the documents including those with information about çiftlik sales usually had other "interior" affairs also being given in the same document. Those parts were not transcribed and thus not included in this part.

mu'accele ve saire ile mezkûrî's-sâmî çend nefer reaya üzerinde karar eylediği Tırhala muhassılı tarafından cevaben iş'ar ve inha ve çiftlik-i mezkûrun kendi çiftlikatına hem-hudud bulunmuş mülayesesıyla zikrolunan seksen beş bin kuruş üzerine bin kuruş daha zam ile seksen altı bin kuruş mu'accele ve saire ile elli sekiz senesi Martından itibaren iştirasına talib olduğu Fehamettin Beyzade İsmet Bey Efendi cânibinden beyan ve ibna olunmuş olduğundan çiftlikat-ı mezburun ol miktar mu'accele ve saire ile sene-i merkumeden itibaren mîr-i mumaileyhe fûruht ile iktizasının icrası

(...)

Maruz-ı çaker-i keminelidir ki

(...) icâl olan işbu tezkire-i sâmi-yi sadaret penahileriyle zikrolunan takrirler mübarek ve mes'ud hak-i pâ-yi me'âli ihtiva Hazret-i Malikâneye bi't-takdim menzur-ı şevket... cenâb-ı tacdârîye buyrulmuş ve bend bend iş'ar ve beyan olunduğu vechile hususat-ı merkumenin icra-ı iktizaları müte'allik ve şeref-i sudur buyrulan emr-i ferman-ı me'âli nişan-ı hazret-i cihan (...) âlisinden bulunmuş ve mezkûr takrirler yine sevb-i ... asafâneleriine iade ve tesyar kılınmış olmakla ol babda emri-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir.

3. İ. DH. 57/2830. The Sale of Seven Imperial Estates Çiftliks in the kaza of Urmiye in the district of Trikala.

Şerait-i ma'lûme ile taliblerine fûruhtu mukteza-yı irade-yi seniyyeden olan Emlâk-ı Hümayun çiftlikatından Tırhala sancağında Urmiye kazasında vaki' ma'lûmü's-sâmi yedi kıta' çiftlik ile konak mahalli senevî on bin kuruş müeccele

ve dokuz seneliğine olarak mâ-resm-i delile ve harc-ı eklam bir yük doksan yedi bin dokuz yüz altmış sekiz kuruş mu'accele ile elli dokuz senesinden itibaren hoceğândan Ahmed Şükri Efendi'ye fûruhtile Hazinece icabının icrası hususu mukaddema ba-takrir lede'l-istizân ol babda irade-yi seniyye-yi şahaneye müte'allik ve şeref-i sudur buyrulmuş olup ancak muahharen çiftlikat-ı merkumeden beş kıta'sının bi'l-müzayede senevî on bin yüz altmış altı buçuk kuruş altı para müeccele ve zikrolunan konak mahali ile beraber mâ-zam iki yük yirmi iki bin dört yüz altmış sekiz kuruş mu'accele ve saire ile Selanik sakinesinden Afife Hanım ve Âli bey üzerlerine bi'l-müzayede karar eylemiş ve mu'accele-i mezbureye peşinen teslim-i Hazine etmek üzere kuva-ı sarf (?) olunmuş olmakla mare'z-zikr beş kıta' çiftlik ve bir bab konak mahallinin hasbe'l-hasad iki yüz altmış senesinden itibaren ol mikdar mu'accele ve saire ile mumaileyhimaya fûruhtile iktizasının icrası ve geriye kalan iki kıta' çiftlik keyfiyetinin dahi isti'lamı zımnında Selanik defterdarı Efendi tarafına tahrirat icabına tastir ve esre olunması

(...)

Maruz-ı çaker-i keminelidir ki

... ta'zim olan işbu tezkire-yi sâmiye-yi asâfaneleriyle zikrolunan takrirler ve mazbata meşmul lahza-ı şevket (...) hazret-i şahaneye buyrulmuştur. İnha ve istizan olunduğu üzere bend-i evvelde muharrer beş kıta' çiftlik ve bir bab konak mahallinin sene-i merkumeden itibaren ol mikdar mu'accele ve saire ile mumaileyhimaya fûruhtile icabının icra ve tahrirat-ı mezkûrenin tastir ve isra olunması ve bend-i sâni'de gösterildiği vechle vali-i müşarünileyhin kusur-ı

matlubu (...) mebalîğ-i mezkûre ile sene-i merkumeye mahsuben itâsı inha olunan bin kîse akçe sermayenin dahi ber-vech-i sabık Hazine-i Celile-i merkumeden itâsı ile müteferrikanın tesviye ve îfa kılınması hususlarına irade-yi seniyye-yi cenab-ı mülûkâne müte'allik ve şeref-i sudur buyrulmuş ve mare'l-beyan takrirler ve mazbata yine sevb-i sâmililerine iade ve tesyar kılınmış olmakla ol babda emri-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir.

4. İ. DH. 95/4774. Sale of Some Çiftliks in Vlöre

Şerait-i ma'lume ile fûruhtu mukteza-ı irade-i seniyyeden olan çiftlikattan Avlonya sancağında (...) nahiyesinde vaki' Kakulakov (?) nam çiftliğin bi'l-müzayede senevî iki bin altı yüz kuruş müeccele ve üç yüz elli kuruş fa'iz bila-îtibar mâ-resm-i delile ve saire on buçuk senelik hesabı üç bin dokuz yüz kırk dört kuruş mu'accele ile Abduselîm ve Ahmed nam kimesneler üzerinde karar ederek meblağ-ı mezburun poliçesi gönderilmiş olduğundan icabının icrası Elviye-i Selase Müşiri atufetlü Hüsrev Paşa hazretleri tarafından ba-tahrirat ve mazbata inha ve şurut mukayyedesini derkenear mealinden istibna olunmuş ve çiftlik-i mezkûr bu tarafta talib-i âhir zuhuruna mebni lede'l-müzayede mu'accele-i mezkûre üzerine beş yüz kuruş zamile dört bin dört yüz kırk dört kuruş peşinen teslim-i Hazine olunmak şartıyla nahiye-i mezbure reayasından Yorgi ve Kosti nam zimmiler uhdelerinde karar eylemiş olmağın çiftlik-i mezburun mâ-zam ol mikdar mu'accele ve saire ile altmış bir senesi Martından itibaren mersumana fûruhtile icabının icrası istizanını şâmil Maliye nazırı devletlü paşa hazretlerinin bir kıta' takriri menzur-ı âli buyrulmak için sevb-i vâlâlarına gönderilmiş olmakla ber-mûcib-i takrir tesviye-yi iktizasını muvaffak irade-i seniyye-i hazret-i şahane

buyrulur ise nazır müşarünileyh hazretlerine havale olunacağı beyanile tezkire-yi senavârî terkimine mübaderet kılındı efendim.

