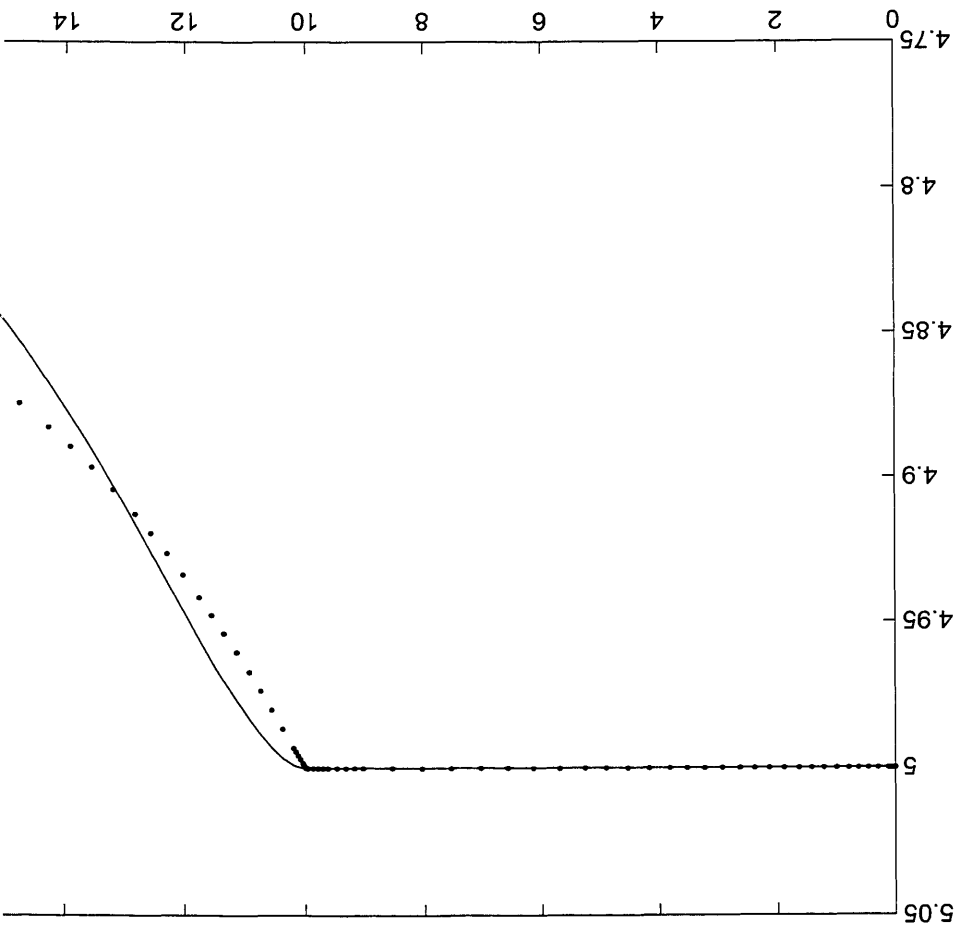


Village, Peasant and Empire

INTRODUCTION

In the Marxist approach, the definition of social formation generally emphasizes the following key points as formulated by Hindess and Hirst: "A distinct mode of appropriation of surplus-product supposes a distinct structure of relations of production. A distinct structure of relations of production supposes a set of forces which correspond to the conditions of the labor process it establishes."[1]

In the frame work of this model, Marxist historians and social scientists have sought a definition for Ottoman social structure or social formation. In the Eastern bloc countries, the "feudal" model was applied until recent times, and Ottoman feudalism was described as the appropriation of the surplus product of the peasants through extra-economic means by a dominant military-political class. Simultaneously, there has also been an attempt to underline characteristics which distinguish Ottoman feudalism from its more advanced variant in the West.[2] According to the aforementioned scholars, Ottoman feudalism was formed as a result of the conquest and domination of an advanced agrarian community by nomadic warriors. The conquerors established a communal ownership over arable lands, which eventually came under the rule or ownership of the sultan. In other words, these lands were forcibly acquired by a central state. In this manner, the appropriation of the surplus-product acquired the characteristic of a rent or tribute. It became the property of the sultan's treasury, and was thereafter distributed to the sipahi timars. In the Ottoman feudal system the sultan assumes a central place. The state is actually "feudalism personified".

Hence these characteristics, according to the aforementioned scholars, distinguish Ottoman feudalism from feudalism in the West, whereby the latter is defined as "the socio-economic order of the manor based on seigneurial ownership of the land." Ottoman

feudalism does not fall into "the set of forces of production". It results from expropriation and forcible usurpation. According to Marxist dialectics, it does not lead to a more progressive social order, in other words, to capitalism. In all the East bloc countries, namely Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia as well as in the USSR,[3] the Ottoman feudal system has principally been defined as a regressive primitive feudalism based on extra-economic means. Moreover, certain Marxist historians claim that their countries had advanced along more progressive lines of Western feudalism until the Ottoman conquest brought an end to this process. (Implying, in other words, that they would have followed a Western European model of development had the Ottomans not arrived). That this claim is a mere hypothesis which has no relationship to historical reality has been substantiated with documents from the Ottoman archives. It has been demonstrated that the pre-Ottoman feudal landlords who were incorporated into the Ottoman timar system lived on the "rent-tax" collected directly from peasants—similar to the Ottoman timar sipahis—and hence did not in any way participate in the actual production process.

Karl Marx himself observed that the feudal model, or the theory of usurpation of surplus product, was not a satisfactory explanation for the social formation of empires which had lasted for several centuries in Asia.[4] It was not possible to explain the state's absolute control over the forces of production, namely, over land and peasant labour, as resulting merely form coercive tactics and fear of the sword. "A distinct set of forces of production" which conditioned such an order needed to be identified. It was observed that in a number of ancient empires (Egypt, Mesopotamia, China), production forces were regulated by a central and absolute authority as public works. The theory was that the large-scale hydraulic works necessary for flood control and irrigation, not to mention production, had to be organized as a public management function[5] by a central and absolute state authority. They thereby sought to explain the state's absolute control over the forces of production. This particular structure of relations of production was termed the "Asiatic Mode of Production."

The Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP) theory of Marx-Engels first became popular in Western Europe in the 1950s, and then in Turkey through the writings of Sencer Divitçioğlu[6] as the closest Marxist approximation to explaining Ottoman social formation. Divitçioğlu and his successors subsequently demonstrated that on

the basis of historical evidence, the theory developed by Marx of Indian society which drew primarily on British reports did not provide an adequate explanation for Ottoman society, and thus called for modifications. Firstly they pointed out that village communities in the Ottoman Empire, at least those in the vicinity of big cities and on coastal areas open to trade, were not closed, isolated, self-sufficient communities. In fact, there existed a measure of socio-economic integration between city and countryside. On the other hand, there was "highly monetized economy with a developed division of labour and a system of regional and inter-regional markets." The particular emphasis was made that during the dissolution of the centralist Ottoman imperial system in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was a growing integration, "peripheralization", with the capitalist world economy. As a result, Ottoman rural society came under the influence of the market economy and commodity production. Following the findings of the empirical historians, Divitçioğlu, İslamoğlu and Keyder[7] also argued that during the classical period, the Ottoman state's ownership of arable land prevented servitude and the rise of a class of feudal landlords in the provinces. And, through such distributive institutions as the *wakf* (religious endowments), a significant part of the surplus production found ways to serve social and economic purposes.

The theory of despotic Asian empires based on great public hydraulic works was developed and subjected to detailed historical analysis by Karl Wittfogel. Wittfogel included the Ottoman Empire as an important example of "despotic" Asian empires. It is clear, however, that the Ottoman Empire was not a case of hydraulic society. The core lands of the Ottoman Empire, Anatolia and the Balkans, were not subject to irrigation farming, but do dry farming. It is possible however to take Wittfogel's theory in a larger sense.[8] For peasant communities which face a continuous challenge in the form of insecurity and feudal exploitation, the acceptance and support for an absolute central regime which provides law and order follows inevitably. As in the case of hydraulic societies, such a state can only fulfill its functions as a result of a well-developed managerial apparatus with a central bureaucracy. Hence, the Ottoman state represents a highly centralist, absolute, bureaucratic, regulatory type of empire. This idea was further developed by N. Eisenstadt, and the

Ottoman state was depicted as a typical example of a centralist bureaucratic empire. Wittfogel and Eisenstadt are following Max Weber. According to Weber, the Ottoman Empire is the most radical example of a patrimonial state system. In the patrimonial system, as with the patriarchal family, the ruler has absolute domination. The community and the economy are organized as the ruler's household. In the Ottoman regime, the ruler possesses such authority in a discretionary and arbitrary way. No autonomous group, institution or tradition can limit his discretionary powers. Weber who considers this state system to be particular to the Middle East, calls this patrimonial state type "sultanism".

What, in fact, is the social structure which gives birth of a central bureaucratic empire? In other words, what is the "distinct mode of appropriation," or the "distinct structure of relations" "determined by a set of forces of production" which produced such a regime? The public hydraulic works theory cannot be applied to the Ottoman regime. The AMP does not constitute "a mode of production" since one sees no evidence of economic integration or articulation between village communities and military-administrative city centers formed as a result of military conquests. The conquerors, it is argued, usurp surplus products from agriculturalists according to right of conquest. The village community on the other hand is described as an undeveloped, stagnant social structure dependent on a closed, self-sufficient economy. In the last analysis, village and city, conquerors and villagers have not been integrated, but constituted two distinct communities which live side by side. Hence, the appropriation of surplus-product is only realized through coercive means. In other terms, such a society is not endowed with any mode of production or social formation and hence must be deemed something abnormal. Herein lies the weak point in the AMP theory. The mechanism of change which it posits for the evolution of societies is inapplicable to this case. These are ahistorical societies!

In the following pages we attempt to explain the Ottoman Empire's economic, social, political and ideologic characteristics as comprised within a global and integrated system, a social formation. It is important to underline that the results arrived at are the outcome of half a century of research in the Ottoman archives, and not the fruit of imaginative experiments based on theory models.

THE OTTOMAN ÇIFT-HANE (PEASANT FAMILY FARM) SYSTEM

The formation of Turkey's basic economic and social structure was determined during the Ottoman period.[9] In other words, we owe the socio-economic structure based on small peasant family exploitations to the Ottoman state-owned land regime and to the *çift-hane* system (see infra). Turkey's economy and social system preserved its century-old traditional Ottoman character until 1950. With the spread of the tractor and the entry of agriculture into the market economy during the 1950-1960 period, Turkey has entered a profound process of change. While in 1939 there were only 3200 tractors, this figure had reached 42,000 by 1959.[10] Wheat and barley, which are the main crops of subsistence in agricultural economy, are gradually relinquishing their place to market crops, industrial plants, cotton, figs, grapes, tobacco, rice and corn.

What are the traditional characteristics from the Ottoman past? The main points of our discussion below will attempt to explain these characteristics.

The principal tool of traditional agriculture is the plough pulled by a pair of oxen. This represents the most effective "technological" use of animal power for the traction prior to the application of the tractor. Since the time of the ancient Mesopotamian civilizations, the climate belt of wheat-barley cultivation under dry farming through the use of the oxen-pulled plough eventually spread to other parts of the world as the most advanced farming technique. The fact that the plough could be constructed from wood, or iron, its structural versatility and other characteristics clearly brought about important changes in the course of time. However, agricultural economy did not witness any fundamental innovations until machine power replaced ox power.[11] We will see below that tax rates in the Byzantine and Ottoman empires were determined according to the number of oxen. The governments exempted from taxation those peasants who fell into destitute after loosing their oxen as a result of epidemics.

The theoreticians of general peasant economics, such as the marginalist school, consider family labour to be a basic factor.[12] They do not, however, take into account ox power which we regard as the tractor of traditional farming. And, as we will see below, it constitutes one of the fundamental elements of the *çift-hane* system.

