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TARSUS AND THE TAHRİR

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The *tahrirs* or Ottoman tax registers of the sixteenth century, when first they became known to the scholarly world in the late nineteen-thirties and early nineteen-forties, aroused considerable hopes, and almost at the same time, their value was questioned and even played down.⁽¹⁾ Hopes were based on the fact that here for the first time, economic historians possessed more or less "hard" data upon which to base population estimates⁽²⁾. At the same time, negative reactions against the Ottoman régime and all its works were still widespread among Arab and Balkan historians of the time. This attitude, along with the slowness with which the registers became physically accessible, has retarded scholarly analysis of these documents. Only in the nineteen-fifties and sixties did studies based upon the Ottoman *tahrirs* become at all widespread.

Moreover when the analysis of the data contained in the registers began in earnest, formulating the appropriate questions to be asked of this material turned out to be no easy matter. While the most explicit and usable registers were compiled in the limited timespan of about one hundred and fifty years. (about 1460-1610) historians were fascinated by the possibility of "linkages" to earlier and later periods. In the registers of appropriate provinces, such as for instance Karaman, Trabzon or Macedonia, researchers have hunted for

(1) Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Tarihi Demografi Araştırmaları ve Osmanlı Tarihi", *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, X (1951-53), 1-27; id., "Essai sur les données statistiques des registres de recensement dans l'Empire Ottoman aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 1 (1957), 9-36 and Charles Issawi, "Comment on Professor Barkan's estimate of the population of the Ottoman Empire in 1520-1530", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 1 (1957), 329-331.

(2) On the need for such data, compare Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philipp II*. 2 vols (London, 1972) vol. 1, p. 394-417. Compare also Michael Cook, *Population Pressure in Rural Anatolia, 1450-1600*, London Oriental Studies. (London, 1972) for an attempt to answer some of the questions posed by Braudel.

traces of Seljuk, Karamanid or late Byzantine institutions⁽³⁾. On the other hand, historians and geographers with an interest in the modern period have compared *tahrir* data with later, usually nineteenth-century evidence. These studies have focussed upon the continuities and breaks in the history of Ottoman population and rural settlement, with considerable emphasis upon the discontinuities and the reconstruction processes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries⁽⁴⁾.

Attempts have also been made to study the Ottoman peasant economy through the medium of these data, although this "micro" approach has probably found less favour than the search for linkages with preceding and following periods⁽⁵⁾. This may partly be due to the fact that a more "macro" approach can be expected to bring results which are easy to link with the political history most familiar to experts on Ottoman affairs. Moreover the theoretical vision informing studies of peasant economies and societies, including the problem of how the peasant household reacts to population growth, has proved more germane to anthropologists and economists than to most historians. This fact may explain why certain monographs based upon *tahrir* data and written by historians seem to be lacking a clearly formulated *problématique*, and limit themselves to a static consideration of institutions viewed more or less in isolation.

To be quite honest, it is easier to formulate these criticisms than to offer an alternative. Limitations with respect to the quality of the data provided by the *tahrirs* readily come to mind when an excuse is needed for the often rather less than sophisticated quality of our analyses. But then the data that medieval European historians have to deal with are often even scantier, and this fact has not prevented scholars from developing reasonably coherent approaches to this material. But Ottoman social historians have to cope with yet other difficulties, not the least of which is the relatively small number of available monographs and the lack of discussion among specialists. Due to problems of this kind, researchers tend to avoid what one might call medium-level generalizations. Overall

(3) On Karaman, compare Nicoara Beldiceanu and Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr. "Recherche sur la province de Qaraman au XVI^e siècle, étude et actes," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XI (1968), 1-129.

On Macedonia and Trabzon: Anthony Bryer, Heath Lowry (eds.), *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society* (Birmingham, Washington D.C.- 1986).

(4) Compare particularly the work of Wolf Dieter Hütteroth. *Ländliche Siedlungen im südlichen Inneranatolien in den letzten vierhundert Jahren*. (Göttingen, 1968).

(5) Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe, Taxation, Trade and the Struggle for Land 1600-1800*, Studies in Modern Capitalism (Cambridge, Engl., Paris 1981).

Huri İslamoğlu-İnan, "Die osmanische Landwirtschaft im Anatolien des 16. Jahrhunderts: Stagnation oder regionale Entwicklung?", *Jahrbuch zur Geschichte und Gesellschaft des Vorderen und Mittleren Orients* (1985-86), 165-214.

visions of Ottoman society are not at all infrequent⁽⁶⁾. But when it comes to explaining how general images relate to data "on the ground", both the more theoretically minded and the more "archive-oriented" among Ottoman historians tend to run into difficulties. A simple classifying of data does not yield viable hypotheses, while such hypotheses as have been generated often do not relate very well to the data at our disposal.