Maruz-ı çaker-i keminelidir ki

(...) (...) tekrim olan işbu tezkire-i sâmiyye-i asâfaneleriyle takrir-i mezkûr menzur-ı âli-yi hazret-i şahane buyrulmuş. Ve iş'ar ve istizan buyrulduğu vechile ber-mûcib-i takrir çiftlik-i mezburun mâ-zam ol mikdar mu'accele ve saire ile tarih-i mezkûrdan itibaren mersumana fûruhtile icabının icrası müte'allik buyrulan irade-yi seniyye-yi cenâb-ı mülûkâne-i icab-ı âliyesinden bulunmuş. Takrir-i mezkûr yine sevb-i vâlâ-ı sadaret penahilerine iade ve (...) kılınmış olmakla ol babda emri-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir.

5. İ. DH. 125/6410. The Sale of Çiftlik of Selades in the kaza of Arta in Ioannina.

Şerait-i ma'lûme ile taliblerine fûruhtu mukteza-yı irade-yi seniyyeden olan çiftlikattan Narde kazasında vaki' Selades çiftliği ve demekle ma'ruf bir kıta' çiftlik bi'l-müzayede senevî dört bin beş yüz kuruş müeccele ve on beş bin iki yüz elli kuruş mu'accele ile altmış üç senesi Martından itibaren Yanya sakinlerinden Âli ve Abdullah nam kimesneler ile Zübeyde Hanım üzerlerine karar eyleyerek ziyadeye talib-i âhir zuhur etmemiş ol babda Yanya meclisinden terkim olunan mazbata takdim kılınmış olduğundan icra-yı icabı Rumeli Ordu-yı Hümayun Müşiri atufetlü paşa hazretleri tarafından inha ve iş'ar ve keyfiyeti derkenar olunup sâlifü'l-beyan mu'accelenin iradesi sünuhunda teslim-i Hazine kılınacağı ifade ve ta'ahhüd olunmuş olduğundan çiftlik-i mezburun ol vechile merkuman ile hanım-ı mumaileyheye fûruht olunması istizanını şamil Maliye nazırı devletlü

paşa hazretlerinin bir kıta' takriri menzur-ı âliye buyrulmak için sû-ı âtufelerine gönderilmiş olmakla ber-mûcib-i takrir tesviye-i iktizası muvaffak irade-i seniyye cenab-ı cihandâri buyrulur ise nazır müşarünileyh hazretlerine havale olunacağı beyanıyla tezkire-i senavârî terkîm kılındı efendim. Fi 25 Şevval 62

Maruz-ı çaker-i kemîneleridir ki

... ta'zim olan işbu tezkire-i samî-i âsafaneleriyle zikrolunan takriri meşmul nekah-ı şevket-i iktinah hazret-i padişah buyrulmuş ve iş'ar ve istizan olduğu üzere çiftlikat-ı mezburun merkumat ile hanım-ı mumaileyhe fûruht olunması zımında bir muceb takrir tesviye-i iktizasının nazır müşarünileyh hazretlerine havalesi şeref-i sunu' ve sudur buyrulan emr ü irade-i sneiyye-i cenab-ı malikane icab-ı âliyesişnden bulunmuş ve takrir-i mezkûru yine sevb-i sadaret penahilerine iade kılınmış olmakla ol babda emri-i ferman-ı hazret-i min leh ül emrindir.

Fi 26 Şevval 62.

Appendix B. Report of the Status of Imperial Estates Çiftlik in 1847.

İ. MSM. 20/491. (Document 1 is excluded, for this document see Table 3.)

Document 2

Ma'lûm-ı âliyeri buyrulduğu üzere Emlâk-ı Hümayun'dan olup şerait-i mâ'lume ile taliblerine fûruhtu mukteza-yı irade-yi seniyyeden olan çiftlikattan Goriçe kazasında ka'in çend kıta' çiftlikatın fûruhtu hakkında bazı mütâla'atı şâmil Maliye Nazırı devletlü paşa hazretlerinin bir kıta' takrirleri üzerinde Meclis-i Vâlâ'dan terkim kılınan mazbata hâk-i pâ-yi hümayun-ı hazret-i mülûkaneye lede'l-arz işbu Emlâk-ı Hümayun çiftlikatından şimdiye kadar haylicesi satılmış ise de çiftlikat-ı merkumenin (...) sahihesi buraca pek bilinemeyip ekserisi (...) fûruht olunmuş olması melhuzâttan olup böyle olmaktan ise mevkî'lerine göre Hazine-i Celile tarafından bu misillu çiftlikat usulüne âşina me'murlar gönderilip ve münasebet alacaklarının dahi bulunduğu mahalın vali ve mutasarrıf ve ka'immakamları ma'rifetleriyle mu'ayene ettirilerek arazi ve (...) sairesi bilindiği ve bunlar şimdiye kadar böyle bakılıp idare olunmuş olduğundan mümkün olduğu mertebe imârı suretine bakılarak ma'mûr olduğu halde çiftlikat-ı merkumenin ahval-i hazırasına kesb-i itlâ' olunmuş olacağı misillu ileride İslamdan müşterisi zuhurunda ma'mûriyeti cihetile ziyade baha ile fûruht olunacağı ve saire satmamak lazım geldiği takdirde dahi hazıra emr-i imârı husule gelerek hasılatça menaf'i mûcib olacağı maslahattan ve bu suretin Hazinece icrası mümkünattan görünmüş olmasıyla husus-ı mezburun Maliye Nezaret-i Celilesiyle muhabere ve mütâla'asıyla karar-ı keyfiyetin tekrar arz ve istizan kılınması hususuna emr ü