The "fundamental cell" of traditional society is undoubtedly the peasant family. It is the labour unit symbolized by the married

peasant male with children. In this regime, the principal components of the peasant family unit consist of the husband, the wife and the children, and oftentimes also of married sons and grand children. This is a patriarchal and patrilinear family type. The husband is the organizer and final arbiter of the family economy and its administration. It is him that state recognizes as the taxpayer. Hence, it is easy to understand why the patriarchal family type is still the dominant family type in the rural sector in Turkey today. It was a rule in the Ottoman administration to take away the land of families where the husband died without leaving a male heir and to transfer it to another male peasant. If the widow could manage with hired laborers until her sons reached working age, she should be recognized as the owner of the farm under the category *bīve* (widow). This is why the "müzevvec" or married man occupied such an important place in the general law codes.[13] In all the Ottoman survey registers, taxation is determined according to *hane* or household, i.e., by the name of the husband who represents the family. Although in our time land constitutes the most important component of agricultural unit as the property of the peasant family, it carried a completely different status under the specific Ottoman land regime known as *miri*. The *miri*, state-owned, land gave the government the authority to control and organize the entire peasant land-holding and agricultural economy. Despite numerous publications to date, certain key concepts concerning the *miri* land regime have not yet been defined clearly which has led to a number of misinterpretations.[14]

Briefly, *miri* land which is under the state's eminent domain does not comprise all agricultural land but areas used as fields and open to grain cultivation. Orchards and gardens fall outside this category. This is because the livelihood of large masses depends on subsistence economy, in particular, wheat-barley cultivation. When there is scarcity in grain cultivation, shortage and famine ensue. It is evidently for this reason that the state has felt the need to control field agriculture and grain cultivation. In fact, Ottoman law codes strictly forbid the conversion of fields into orchards or gardens. The uninterrupted farming of fields was guaranteed by law. The state always supervised the land and peasant farming through the sipahis resident in the village. A family which has a pair of oxen constitutes the basic unit of exploitation. The unit of land which can be operated by peasant family labour and a pair of oxen is considered to be the most productive and essential form of exploitation. This *raiyyet çiftlik* is

the basic unit of agricultural economy and taxation for the state.[15] Strict legal measures have been adopted to prevent its division or disappearance. In sum, it is in order to apply a particular economic and social regime that the state has felt the necessity to bring arable land under its absolute control. The *miri* land system is considered an indispensable agrarian system for the sustenance of a particular economy and social order. We call this the *çift-hane* system.

The second point regarding the *miri* land regime which requires clarification is the following. The *miri* or state lands are divided into two fundamental categories: The first is *tapulu arazi* (land under tapu), and *mukataalı arazi* (land under *mukataa*, see infra).[16] *Tapulu* is the land which is given to peasant family units under a special system known as the tapu regime. Land which is disposed according to the tapu regime are the *raiyyet çiftlik*s which are neither sold nor subject to donation *(hibe)* or mortmain *(wakf)*, but transferred from father to son as a unit of exploitation. It is up to the peasant to cultivate this land. He organizes the production himself. He provides the means of production, the ox, the plough and the seeds, and cultivates the land as an autonomous unit of exploitation. In the following sense, therefore, the peasant is free and independent. He does not owe sipahi any other labour service than that ordained by law. No one exploits his labour without compensation. These are the guarantees provided by the state. Otherwise, *raiyyet* farming could not operate, nor could taxation of sipahi benefice be realized; and the whole system would collapse. In short, the status of the *raiyyet* (or dependent peasant) is determined by the requirements of the *çift hane* system. The state thus prevented the grandees *(ekābir)* from using the *raiyyet* on their own farms or *wakf* lands. The laws protected the labour and freedom of the peasant. On the other hand, one should not forget that in the Ottoman Empire, peasant labour was as much under government control as land. Services, *corvées*, should be evaluated from this angle. In sum, the *tapu* system consists of an arrangement which enables *çiftlik* units to be exploited in an autonomous and systematic fashion by peasant families. The patrilineal heredity system, namely, the principle of inheritance without any transfer fees of the land from father to son, was instituted in order to guarantee this continuity. This is the underlying basis of the *tapu* regime during the classical period. In the succeeding periods, the *raiyyet* farming unit, the independence of the peasant and other factors would be subject to various changes. But the main parameters of small peasant farming

units survived into the twentieth century. In the Byzantine and Ottoman empires, the state always sought to protect the *reaya* (pl. of *raiyyet),* namely, the peasant families combined with units of land, i.e., the farm or the unit of land ploughed by a pair of oxen, against the grandees. One of the principal tasks of the imperial bureaucracy was to supervise and guarantee this regime. The peasants were to be protected against the grandees (*dynatoi* in the Byzantine, *ekābir* in the Ottoman Empire) as a "poor and destitute" class.[17] For this reason I do not think it would be an exaggeration to characterize these empires as "peasant empires." The imperial bureaucracy's struggle to prevent feudal control over the land and the *reaya* constitutes one, if not the most important, chapter of imperial history. This could be a principal indicator in explaining a fundamental aspect of imperial history provided one avoids the pitfalls of known theories and examines the struggle undertaken by the state in a historical context. As a fundamental imperial regime that was discovered and maintained by imperial politics, the *miri tapulu* land system is the basis which shaped Mediterranean and Middle Eastern societies and history since early medieval times.

The second major category of land after the *miri tapulu* system is the *miri mukataalı* system. Compared to the *tapu* system, the *mukataa* system signifies a completely different land regime. In the meaning used here, *mukataa* or *kesim* is the act of renting out a source of income by the state to a private individual. In the general sense this is farming out, or *iltizam.* The *mukataa* system was applied in the following manner to the *miri* lands. Land which was not under a *tapu* regime, or as explained above, land which was not managed by a peasant under the special system known as the *tapu* system, was rented or contracted out by the state to individuals. The latter were not necessarily peasants. City dwellers, tradesmen, even soldiers would qualify as well. But peasants could also rent the land either on an individual or group basis as *mukataa.* In this type of lands the rules of the tapu regime did not apply. Because from a legal perspective *mukataa* is rental policy. It was settled or "cut" (*mukataa* or *kesim)* in contractual form between the state and the individual who paid a given sum of money as rent. The amount of rent is settled following "mutual agreement" (*kesişme*). Often the figure was determined in open auction. The renter only pays the amount agreed upon. A lump sum amount for the *raiyyet çiftliks* (farms) undertaken under *mukataa* (*mukatalı çiftlik*) or larger land units such as *mezraa* [18] are recorded

in the survey registers. (For instance, "the mezraa of Pınar in the possession of Ali : 800 akça," the amount of money indicates here the yearly rent agreed upon.)

