

AYÂNS IN THE OTTOMAN CYPRUS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY

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Introduction

To have a better understanding of the so-called “process of decentralization” seems wise to look briefly at the general situation of the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century and even before.

A social, economic and political *crisis* started in the last quarter of the 16th century¹ spread and became effective in the coming century. It would continue prevail all over the empire in the form of a “decentralization process”² in the 18th century, especially in its second term.

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¹ According to the general acceptance, this period of crisis started in the late sixteenth century mainly as a result of the “price revolution” which first appeared and shook the economics in Europe. On the issue, some scholars assert that this economic revolution shook fundamentally the traditional Ottoman administrative and social structures, for the Ottoman rulers of the time had abolished the customs imposed on importation of silver to encourage free trade believing that it would have contributed a lot to the imperial treasury, and thereby, let the cheap European silver flow into the Levantine markets. Halil İNALCIK, *The Ottoman Empire, the Classical Age, 1300-1600*, London 1973, p 137-138; Yaşar YÜCEL *Osmanlı Ekonomisi – Kültür – Uygarlık Tarihine Dair Bir Kaynak: Es'ar Defteri (1640 tarihli)*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992, p. 8-9; Mehmet ÖZ, *Osmanlı'da “Çözülme” ve Geleneği Yorumcuları*. İstanbul, Dergâh Yayınları, 1997, p. 37-38.

² For general references on the emergence of the ayâns as a class and their political, administrative and socio-economic roles in the Ottoman history, see Mustafa AKDAÇ, *Celâli İsyânları 1550-1603*, Ankara, 1963; *Türkiye'nin İktisadi ve İçtimai Tarihi*, Cilt II (1453-1559), II. Baskı, İstanbul, 1995; Halil İNALCIK, “Adâletnâmeler”, *Belgeler*, II (3-4), (1965), p. 149-145; “Centralization and Decentralization in the Ottoman Administration”, in Thomas NAFF and Roger OWEN, (eds.), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, Vol. II, Edwardsville and Carbondale 1977, p. 27-52; Yaşar YÜCEL, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Desantralizasyon Dair Genel Gözlemler”, *Belleten*, 38/152 (1974), p. 657-708; *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtına Dair Kaynaklar*, Ankara, 1988; Ömer Lütfi BARKAN, “Türkiye'de Fiyat Hareketleri”, *Belleten*, XXXIV/136 (1970), p. 574-590; “Feodal Düzen ve Osmanlı Timarı”, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri, Metinler - Tartışmalar*, 8-10 Haziran 1973, ed. by Osman OKYAR ve H. Ünal NALBANTOĞLU, Ankara, 1973, “Türk-İslâm Toprak Hukuku Tabikatının Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Aldığı Şekiller”, *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi, Toplu Eserler*, I, İstanbul, 1980, p. 151-208; Yücel ÖZKAYA, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ayânlık*, Ankara, 1994; Mehmet GENÇ, “Osmanlı Maliyesinde Mâlikâne Sistemi”, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri, Metinler - Tartışmalar*, 8-10 Haziran 1973, ed. by Osman OKYAR ve H. Ünal NALBANTOĞLU, Ankara, 1973;

The unending wars generally resulted in defeats, changings in the nature and volume of the international trade which was chiefly carried out with the European countries, a rapid increase in population and unemployment, the "price revolution" and the widening of monetary relations in the world economy, emergence of new war technologies that necessitated professional armies and required transformation from the fiscal capitalism to the industrial one etc., were also among the most prominent reasons for that *crisis*³. The then Ottoman statesmen had to invent new means like creating new sources of revenue especially in cash for their central treasury and increase the capacity of the existing ones to meet the rapidly widening imperial expenses.

In order to achieve those aims, besides *confiscations* of the properties of the well-to-do officials (*müsâdere*) and devaluation (*tağşış*)⁴, initially the state began to collect almost regularly the taxes of "*avârız*", "*imdâdiye*" and "*tekâlif*", which had been so far harvested during extraordinary periods like wars⁵. Secondly, the range of "*iltizâm method*" was to be expanded at the expense of the "*timâr system*", or in other words, the state changed the sources of revenue, which mostly belonged to the "*timâr system*", into "*mukâta'as*"⁶. This would mean to sell some of the imperial sources of revenue to the men of capital for one or three years.

A third method applied by the Ottoman statesmen to provide enough amount of ready money was "*mâlikâne system*"⁷. As a system it was quite

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Devlet ve Ekonomi, İstanbul, 2000; Özer ERGENÇ, "Osmanlı Klasik Döneminde Eşraf ve Ayân Üzerine Bazı Bilgiler", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, III (1982); Ahmet TABAKOĞLU, *Gerileme Dönemine Girenken Osmanlı Maliyesi*, İstanbul, 1985; Şevket PAMUK, *100 Soruda Osmanlı - Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi 1500-1914*, I. Baskı, İstanbul, 1990; Suraiya FAROQHI, *Osmanlı'da Kentler ve Kentliler*, II. Baskı, İstanbul, 1994; Yuzo NAGATA, "The Role of Ayans in Regional Development During the pre-Tanzimat Period in Turkey: A Case Study of the Karaosmanoğlu Family", in *Studies on the Social and Economic History of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. by Yuzo NAGATA, İzmir 1995, p. 119-133; Same author, *Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa ve Ayânlık Müessesesi*, İzmir, Akademi Kitabevi, 1999.

³ BARKAN 1970, p. 574-590; İNALCIK 1973, p. 139; TABAKOĞLU, *op cit.*, p. 235-246; YÜCEL 1988, p. IX; FAROQHI, *op cit.*, p. 2.

⁴ YÜCEL 1992, p. 8-11.

⁵ PAMUK, *op cit.*, p. 127.

⁶ "*Mukâta'a*" means a tax source. The state used to fix the geographic boundaries and kind of a *mukâta'a* and the maximum level of the taxes, that would be collected from it. The Ottoman guilds in the cities, customs of external trade or various taxes of a certain region could constitute a "*mukâta'a*". Mithat SERTOĞLU, *Osmanlı Tarih Lügâtü*, 2. Baskı, İstanbul, Enderun Kitabevi, 1986, p. 229.

⁷ GENÇ, *op cit.*, p.231-283.

similar to the "iltizâm method"⁸. By the system the "*mukâta'as*"⁹ were to be sold not for one or three years, but for life in return for an advance payment (*mu'accele*) and a yearly sum (*mâl*). The state's expectation from the application of this method was that the "*mâlikâne*" owners would have been more willing to protect the Muslim or non-Muslim reayah and improve their "*mukâta'as*", for they would not have to surrender them to the state after a few years. The fourth arrangement, *eshâm system*, made by the Ottoman rulers of the period was to divide the "*mukâta'as*" into very small fragments or shares and sell the annual tax revenues of an each share to the rich persons for life in return for a total advance payment. When a share-holder died, his share had to be returned to the state¹⁰.

In fact, all of those methods failed to remedy the deterioration of the Ottoman economy. Under the existing developments and the changings in the war technology, the Ottoman "*timâr system*" rapidly lost its importance and thereby, the number of the timâr-holding *sipâhîs* (cavalry) reduced and came to be useless¹¹. As their quality and effectiveness got lower, the *Yeniçeris* enlarged in number due to the entrance of many unqualified people from the Turco-Muslim elements into their class, which had only made the burden of the central Treasury heavier.