Regional History In Ottoman Anatolia

It is important to keep this general perspective in mind, even though the present study does not pretend to show a way out of the impasse. In fact, the approach attempted here is quite traditional. On the one hand, we will once again search for linkages, in this case between Mamluk and early Ottoman southern Anatolia. The old problem of rural lifestyles, that is the relationship between peasants and pastoralists, will also present itself, as sixteenth-century Tarsus was inhabited by a sparse population of semi-nomads. About the latter less is known than about settled villagers, although semi-nomads have been discussed by a few researchers⁽⁷⁾. In addition we will attempt to determine how the Ottoman state sought to control and influence rural social structures, and this problem also belongs to the traditional repertoire of Ottoman historical studies⁽⁸⁾.

Within this traditional framework, the present study insists on the extreme regional variation within early Ottoman Anatolia. To the specialists in European history this emphasis would scarcely appear as a novelty. In fact Lucien Febvre, Fernand Braudel and many other historians in their wake have so often told us that "la France nomme diversité" that this statement, true though it may be, is in danger of becoming something of a hackneyed phrase⁽⁹⁾. And the same obviously applies to Spain, to say nothing of Italy or the Germanies.

However in Ottoman studies, regional history and regional diversity still constitute something of an intellectual problem. To begin with. Ottoman documentation is largely the product of a centralized government, and as a result, tends to overemphasize those aspects in which regions resemble one

(6) For a recent example compare Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey* (London, 1987).

(7) Compare the work by Faruk Sümer, particularly "Çukurova Tarihine Dair Araştırmalar (Fetihten XVI. yüzyılın ikinci yarısına kadar)", *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1,1 (1963), 1-112.

(8) Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954), 103-129.

(9) Lucien Febvre, *Life in Renaissance France*, ed. tr. by Marian Rothstein (Cambridge, Mass., London, 1977), p. 47-48.

Fernand Braudel, *L'identité de la France*, 3 vols. (Paris, 19), vol. 1, p. 48 ff.

another, at the expense of those in which they differ. Moreover the existence of supra-state organizations in Western Europe during the second half of the twentieth century to a certain extent has fostered an awareness that the national state may not be the *non plus ultra* in political organization. Regionalist movements, particularly in France, have tended to operate in the same direction⁽¹⁰⁾. On the other hand, public discussion of the national state is not very prominent on the intellectual agenda in Turkey. The tendency to view the modern Turkish state as a continuation of the Ottoman Empire has further militated against the recognition of regional diversity in the sixteenth century. In addition, the social and political problems posed by the *décalage* between regions in a twentieth-century context have not exactly fostered an awareness of regional problems as they presented themselves in the sixteenth century. Moreover the twentieth-century formation of a number of national states on the Balkan and Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire has facilitated distortion, rather than awareness, of regional diversity in the pre-nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. In the process of constructing national identities for these new states, which often had come about due to quite ephemeral political considerations, the boundaries of Ottoman regions in the minds of researchers have sometimes been redrawn to make them coextensive with present-day political boundaries⁽¹¹⁾. When studying sixteenth-century regional diversity, it is not always easy to avoid the pitfalls caused by these nineteenth and twentieth century complications.

From Mamluk to Ottoman Tarsus

The present paper is concerned with the integration, into the sixteenth-century Ottoman state, of an area which until 1517 had been under loose Mamluk control. However since Tarsus was located far away from the centres of Mamluk power, and in close proximity to the boundaries of the expanding Ottoman state, Ottoman influence in the area must have been considerable from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards. Our sources are particularly suitable for the study of Ottoman post-conquest policies⁽¹²⁾. The first *tahrir* is dated 925/1519 and individual entries go back to 1518, that is this document was compiled within one to two years after the Ottoman

(10) On the impact of such movements, on the manner in which the Fronde is regarded today, compare the last paragraphs of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, "Les masses profondes: la paysannerie," in F. Braudel and E. Labrousse (eds.) *Histoire économique et sociale de la France* [4 vols. in 7 (Paris, 1970-80)], 1, pt.2, p. 859.

(11) On this problem compare Rifa'at A. Abou-el-Haj, "The Social Uses of the Past: Recent Arab Historiography of Ottoman Rule", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 14 (1982), 185-201.