Why does the state distribute certain lands under *mukataa?*[19] Because the state owns a great deal of land not cultivated by the peasants and not possessed by the *reaya* under the *tapu* system. For instance, a village community may have run away from the village for a variety of reasons. Or a family may have abandoned its *raiyyet* farm which thus remains uncultivated. We find many such records of abandoned lands (*hālī) in* the survey registers for *çiftlik, mezraa* or village lands. The state sought to rent such lands as *mukataa* as the best means to ensure continued cultivation and to prevent a loss of source of income for the treasury. In other words, so as to provide a source of revenue for the state treasury rather than let them go to waste, the state farms them out to individuals under a free rental system. The central bureaucracy's ultimate objective is to eventually convert this type of lands into lands under *tapu,* i.e., possessed by the peasants. The principal regime under the *miri* land system is the *tapu* regime. In effect, the subsequent registers show that these types of farms and *mezraas* gradually became lands under *tapu* following the settlement of peasant families. This process resembles the settlement of colons with their families on latifundia lands in late Roman history.

These are the two main land categories in the Ottoman Empire, and since the distinction between the *tapulu* and the *mukataalı* lands have not been identified in a clear manner by researchers to date, it has led to various misinterpretations.[20]

In sum, the existence of the *mukataalı* lands does not deny the fact that the *çift-hane* system which is applied under the *tapu* regime forms the fundamental policy of the Ottoman state. The system, whose origins go back to ancient Iran and the late Roman Empire, appears to have been inherited from the Byzantine and Seljuk empires.

As briefly referred to above, the foundation of the system and the main unit is composed of the peasant family which possesses a *çiftlik* farm within the rules of the tapu regime. For the imperial bureaucracy, this unit is also the main unit of a specific system of taxation known as *çift* tax.[21] Because *çift-hane* is the principal unit of the entire system, the tax registers and law codes speak first of the *çift* tax. In the survey registers, a *çift-hane* unit is identified by the letter "ç" under the name of the family head responsible for taxes. In old

registers, scribes sometimes list this unit clearly under the name of "hane-bā-çift" (peasant household with a piece of land the size of a *çiftlik*). *Çift* actually signifies "çift öküz" (pair of oxen). And the sum of fields ploughed by a pair of oxen is known as a *çiftlik* or farm. Actually, in the Byzantine Empire, the same unit known as *zeugarion* (derived form the same root in Persian *juft,* and in Latin *Jug*) represented not the land, but a pair of oxen.[22] But also *zeugarion* sometimes described not a pair of oxen, but the land. The Ottomans take as a taxation basis the land or the *çiftlik* operated by a pair of oxen. Though seldom, there are also cases where the oxen are considered a tax unit.

The *hane* is the peasant family. More precisely, it means that the family's productive labour unit is considered as the standard for tax assessment.

Here it is to be emphasized that family labour, together with the land cultivated with a pair of oxen is all considered to be a single unit of production, and hence also a fiscal unit. The *çift* tax collected as a result is not, as some have argued, only a form of personal tax. Rather, it is the tax obligation of the *çift-hane* unit. In other words, it is a combination tax over peasant-land-oxen unit. In the late Roman period too, *jugum* corresponding to *çift*, and *caput* to *hane* were taken together as *jugum-caput,* and the tax imposed on it encompassed both. Western historians have for two hundred years disagreed about whether this tax constituted a personal tax or a hearth tax, or whether it amounted to a land tax. The combined peasant-land tax nature of it has only been established in recent times.[23]

The Ottoman *çift-hane* tax corresponds to one case of this "combined" tax system. In the Mediterranean countries where grain cultivation prevailed, the principal system of agriculture and taxation was the *çift-hane* system. From an economic viewpoint, *çift-hane* was a typical production unit which provided for the subsistence of the peasant family and met the taxation requirements of the state through surplus-produce. This was also a social and fiscal unit which the state meticulously sought to protect. In view of this principal characteristics, *çift-hane* was the fundamental cell of the rural society and the basis of the imperial structure. The Marginalist school claims that this form of organization of production based on family labour constitutes the most productive form of agricultural management in the pre-industrial era. According to A. V. Chayanov, rather than being a primitive type of farming, this is in fact one of the

principal "modes of production." Chayanov argues that this particular mode of production explains the specific historical structure of economy and society in Asia and Russia.

The ideal production unit for the Asian bureaucracies is the peasant family equipped with a pair of oxen. The single man, or "mücerred" as it appears in the registers, is placed at the lowest level in the echelons of the *çift-hane* system due to his limited labour capacity compared to a married man. In fact, in rural communities, social reality does not conform with the formal regulations of the bureaucrats. In this community, in addition to those families who possess and manage *çiftlik* units, there are also families who have lost their land or who do not possess sufficient land. The state classifies these families according to a different status within the *çift resmi* system and puts them in the surveys under separate columns. Likewise, it determines their tax obligations not on the basis of land, but according to their labour capacity. Regarding tax policy therefore, the following rank gradation can be observed in the peasant taxation system. The *çifts* or those peasant families who manage *çiftliks* come first. Next follows those families who possess roughly half the land of *çiftlik* owners, namely the "nîm (or half) - çifts" (equivalent in the Byzantine system to "those with one ox"). Third are farmers called *bennaks* who are families in possession of a piece of land less than a *çiftlik*; their labour force is taken as the determining factor in taxation. Last are single men who nevertheless generate a source of income. The latter are peasants known by the names of *mücerred*, *kara* or *caba*. A final category in this system is that of widows or *bîve* who manage to work their former husband's farms. This regime, which compasses the peasant community in such a schematic taxation system has been meticulously described in the Ottoman tax codes and register books.

We had established the relationship between *raiyyet* taxation and the *çift* system in a previous research on *raiyyet* taxation.[24] However, we had been unable to show adequately at the time that the taxes and dues levied under this taxation system were simply part of a complex system related to the social structure of the rural society. We had not realized that it was based on a socio-economic structure which the imperial bureaucracy took as the basis of its entire land and taxation system. Our later research led us to believe that this system was the basic agrarian system of ancient empires, which was, in turn, tied to the system of Mediterranean countries dependent on wheat-barley