Along with that corruption in the military and economic systems, the solidarity of the Ottoman society, too, came to be threatened by a social turmoil named as the "*Celâli movements*"¹² that were in the nature of brigandages and started and widened rapidly especially in the central Anatolia. The "*Celâli*" bands were populated by the unemployed youths (*levends* or *gurbet tâifesi* and *suhte*) and the landless subjects who had to abandon their lands (*çifts*)¹³ due to the pressure of heavy tax burden imposed by the state and the *brigands*. After leaving their lands the villagers

⁸ The "*mültezims*" who bought a source of revenue generally had not been careful about the living conditions or durability of the peasants and improvement of the "*mukâta'a*", which he bought by auction. They tried as possible as to squeeze the real producers in their predetermined periods by imposing extraordinary or illegal taxes (*tekâlif-i şakka*) on them in order to get more than they offered to the state in their limited periods.

⁹ For comprehensive works on this subject, see Mustafa CEZAR, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Levendler*, İstanbul, 1965 and Karen BARKEY, *Bandits and Bureaucrats-The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, London, Ithaca, 1994.

¹⁰ PAMUK, *op cit.*, p. 131.

¹¹ YÜCEL 1988, p. XIII.

¹² Consult AKDAĞ 1963.

¹³ This incidence was to be called in the Ottoman social history as the "great flight" (*büyük kaçgun*) and continued until 1610. YÜCEL, *op cit.*, p. XIII-XV.

began to husbandary around the hillsides and crowded the medreses as students in the cities, or mercenary troops (*sekbân bölüks*)¹⁴. The "*sekbân bölüks*" had been organized and armed by the provincial governors with the permission of the state to protect the social order against the brigandages. It's interesting enough, many of those governors would revolt against the central administration during the 17th century¹⁵.

In the destruction of the social solidarity of the Ottomans; i.e., in the dissemination of the Muslim and non-Muslim reayah (*perâkende vü ihtilâl / perîşân*), in spite of being representatives of the state authority, the oppressor state officials (beylerbeyis, sancakbeyis, kadis and their nâibs, mütesellims or muhassils, voyvodas, mültezims and the other members of the "*ehl-i 'örf*") were the most responsible ones¹⁶. For, they had abused their power to commit various malpractices¹⁷ neglecting the firmans of "*adâletnâme*"¹⁸ issued by the Sultans. For instance, they sold their own timars to others by way of "*ültizâm*", demanded illegally foods, sheeps or something else (*yem ve yiyecek / koyun ve kuzu taleb etme*) from the people during their unlawful visits (*il üzerine devre çıkma*) through "*salma*", increased the rates of dues and fines (*ziyâde taleb*), and imposed extraordinary taxes (*tekâlif-i şakka*) on them¹⁹.

Eventually, throughout the 17th century all of these economic, military, demographic, social and political provisions were to force the Ottoman Empire to lose a lot from its central authority both in the capital and provinces. In the next century emerged a new social power, namely the local notables (*a'yâns*) to fill that gap of authority.

Ayâns in the Ottoman History

The afore-mentioned political, socio-economic, military and demographic circumstances and provisions which began to appear in the second half of the the sixteenth century, shook essentially the traditional

¹⁴ In fact, some of these "*sekbans*" were the ones whom the very state armed and used in the battles against Austria, Venice and the Iranian Safavids. Justin McCARTHY, *The Ottoman Turks, An Introductory History to 1923*, Longman, New York and London 1997, p. 167-172.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171-174.

¹⁶ TABAKOĞLU, *op cit.*, p. 223-227.

¹⁷ For many kinds of the commitments of the "*ehl-i 'örf*" consult TABAKOĞLU, *op cit.*, pp. 226-230.

¹⁸ See İNALCIK 1965.

¹⁹ YÜCEL, *op cit.*, p. XIII.

Ottoman regime causing it to degenerate and decline steadily²⁰ throughout the 17th century. Although having tried to do their best to meet or get accustomed to the newly emerged challenging predicaments of the period²¹, the then Ottoman governments lost a lot from their central authority both in the capital and provinces.

Although there was not any social power to fill the gap of authority in the 17th century, beginning from the first decade of the following century²² a new social class, a fresh power, namely the local notables (ayâns) appeared and took the control or their share from the authority of the central government²³ in the imperial provincial organization.

The local dignitaries or ayâns were mostly the retired members of the “askeri” class including the “ulemâ”, rich merchants or heads of great and rooted families²⁴. In the century the incidence of ayâns was to be transformed by the Ottoman State into an institution. Hereafter the state was able to enjoy the right to appoint or depose the ayâns or fix their rights complying with an order²⁵.

As time went on, ayâns would become agents of the state and real representatives of the population living in provinces. They achieved this in two phases; first they seized the control of militia forces created with the support of the state for preventing brigandages. And then, in the second stage, ayâns obtained positions of mültezim, muhassıl, mütesellim and voyvoda, which gave them the right to collect taxes, during the process of enlarging the range of iltizâm method at the expense of the traditional timâr system, and implementation of mâlikâne and eshâm arrangements aimed at escaping general economic crisis, or more correctly, increasing revenues in cash and finding new ones to meet the ever-increasing imperial expenses²⁶.

²⁰ İNALCIK 1973, p.47.

²¹ For a detailed examination of the means invented by the Ottoman governments to escape the stated period of crisis, consult Linda DARLING, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy-Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1660*, Leiden 1996.

²² On the history of the Ottomans in this century Faroqhi claims that in the Ottoman history especially the eighteenth century constitutes a period which was “forgotten” or did not sufficiently attract the attention of the scholars upon itself. FAROQHI, *op cit.*, p.10.

²³ PAMUK, *op cit.*, p. 121-122.

²⁴ GENÇ, *op cit.*, p. 251.

²⁵ KŞS (Kıbrıs Şer’iye Sicilleri / Court Registers of Cyprus, Archive of General Directorate of Vakıflar, Lefkoşa – KKTC, Mersin on Turkey, hereafter KŞS) 21: 8/1, 9/1.

²⁶ TABAKOĞLU, *op cit.*, p. 224.

In spite of having enjoyed their assistance in the solution of many problems, beginning from 1750's the Ottoman State would have to struggle against the newly born social power, i.e. ayâns. For, most of the members of this class would not both necessarily feel everytime that they had to prefer the interests of the empire to their own and restrain from committing oppressions on the imperial subjects whom they represented.

As tax collectors (mütesellims, muhassıls etc.) ayâns' frequently witnessed abuses against the state and people were of increasing rates of the prescribed taxes of the reayah (salyâne defterine fazla akçe eklemek), not submitting the collected tax revenues to the relevant office, and raping the subjects of the region where they held as mültezims in different ways in assistance of usurers (murâbâhâcılar)²⁷.

The period of the Ottoman-Russian War (1768-1774) constitutes a turning-point in the institutional development of ayânlık in the Ottoman administrative and socio-economic history. During the Russo-Ottoman War (1768-1774) the then Ottoman government used all of its sources on which it rested, and this led to great internal changes in the social, economic and administrative structures of the state. In the years of expedition against Russia the newly emerged local powers realized the first steps of a great development and in the following period were to have their influence felt in all of the state affairs and gain great power.

In this period Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa became Grand-Vizier and continued his policy he adopted during his first Grand-Vizierate (1765) towards ayâns of kazas. Mehmed Paşa established new bridges between the central government and local notables by letting them take part in many imperial missions. While taking part in the imperial activities as state agents the local powers, in other words, ayâns would generally pursue their own interests and thereby, come to be a different source of trouble for the state and society of the time. There was a furious struggle among the notables for the post of ayânlık near before and after the War of 1768-1774. The local inhabitants would be the element which mostly suffered from the social and administrative turmoil caused by the struggling local notables and unjust governors²⁸.

²⁷ ÖZKAYA 1994, p.179-209.

²⁸ NAGATA 1999, p. 142.