(12) Compare Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest".

takeover⁽¹³⁾. Thus it can be assumed that the names of settlements, cultivated lands (*mezraa*), and organizational units of nomads (*cemaat*) which did not change from one year to the next, reflect more or less the state of affairs as it existed during the last few years of Mamluk rule. Since we already possess a political history of Ottoman Çukurova, it is the more long-term changes in social and economic structure which will concern us here⁽¹⁴⁾.

It would appear that when preparing the register of 1519, the Ottoman official in charge of compiling this document (*tahrir emini*) had at his disposal a late Mamluk tax register. This register must have been similar enough to the format that Ottoman officials were accustomed to, for the recording bureaucrat to describe his own work as the *defter-i cedid* ("new register")⁽¹⁵⁾. Now a new register implies the existence of at least one predecessor; and given the shortness of the time involved, this predecessor can scarcely have been an Ottoman document. Unfortunately the "new register" does not tell us very much about the contents of the old one. But even so, by an extraordinary stroke of luck, we are dealing not only with the social and economic structures of the late Mamluk period, but probably and at least in part, with the image of these structures as presented by a late Mamluk register.

Early-sixteenth century Tarsus was a district (*nahiye*) almost devoid of villages. The population was organized in tribal units known as *cemaats*, and combined agriculture in the lowlands with pastoral activities in the foothills of the Taurus. Agriculture is documented due to the fact that on each inhabited site, the tithe was collected from all produce, in kind if at all possible. About the livestock-raising activities of the inhabitants of Tarsus district we know almost nothing; the register records only isolated instances of pasture dues (*resm-i yaylak*, *resm-i kışlak*). In one single case, a group of semi-nomads owed dues in clarified butter. But this scarcity of data should not be taken to mean that agriculture was the main source of support in this district, and sheep and/or goats were unimportant. It is much more probable that migrating flocks were difficult to count and tax, and that Ottoman officials of the time avoided the issue as far as possible. On the other hand, the importance of migratory flocks can be demonstrated in rather an unexpected fashion, namely by a note concerning rice growers (*çeltükçi*)⁽¹⁶⁾. Even though rice-growing demanded intensive labour, certain rice growers are described as migratory (*göçer evler*) possessing summer and winter pastures of their own, which means that they worked in the rice fields on a part-time basis. Howe-

(13) Başbakanlık Arşivi (Istanbul) section Tapu Tahrir (TT) 69. The second *tahrir* dates from 950/1543-4 and is catalogued as TT 229. The third *tahrir* is located in the Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü Ankara (TK) and catalogued as no. 134. It is dated 980/1572-73.

(14) Sümer, "Çukurova".

(15) TT 69, p. 434, 450.

(16) TT 69, p. 450-51.

ver the register does not tell us how migration patterns were adjusted to fit this particular combination of agriculture and herding.

Even though there was little permanent settlement in the Tarsus district, markets were by no means rare. Apparently the semi-nomads of sixteenth-century southern Anatolia were not self-sufficient. For the area of Alanya, where semi-nomads also predominated, the sixteenth-century tax register contains evidence of quite a few markets, and so does the seventeenth century traveller Evliya Çelebi⁽¹⁷⁾. Given the paucity of records particularly for the early sixteenth century, it is hard to say whether there were more markets, relative to total population, in areas mainly inhabited by semi-nomads or in those populated by peasants. Exchange should have been most lively in places where both peasants and herders were represented. Among the markets of Tarsus district (*nahiye*), one was especially notable for being associated with a major tribal grouping, namely the Ordu-yu Esenlü. This market took place on the summer pasture for the duration of two months every year, presumably as long as the Ordu-yu Esenlü remained in this particular place. Market dues were modest, 200 *akçe* for two months, but then rural markets throughout Anatolia were not usually major sources of revenue.

Administrative Changes Under Kanuni Sultan Süleyman

Nomads and semi-nomads, from the Ottoman central administration's point of view, posed some rather intractable problems. Nomads were difficult to tax, and frequently got into disputes with the inhabitants of the villages whose territories they traversed. Thus from the late seventeenth century onwards, the Ottoman administration made concerted attempts to convert nomads into settled villagers⁽¹⁸⁾. For the sixteenth century, the existence of a systematic policy of sedentarization cannot be proved. However the compilers of *tahrirs* were quick to record any indications of nomads and semi-nomads adopting the life-styles of settled peasants, and reclassified taxpayers accordingly. It is also possible that pressure was occasionally put upon groups of tribesmen in order to induce them to settle. But the Tarsus registers do not contain any evidence for systematic overtaxation of seminomads in

(17) Suraiya Faroqhi, "Sixteenth Century Periodic Markets in Various Anatolian *Sancaks*: İçel, Hamid, Karahisar-ı Sahib, Aydın and Menteşe, " *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XXII (1979), p. 56.