ferman isabet-i nişan-ı hazret-i şehinşâhî müte'âllik ve şeref-i sudur buyrulmuş olduğundan mukteza-yı (...) üzere keyfiyet nezaret-i müşarünileyh ile lede'l-muhabere çiftlikat-ı merkume mukaddemki idarede elden ele geçtiği cihetle iltizam edenler menfâ'at-ı mahsusa gazezile imârına asla sarf-ı efkâr etmeyerek müşerref harab olmuş ve muahharen (...) Tanzimat'ta muhassılık ma'rifetile idaresinde fi'l-cümle eser-i ma'mûriyet ve bedelat-ı mukayyedesinde fazla-ı hâsılat olmasıyla daha ziyade husul-i menfâ'at mütâla'asıyla karargâr olan nizam-ı mâ'lumu vechile İslam ve reayadan zuhur eden taliblerine fûruhtu olunmakta olduğu halde çiftlikat-ı merkume reayası üçer beşer neferinin ismine olarak mübayâ'a edip müeccele ve mu'accelâtını reyanın cümlesine bi't-tevzi' ahz birle te'diye etmekte olduklarından ve kocabaşı ve sair ilerü gelen reaya tarafından ahali îâne ve zirâ'ata teşvik olunmamakta olmasından dolayı çiftlikat-ı merkumenin âdm-i (?) ma'mûriyetile beraber reyanın mağduriyetini ve mahlulâtın layıkıyla meydana çıkmamasını mûcib olacağından ve Tırhala sancağında olup fûruht olunandan mâ'ada yetmiş kıta' çiftlikat bu def'a aşar ihalesi hakkında keramet- ikza-yı (?) sünû buyrulan irade-yi seniyye misillü imârına kemalile dikkat olunmak şartı ve şerait-i sairesiyle altmış seneinden itibaren beş senelik olmak üzere deruhde olunmuş olmakla çiftlikat-ı mezkûre kesb-i imâr ederek müddet-i mezkûre iktizasında haylice zemaîm ile yine beşer seneliğine mahallerinde talibi hazır olduğuna dair rivayet-i vakı'a bazır erbab-ı vukûf tarafından dahi tasdik kılınmış olduğundan Yanya ve Avlonya ve Delvince sancaklarıyla Rumeli Eyaleti'nde ka'in olup henüz fûruht olunmayan dört yüz bu kadar kıta' çiftlikatın biraz vakit fûruhtu bi't-te'hir ber-mantuk-ı irade-yi seniyye-yi celile tarafından çiftlik umuruna âşına birinin ta'yinile ber-vech-i muharrer

henüz satılmamış olan çiftliğin keyfiyet-i hazır ve ma'mûriyet-i haliyesini mu'ayene ve bundan böyle cihet-i imâriyesi esbabını erbab-ı vukuf ile mütâla'a birle ma'lûmat ve tahkikini bu tarafa bildirerek Tırhala çiftliği hakkında tutulan usul hayırlu görüldüğü halde bunların dahi ana tatbiken tesviyesi sureti nezaret-i müşarüniley tarafından cevaben ifade ve beyan kılınmış olup vakı'a çiftliği-ı merkumenin mültezimler yedlerinde harab olmakta olması cihetiyle bunların Emlâk me'muru namile biri ta'yin olunup anın ma'rifetile hüsn-i idareleri sureti geçenlerde tasavvur kılınmakta olduğu halde bu babda isabet-i ikza-yı (?) sudur buyrulan irade-i seniyye (...) keramet ve ma'mûriyet-i mülkiye hakkında meşhud-ı âliyeden olan bunca (...)kâmile ve mü'essir-i hazret-i şehinşâhîye delil-i cedid olduğundan (...) şehriyârî tekrar kılınarak suret-i hal lede't-te'amül işbu çiftliklerin birer senelik olarak şuna buna deruhdesi bi'l-ahare harab olmalarını mu'di olacağından bu hal ile kalmaktan ve bütün bütün satılıp elden çıkarılmaktan ise bedelat-ı münasebe ile beşer senelik olarak ihalesi takdirinde deruhde edenler istihsal-i menfâ'at-i zâtileri zımında (...) hal akçe sarf ederek senesine ma'mûr olacağından bu suretin (...) ve hazinece (...) olduğu maslahattan olup mâmafih ahval-ı hazıralarına kesb-i itlâ' olunarak ba'de icabına bakılmak pek münasib olacağından ve nezaret-i müşarünileyh tarafından vâki' olan iş'arât (...) görüldüğünden evvel emirde sâlifü'z-zikr eyâlet ve elviyede kain çiftliklerin tahkik-i ahval-i haliyesi zımında Hazine-i Celile'den dirayetlü ve çiftlik umuruna âşına bir me'mur-ı mahsus ta'yin olunup ber-vech-i muharrer henüz satılmamış olan çiftliğin keyfiyet-i hazır ve ma'mûriyet-i haliyesi mu'ayene ve bundan böyle dahi cihet-i imâriyesi esbabı erbab-ı vukuf ile müzakere ve mütâla'a ederek ma'lûmat ve tahkikatı mübeyyin bir kıta' layihasını tanzim ve takdim birle Tırhala

çiftlikâtı hakkında tutulan usul hayırlu (...) çiftlikat-ı merkumenin dahi anlara tatbiken tesviyesi sureti icra buyrulduğu halde emlâk-ı mezkûrenin istihsali esbab-ı ma'mûriyetile beraber Hazineden çıkarılmış olması gibi bazı menfâ'at (...) hazır olduğundan (...) vuku' bulacak mâ'lûmat ve tahkikata nazaran suret-i meşruhadan kangısının icrası hayırlu ve menfâ'atlı görünür ise ana göre iktiza-ı icra olunması Meclis-i Vâlâ'da münasib tezekkür kılınmış ise de ol babda her ne vechile irade-i seniyye müte'allik buyrulur ise icabının icrası lazım (...) âliyeleri buyruldukta emr-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir.