cultivation using dry farming. It would appear that the colons in the late Roman Empire, the *mansus* in Gallia, the zeugarion in the Byzantine Empire, and the *çift-hane* in the Ottoman Empire were all forms of an agrarian system based on peasant family labour and the plough pulled by a pair of oxen.[25] In this system, the entire rural community, whether those owning *çiftliks* or those who owned less than a *çiftlik* of no land, were classified as poor laborers and were registered and identified in the imperial registers according to a special system. As in the Roman and Byzantine empires, the peasant in the Ottoman Empire too gained a fiscal and social status by being registered in special survey books. This status, which persisted until the new survey, shaped the social structure of the whole rural society. In other words, as a result of the control it exercised over the land and the peasant through the survey system, the imperial bureaucracy played a fairly large role in influencing, even crating, this social order. So instead of the spontaneous emergence of a social order, we witness the formation of an estate society, or stratified order regulated by the state. Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that the stratification role of the bureaucracy did not and could not totally eliminate the social differences spontaneously formed in rural community. Rather, the fiscal system tried to conform with that. Thanks to the *miri* (state-owned) land and survey (*taḥrīr)* system,[26] the state maintained tight control over land and the *reaya*, and sought to prevent the break up of farms, the conversion of fields into orchards and gardens, and the emergence of big farms and plantations. As a result, it perpetuated an extremely restrictive or conservative social order. The *miri* land regime and the *çift-hane* system are held primarily responsible for the Ottoman and other traditional empires' resistance to change, improvement and the emergence of new economic systems, and underlies the way they clung on to a "stagnant" socio-economic structure. Neither should we forget, however, that this system constitutes the historical foundation of the present social structure in Turkey based on small family enterprises. Although land and the peasant fell under the domination of a small feudal group in certain areas, such as Iran, where the central authority lost its control, a similar development was to a great extent avoided in the Ottoman Empire. Even in the *mālikāne-mukataa* system of the eighteenth century, the state was able to protect its eminent rights over arable lands. Similarly, when property was converted to mortmain *(wakf)*, the state did not completely relinquish its control rights over land and

the *reaya*. Those villages and large farms which came under the control of the *ayans* or provincial notables, were eventually returned mostly to *miri* system through state confiscation.[27] In sum, the struggle witnessed in each period between the central state and the "men of power" (*kudretlüler* or *ayan)* in the provinces over land and peasant labour never resulted in perpetual and absolute control of the latter. In fact, according to Marxist analysis, the real subject of this struggle between the state and the "feudals" concerns the surplus-product of the direct producer, i.e., the peasant *reaya* and not the actual ownership of the land. The question here is seen as one of determining which group among the privileged "classes" would take possession of the surplus-product. However, because the imperial regime operated within the framework of general laws and regulations, it emerged as the protector of the small peasant against local, personal exploitation. Under the imperial regime, the state sought to prevent their uncontrolled exploitation by the provincial officers or "strong men" through illegal fees and forced labour. In this manner, an imperial ideology of "justice" and a kind of trust and dependence emerged between the central imperial authority and the peasant. We have sought elsewhere to explain in detail this ideology within the framework of the *adāletnāmeler,* or the "rescripts of justice."[28] Thanks to this confidence in imperial justice, the Serbian farmer along the Danube, or the Turkish peasant in Amasya always felt able to seek the protection of the sultan in *Carigrad* or *Dersaadet* against local injustices. The state's fiscal interests, including extraordinary levies, were legitimated in a political system based on the marriage of a specific ideology of social justice and the requirements of the *Din u Devlet*, "Islam and the Islamic state". An expert bureaucracy successfully applied this regime through a comprehensive system of surveys, registration *(taḥrīr)*, central archives *(defterhāne),* and effective bookkeeping.

STATE AND VILLAGE TYPES

Clearly, the system did not in reality operate as smoothly as the bureaucrats had planned. Fundamental differences have emerged between the ideal order laid out in imperial laws and registers and actual developments among rural communities. The imperial bureaucracy constantly sought to issue new regulations in order to resolve these differences. The cadi court registers, though rarely used

for this purpose, provide us with a detailed source for exploring the real situation.[29] It is to be remembered that every jurisdiction assembles 40-50, sometimes up to 300 villages under the authority of the cadi. The judaical cases which arise in the villages fall under the jurisdiction of that town or city's cadi. It appears that the cadi often appointed a *naib* or surrogate to deal with village lawsuits. Among the shari'a court registers, particular registers dealing with rural questions, and in estate registers which list and determine the value of belongings in the estates of the deceased, we find detailed information about the socio-economic aspects of rural life that has hitherto been unavailable in other sources. Below we shall discuss certain interesting points that we have obtained from these sources. Before we start, it should be kept in mind that because these villages are close to cities and towns, they are subject to special conditions. This is why one should treat any generalizations related to them with caution. For instance, by looking at the "sales" of *çiftliks* and *mezraas* in these villages, there have been generalizations relating to the large conversion of *miri* lands into freehold property in given periods. In reality, many of these sales consisted of mere transfers arising form possession rights, or "sales"—more correctly, leasing—of land under *mukataa*.

In different regions of the Ottoman Empire there existed different village types. Physical and ethnic factors, settlement conditions, cultural, political-military circumstances determined the size of villages, their population, type of settlement and economic activity. It is therefore not possible to speak of a particular village type on the scale of the empire. One can nevertheless identify, at least in the core region of the empire, namely in Anatolia and Rumilia, village settlements which acquired a special "Ottoman" character under the influence of Ottoman land and taxation laws. The characteristics and effects of village structure under Ottoman law can be summarized as follows:

1. Despite the principle of his attachment to the land, the peasant could move around and frequently abandoned his holding to become what Ottoman law calls a *çift-bozan,* that is, "a peasant who has abandoned his *çift*." In order to prevent this, Ottoman laws granted the sipahi the right to bring the fugitive peasant back to his registered village within a period of 10 to 15 years. That such a law existed testifies to the ease with which the peasant could displace himself. This convenience arose from the fact that the peasant did not own the land himself. Either because of natural disasters, such as desertification and the land becoming uncultivable, or of being close to a caravan or military road, or due to the imposition by the state of extra duties or heavy taxes within the framework of the system of extraordinary levies *(awāriz)*, the peasant often quit his village and emigrated elsewhere. Another important factor was the flight of peasants to villages under *wakf* which were in a better position to protect peasants. The peasant naturally sought conditions which guaranteed a better life. The number of villages registered under *mezraa* in survey registers which have been abandoned by peasants are surprisingly numerous. In many sub-provinces, these *mezraa*s are as numerous as the villages. At the same time, we also know that the *mezraa*s did not consist only of abandoned old villages. As a result of population growth, a village could bring under cultivation a nearby forest or wasteland, and could lease it from the state as land under *mukataa* in a new survey. Hence, village satellites, *çiftlik*s, and even small settle-ments would emerge which would be registered in survey books under the name of *mezraa*. These *mezraa*s could either become transient settlement areas or permanent ones with only a few peasant households. This type of land would also be identified as *mezraa*s in register books. During the sixteenth century, many *mezraa*s appear to have emerged in this manner. However, for later periods, we find considerable evidence of peasants who abandoned their villages, either partially or entirely, to escape heavy taxation. The fact that the peasant only possessed land under the *tapu* system *(supra)* and did not loose much by abandoning it is considered to be a major factor in explaining the Ottoman peasant's unusual rate of displacement. It we consider escapes as individual acts, we come across the phenomenon of abandoned *(hālī) çiftlik*s; the sipahi might have had difficulty settling new families in these *çiftlik*s under the *tapu* regime. We can take the increase of the number of the *hālī çiftlik*s as an indication of the economic deterioration of the village. In other words, the augmentation of *hālī çiftlik*s in the registers of any given region can be explained through the increase of negative factors affecting the peasantry. Data on *hālī çiftlik*s and *mezraa*s may show how the tax policies of the government affected village existence and changes within.