(18) Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Aşiretleri İskân Teşebbüsü (1690-1696)*, İstanbul Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları No. 998 (İstanbul, 1963), p. 27 ff.

order to force them to give up their pastoral and migrant way of life⁽¹⁹⁾.

However this observation should not be taken to mean that the Ottoman government followed a policy of complete *laissez-faire vis a vis* the pastoral population of the Taurus. Probably the most obvious reason for official intervention was the inclination of Anatolian nomads and semi-nomads toward Shiism. Our only piece of documentary evidence about Kızıldağ activities in the Tarsus area comes from a later period (1577-78), when a dervish leader from a Tatar tribe was accused of fomenting heresy⁽²⁰⁾. But it is probable that this dervish was not the first heretic to gain adherents in the area.

Probably the administrative reorganization of the district of Tarsus, which seems to have taken place during the early years of Sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver (1520-1566), was undertaken in order to intensify control over heretic and potentially rebellious pastoralists. The evidence for this reorganization, which involved a shift in the boundaries of Tarsus *nahiye*, is indirect: of 142 tribal organizations (*cemaat*) which were recorded in the district in 1519, only about fifty were still documented in the register of 980/1572-73. Similarly, of the 219 agriculturally used sites (*mezraa*) to be found in the 1519 register, only about ninety were located, with more or less confidence, in the register of 1572-73. It is not easy to interpret the fact that so many *cemaa*s disappeared: these south Anatolian pastoralists may have migrated, either voluntarily or under duress. But it is most improbable that in the slightly more than fifty years which separate the two registers, a large number of *mezraas* should have been uprooted. *A fortiori* this is improbable for the brief period between 1519 and 1543-44: most of the changes outlined, however, were already apparent from the first register compiled in Kanuni Süleyman's time. Wholesale name changes are equally improbable for this period. This makes a shift in *nahiye* boundaries seem the most probable explanation⁽²¹⁾. Given the trouble and expense involved in such an operation, it is not likely that it would have been undertaken without a serious political reason. For the time being, and until contradictory evidence comes to light, it seems reasonable to assume that this reorganization was intended to break up traditional political structures and facilitate control from above.

(19) Compare Rudi Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*, Indiana University Uralic and Altaic Series, V. 144 (Bloomington, Ind., 1983), p. 51 ff.

(20) MD 33, p. 221, no. 452.

(21) A few more *mezraas* might have been matched if the copy of TK 138 that I made many years ago had contained the names of those *mezraas* whose taxes were recorded only in money and not in agricultural produce. Unfortunately I was unable to remedy this deficiency.

Population Growth And Agricultural Change

In an area inhabited mainly by migratory tribesmen, it is notoriously difficult to speak of population rise or decline. New tribal units are formed, others migrate or split up. As a result it becomes impossible to discern whether a given new name in a tax register denotes a group of people not previously resident in the area, or whether we are simply confronted with the descendants of former residents. To put it differently, when dealing with settled villages, we can make allowance for boundary changes by "matching" the names of settlements, and then establishing the extent of population rise or decline. But where we are concerned with nomads and semi-nomads, these procedures are of no great assistance, and all measurements of population change remain more than crude.

Even so however, it is probable that the district (*nahiye*) of Tarsus came to be more densely populated in the course of the sixteenth century. From about 3400 taxpayers in 1519 the district - in its presumably redrawn boundaries - increased to about 4800 in 1543-44. Population increase was also quite dramatic in the later part of Sultan Süleyman's reign, for the number of taxpayers recorded in the district had increased to about 600 by 1572-73. We do not have any evidence for household size. But given the share of adult males in a pre-industrial population, the number of people living in Tarsus *nahiye* should have been about 10,200-13,600 in 1519, and 18,000-24,000 by 1572-73⁽²²⁾. Moreover the number of *cemaats* recorded jumped from 142 to 211 during the same period. Even if we make all allowances for the uncertainties of our data, the population of Tarsus district during those years in all likelihood showed a tendency to increase.