Document 3

Emlâk-ı Hümayun-ı Şahane'den Goriçe kazasında kain çend kıta' çiftlikatın fûruhtu hakkında bazı mütâla'atı şamil takrir (...) ile ana dair Meclis-i Vâlâ'dan kaleme alınan mazbata hâk-i pâ-yi âliye lede'l-arz ol babda bir kıta' tezkire-i senavârî (...) muharrer irade-yi seniyye-yi şahâne menzur-ı âliyeleri buyrulmak için leffen irsal olundu. Bu misillü çiftlikatın Emlâk me'muru namile birisi ta'yin olunup anın ma'rifetile idaresi (...) olduğu halde işbu emr ü ferman şehinşâhî (...) kerâmet (...) cenâb-ı cihandârî eser-i celilesinden mâ'dud olmasıyla (...) ve şevket ve iclâl-i hazret-i padişâhî (...) ve tekerrür kılındığı ve mûcibince müzakere-i icabına ibtidar olunmak üzere bu babda olan re'y devletlerinin iş'arıyla evrak-ı mezkûrenin îadesi lazım geleceği beyan ile tezkire-i senavârî terkimine ibtidar olundu.

Fi 14 Safer 63

Hâk-i pâ-yi âli-i vekalet penahîlerine mâ'ruz-ı âbd-i (...)

Makar-ı ferman-nâme-yi sâmi-yi vekalet penahîleriyle melfuf tezkire-yi âliye-yi asafâneleri (...) muharrer irade-yi seniyye-yi cenâb-ı mülûkâne keyfiyeti

bi'l-mütâla'a rehin izân-i âcizânem olmuştur. Mâ'lum-ı sâmi-yi asafâneleri buyrulduğu vechile işbu Emlâk-ı Hümayun çiftlikatı ibtida-yı (...) müstefil Emlâk nazırları ta'yinle bir zaman emaneten idare ve muahharen şuna buna maktu'en ihale olunup gerek emaneten ve gerek maktu'en idaresinde matlub vechile hüsn-i hal hasıl olamadığından başka reayasına ta'addi vuku'a geldiğinden Tanzimat-ı Hayriye icrasına değin mahalleri (...) ve mutasarrıfın kirâmı (...) iltizam ve ihale olunmuş ve anlar dahi mahallerinde evvelki gibi mültezimlere parça parça deruhde ve iltizam eyledikleri ve çiftlikât-ı merkume senesine elden ele geçtiği cihetle deruhde edenler menfâ'at-i mahsusalarını (...) imârına asla sarf-ı efkâr etmeyerek müşerref harab olmuş ve bedayât Tanzimat-ı Hayriye'de muhassıllar ma'rifetile emaneten bi'l-idarede fi'l-cümle (...) me'muriyet ve bedelât-ı mukayyedelerinde fazla-ı hasılat (...) olmasıyla daha ziyade me'muriyet ve menfâ'at mütâla'asıyla karar-gîr olan nizam mâ'lumu vechile İslam ve reayadan zuhur eden taliblerine ba-irade-yi seniyye fûruht olunmakta olduğu halde zikrolunan takrir-i âcizânemde ber-tafsil-i ifade ve beyan olduğu üzere çiftlikât-ı merkumeyi reayası üçer beşer neferinin ismine olarak mübayâ'asına talib olup istihsal etmekte iseler de müeccele ve mu'accelatı reaya-yı mevcudenin cümlesinden bi't-tevzî' ahz birle te'diye etmekte olduklarından ve kocabaşı ve saire ilerü gelen reaya ahaliyi iâne ve zirâ'ata teşvik ve terkîb etmediklerinden çiftlikat-ı merkumenin reayasına fûruhtu dahi adm-i (?) ma'mûriyetile beraber reaya-yı çiftlikata gadri ve mahlûlatın layıkıyla meydana çıkmamasını mûcib olacağı zâhir olarak anlara fûruhtu men' suretinde tutmuş idi. Çiftlikât-ı merkumeden leffen takdim-i hâk-i pâ-yi sâmilere kılınan pusla nutk olunduğu üzere Tırhala sancağında olup fûruht olunandan mâ'ada yetmiş kıta' çiftlikat bu

def'a aşar ihalesi hakkında keramet-i ikza-yı sünû buyrulan irade-yi seniyye misillü imârına kemâlile dikkat olunmak şartı ve şerait-i saire ile altmış senesinden itibaren beş senelik olarak maktu'en deruhde olunmakla çiftlikât-ı merkume bu vechile ihale ve iltizam olunmasından nâşî kesb-i imâr ederek hatta çiftlikat-ı merkumenin (...) müddette bedelât-ı sabıkasına haylice zemaîm ile beş senelik olmak üzere deruhdesine şimdiden taliblerine hazır olduğuna dair bazı rivayetin üzerine bu def'a Dersaadet'e gelmiş olan Yenişehirli mîr-i mîrandan saadetlü Hasan Paşa bendeleri dahi tasdik etmiş ve suret-i hâle nazaran bu usul muvaffak düşmüş gibi mülahâza olunurken bu def'a şeref-i sünû buyrulan irade-yi seniyye-i cenab-ı mülûkâne (...) idüğü derkâr ve Tırhala takımı çiftlikâtının ihalesi müddeti iki seneye kadar muktezîye olacağından (...) keyfiyeti gereği gibi zâhir çıkacağı bedidâr olmaktan nâşî pusla-yı mezkûrede gösterildiği vechile Yanya ve Avlonya ve Delvine sancaklarıyla Rumeli Eyaletinde olup henüz fûruht olunmamış dört yüz elli üç kıta' çiftlikatın biraz vakit fûruhtu (...) hayr bermûcib-i irade-yi seniyye-yi Hazine-yi Celile tarafından çiftlik umuruna âşına birinin tâ'yinile ber-vech-i muharrer henüz satılmamış olan çiftlikatın keyfiyet-i hazırası ve ma'mûriyet-i haliyesi mu'ayene ve bundan böyle dahi cihet-i imâriyesi esbabı erbab-ı vukuf ile müzakere ve mütâla'a ederek ma'lûmat ve tahkikatı mübeyyin bir kıta' layihasını tanzim ve takdim birle Tırhala çiftlikâtı hakkında tutulan usul hayırlu görüldüğü surette bunların dahi anlara tatbiken tesviyesi sureti icra buyrulacağı halde Emlâk-ı mezkûrenin istihsal-i esbab-ı ma'mûriyetiyle beraber Hazineden çıkarılmamış olması gibi bazı menfâ'at dahi (...) çâkeri olmu ise de bu hususu başlıca bir madde olduğundan etrafile mütâla'aya mütevakkıf ve (...) vekalet penahîlerine muhtac ve merbut olmağın irade-yi seniyye-yi

asafânelerine mebnî (...)-ı (...) min arz ve beyanına ibtidar ve tezkire-i âliyeleri
melfuf takrir ve mezkûr pusla ile beraber leffen iade ve tesyar kılındığı (...)
âliyeleri buyruldukta ol babda ve her halde emr-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-
emrindir. Fi 21 S 63.