In order to stop the fighting between the influential local notables and protect the reayah from the malpractices and oppressions of the state representatives, the Grand-Vizier of the time Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa to reform the method of recognition of ayânlık (ayânship) by the central government. In one of his edict issued on the subject and sent to every district (kaza) in Anatolia and Rumelia, Mehmed Paşa declared that every ayân, after being elected by the reayah in his own kaza, had to be recognized through a mektûb (letter) sent by the Grand-Vizier. By this reform the Grand-Vizier had aimed to keep local peace under the control of the central power. Nonetheless he was dismissed from the office of Grand Vizierate just before the war and his policy towards ayânlık was left, for the central government wanted to make ayâns support the imperial corps with local soldiers, food and munitions. In 1771 Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa was to be restored to his office again and he would adopt the same policy of recognition of ayânlık. The Grand Vizier requested the loyal ayâns to send food and soldiers for the War of 1768-1774²⁹. Until the end of the war a great number of new ayâns emerged in many parts of Anatolia and Rumelia. After the war leading notables remarkably strengthened their political power and many of them, as ayâns, enjoyed political and social influence by way of supplying food, munitions and local soldiers³⁰.

Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa in his first term seriously worked to cope with the severe competition and fighting between ayâns. While doing this, on the one hand he tried to protect ayâns who were loyal to the state and restrained from oppressing the people, on the other hand he was punishing the betrayer and oppressor ones. Thereby, the Grand Vizier Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa was trying to keep the provincial administration under control. But unfortunately, in spite of his great efforts to preserve the imperial authority in provinces active and respectable, instead of coming to an end the ayân fightings would worsen. Eventually the Grand Vizier's policy of ayânlık was to be given up due to the unending strife between ayâns in 1769³¹.

The ayâns who strengthened their power and came to be an important state agent before and during the War of 1768-1774 by taking advantages of the opportunities provided by the Grand-Vizier of the time Muhsin-zâde

²⁹ For detailed information on the war see Osman Kösc, *1774 Küçük Kaynarca Andlaşması*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara, 2006.

³⁰ NAGATA 1999, p. III, 140-144.

³¹ NAGATA 1999, p. 50.

Mehmed Paşa would play a crucial role in the movements for modernization in the Ottoman Empire and the Middle-East in the 19th century³².

Ayâns and Eşrâfs of the Ottoman Cyprus

As it was common in other administrative units of the empire³³, in the province of Cyprus of the second half of the eighteenth century rulers were the governors called muhassıls and müsellims or mütesellims. They were responsible for the collection of the imperial taxes of the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects in Cyprus. They were great mültezims, but not everytime necessarily called "mültezim". They bought their positions from sadrazams by way of auction (iltizâm). These big patrons generally preferred to stay in İstanbul and sold their offices or rights to other "sub-mültezims". The low-ranked mültezims were in great number and interested in many petty works of iltizâm. In provinces they constituted an influent socio-economic class. This class was populated by local well-to-do dignitaries who bought their offices from great mültezims through auction³⁴.

Besides sadrazams, who sold their fief (hass) to muhassıls or müsellims by auction, there were other high-ranked officials or officers, too, like vezirs holding fiefs (zeamets and timârs), some members of military class (ehl-i 'örf), mâlikâne and mukâta'a owners, founders of great pious foundations (vakıf) and their official representatives called voyvodas, mütevellis, câbis etc³⁵. to supply the mentioned class with an another human source. They enjoyed a special place in the Cypriot society. These people of high-positions would generally live in the capital and sell their sources of revenue to the men of capital again by way of iltizâm for a fixed period in return for some predetermined payment in advance or by installments.

³² NAGATA 1999, p. 2.

³³ GENÇ, *op cit.*, p. 251.

³⁴ C.D. COBHAM, *Excepta Cyprica, Materials for a History of Cyprus*, Cambridge 1908, p. 351.

³⁵ For example, "Cezâire-i Kıbrıs'ta vâkı' Ca'fer Paşa vakfından..." A. DVN. KBŞ (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive, İstanbul / Turkey, hereafter KBŞ), File / Document No: 1/1 (1150 of Hicrah); KBŞ: 1/1, 1150 H.; "Sadır-ı esbâk merhûm 'Abdu'l-lâh Paşazâde Mehmed Sa'îd Beg kullarının ber-vechi mâlikâne 'uhdesinde olan Kıbrıs cezâiresinde Karpaz Kazâsı'nda Trikomo ve Kumukebîr ve Aftikomo ve Dipkarpaz nâm dört 'aded vakf karye..." A.DVN. KBM (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive, İstanbul/Turkey, hereafter KBM): 1/9, 1179 H.; "Haramcını's-şerîfeyn evkâfından Kıbrıs'ta Gerine Kazâsı'na tâbî Iabta nâm karyedeki Haydarpaşazâde Mehmed Beg'in evkâfı ve mukâta'ası..." KBM: 1/21, 1191 of Hicrah, and "Sadır-ı 'azâm-ı esbâk Çorlulu 'Alî Paşa merhûmun vakf-ı şerîfi mülhakâtından cezâire-i Kıbrıs'da vâkı' Poli nâm çiftliği vakfın mütevelliyesi 'Alî Paşa'nın akâribinden..." KBM: 1/55, 1202 of Hicrah.

The latter also would transfer their offices to some other native buyers. Thus, even a kind of hierarchical order was to come into being among the intermediaries called *mültezims* at the expense of their sources of revenue and the native people living there³⁶.

Consequently, in the province of Cyprus, too, the well-to-do and distinguished individuals created a new socio-economic class in the period. They came from the island's society and in time, seized the control of the sources of revenue of the province through *iltzâm* and other similar fiscal methods. They were to be called, as reflected in the documents, "*Kıbrıs a'yân ü eşrâfi*" (the dignitaries and the most esteemed of Cyprus).

The *ayâns* and *eşrâfs* of Cyprus were the dignitaries of the local population. These people could rarely obtain offices of *muhassıl* or *müsellim*, but in general their economic and political power sufficed to get the positions of "voivoda", "mütevelli", "câbî" and "nâ'ib of kadi". They were mostly retired members of the ruling class, *ehl-i 'örf* and *'ulemâ*, who stayed in Cyprus and made marriages with the native, instead of returning to their birthplaces after their retirements.

The *ayâns* and *eşrâfs* of Cyprus had gained great dignity in the rural society through holding an office in many years, and getting rooted by way of marital relations. The titles that were adopted by the *ayâns* and *eşrâfs* of Cyprus for themselves or used by others for them, indicate this very clearly: "*Miralây-ı sâbık Hacı Mehmed*", "*Kethüdâ-yı sâbık Hüseyin*", "*Ağa-yı Yeniçeriyân-ı sâbık*" veya "*Sâbıkan Kıbrıs Defterdârı Es-seyyîd İsmail Efendi*"³⁷.

The Ottoman documents of the period reveal that the representatives and dignitaries of the non-Muslim *reyah* (*zimmî*) could also become from *ayân* and *eşrâf* in Cyprus like "*sâbık (former) Rum Tercümânı*" and "*Tuzlalı sâbık Kocabaş*"; in other words, there were *mültezims* among the *zimmî* subjects³⁸. As *mültezims*, the Christian notables were able to have

³⁶ A quotation from a document of KBM: 1/8, 1179 of Hicrah, indicates this hierarchy:

Sadr-ı sâbık merhûm Abdu'l-lâh Paşâ'nın âsitânedec sâkin sağır oğlu Mehmed Sa'îd Beg 'uhdesinde olan Kıbrıs cezîresinde Karpâz kazâsında Trikomo ve Kûmûkebîr ve Afıtukomo ve Dîpkarpâz nâm dört 'aded vakıf kurâları mûmâ-ileyhin umûr-u husûslarını rü'yet iden Harem-kethüdâsı 'Abdu'l-lâh Ağâ nâm kimesne tama'-ı hâma teb'iyet ile yetmiş üç senesinden berü tarafından karyelerimizi iltizâm eylediği kendi adamısi [adamı] olan el-hâc 'Alî Ağâ nâm kimesne altı seneden berü...