The one major exception to this trend, however, was the town of Tarsus itself. In 1543-44, 734 taxpayers were recorded, in 1572-73 the number had dropped to 699. It is possible that this decline was the consequence of a localized epidemic and therefore not indicative of any major trend. But even so, the decline is worth pondering, since it is very much the exception to the general tendency of this period: Between about 1520 and 1580, most Anatolian towns grew vigorously and increases of 60-100 percent were not unknown⁽²³⁾. Doubtlessly the Tarsus area had a malaria problem; but this problem presumably did not change very much between 1543-44 and 1572-73. Therefore it seems necessary to search for contributing factors. It is possible that an inc-

(22) Leila Erder, "The Measurement of Pre-industrial Population Changes: The Ottoman Empire from the 15th to the 17th Century", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 11, 3 (1975), 284-301.

(23) Leila Erder and Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Development of the Anatolian Urban Network During the Sixteenth Century", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XXIII, 3 (1980), 265-303.

creasing number of rural markets competed with what must have been a rather somnolent district centre to begin with. Moreover it may be assumed that after the conquest of Syria and Egypt, and the incorporation of the Hijaz into the Ottoman Empire, the pilgrimage route connecting Istanbul to Damascus became increasingly popular. However this route passed through Adana, which did in fact grow during this period, and bypassed Tarsus. It is probable that a certain number of households were induced to move from Tarsus to Adana for this reason.

However agricultural change in the region of Adana - Tarsus (modern Çukurova) may also have contributed to the decline of the town of Tarsus. While large-scale cotton cultivation in the Çukurova is a nineteenth and twentieth-century phenomenon, cotton from the area was not unknown even to Italian merchants of the fourteenth century⁽²⁴⁾. After the Ottoman conquest, Adana's cotton production expanded, and local growers may have been encouraged to bring cotton into the town by a lowering of the weighing dues which had been demanded in Adana ever since Mamluk times. On the other hand, cotton production in the Tarsus area, which was located some distance away from the major trade routes, declined. This decline was most marked in the early years of Sultan Süleyman: If the *men*, the unit normally used to measure cotton in the Ottoman tax registers, remained constant between 1519 and 1572-73, the movement of cotton production in the district of Tarsus can be summarized by the following figures: From approximately 106.000 *men* in 1519, cotton production declined to 78.000 in 1543-44 and from there moved back to 96.000 *men* in 1572-73. Some of this change may have been more apparent than real, if we are correct in our assumption that district boundaries had been redrawn. But if we compare the cotton harvests in those *mezraas* which occur in both the *tahrirs* of 1519 and 1572-73, the picture is not substantially different. If anything, the decline is even more visible in this latter case.

Grain Production

Nor was agricultural change limited to the cotton sector. In the register of 1519, we find frequent references to dues payable in millet (*dari*), and occasional instances of chickpeas, broad beans and rye. All these crops disappear from the registers compiled in Sultan Süleyman's time. At first glance, one might assume that this is simply a consequence of the shift in territory postulated above. But even when we compare only those *mezraas* which

(24) On the agricultural history of Adana compare Huri Islamoğlu, Suraiya Faroqhi, "Crop Patterns and Agricultural Production Trends in Sixteenth-Century Anatolia", *Review* II, 3 (1978). 401-436.

occur both in the earliest and in the latest register, the decline of these minor crops is clearly apparent. In the tax registers, no reason is given for the change in crop patterns. Possibly local *timar* holders demanded barley as fodder for their horses, and the extension of the area devoted to this crop led to the abandonment of millet, beans, and chickpeas. Be that as it may, these changes resulted in a more uniform agricultural pattern throughout the Çukurova: Both in Adana and Tarsus, the dominant crops were wheat and barley, along with limited amounts of sesame and cotton. This pattern sharply distinguished the area from other parts of Ottoman Anatolia.

At the same time, the production of wheat seems to have grown, but very slowly. In those *mezraas*, which could be located both in the *tahrir* of 1519 and in its counterpart of 1572-73, the total harvest increased from about 53.000 *kile* to about 56.000 *kile*, a rate of increase so low that it might almost be considered stagnation. On the other hand, the growth of barley production was dramatic: In the *mezraas* documented both in 1519 and 1572, the harvest increased from about 37.000 to about 54.000 *kile*, that is by forty-six percent.