Document 4

(...) devletlü înayetlü atufetlü efendim hazretleri

Mâ'lum-ı âli buyrulduğu üzere Emlâk-ı Hümayun'dan Goriçe kazasında
ka'in çiftlikâtın fûruhtu hakkında bazı mütâla'atı şamil Maliye Nazırı devletlü
paşa hazretlerinin bir kıta' takriri üzerine Meclis-i Vâlâ'dan terkim kılınan
mazbata hâk-i pâ-y-i hümayun hazret-i mülûkâneye lede'l-arz hâk-ı teâli (...)
padişahımız efendimizi ile'l-ebed (...) şevket ü şan (...) her bir hususda derkâr
olan dikkat-i (...) sa'adet(...) mülûkâneleri iktizasınca işbu Emlâk-ı Hümayun
çiftlikâtından şimdiye kadar haylicesi satılmış ise de çiftlikât-ı merkumenin
keyfiyet-i sahihesi buraca pek de bilinemediğinden ekserisi (...) baha ile fûruht
olunmuş olması melhuzâtından olmakla böyle olmaktan ise mevkîlerine göre
Hazine-i Celile tarafından bu misillü çiftlikât usulüne âşına me'murlar gönderilip
ve münasebet alacaklarının dahi bulunduğu mahalın vali ve mutasarrıf ve
kai'mmakamları ma'rifetile mu'ayene ettirilerek arazi ve keyfiyet-i sairesi
bilindiği ve bunlar şimdiye kadar böyle bakılıp idare olunmuş olduğundan
mümkün olduğu mertebe imâr-ı suretine bakılarak ma'mûr olduğu halde çiftlikât-ı
merkumenin usul-i hazırasına kesb-i itlâ' olunmuş olacağı misillü ilerüde
islamdan müşterisi zuhurunda ma'mûriyeti cihetiyle ziyade baha ile fûruht
olunacağı ve saire satılmamk lazım geldiği takdirde dahi hazır-ı emr-i imâri

husule gelerek hasılatça menaf'ı mûcib olacağı maslahattan ve bu suretin
Hazinece icra-yı mümkünâttan görünmüş olmasıyla husus-ı mezburun Maliye
Nezaret-i Celilesiyle bi'l-muhabere karar-ı keyfiyetin tekrar arz ve istizan
kılınması hususuna emr ü ferman isabet-i unvan hazret-i padişahî müte'allik ve
şeref-i sudur buyrulmuş olduğundan ber-mûcib-i irade-yi seniyye keyfiyet
nezaret-i müşarünileyh ile lede'l-muhabere çiftlikât-ı merkume mukaddemki
idarede elden ele geçtiği cihetile iltizam edenler menfâ'at-i mahsusa gareziyle
imârına asla sarf-ı efkâr etmeyerek harab olmuş ve muahharen bedayât
Tanzimatda muhassıllık ma'rifetile idaresinde fi'l-cümle eser-i ma'mûriyet ve
bedelât-ı mukayyedesinde fazla-yı hasılat olmasıyla daha ziyade husul-i menfâ'at
mütâla'asıyla karar-gîr olan nizam-ı mâ'lumu vechile İslam ve reayadan zuhur
eden taliblerine fûruht olunmakta olduğu halde çiftlikat-ı merkume reayası üçer
beşer neferinin ismine alınarak mübayâ'a edip müeccele ve mu'accelâtı reyanın
cümlesine bi't-tevzî' ahz birle te'diye etmekte olduklarından ve kocabaşı ve sair
ilerü gelen reaya tarafından ahali îane ve zirâ'ata teşvik olunmamakta olmasından
dolayı çiftlikât-ı merkumenin adm-i (?) ma'mûriyetile beraber reyanın
mağduriyetini ve mahlulatin layıkıyla meydana çıkmamasını mûcib olacağından
ve Tırhala sancağında olup fûruht olunandan mâ'ada yetmiş kıta' çiftlikat bu def'a
aşar ihalesi hakkında keramet-i ikzâ-yı sünû buyrulan irade-yi seniyye misillü
imârına kemâlile dikkat olunmak şartı ve şerait-i sairesiyle altmış seneinden
itibaren beşer senelik olmak üzere deruhde olunmuş olmakla çiftlikat-ı mezkûre
kesb-i imâr ederek müddet-i merkume (...) haylice zemaîm ile yine beşer
seneliğine mahallerinde talib-i hazır olduğuna dair rivayet-i vakı'a bazu erbab-ı
vukuf tarafından dahi tasdik kılınmış olduğundan Yanya ve Avlonya ve Delvine