³⁷ KBS: 1/5, 12, 14, 16, 54, 58; KBM: 1/4, 14.

³⁸ KBM: 1/14, 39.

many great farms (çiftlik) and the right to collect imperial taxes (emvâl-i mîrî) of the regions including non-Muslim population³⁹.

Ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus who were mostly the retired members of the ruling elite ('askerî and 'ulemâ) in the period of 1750-1800 A.D. emerged as a real new and effective socio-economic class and power through their influence and authorities both in Cyprus and the capital, İstanbul. They rised to such a position by means of their wealth, they gained during their long term of office in the province and close relations like marriages they established with native people. In this period the incidence of ayâns and eşrâfs seems to have completed the process of turning into an institution.

Among the existent documents of the period there is a very characteristic one, an imperial paper (hatt-ı hümayûn) registered in one of the sicills (court registers) of 17 Şevvâl 1198 H. / 24 August 1784 A.D.⁴⁰. The document provides us with explanatory information like nature and development of the matter of ayâns and eşrâfs both in the empire and the province; i.e. their social origins, their appointments and depositions, their responsibilities, interclass relations, their abuses and measures to be taken against their malpractices.

As it is understood, the document was written to all vezirs, commanders, governors, judges and their helping personnels, fief holders and the ayâns of the imperial administrative units: "...Anadolının sağ kolı yemîn ve yesâriyle nihâyetine varınca vâkı'..." olan "vüzerâ-yı 'azâm ümerâi'likirâm mîr-i mîrân-ı kirâm mevâlî-yi fihâm sâ'ir kuzât ve nüvvâb ve bi'l-cümle zâbitân ve a'yân-ı memleket". This imperial order was released and sent to the island by the sadrazam of the time through one of his personnels (çukadâr), el-Hac Ebubekir. This "suret-i hatt-ı hümayûn" orders the ayâns that the regulations, which were previously set up by a firmân (imperial paper) of 1193 .H. / 1779 A.D. for the matter of distortions come across, had been disobeyed, and such kind of commitments had had to be avoided.

Through a general examination of the document of 1198 of Hijrah one can reach at such results: First of all, the issue of ayâns became one of the most important administrative and socio-economic matters of the empire in the second half of the eighteenth century.

³⁹ KBM: 1/4; A. DVN. KBE (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive, İstanbul / Turkey, hereafter KBE): 20559-20560.

⁴⁰ KŞS 21: 8/1, 9/1.

The document, moreover, shows that the incidence of ayâns had exactly transformed into an institution in the Ottoman Empire during the period under examination. According to the firmân of 1198 of Hijrah, a firmân was issued about "ayânlık maddesi"; i.e. matter of ayâns' office in 1193 of Hijrah, which abolished the existing applicaiton and established new principles of who and how could be an ayân⁴¹. The firmân of 1193 of Hijrah ordered that the appointment of ayân in the imperial territories (memâlik-i mahrûse) would not be realized any longer by papers released by sadrazams and governors (emr-i 'âlî ve vâlî buyruhdısı) as it was usual in the past. Since 1193 of Hijrah governors and judges would not issue *buyruđı*⁴² and *mürâsele*⁴³ for anybody who wants to be ayân.

Instead of the previous application mentioned above, the firmân of 1193 of Hijrah produced a new regulation according to which people of every sub-district (kazâ) and region (belde) had to present petition (istidâ') for appointment of a person whom they saw that he had sufficient qualifications (mehâsin-i etvâr) and thereby, chose him as ayân. After thoroughly examining whether the candidate, who was chosen and petitioned by the reayah, was suitable for the ayânship, judges (kadıs) would notify the situation to the Sublime Porte by a written judicial decree (i'lâm). After that, the Sublime Porte was to issue a permission letter (izin mektûbı) and give it to the proposed nominee after taking an exact decision on him. Thereafter, it would not be possible to choose and appoint ayân in any way except for the new arrangement.

In short, by the regulation of 1193 of Hijrah the right of governors to nominate anyone for ayânship was annulled and initiative was given to the people. This was, indeed, a kind of radical reform in the provincial administration in favour of the ruled. Hereafter, the imperial subjects of the Province of Cyprus could select their own ayâns.

Nonetheless, as the firmân of 1198 of Hijrah reveals again, from 1193 of Hijrah, various malpractices on the newly built system began to be reported to the Sublime Porte. For instance, some governors had dared to install ayân (a'yân nasbına cür'et) without waiting for permission letter of

⁴¹ KŞS 21: 8/1.

⁴² "Nomination paper for a lower official", *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*, 11th Ed., İstanbul, 1990, p. 204.

⁴³ "A judge's letter of appointment". *Ibid.*, p. 825.

sadrazam and continue collecting money (akçe) from the people under the name of "a'yâniyye" just like the other officially prescribed taxes.

As a matter of fact that there were very different malpractices committed by the governors on the issue of ayâns, but one of them was a quite distinctive example; at the time of passing the rule of a province (eyâlet) or district (sancak) from one to another on necessity, every new governor used to appoint or depose ayâns (a'yân 'azl u nasbı) very frequently by neglecting the firmân of 1193 of Hijrah in order to levy money on people. Thus, the most oppressed ones would be the poor reayah (fukarâ ve zu'afâ) as usual.

Then, in order to avoid the mentioned oppressions of the governors, the Ottoman central government of the time had to issue the firmân of 1198 of Hijrah⁴⁴. By this firmân, the importance of obedience to the regulations set up in 1193 of Hijrah was underlined and the relevant provincial rulers were strongly warned by recalling them their responsibility once more.

By the firmân of 1198 of Hijrah the Sublime Porte also banned the governors from collecting money openly or secretly from people under the name of "expenses of sending petition and written judicial decrees to İstanbul" (a'yânlık 'arzı mesârîfı ve i'lâm harcı), and notified that those who would dare to go on the same way were to be soon liquidated wherever they were found disregarding whoever they were (her kim olur ise bi-lâ imhâl haklarından geleceğim muhakkak olmağın).

Additionally, in the same document it was also stressed that those oppressors who claimed for ayânship (a'yânlık iddi'â iden zalemeler) with the help of governors and judges in provinces were frequently struggling among themselves for their own sake⁴⁵ and extracting from the poor (fukarâ) the sums they paid to governors, and thus, the tax-paying subjects of the empire were becoming the most squeezed and disturbed, and the İstanbul government was aware of these happenings.

⁴⁴ KŞS 21: 8/1.

⁴⁵ The situation was not different in the Ottoman Karaferye (Veroia in Greek) in the district (sancak) of Salonika in the period. Antonis ANASTASOPOULOS, "Lighting the Flame of Disorder: Ayan Infighting and State Intervention in Ottoman Karaferye, 1758-59", *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 8 (Spring 2002), p. 73-88.

The “Hatt-ı Hümâyûn” of 1198 of Hijrah, registered in the sicill⁴⁶, provides us with further materials on implementation of the new procedure established by the firmân of 1193 of Hijrah for proper appointment of ayâns in the regions. For instance, the election of an ayân by the people for supervision of their own issues, preparation of a round robin (‘umûmî ve ittifâkî ‘arz u mahzar) describing qualifications of the person elected for ayânship, and submission of this petition by the judge (kadi) to the capital in the form of a judicial writing (inhâ) were to be obligatory, but not enough for completion of the process.

The candidates for ayânship had not to be accepted as appointed if they claimed that they were elected by the people (memleketlü) and notified to the Sublime Porte, unless permission letter (izin mektûbı) of sadrazam was received.