2. Simultaneously, the Ottoman state's etatist-patrimonial character which enabled it to bring under control not only field lands but also field labour, led certain villages to assume a special character.

The most obvious examples are found in *derbendci* (peasant guards at mountain passes), *madenci* (miner), and *çeltükci* (rice-growing) villages. Villages designated as guarding mountain passes, or subjected to mining or rice-growing are completely differentiated on economic and social grounds.

3. The Ottoman village never formed a village type based on the communal possession of land. Admittedly, one comes across cases of communal ownership and the periodic parcelling of lands following the settlement of nomads and immigrants. But the typical village in the Ottoman Empire was formed by independent peasant families who settled on hereditary *miri* land of the *raiyyet çiftliks*. In other words, the *çift-hane* system constitutes the fundamental social structure of the Ottoman village. There is no such factor as communal possession which could form the basis of a village community. The village community's communal possessions, such as its pastureland, forest, meadow, trashing ground, cemetery and water, while constituting a communal ownership, still does not enable us to speak of a communal village type. We cannot consider certain collectively performed social actions, i.e., the peasants' cooperation to do such works as harvesting of each other's produce *(imece)*, as evidence of a communal village type. Among the jointly owned possessions, the struggle between different villages and/or nomads over pasture grounds occupies an important place in village history. The state attempted to substantially reduce conflict between neighboring villages over pastureland by allocating specific meadows to specific villages. The demarcation of borders between villages was determined by the cadi who identified them by special certificates.

The reference by G. Ostrogorsky and H. Stahl to communal land possession in the Balkans prior to the Ottoman period[30] has been denied by current research. In any event, it is clear that such "village communities" did not exist in the Balkans during the Ottoman period.

Certain taxes entailed the village's communal responsibility. For instance, in the collection of extraordinary levies and the poll tax, the village was communally held responsible for the total amount, particularly after the sixteenth century. Similarly, under Ottoman criminal law, an entire village would be held responsible for murder and theft actions committed within the village boundaries. While such cases strengthened the communal character of villages, they were not sufficient to fundamentally alter their social character. In sum, the Ottoman village was an administrative unit whose fields, pastures and meadows were delimited, and whose territorial existence was determined in the survey registers as well as in cadi certificates. It is a unit whose territory is clearly distinct in relation to the sipahis of other units, or to other administrative units such as the *wakfs*. In addition to the villages' common material interests and dispositions, it is necessary to stress this administrative identity and unity. But despite all these "community" characteristics, from a socio-economic structural point of view, the Ottoman village was a village community composed of independent *çift-hanes* each of which practiced cultivation independently on independent *raiyyet çiftliks*. Within the community, the independence of *çifts* and families was the essential char-acteristic. In sum, it is evident that the Ottoman *miri* land regime and *çift-hane* system sought to perpetuate a specific socio-economic order which led in certain regions to the emergence of a specific village type with common characteristics.

THE SIPAHI AND THE PEASANT

The principal responsibility of the sipahi in the village was to administer the laws which sought to maintain the *çift-hane* system under the sipahi's continued control. In the court registers there exist documents which illustrate the specific nature of sipahi-peasant relations.[31]

The documents we examined comprise the years 1500-1600. Fields devoted to grain cultivation never appear in court documents testifying division of inheritances *(terekes)*. In terms of land, only gardens and orchards were divided among the heirs. Nevertheless, Ottoman land law recognizes the transfer *(ferag)* right of a peasant to filed or farm. Transfer can only occur with the permission of the sipahi. An old peasant can, in his lifetime, transfer his land under tapu to his adult sons or to a stranger. The fact that the transfer method is referred to in cadi registers as a *sales* act (*satma* or *bayᶜ u şirā'* has led to erroneous generalizations. In the transfer trans-action the peasant receives a certain amount of money from the contractor in return for the *tapu* fee he originally paid for the land. And since the sipahi accords his permission, the peasant also agrees to give a fee to him even though this is not decreed by law. In this manner we witness *miri* farms *(çift-liks)* becoming the subject of a large scale trading operation. The cadi registers contain innumerable transactions of transfer "sales."

We also frequently come across the following event in the cadi registers. Profiting from the loopholes in the law, the sipahis generally tend towards taking away the lands under *tapu* from the peasants. The reason is due to the fact that when they hand over land to someone else's possession under *tapu*, it provides a new *tapu* fee. We have also observed in the registers cases of orphans and share holders losing their rights as a result of sipahis' frauds and applying to cadi courts for redress.

In law codes, other subjects of conflict between the peasants and the sipahis are figured. For instance, cases of the sipahis forcing the peasant to carry his own tithes on grain to profitable distant markets, or that newcoming sipahis obliging the peasants to build houses and store rooms for the sipahis' own use, and other similar services. One of the most widespread, and for the peasant, the most oppressive malpractice resorted to by the sipahi was that of reviving the legally forbidden practice of forced labour or local dues under the pretext that it was old custom. Another widespread sipahi malpractice was that of extracting taxes from meadow and pasturelands not recorded in tax registers. Only a new survey could regulate this type of source of income. The most serious grounds for conflict emerged from the sipahi's attempt to exploit peasant labour. One of the characteristics of the Ottoman regime was to try to prevent this type of extended service or forced labour. A frequently encountered case was the sipahi's attempt to use the peasant on his reserve *(hassa)* land more often than decreed by law, and to impose on the latter transportation tasks on his animals and cart. All the same, under such circumstances the peasant had the right to appeal to the local cadi court and, in more serious cases, to take his complaints directly to the sultan. In sum, alongside the sipahi's duty of protecting the peasant in the village, there existed several areas where the two conflicted.