sancaklarıyla Rumeli Eyaleti'nde kain olup henüz fûruht olunmamış olan dört yüz bu kadar kıta' çiftlikaktın biraz vakt-i fûruhtu bi't-te'hir ber-mantuk-ı irade-yi seniyye Hazine-i Celile tarafından çiftlik umuruna âşina birinin ta'yinile ber-vech-i muharrer henüz satılmayan çiftlikatın keyfiyet-i hazıra ve ma'mûriyet-i haliyesini mu'ayene ve bundan böyle cihet-i imâriyesi esbabını erbab-ı vukuf ile mütâla'a birle ma'lûmat ve tahkikatını bu tarafa bildirerek Tırhala çiftlikatı hakkında tutulacak usul hayırlı görüldüğü halde bunların dahi ana tatbiken tesviyesi sureti nezaret-i müşarünileyh tarafından cevaben ifade ve beyan kılınmış olup vakı'a zikrolunan çiftliklerin ahvali şayan-ı dikkat şey olduğundan Emlâk me'muru namile birinin ta'yini Meclis-i Vâlâ'da tasavvur olduğu halde bu vechile emr ü ferman isabet-i beyan-ı hazret-i şehinşâhî şeref-i suduru (...) olup mantuk-ı celile üzere suret-i halleri (...) işbu çiftliklerin bir senelik olarak şuna buna deruhdesi bi'l-ahare harab olmalarını mû'di olacağından bu hal ile kalmaktan ve bütün bütün satılıp elden çıkarılmaktan ise bedelat-ı münasibe ile beşer senelik olarak ihalesi takdirinde deruhde edenler istihsal-i menfâ'at-i zâtiyeleri zımnında behemehal akçe sarf ederek senesine ma'mûr olacağından bu suretin (...) ve Hazinece (...) olduğu maslahattan olup mamafih ahval-i hazıralarına kesb-i itlâ' lunarak ba'de icabına bakılması pek münasib olacağından evvel emirde sâlifü'z-zikr eyalet ve elviyede kain çiftliklerin tahkik-i ahval-i haliyesi zımnında Hazine-i Celile'den dirayetlü ve çiftlik umuruna âşina bir me'mur-ı mahsus ta'yin olunup ber-minval-i muharrer henüz satılmamış olan çiftlikatın keyfiyet-i hazıra ve ilerüde cihet-i imâriyesini mütâla'a ve müzakere ederek ma'lûmat ve tahkikatı mübeyyin bir kıta' layihasını takdim birle Tırhala çiftlikâtı hakkında tutulan usul hayırlı görünüb de çiftlikat-ı merkumenin dahi

anlara tatbiken tesviyesi suret-i icra buyrulduğu halde bazı dürlü menfâ'at (...) hatır olunduğundan has (?) vuku' bulacak ma'lûmat ve tahkikata nazaran sur-ı meşruhadan kangısının icrası hayırlu görünür ise ana göre iktizasının icrası münasib olacağı tezekkür kılındığı Meclis-i Vâlâ tarafından kaleme alınıp geçen Perşembe günü mâ' kud Meclis-i Umumi'de kıra'at olunan bir kıta' mazbatada izha ve iş'ar olunmuş ve fi'l-hakika çiftlikât-ı merkumenin tahkik-i ahval-i hazıra ve cihet-i imâriye-yi (...) zımında Hazine-i Celile tarafından (...) matllube vechile bir me'murun tayin ve irsalile vuku' bulacak müzakere ve ma'lûmat-ı hakikiye üzerine icra-yı iktizasına bakılması muvaffak hal ve maslahat görüldüğüne binaen Hazine-yi Celile tarafından öyle bir münasib ve çiftlik umuruna vukuf ve dirayetlü me'murun bi'l-intihab yedine icabına göre tâ'limat itâsıyla me'mur ta'yin kılınması Meclis-i Umumi-yi mezkûrda ve hatta tezekkür ve tensib ve mazbata-ı merkumeyi meşmul lahza-yı şevket-i ifâze-i cenâb-ı cihan (...) buyrulamak için evrak-ı müteferri'siyle beraber sû-yı vâlâlarına ba'ş ve tesrib kılınmış olmakla ol babda her ne vechile emr ü ferman isabet-i nişan-ı hazret-i mülkdârî müte'allik şeref-i sudur buyrulur ise mantuk-ı ceile üzere harekete ibtidar olunacağı beyanile tezkire-yi senavârî terkim kılındı efendim. Fi 3 Cemaziyelevvel 63

Maruz-ı çaker-i kemineleridir ki

Reside-i dest-i tâ'zim olan işbu tezkere-i sâmiye-i asafâneleriyle zikrolunan mazbata ve evrak menzur-ı âli-i hazret-i şahâne buyrulmuştur. Vakı'a çiftlikât-ı merkumenin tahkik-i ahval-i hazıra ve cihet-i imâriye-i âtiyesi zımında Hazine-i Celile cânibinden bir me'murun ta'yin ve irsalile vuku' bulacak müzâkere ve ma'lûmat-ı hakikiye üzerine icra-ı iktizasına bakılması muvaffak hal ve maslahat

olarak ber-minval-i muharrer çiftlik umuruna vukufly ve dirayetlü birinin bi'l-
intihab yerine icabına göre tâ'limat itâsıyla me'mur ve ta'yin kılınmış pek
münasib ve yolunda tezekkür ve mütâla'a olunarak nezd-i (...) hazret-i şahânedede
dahi takdir buyrulmuş olmasıyla tebk-i iş'ar ve istizan olunduğu üzere icra-yı
iktizasına ibtidar olunması şeref-i (...) ve sunû' ve sudur buyrulan emr-i irade-yi
seniyye-yi cenab-ı padişahî icab-ı âliyesinden bulunmuş ve mare'l-beyan mazbata
ve evrak yine sevb-i (...) sadaretpenahîlerine iade ve tesyâr kılınmış olmakla ol
babda emr-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir. Fi 5 Cemaziyelevvel 63.

Appendix C. Document Demonstrating the Trial of Kalkandelenli Esad Bey.

1. A. MKT. MHM. 196/3.

Kalkandelen'de harekât-ı makduhası zuhura gelen Esad Bey namında birisi Dersaadet'e savuşmuş olduğundan bunun buldurulup mahfuzen Üsküb Valisi devletlü paşa hazretleri tarafına irsali ifadesine dair taraf-ı âli-yi hazret-i sadr-i (...) tevarüd eden emir-name-yi sâmi ve melfuf tahrirat menzur-ı vâlâlara buyrulmak üzere leffen irsal kılınmış olmakla tahrirat-ı lazıme ve mukteziyenin icrasıyla merkum buldurulup tahte'l-hıfz vali-yi müşarünileyh (...) iade ve keyfiyetin Bâbıali'ye dahi beyan ve ifade ile hususuna heman buyrulmak saikinde (...)tezkire.