From the firmân of 1198 of Hijrah⁴⁷ one can also learn the way to solve the problem emerged when the people of a region or district did not agree on one of the candidates for ayân’s office. The document explains that in such a case, among the people of the region another person who was to be convenient (âher münâsib); i.e., to be expected to have good conduct (husn-i hâl), and to have served to the people and enjoyed capability of supervising the affairs of the province, was to be determined and installed by the sadrazam’s office. Finally, by governor and judge he would be given a letter (kâ’ime ve mektûb) providing permission and licence (izin ve ruhsat).

The firmân under examination continues to make further contribution to the subject matter by revealing that in any way nobody could be rised to ayân’s office except for the way defined above, and the regularly fixed ayâns should not have been deposed by governors for any personal purposes of greed. Otherwise, those who had enough courage to commit such a malpractice were to be punished in the heaviest way. And then, the man who unlawfully claimed for ayânship, or the properly fixed ayâns who desired to extract money from the people through adding sum to the notebook (defter-i tevzî’a) kept for allocation of tax burden of the people under the name of “a’yâniyye” by saying that they had paid akçes to governors and judges and spent a lot of money had to be immediately

⁴⁶ KŞS 21: 8/1.

⁴⁷ The transliteration of this very characteristic and explanatory firmân from Arabic to Latin alphabet is appended to this work.

reported to Istanbul where this kind of ayâns (a'yân makûleleri) whose commitments were fixed would be punished in the most suitable way⁴⁸.

Towards the final section of the document, there are noticeable points. First of all, it reminds the local authorities (governors and judges) that ayân appointments were merely for the protection of the subjects (himâyet-i ra'yyet); therefore, any member of the military class like serdârs etc. could not interfere in that issue. If they insisted unnecessarily on appointments or depositions of ayâns, governors and judges had to notify them to their units (ocaks), and have them banned from these actions by means of their commanders. And then, after having made governors and judges remember to care for keeping the order of fixed ayânship in effect everywhere, the Ottoman central government reminded ayâns their duties and the things which they had to take into consideration, wanted them to comply with the principles, that were set up by the firmân of 1193 of Hijrah, in their deeds and positions, and restrain from oppression or causing to any abuses.

Final sentences of the firmân of 1198 of Hicrah⁴⁹ make a special emphasis on the frequently committed malpractices of ayâns in collecting prescribed money and dues from the people for their own expenses. As it was noted in the document, ayâns had the right to collect a certain amount of money for their usual expenses they made in supervising the affairs of the people, and but in this process some of them used to rape the reayah by increasing in the "defter of distribution" the amount of money to be collected from the inhabitants of the region, and send the copy of the defter including distorted figures to İstanbul.

In addition to the document examined in detail above and shedding light on the the general position of ayâns in the empire, there are other archival materials witnessing how the incidence of ayâns took place in the Province of Cyprus.

As much as these documents reveal, especially in the second term of the eighteenth century the local dignitaries, "ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus", were to fill the gap of authority emerged remarkably in provinces as a result of various abuses committed by officials, the very representatives of the state's power.

⁴⁸ KŞS 21: 9/1.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

In time, ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus would rise to such a position that the state was to necessarily accept them as agents and seek their help in solution of many local problems, for they captured sometimes offices of muhassıl, mütesellim, but usually the positions of sub-mültezim, rights for supervision of many administrative and municipal affairs, and jobs of public security and defence of the island's shores against piracies or other outsiders' challenges. The fact that the titles of the local administrative judicial and military elite and that of the ayâns and eşrâfs of the province were cited together in the inscriptio part (elkâb) of firmâns and other official papers issued by the Ottoman government in the period⁵⁰ for the affairs mentioned above also indicates it very clearly: "*Umûmen 'ulemâ ve sülehâ ve e'imme ve hutebâ ve zu'emâ ve çorbacıyân ve sâ'ir a'yân ü eşrâf...*" or:

"Lefkoşa Nâ'ibine ve Eyâlet-i Kıbrıs'da vâki' kazâların kuzât ve nüvvâbına ve Kıbrıs Muhassılı zâde mecduhuya ve zikrolunan kazâların a'yân ve zâbitân ve vüçûh-ı memleket⁵¹ ve bî'l-cümle iş erlerine hüküm ki..."

Although having spent great efforts in carrying out a lot of jobs for the sake of the state until 1750's as state agents, it was also seen that in 1750's-1800 A.D. the ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus were to lead (hilâf-ı kânûn ve defter / şer' ve kânûnâ muğâyir) the subjects of the province to be oppressed and disseminated (perâkende vü perişân) by way of abusing their authorities (zulm ü te'addî), which they obtained through getting offices of muhassıl, mütesellim, mültezim, mütevellî, voyvoda, câbî, or kadî nâib etc. by auction (iltzâm)⁵². For, selling a source of revenue for a fixed period or for life (ber-vech-i mâlikâne⁵³ / eshâm⁵⁴) was essential in the method of iltizâm. Hence, there was no principle that morality of buyers also had to be definitely regarded. The mültezims, too, were to extract money from the people more than they paid in advance to their big patrons in their tenures. They would not sufficiently take into consideration the conditions of their source of revenue and villagers living in them. They had openly disregarded laws and related regulations. A relevant document of 25. 12. 1191 of Hijrah⁵⁵ indicates this:

⁵⁰ KBM: 1/22-23, 28, 40, 53; KBŞ: 1/5, 8, 35.

⁵¹ This title also means dignitaries of a place.

⁵² KŞS 21: 8/1.

⁵³ KBM: 1/9.

⁵⁴ KBM: 1/50.

⁵⁵ KBŞ: 1/17.

“Kıbrıs cezîresinde medîne-i Tuzla kazâsına muzâfe Arpera nâm karyede vâkî’ mülkiyet üzre mutasarrıf olduğum çiftlik ve bağçe derûnında mevcûd devâbb ü mevâşî ve sâ’ir eşyâsı bedel-i mahsûl-i ma’lûme ile bundan akdem ‘Abdü’l-bâkî Ağâ *iltizâmında* iken birkaç sene mukaddem mûmâ-ileyh *iltizâm*dan fekk ve ma’rifet-i şer’le ber-vech-i meşrûh çiftlik-i merkûm ve bağçe-i mezkûrın mevcûdı olan tohumluk ecnâs-ı hayvânât ve devâbb vü mevâşî ve sâ’ir eşyâsı tahrîr ve ber-mûceb-i defter müste’cir-i âher ‘uhdesine *iltizâm* ve eşyâ-yı mezbûre yedine teslim ve ol dahî tefevvüz ü tesellüm eyleyüb lâkin *bu vakte deĝin i’mârlarında tekâsülden mâ’adâ ebniyelerinin harâbiyetine ve tesellümü olan eşyanın itlâf ve izâ’atına bâdî olduğma binâ’en* müste’cir-i merkûmın dahî ‘uhde-i *iltizâmından* fekk ve âhere *iltizâmı* iktizâ eylemeĝin...”

The most frequently witnessed oppressions of the ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus were of making illegal inspection visits through the region (il üzerine devre çıkmak), hearings judicial cases in unprescribed places (icrâ-i ahkâm-ı şer’iyye), in the meantime demanding provisions without making any payment (yem ve yiyecek talep itme), increasing the rates of taxes (kânûndan ziyâde akçe / penbe ve ipek almak / talep itmek), imposing on the people illegal taxes like şartlama, teşrifîyye, kudûmiyye, mübâşiriyye, zâhire-bahâ, sarây döşemesi, tekâlif-i şâkka etc., usurpation of others’ properties (fuzûlî zabt) and taking bribes⁵⁶.