EPILOGUE

The Ottomans regarded the family labour farm system as the foundation of agricultural production and rural society, and they scrupulously endeavored to maintain it through a complex bureaucratic system. It was, so to speak, the constitutional underpinning of the whole imperial system until the nineteenth century.

A. V. Chayanov,[32] the noted Russian theoretician of peasant economy, argued that in a specific geographical zone this system was the most efficient "mode of production." Dismissing Marx's analysis of the peasant economy based on the capitalistic economy, Chayanov asserts that family labour and capital are organized into a specific unit, a distinct production machine which actually represents a *sui generis* mode of production.[33] The peasant household is taken as a single unit, and its annual income is considered a single labour income. The adult male worker in the peasant family is the standard measure, and female and child labour are expressed in relation to it. Family composition, whether young, mature or aged, determined the consumer-demand equilibrium. The self-exploitation of the family intensified in conditions of limited availability of land. Thus the system worked better in thinly populated areas where land was relatively more available. In this system, family labour and land (let me add, animal power, or a pair of oxen) are articulated into one organic unit of production. Chayanow believed his theory applied to all traditional agrarian societies, including Russia and the Ottoman Empire. He emphasized that "this mode of production machine" signified an independent mode of production. Such an ingenious "machine" is actually the outgrowth of a long experiment in human history. Chayanow's theoretical analysis is important for our understanding of the economic basis of the *çift-hane* system and its counter-part in the Roman world, the *jugum-caput*. What makes it particularly relevant to our topic here is that Chayanow's theory is based on empirical data derived from the traditional Russian peasant economy. What feudal or Asian Mode of Production theories failed to explain on the basis of Marxist premises finds in this mode of production a clear, logical and historically documented explanation. We have to add to Chayanov's theory that the most important prerequisite for the continuity of such a system is a powerful and efficient centralist state control over land possession and family labour. An imperial bureaucratic apparatus, as explained above, had to struggle systematically to perpetually eliminate encroachment on the part of local lords, while striving to prevent its own provincial agents from transforming themselves into a provincial gentry. By means of its centralist regulatory power, the imperial system was responsible for the functioning of this particular mode of production, and was also undoubtedly responsible for an indispensable part of the forces of production in it.

NOTES

1. Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, *Precapitalist Modes of Production,* London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, 183.

2. In particular, see Vera P. Moutafchieva, *Agrarian Relations in the Ottoman Empire in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988; this study influenced all Marxist historians in the Eastern bloc countries on Ottoman social formation.

3. In Bulgaria: V. Moutafchieva and St. Dimitrov; Hungary: L. Makkai, E. Francès (Byzantine period); Romania: A. Otetea, H. Stahl; Yugoslavia: B. Djurdjev, N. Filipović; USSR: F. Oreshkova; East Germany: E. Werner.

4. K. Marx, *Precapitalist Economic Formations*, ed. E. Hobsbawm, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1964; K. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*, New Haven 1964, 364-412; Ferenc Tökei, *Essays on the Asiatic Mode of Production*, Budapest: Akademiai Kiadó, 1979, 9-35; also see Witold Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System*, trans. L. Garner, Bristol, 1976, 11-27; *Recherches Internationales*, vol. 57-58, (January-April), numero special: *Premières sociétiés de classes et Mode de Production Asiatique.*

5. Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism, A Comparative Study of Total Power,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, Fifth Printing, 1964 (originally published in 1957).

6. *Asya Tipi Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumu*, Istanbul: Iktisat Fakültesi Publications, 1967; among his followers, M. A. Şevki, *Osmanlı Toplumunun Sosyal Bilimle Açıklanması*, Istanbul: Elif, 1968; in particular Huri Islamoğlu and Çağlar Keyder, "Agenda for Ottoman History," *Review*, I-1 (1977); Ç. Keyder, "The Dissolution of the Asiatic Mode of Production," *Economy and Society,* V-2 (May 1976), 178-96.

7. *Art. cit.*

8. *Op. cit.*, 101-107; 161-270.

9. Number of Households, etc., in rural areas. (Source: Mine Çınar *Kırsal Kesim Gelir Dağılımı ve Tüketimi Harcamaları* 1973-74 , Ankara: Institute of Statistics, 32.)

Income in T.L.	Household		Number of Household Members		Average size of Household
Income Groups	Number	%	Number	%	
Total:	2,833,905	100.00	17,571,916	100.00	6.2
0- 1999	218,430	7.71	1,068,673	6.08	4.9
2000- 5999	596,948	21.06	3,273,61	18.63	5.5
6000- 9999	704,384	24.86	4,217,772	24.00	6.0
10000- 19999	837,436	29.55	5,455,780	31.05	6.5
20000- 39999	379,943	13.40	2,789,082	15.87	7.3
40000- 59999	56,920	2.01	456,071	2.60	8.0
60000- 79999	14,942	0.53	106,725	0.61	7.1
80000- 99999	9,960	0.35	72,573	0.41	7.3
100000-299999	13,519	0.48	124,513	0.71	9.2
300000+	1,423	0.05	7,115	0.04	5.0

10. H. Inalcık, "Land Problems in Turkish History," *Muslim World*, 45 (1955), 221-28.

11. E. Cecil Curwen, *Plough and Pasture*, London: Cobett Press, 1946; G. Haudricourt, Mariel J. Brunhes Delamarre, *l'homme et la charrue à travers le monde*, Paris; Gallimard, 1955; A. Leroi-Gourhan, *Evolution et techniques*, vol. II, *Milieu et techniques*, Paris: A. Michel, 1945; Carl Sauer, *Agricultural Origins and Dispersals*, New York: American Geographical Society, 1952; André Beteille, *Studies in Agrarian Social Structure*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974; A. Dauzat, *Le village et le paysan de France*, Paris: Gallimard, 1941, in particular, 81-126.

12. See A.V. Chayanow, *The Theory of Peasant Economy*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966 (reprint by T. Shanin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), Introduction by B. Kerblay, 1-24, XI-LXXV. The principle of *çift-hane* is expressed in the following way: "In a peasant economy, labour, proportionate to the size of the family, is the stable element which determines the change in the volume of capital and land area." D. Warriner, *The Economics of Peasant Farming*, New York: Barnes and Noble, 1939; D. Thorner, "Peasant Economy as a Category in Economic History", *Proceedings, International Conference of Economic History,* 1962, 287-300.