Bu dahi müşarünileyh hazretlerine

Niş'te bulunan iki aded harik tulumbarıçün mâ' ihtiyat birer çift hortumun irsali ifadesine dair (...)i âli hazret-i vekâlet penahiden tevarüd eden emir-name-i sâmi ve melfuf tahrirat varaka- menzur-ı devlete buyrulmak üzere leffen irsal kılınmış olmakla iktizasının icra ve ifadesi hususu hemen buyurmak saikinde tezkire.

2. A. MKT. MHM. 196/102.

Zabtiye Müşiri hazretlerine kenar

Suret-i iş'ar vâlâların ma'lum-ı senâvârî olup metin (?) tezkire-i senâvâriyenin beyan olunacağı vechile merkumun tahte'l-hıfz ahz emri lazım geldiğinden ve buna dair Vali-i müşarünileyh hazretlerine yazdırılan tahrirat dahi

leffen irsal (...) ol vechle merkumun (...) -i mahsusa tevkifen tahte'l-hıfz heman ahz emri husus-ı himmet buyurmaları saîkine terkim-i zeyle ibtidar kılındı.

Üsküb Valisine

Kalkandelen'de harekât-ı makduhası zuhura gelen Esad Bey namında birinin bu tarafa savuşmuş olduğu cevaben taraf-ı âli-i hazreti vekalet penahiye vuku' bulan iş'ar olanlarından anlaşılmiş ve bu babda taraf-ı sâmi-yi hazret-i müşarünileyh vürud eden tahrirat-ı sâmiye üzerine merkum bi't-taharri buldurabilip Zabtiye'ye tevkifen tahte'l-hıfz ol (...) gönderilmiş olmakla vusulünde Meclis-i Eyalet'te muhakeme-i lazimesinin icrasıyla hakkında terettüb edecek mecâzetin icrası zımında keyfiyetin izha ve iş'arı hususuna himmet buyurmak saikinde şukka.

3. A. MKT. NZD. 338/4.

Document 1

Maruz-ı çaker-i keminelidir ki

Cünha-ı vakıa'sından dolayı firar etmiş olan Kalkandelenli Esad Bey'in buldurulup tahte'l-hıfz mahalline irsali hususu müte'allik ve şeref-i sudur buyrulan irade-i seniyye-i âliye-i cenab-ı sadaret penahileri icab-ı âliyesinden olmakla merkum mukaddema derhal bi't-taharri buldurularak mahalline irsal kılınmıştı. Mumaileyhin vusul bulduğuna dair Üsküb Valisi devletlü paşa hazretlerinin (...) sâmi-yi (...) olarak tevarüd eden bir kıta' ârıza-ı muharreresi (?) leffen arz ve takdim kılınmağın ol babda emri-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'lemrindir. Fi 4 Rebiülahir 1277.

Mehmed (...)

Document 2

Makam-ı âli-i cenab-ı vekâlet penahiye

Maruz-ı çaker-i keminelidir ki

Kalkandelen kazası sakinlerinden hareket-ı makduhası zuhura gelen Esad Bey buldurulup tahte'l-hıfz irsal buyrulmuş olduğu beyan-ı âliyesiyle icabının icra ve izha olunması şeref-i vürud eden bir kıta' emir-name-i sâmî-i asâfanelerinin emr-i ferman buyrulmuş. Ve merkum dahi vürud eylemiş olduğundan tebk-i emr-i ferman-ı sâmî-i ve (...) vechile muhakemesinin icrasıyla tebeyyün edecek halin arz ve iş'arına mübaderet kılınacağı derkar bulunmuş olmakla ol babda emri-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir. Fi 22 Rebiülahir 277.

Vali-i Eyalet-i Üsküb

4. A. MKT. MVL. 136/43.

Kalkandelen hanedanından Esad Bey hakkında ahali-yi ba'de Müslim tarafından bazı şikayeti hâvi takdim olunmuş olan mahzar ve defter suretinin irsaliyle keyfiyetin tahkik ve tedkiki zımında ve tasyid kılınan tahrirata cevaben ve fi 27 Rebiulevvel 278 tarihini ve otuz üç numerosu ile (...) Üsküb Meclisinin tevariüd eden mazbata-yı mufassalasıyla melfuf istintakname Meclis-i Vâlâ Muhakemat Dairesine lede'l-havale me'allerinden müsteban olduğu vechile şikayet-i mezkure üç maddeden ibaret olup birincisi iki sene mukaddem katl olunan Simon'un îdamı maddesine müdahale olması ve ikincisi yedi seneden beri çiftliğine zükûr ve enâseyi bir takım kesani hasat vakitleri celb ile angarya olarak istihdam etmiş ve üçüncüsü dahi hidmetkârları vesaitile celb eylediği adamlardan

erkeklerin birtakımı yoldan ve küsurunu dahi çiftlikten def' edib alıkoyduğu ve çalıştırdığı kızların ırzına tasallut eylemiş olarak bu babda icra kılınan tedkikat-ı istintakiye ve tahkikat-ı sairede zikrolunan katl maddesinden dolayı mîr-i mumaileyh (...) etmiş olduğu gibi ahaliyi bila-ücret çiftliğinde istihdam etmesi dahi kendisinin çayırında meccanen hayvan ra'y etmelerine mukabil olduğunu söyleyip bu hayvan ra'yı (...) müddeîleri (?) tarafından tasdik olunmuş olmasına nazaran mîr-i mumaileyh bu maddede biraz hakkı görünerek mâ'mafih böyle imece suretle amele istihdamı mugayir mu'adilat-ı seniyye olmasıyla ücret-i yevmiyelerinin istihsali lazım gelir ise de ahali-i merkume işledikleri (...) ve ücretin mikdarını ta'yin ve beyanda izhar-ı âcz eylemelerinden ve mîr-i mumaileyhin çayırında meccanen hayvan ra'y etmelerinden dolayı tazmin-i ücret maddesine bir tarîk-i hükm bulunamadığından ba'dema bu makule hâlet vuku'a getirilmemek üzere icra-yı tenbihat ile iktifa olunmuş ve (...) arz hususunda dahi çünkü bunların mukaddema vuku' bulan ferman ve iştikalarında mîr-i mumaileyhin Dersaadet'e firar etmiş ve mu'amele-i cebriye ile mezburelere fi'il-i (...) icra olunduğu mezburelerin muharrerü's-sâmî refikleri tarafından takrir ve tasdik kılınmış olması fi'il-i mezkurun vuku'una delalet eder ise de mezburelerin kadimden beri mezkur çiftlikte işlemekte olarak orada yatmak dahi mu'tadları bulunduğu kendü ifadelerinden ve zaten serbest takımdan oldukları ruşen-i (?)hallerinden ve tahkikat-ı saireden anlaşılmış olduğuna ve ifadât-ı vakia'da mübayanet bulunduğu binaen bu babda iddia olunan mu'amele-i cebriyeye nazar-ı sıhhatle bakılamayarak mîr-i mumaileyhin bundan dolayı dokuz maha reside olan müddet-i mahbusiyeti Kanun-ı Ceza'nın iki yüz ikinci maddesi hükmünce hakkında ceza-yı kâfi olup fakat bu makule çiftçi takımından bazı