In the socio-economic discontent and upheaval of the period, role of the ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus was quite effective. Under an inflationist condition, the ayâns of Cyprus, who seemed morally corrupt, just after having bought the right to collect taxes of a source of revenue by auction, were to make the highest profit by squeezing mercilessly both the source of revenue and the people living in their regions at any cost. One of them was Muhassıl of Cyprus Çil Osman (Silahşör). He took the position of muhassıllık in 1178 of Hicrah (1764/65 A.D.). Yuzo Nagata who studied the ayânlık issue of this period in detail defines Çil Osman Ağâ as the worst of the muhassıls⁵⁷. He was killed together with some of his men by the Muslim - non-Muslim people of Lefkoşa (Nicosia) in an incident because of the fact that he tried to collect imperial taxes from the reayah at a level more than prescribed. In the same incident Çil Osman’s residence (Sarây) and properties were looted, as well.

⁵⁶ KBŞ: 1/12, 15, 20, 26, 39, 42-43, 45-46, 49, 54; KBM: 1/8, 15, 21.

⁵⁷ NAGATA 1999, p. 28.

Dizdar Halil's revolt (1765) witnessed in this period was another remarkable development that should be cited here⁵⁸. Following the turmoil the Ottoman central government had wanted a certain amount of compensation from the reayah of Cyprus in return for the looted properties of the murdered muhassıl Çil Osman Ağa. Although the Christians accepted to pay the ordered amount of money (*guruş*), the Turks opposed to make any payment claiming that they did not have any interest in the issue. They revolted against the local Turkish government under the leadership of Dizdar Halil, Commander of Girne Castle. Dizdar Halil made Değirmenlik (Kythrea) a sub-district (*nahiye*) of Lefkoşa center for their movement and urged that he was installed as muhassıl of Cyprus by the Ottoman government⁵⁹. It is understood from the documents that Dizdar Halil as pseudo Muhassıl of Cyprus collected taxes from the reayah of the island⁶⁰.

The Grand Vizier Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa who came to office instead of Bâhir Mustafa Paşa in 1765 to be his second term, had ordered Muhassıl Hafız Mehmed Efendi to restore the order and collect the necessary compensation from the reayah. Then the Grand Vizier ordered the new Muhassıl of Cyprus Süleyman Efendi to have Dizdar Halil and his friends executed.

After coming of auxiliary troops from Anatolia under the command of Kaptan Malikî Hacı Mehmed, Kaptan Cafer Bey and the Ayan of Silifke Güllü-oğlu Mustafa the upheaval was suppressed, Dizdar Halil was hanged in the Fortress of Girne and his cut off head was sent to Istanbul⁶¹.

One more characteristic example for the oppressor muhassıls of the period was El-hâc 'Alî. He was a mültezim. According to a round robin of 1179 H. / 1765 A.D.,⁶² six years ago⁶³ he bought a source of revenue (*mukâta'a*) in the sub-district (*kazâ*) of Karpas by auction from Kethüdâ of Harem 'Abdullah Ağa who was deputized by Mehmed Said Bey, the younger son of the late former Sadrazam Abdullah Paşa. Some inhabitants

⁵⁸ For detailed documentary information about Çil Osman and Dizdar Halil incidents see Nuri Çevikel,

⁵⁹ Mühimme Defteri, no: 165, p. 3. Referred in NAGATA 1999, p. 31.

⁶⁰ Halil Inalcık, "Kıbrıs'ta Türk İdaresi Altında Nüfus", *Kıbrıs ve Türkler*, (Ed. Cevat Gürsoy), Ankara, 1964, p. 37.

⁶¹ NAGATA 1999, p. 33.

⁶² KBŞ: 1/8.

⁶³ Means 1173 of Hicrah.

of the sub-district of Karpas who were no longer able to bear the burden of the maltreatments of the mültezim El-hâc 'Alî requested from the Sublime Port a firmân ordering deposition and replacement of the mültezim with a new, just, cherishing his subjects and pious one (...emr ü fermânları ile bir ehl-i insâf ve ra'iyet-perver ve mütedeyyin bir kimesneye iltizâm....).

The same document shows another fact that besides the abuses they committed as mültezims during their tenure, the ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus had also tried to prevent their oppressions to be heard in Istanbul by avoiding the people to leave their districts or sub-districts and the island for taking their complaints to the capital of the empire. The documents reads:

“İsm-i mâl ıtlâk olunur nesnemiz kalmayub ve ehl ü 'iyâl-i evlâdlarımıza ta'arruz ile 'ırzlarımız pâ-yi mâl ve beyne'n-nâs rüsvây vü bed-nâm kaldıklarımızdan birkaç defa mahallinde Kıbrıs muhassıllarına mezbûrlardan iştikâ murâd eylediglerimizde a'yândan mezbûrın mu'ini ve hâmîsi el-hâc 'Abdu'l-bâkî Ağâ bizleri zecrenle [zecrile] tahvîf ve men'-i ekîd ile iştikâdan men' ve der-'aliyyeye gelüb iştikâ ümek murâd eylediğimizde bir ferdi karyelerimizden taşra salıwirmeyüb bu def'a da dört 'aded karye re'âyâları fukarâları der-'aliyyeye irsâl için bu dört nefer kullarını intihâb ve cümle taraflarından vekâlet ile ve Rûmî mektûblarıyla ber-takrîb 'Arabistân yakasına geçüb bir neferimiz esnây-ı tarîkda hasta kalub bu üç nefer kulları vekâletligimiz ile der-'aliyyeye gelüb mektûblarımızı Harem-kethüdâsı 'Abdullah Ağâ'ya ibrâz eylediğimizde...”

In spite of the obstacles of every kind put in front of them by the ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus from time to time the Ottoman subjects of the province achieved to have their complaints to be heard by the central government. On having reports about the oppressions of the local powers on the tax-paying subjects in Cyprus the Ottoman government of the time did not restrain from struggling furiously against the oppressors⁶⁴. In this context, for instance, Muhassıl (governor) El-hâc 'Abdulbâkî Ağâ one of that kind men, was deposed and exiled in 1785 A.D. to Yafa of Palastine depending on the report came from Cyprus and verified the complaint of the Muslim and non-Muslim reayah⁶⁵ about the muhassıl.

⁶⁴ The then Ottoman government also acted in the same manner against the oppressor ayâns in the other parts of the empire. ANASTASOPOULOS, *op cit.*, p. 75.

⁶⁵ KBM: 1/40; KBŞ: 1/29, 31; COBHAM, *op cit.*, p. 368.

In another case, again on the accusation of the Muslims and non-Muslims of Cyprus a special inspector was sent to the province in 1786 A.D. He prepared a report and sent it to the capital. Depending on the report Muhassıl (governor) 'Alî Ağâ was removed from his office and confined to the fortress of Mağusa, to be a deterrent to others ('ibreten li's-sâ'ire)⁶⁶.

And then, both as a member of representatives of zimmî reayah and Interpreter of Governor's Court (Kıbrıs Dîvân / Muhassıl Tercümânı) Acı Yorgakî veled-i (son of)Yanni was arrested and sent to İstanbul to be put on trial as a result of being accused of making injustices about the amount and allocation of the zimmîs' tax burden (hilâf-ı şer' vergileri hususunda zulm ü te'addî itmek) and usurpating the right of inheritance of a zimmî (hakk-ı 'irsiyyesini fuzûlî zabt itmek)⁶⁷

Conclusion

Under the influence of new political, social and economic predicaments the Ottoman Empire had come into a period of crisis in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The new challenging problems of the period shook the traditional Ottoman regime. Although having spent great efforts to escape the crisis, the Ottoman rulers failed to give an end to the deterioration and rapid decline of the state. So, by the end of the 17th century the Ottoman State had considerably lost its authority both in the capital and provinces.