13. In the law code of Mehmed II (ed. F. Kraelitz, in Mitteilungen zur Osmanischen Geschicte, I (1921), 12-48, see chapter on the taxation of "Non-Muslim Married Men" (Müzevvec-i Gebrān); also see H. Inalcik, "Osmalılarda Raiyyet Rusumu," *Belleten,* XIII (1959), 583.

14. In the Byzantine Empire a similar situation appears to have been prevalent, but the Byzantinists are hesitant to recognize this basic fact which would clarify many problems, see P. Lemerle, *Esquisse*, mentioned in note 30, pp. 68-70.

15. See "Çiftlik" (H. Inalcik), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition (hereafter *EI*^{2}) II, 32-33; Ö. L. Barkan, *XV. ve XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Ziraî Ekonominin Hukukî ve Malî Esasları, I: Kanunlar*, Istanbul, 1943, Index: *Çiftlik*.

16. Barkan, *XV. ve XVI Asırlarda . . .*, Index: *Tapu, Tapulu*; in "Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri," *Millî Tetebbular Mecmuası*, I (1915), 49-112; 303-37, where the distinction between *tapulu* and *mukataalı* lands is clearly expressed.

17. For the peasant household with its farm *(stasis)* and team of plough oxen in the Byzantine Empire, see G. Ostrogorsky, *Pour l'histoire de la féodalite Byzantine*, trans. H. Grégoire and P. Lemerle, Brussels, 1954, still essential; also N. Svoronos, "Recherches sur le cadastre byzantin et la fiscalité aux XIe et XIIe siècles: le cadastre de Thebes," *Bulletin de Corrrespondance Hellenique*, 1959; P. Lemerle, "Esquisee . . . ," mentioned in note 30 below, pp. 279-81; A. E. Laiou-Thomadakis, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977; J. Lefort, "fiscalité médiaeval et informatique . . . ," *Revue Historique,* 512 (1974), 315-54; for the ruling elite, see G. Ostrogorsky, "Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 25 (1971); K.-P. Matschke, "Socialschichten und Geisteshaltungen," *Akten, XVI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses*, 1981; I. Hauptreferate, (Wien 1981), 189-212.

18. See "Mazraʿa" (H. Inalcık), *EI*^{2}, VI.

19. For *Mukataalı* lands also see, "The Emergence of Big Farms, *Çiftliks:* State, Landlords and Tenants", *Contributions à l'histoire économique et sociale de l'empire ottoman*, Louvain: Peeters, 1984, 108-12.

20. Cf. G. Veinstein, "les steppes du nord de la Mer Noire au XVIe siècle," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, vol. 4 (1985), *Ö. L. Barkan'a Armağan,* 177-210.

21. See H. Inalcık, "Osmanlılarda Raiyyet Rusûmu," *Belleten*, XXIII (1959), 575-61; Chayanov, 1966, 50.

22. H. Inalcık, "The Problem of the Relationship between Byzantine and Ottoman Taxation," *Akten, XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-*

kongresses, München, 1958, 237-42. On state control on arable land and family farm in the Byzantine Empire, see M. Kaplan, "Remarques sur la place de l'exploitation paysanne dans l'économie rurale byzantine," *Akten,* XVI. Internal Byzantinistenkongresses, *Jahrbuch der österr. Byzantinistik,* vol. XXXII-2, 105-14; Z.V. Udal'cova and K.V. Chvostova, "Les structures sociales et éconimques dans La Basse-Byzance," *ibid*, 131-47.

23. Th. Mommsen, "Syrisches Provinzialmass und Römischer Reichskataster," *Hermes,* III (Berlin, 1869); G. Ostrogorsky, "Das Steuersystem in byzantinische Altertum und Mittelalter", *Byzantion,* 6 (1931); A. H. M. Jones, "The Roman Colonate," *Past and Present,* Vol. 13 (1958); A. Déléage, *La Capitation du Bas-Empire*, Mâcon: Rotat, 1954; F. Lôt, *L'impôt Foncier et la capitation personelle sous le Bas Empire et à l'époque franque*, Paris, 1928; A. H. M. Jones, "Capitatio and Iugatio," *The Journal of Roman Studies,* vol. LVII (1957), 88-94.

24. See note 21 above.

25. In addition to the literature mentioned in note 22 above, see M. Bloch, *Les caractères originaux de l'histoire rurale française*, 2nd ed., 2 vol. Paris: A. Colin, 1952-1956; A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, II, University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 767-823; E. L. R. Ladurie and M. Morineau, *Histoire éconimique et sociale de la France*, vol. I-2, Paris: PUF, 483 ff.

26. On the *tahrīr* system, see Ö. L. Barkan, "les Grands récensements de la population et du terrritoire de l'empire Ottoman et les régisters impériaux de statistique," *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, Vol. II (1940-1941), 20-60, 214-47; H. Inalcık, *Sûret-i Defter-i Sancak-i Arvanid,* Ankara, 1954, I-XX; *idem,* "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica,* II (Paris, 1954), 107-112.

27. H. Inalcık, "Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman administration," *Studies in Eighteenth Century Ottoman History*, eds. T. Naff and R. Owen, London, 1977, 27-52.

28. H. Inalcık, "Adâletnâmeler," *Belgeler*, II (Ankara, 1965), 49-145; on state protection of peasants against the grandees in the provinces, see P. Lemerle, *art. cit.,* 277-79.

29. I published a selection of documents from the Bursa cadi court covering the period 1520-90, in *Belgeler*, vols. X, XIII and XIV.

30. G. Ostrogorsky, "La commune rurale byzantine," *Byzantion*, 32 (1962), 139-66; H. Stahl, *Les anciennes communautés villageoises*

roumaines, asservissement et pénétration capitaliste, Bucharest and Paris: l'Academie . . . de Roumaine, 1969; *idem*, "Paysage et peuplement rural en Roumanie," *Nouvelles Etudes d'Histoire*, Vol. III, (Bucharest, 1905), 71-85; cf. P. Lemerle, "Esquisse pour une histoire agraire de Byzance," *Revue Historique*, vol. 219, (1958), 32-94, in particular, 91-92, 139-66, 255-84; Danuta M. Gorecki, "Land Tenure in Byzantine Property Law: *iura in re aliena*," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, Vol. 22 (1981), 191-210.

31. Cadi court records mentioned in note 29 above.
32. See note 12 above.
33. *Op. cit.*, XVIII-XXI.

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