ahalinin mîr-i mumaileyhden emniyetleri olamayacağı anlaşıldığından bir müddet Prizren’de bulundurulmak üzere kefile rabt ile (...) tahliye kılınmış ve vakıa’ mîr-i mumaileyhin şerh olunan hareketinden dolayı müddet-i habsi kanunen ceza-yı kâfi olarak ol suretle salıverilmesi yolunda görünmüş olup ancak kefalet altında olarak bir müddet ahar mahalde ikamet ettirilmesi hükm-i kanun harcında bulunduğu cihetle memleketine âzimetine itâ- ruhsatla beraber esas vezaif-i me’muriyet olduğu vechile ba’de-zin bu misillü halet-i vuku’a getirilmemesine ve bir de maktul merkumun eline bir katil olmak lazım geleceğinden anın dahi bi’t-taharri ele geçirilmesine sarf-ı mesa’i ve dikkat olunması hususlarının sevbi vâlâlarına iş’arı ba-mazbata ifade olunmuş olmakla ber-minval-i muharrer iktizalarının icrası hususuna (...) itina ve himaye buyurmaları (?) lazım geleceği beyanile şukka. Fi 23 Cemaziyelevvel 278

4. İ. DH. 534/37011.

Document 1

Devletlü efendim hazretleri

Şimdiye değin me’mur olduğum kaffe-i hidemât-ı askeriye ve hususiyle Mes’ele-i Cebeliye’de can-perâne ifa-ı hüsn-i hidmete sa’y ve gayret ettiğim cihetle istit’af-ı lütf ve merhamet-i Celile-i Vali takımına kesb-i istihkak etmiş olduğuma binaen saye-yi ihsanvâye-yi cenâb-ı tacdârîye hem vuku’a gelen hidemat-ı naçizaneme bir mükafat-ı aliyâne ve hem de beyne’l(...) tezayid-i şevk ve (...) âbidanemi müstelzim olmak üzere uhde-i bendegâneme Rikâb-ı Şahane

kapıcıbaşıllığı rütbesinin istihsalile ârızalarını ez-(...) ihya buyurmaları niyazı babında ve her halde emr-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir.

Bey

Sergerde-i Âsâkir-i Muvazaffa-ı Kalkandelen Mehmed Esad.

Document 2

Maruz-ı çaker-i kemineleridir ki

Asakir-i Muvazzafa sergerdelerinden Kalkandelenli Mehmed Esad Bey'in Mes'ele-i Cebeliye'de vuku'a gelen hüsn-i hüdmetine mükafeten uhdesine Rikâb-ı Hümayun-ı Şahane-i kapıcıbaşıllığı rütbesi tevcihi niyazına dair itâ eylediği varaka menzur-ı âli-i vekâlet penahileri buyrulmak üzere leffen takdim kılınmış. Ve fi'l-vaki' mîr-i mumaileyhin Kalkandelen'den müretteb gönüllü askerinin sergerdesi olduğu halde refakat-ı çakerânemile (...) Ferikiyyesinde bulunarak pek çok yararlık eylediği meşhud-ı âcizanem bulunmuş olmakla her halde emr-i ferman-ı hazret-i min lehü'l-emrindir. Fi 12 Ramazan 281 ve fi 28 Kânunusani 285.

Document 3

Atufetlü Efendim hazretleri

Âsâkir-i Muvazzafa Sergerdelerinden Kalkandelenli Mehmed Esad Bey'in mes'ele-i Cebeliye'de vuku'a gelen hüsn-i hidmetine mükafeten uhdesine Rikâb-ı Hümayun-ı Şahane kapıcıbaşıllığı rütbesi tevcihi niyazına dair vermiş olduğu varaka ile devletlü ka'imakam paşa hazretlerinin tezkeresi arz ve takdim kılındı. Mîr-i mumaileyh âsâkir-i mezkurenin sergerdesi olduğu halde kai'mmakam-ı

müşarünileyhin refakatile (...) ferikiyyesinde bulunarak pek çok yararlık eylediği görülmüş ve zaten dahi şayan-ı atufet-i seniyye görünmüş olmasıyla zikrolunan rütbenin uhdesine tevcihi hakkında her ne vechile irade-yi seniyye-yi cenâb-ı padişahî müteallik ve şeref-i sudur buyrulur ise ana göre hareket olunacağı beyan ile tezkire-i senavârî terkim kılındı efendim. Fi 24 Ramazan 1281.

Maruz-ı çaker-i kemineleridir ki

(...) dest ikraz olan işbu tezkire-i sâmiyye-i asâfaneleriyle mezkur tezkere ve varaka menzur-ı (...) padişahî buyrulmuş ve mîr mumaileyhin uhdesine bermûcib-i istizan mezkûr rütbenin tevcihi müteallik şeref-i sudur buyrulan emri-i irade-i seniyye-i cenab-ı mülûkâne mukteza-yı (...) olarak mezkur tezkire ve varaka yine sevb-i sâmiyye-yi asâfanelerine iade kılınmış olmağla ol babda emri-i ferman-ı hazret-i min leh ül emrindir. Fi 27 Ramazan 1281.

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