The lack of authority caused a new local socio-economic class to appear in the Ottoman provinces from the beginning of the 18th century onwards. The members of this class were the notables, namely the ayâns of the regions. They were generally retired state officials and officers, the rich merchants and the heads of great rooted families. They got rapidly the control in the Ottoman provincial organization through seizing the important offices and positions of mültezim, muhassıl, mütesellim, mütevellî, voyvoda, câbi, nâibs of kadi etc. by way of auction (iltizâm). Thereby, they became both collectors of the imperial taxes of the reayah and governors of the provinces. The ayâns had their influence felt strongly and widely in the empire in 1750-1800. Meanwhile, a new regional social and economic power called the "ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus", too, was to come into view in the Province of Cyprus.

⁶⁶ KBM: 1/44, 50-51.

⁶⁷ KBŞ: 1/25, 29, 31.

In the period, the Muslim and non-Muslim dignitaries of Cyprus populated the newly emerged class, and the incidence of ayâns transformed into an institution with the help of the state. In the province, the members of this class once had made great service to the state and society. Their assistance had been sought by the then Ottoman central governments in carrying out their many duties like some military services, collecting taxes, keeping social order, etc.

Nonetheless, some of the ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus selfishly began to act at the expense of the state and the reayah of the province during the period. They changed into a group of bandits against which the state inevitably had to fight. For, they would usually prefer their own interests to the State's. So, they had comitted various malpractices and injustices to the ruled in the province.

The then Ottoman statesmen tried to protect the tax-paying Muslim and non-Muslim reayah from the oppressions of the ayâns and eşrâfs of Cyprus by doing their best. To achieve this aim, on the one hand, they punished severely those who caused the local population to be squeezed and disseminated, and on the other hand, they realized a reform in the method of appointment and deposition of ayâns through transferring the initiative in the election of ayâns from governors and judges to the people of the province. But, in spite of these measures, the relevant documents of the period examined in this study reflect clearly that the struggle between the oppressor ayâns and the state lasted until the end of the eighteenth century.

APPENDIX: The firmân of 17 Şevvâl 1198 of Hicrah registered in the KŞS (Court Register of Cyprus): 21: 8/1 – 9/1.

Mu'cebince 'amel olına

Sûret-i hatt-ı hümayûn

Düstûrûn-ı mukrimûn-ı müşîrûn-ı mefhûmûn-ı nizâmî'l-'âlem müdebbirûn ve umûri'l-cumhûr bi'l-fikri's-sâkıb mütemmimû mehâmmi'l-enâm bi'r-re'yi's-sâ'ib mümeheedû bünyâni'd-devleti ve'l-ikbâl müşeyyedû erkâni's-sa'âdeti ve'l-iclâlî'l-mahfû kavıyyi bi-sınûf-i 'avâtufi'l-meliki'l-a'lâ Anadolının sağ kolı yemîn ve yesârıyla nihâyetine varınca vâkı' olan vüzerâ-yı 'azâm edâma'l-lâhu te'âlâ iclâluhüm ve e'âzım-i'l-ümerâi'l-kirâm efâhimi'l-küberâ'i'l-fihâm ulû'l-kadri ve'l-ihtirâm eshâbi'l-ferdi'l-ihtişâmi'l-muhtassûn bi-mezîd 'inâyeti'l-meliki'l- a'lâ mîr-i mîrân-ı kirâm dâme ikbâluhüm ve akzâ'l-kuzâtî'l-muslimîn evlâ vülâtî'l-muvahhidîn mu'âdili'l-fezâ'ili ve'l-yakîn râfi'û i'lâmi's-şer'ati ve'd-dîn vârisû 'ulûmi'l-enbiyâ'i ve'l-mürselni'l-muhtassûn bi-mezîd 'inâyeti'l-meliki'l-mu'în mevâlî-yi fihâm zîdet fezâ'iluhüm ve mefâhiri'l-kuzâtî ve'l-hükkâm mu'âdili'l-fezâ'ili ve'l- kelâm ve sâ'ir kuzât ve nüvvâb zîde fazluhüm ve mefâhiri'l-emâsili ve'l- akrân bi'l-cümle zâbitân ve *a'yân-ı memâlik* zîde kadruhüm tevki'-i refi'-i hümayûn vâsıl olıcak ma'lûm ola ki *a'yânlık maddesi* için bin yüz doksan üç [1193] senesinde hatt-ı hümayûn-ı şevket-makrûnımla mu'anven muhâyâ-yı efzâ-yı (?) sudûr olan evâmîr-i 'aliyyem mazmûn-ı münîfi muktezâsınca memâlik-i mahrûsemde vâkı' büldân ve kazâlarda *a'yân* nasbı emr-i 'âlf ve vâlf buyruldisıyla olmayub vülât ve hükkâm taraflarından fîmâ-ba'd *a'yânlık* için buyruldı ve mürâsele virilmeyüb bir kazânın 'umûm üzere re'âyâsının *a'yân* nasbı istidâ' eyledikleri kimesnenin mehâsin-i etvârı 'indlerinde müselleme ve ma'rûf olduğına tahsîl ü vukûf ve ittulâ' olındıktan sonra hasbîce keyfiyyet-i hâli sadr-ı a'zam tarafına i'lâm ve sadr-ı a'zam tarafından dahî ol kimesnenin hâline 'ilm-i yakîn hâsıl oldıkda izîn mektûbı tahrîr olmak ve bundan gayri tarîk ile *a'yânlık* olunmamak husûsları münderic ve mestûr iken bu nizâma mugayir vâlifler taraflarından bi-lâ mektûb-ı sadr-ı a'zamî *a'yân* nasbına cür'et ve *a'yâniyye* nâmiyle her kazâdan mesârif-i mu'tâd misüllü akçe tahsîlini ve bu vechile münâfi-i 'adet eyledikleri ve bir eyâlet veyahud bir sancâk hasbe'l-iktizâ bir senede bir iki vâliye virildikde her gelen vâli *a'yânlık* zımında akçe ahzı dâ'iyyesiyle *a'yân* 'azl u nasbına hilâf-ı fermân-ı hümayûn buyruldı ve hal' ve ekâsir misüllü harekât-i zâlimâneye cesâret eyledikleri tahakkuk-gerde-i şâhânem olub fukarâ ve zu'âfâya böyle zulm ü te'addî olduğına kat'â rızâ-yı

pâdişâhânem olmadığına binâ'en fîmâ-ba'd bi'l-izn ve mektûb-ı sadr-ı a'zamî **a'yân** nasbına kangı vâlî ve kangı kazî ve nâ'ib cesâret ve der-'aliyyeme **a'yânlık** 'arzı mesârîfi ve i'lâm harcı nâmı ve nâm-ı âher ile ve'l-hâsıl **a'yânlığı** vesîle ile sırrân ve 'alâniyyeten fukarâdan bir akçe ve bir habbe mutâlebe ve tahsîl ile tahrîb-i fukarâ-yı ra'iyet mûcibe-i sù'-i hareket ider ise cesâret idenlerin her kim olur ise bi-lâ imhâl haklarından geleceğim muhakkak olmağın emr-i şerîfim ısdâr ve sadr-ı a'zam çukadârlarından kıdvetü'l-emâsîl ve'l-akrân El-hâc Ebubekir ile irsâl olunmuşdur imdi vâlîlerin ve hâkimlerin hilâf-ı evâmir-i şerîfe i'ânetlerle **a'yânlık** iddi'â iden zalemenin zulm ü te'addîlerinden ve birbirlerine nefsâniyyetlerinden vilâyetlerde münâza'ât-ı maktû'a tehdâdüs eylediği ve aralıkda ehl-i 'ırz ve re'âyâ pâ-yi mâl olduğu âşikâr ve **a'yân** olmak için vâlîlere virdikleri mebâliği fukarâdan aldıkları be-dîdâr olmağla ba'de-izin memâlik-i mahrûsemde kâffe-i büldân ve emsârın fettân ve sükkânı umûrlarını idâreye her kimi **a'yân** ittihâz iderler ise 'umûmî ve ittîfâkî 'arz u mahzarlar ile ol eşhâsın ve sîret ve ahvâlî ve **a'yânlığa** ehliyet ve istihkâkı der-'aliyyeme inhâ olmak ve bu vechile inhâ olunan şahıslar hem'ân der-'aliyyeye inhâ ile **a'yân** olmuş olmayub ve memleketlü ihtiyâr ve i'lâm olunmuşlar deyü def'aten i'tibâr olunmayub sadr-ı a'zam tarafından tahkîk olunmak veyahud **a'yân** intihâbında ahâlî-yi kazâ müttefik olmayub iki taraf olarak bir tarafı birini bir taraf diğeri âherini ihtiyâr iderler ise ahad-ı hümâdan birinin hüsn-i hâli(ni) tahkîk ile tercîhî veyahud ahâlî ve hâricden ahâlî-yi vilâyete hayrı ve umûr-ı kazâyı rü'yeti iktidârı olan âher münâsib kimesnenin **a'yânlığa** intihâb ve ta'yîni sadr-ı a'zamın re'yi ile olub izn ve ruhsatı hâvî **a'yân** olacak âdemîn yedine velâ-yı vilâyete veyahud hâkim-i memlekete hitâben ve kâ'ime ve mektûb virilmek ve bu vechile [KŞS 21: 8/1 / 9/1] sadr-ı a'zam tarafından sened virilmeksizin bir mahalde ve bir vakitte **a'yân** nasb olunmayub ve bu vechile nasb olunan **a'yân** tama'a ve hilâf-ı inhâya mebnî 'azl olunmamak ve bu zâbitanın hilâfî hareket idenlerin eyne-mâ-kâne eşedd-i 'ukûbet ile cezâları icrâ kılınmak ehass murâd-ı şâhânem idüğü sen ki vüzerâ-yı müşâr ve ve mîr-i mîrân ve mevlânâ ve sâ'ir mûmâ-ileyhimsiz ma'lûm oldıkda müfâd-ı hükûm-i ita'ât-mehbetini sicillâta sebt ve bundan böyle hilâf-ı hareket olunması maddesi taht-ı zâbitaya idhâl ve mefhûm-ı emr-i şerîfim ilâ-mâşâ'allâh-i te'âlâ destûri'l-'amel dutulmasına ihtimâm ü dikkat ve eger ben vâlîden hil'at giydim ve yedime vâlî buyruldı aldım ve ahâlî beni **a'yân** idüb yedime hâkimden hüccet alıvirdiler deyü ba'de'l-yevm nass-ı fermân-ı hümâyûnıma muhâlif **a'yânlık** iddi'âsı iden olur ise veyahud şurût-ı merkûme üzre izn ve icâzet-i sadr-ı a'zamî ile **a'yân** olanlar dahî vâlî ve hâkime akçe virdik ve masraf itdik deyü

defter-i tevzî'a *a'yâniyye* nâm u tâm ile kendü nefisleri için akçe idhâl kaskında olurlar ise keyfiyyet derhâl der-'aliyyeme ahâlî-yi vilâyet taraflarından sıhhatî üzere mahzar birle 'arz ve iştikâ ve i'lâm olunmak ve bu vechile kendisünden veya âher tarîk ile sût-i hâl ve hareketi tahkîk olunan *a'yân* makûlelerinin bi-lâ emân cezâ-yı sezâları tertîb ve icrâ olunmak ve *a'yân* nasbı mücerred himâyet-i ra'iyet olub 'askerî tâ'ifesinin müdâhale idecekleri serdârlik misüllü umûr-ı 'askerîyeden olmamağla ber-muktezâ-yı şürût *a'yân* 'azl u nasbında 'askerî tâ'ifesi vechân mine'l-vücûh karışdırılmamak ve fuzûlî karışmak irâde ider olur ise ocaklarına ifâde ve derhâl ocakları ma'rifetiyle zecr ü men' ve memnû' olmayanların te'dîbân lâyükaları icrâ olmak üzere nizâm-ı mezkûrın devâm ve bekâsı hâlâtına her mahalde ihtimâm ve mikdâr-ı zerre hilâfına cür'et ile ve 'aydât-ı mezkûreye mazhariyyetden ittikâ-yı tâm eylesesiz ve siz ki *a'yânlarsız* hâlinizi ve a'mâlinizi fermân-ı hümâyûnumun mazmûn-ı ita'ât-makrûnına uydurub zulümden ve zulme vesîle olmakdan tehâşî ve mücânebet iderek kazâlarınız ahâlîlerinin evâmîr-i şerîfem müceblerince üzerlerine edâsı lâzım gelen tekâlifî ve umûr-ı mühimmeyi kemâl-i hakkâniyyet ve nisfet üzere tahsîl ve idâre itdirüb ve tevzî' husûsında dahî şürût-ı istikâmetle tesvîyeye dikkat idüb mesârif-i sahîha-yı mühimmeden mâ'adâ nefsiniz için veyahud fukarâyı mü(v)ekkil ittihâz iden zâlimler için vâlî-yi memlekete evâmîr-i şerîfe ile tahsîs kılınandan mâ'adâ vâlîler ve sancâk mutasarrıfları için defter akçesi nâmı ve nâm-ı âher ile kâdîlar ve nâ'ibler için tevzî' defterine bir akçe bir habbe zamm idhâl olunmamasına mezîd ikdâm ve dikkat ve sizleri dinlemeyüb ve evâmîr-i şâhâneme imtisâl itmeyüb fukarâdan bi-gayr-i hakk akçe almak ve tevzî' defterine mesârif-i sahîhadan mâ'adâ akçe idhâlini cebr itmek misüllü evzâ'a cesâret idenleri der-'aliyyeme i'lâm itdirmege dikkat ve eger i'lâm itâsında tereddüd olunur ise kazâlarınızın müftî ve 'ulemâ ve *vücûh-ı ahâlî* ve re'âyâsının bi'l-ittifâk mahzarları ve kendü tahrîrâtınız ile hakîkât-ı keyfiyyeti oldığı gibice der-sa'âdetime bildirmege ihtimâm ve bu vechile vikâye-yi nizâm ve himâyet-i 'ibâd-ı melik-i 'allâma sa'yi mâ-lâ-keâm eylesesiz şöyle ki işbu tenbîhât-ı şâhânemin icrâsında kangı mahalde rehâvet ve muhâlefet oldığı bilinmek için her kazânın mesârif defterleri dikkat ü kat sicillâtdan ihrâc ve der-'aliyyeme celb ve imrâr-ı nazâr-ı dikkat olunacağı ve hilâf-ı tenbîhe kangı kazânın defterinde mesârif-i gayr-i sahîha bulunur ise ol kazânın *a'yân* hakkında bi-lâ imhâl tertîb-i cezâdan gayrî mu'amele olinmayacağı muhakkak olmağla ânâ göre hareket ve himâyet ü siyânet-i ahâlî ve re'âyâya ez-dil ü cân ikdâm ve gayret eylemeniz bâbında fermân-ı 'âlî-şânım sâdir olmuştır buyurdım ki hükûm-i şerîfemle vusûl buldıkda bu bâbda vech-

i meşrûh üzre şeref-yâfte-yi sudûr olan fermân-ı vâcibi'l-ittibâ' ve lâzımı'l-
imtisâlimin mazmûn-ı itâ'at-makrûnıyla 'amel ve hareket ve hilâfından
gâyeti'l-gâyete tehâşî ve mücânebet eyleyesiz şöyle bilesiz âlâmet-i şerife
i'timâd kılâsız tahrîren fi evâ'il-i cemâzi'l-evvel sene semân ve tis'in ve mi'e
ve elf kad vusile ileynâ ve kuyyide fi 17 L (Şevvâl) 1198.