Growth of barley production, accompanied by stagnation or decline in the wheat harvest, did not by any means constitute a pattern unique to sixteenth-century Tarsus. In the north-central provinces of Anatolia, under rather different climatic conditions, a similar development has been observed⁽²⁵⁾. Given the uncertainties of registration in a semi-nomadic environment, it is impossible to say whether increasing stringency due to population growth was responsible for the popularity of barley cultivation. Easier to grasp is the impact of military demand: Quite apart from the horses and camels of the regular army, we also need to think of the transportation services that were so frequently demanded of nomads and semi-nomads⁽²⁶⁾. Due to the increased demand for transportation services in a period of frequent warfare, the semi-nomads of Tarsus presumably were obliged to keep more camels, and barley was needed to feed the animals. Thus even an outlying and isolated part of Anatolia responded to stimuli emanating from the political centre of the Ottoman Empire.

The Cultivation Of Rice

In addition to cotton and barley, the cultivation of rice also depended upon demand from outside the region of Tarsus. Rice in the sixteenth century was still something of a prestige food, and the great official guest houses in

(25) Compare Islamoğlu-Inan, "Landwirtschaft"

(26) Lütfi Güçer, *XVI-XVII Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Hububat Meselesi ve Hububatın Alınan Vergiler*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınlarından No. 1075, İktisat Fakültesi No. 152, (İstanbul, 1964), p. 28 ff.

Istanbul and certain larger provincial cities probably played a role in the spread of rice consumption⁽²⁷⁾. From the very beginning, the Ottoman central administration took an active interest in furthering the cultivation of rice in Tarsus. According to the *tahrir* of 1519 a group of tribal leaders were appointed officials in charge of cultivation (*reis*)⁽²⁸⁾. These personages had promised to restore the irrigation canal known as Kızılark, which had lain abandoned for about a hundred years or so, and undertaken to pay the Sultan's Treasury 30.000 Halebi *akçe* a year. In addition, the rice-cultivating tribal leaders along with their fellow tribesmen employed in the enterprise were to be exempted from the *avariz* tax. This exemption was customarily granted, not only to rice growers (*çeltükçi*), but also to people who performed service in the mines, raised falcons for the Sultan's hunt or worked the saltpans found in many places along the Mediterranean coast⁽²⁹⁾. The register of 1519 very explicitly specifies the manner in which the product of the Tarsus rice fields was to be disposed of: To begin with, enough mature rice should be harvested and set aside to secure the seed for next year's crop. Thereafter, the remaining rice was to be sold to the public, local experts (*ehl-i hibre*) intervening to determine the price. Purchasers were granted a two months' delay in which to pay; this stipulation by itself shows that rice was not purchased in small quantities for direct consumption, but went to institutional buyers or else to substantial merchants. When the money had been collected, the chief *reis* appropriated one half of the proceeds in order to pay his debt of 30.000 *akçe* to the Treasury. The other half was turned over to the rice growers. However, the latter were required to pay a tithe, collectible in money, to whoever was in charge of the *timar*, *zeamet* or *has* on whose territory the irrigation canal was located. In addition, the text regulates the use of the water which periodically needed to be evacuated from the rice fields. We also find stipulations concerning the amount of rice that the *reis* and his helpers might demand for themselves. In the case of disputes and abuses, the local *kadı* was enjoined to intervene.

(27) Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Şehirlerin Teşekkül ve İnkişafı Bakımından Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İmaret Sitelerinin Kuruluş ve İşleyiş Tarzına ait Araştırmalar", *Istanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 23, 1-2 (1962-63), 239-296.

(28) On rice cultivation in the Ottoman Empire compare Nicoara Beldiceanu and Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Riziculture dans l'Empire Ottoman (XVII^e-XV^e siècle)", *Turcica*, IX, 2-X (1978), 9-28. Halil Inalcık, "Rice Cultivation and the Çeltükçi-re'aya System in the Ottoman Empire", *Turcica*, XIV (1982), 69-141.

(29) On *avariz* taxes and exemptions from them, compare the article "avarız" in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1965-) by Ömer Lütfi Barkan.

On employment of 17th century nomads in rice cultivation compare Inalcık, "Rice Cultivation", p. 103ff.

When compiling sixteenth century Ottoman tax registers, texts which were meant to regulate activities specific to a given locality were often copied integrally from one register into the next. Therefore it is all the more remarkable that this detailed regulation does not appear in later *tahrirs*. The rice fields themselves apparently continued to exist, but the text was abridged to a standardized formula, namely that these rice growers (*çeltükçi*) were excused the payment of *avarız-i divaniye* and *tekalif-i örfiyye*. Probably this standardization of a situation which at the beginning had shown highly individual characteristics must be seen as part of a broader trend. In the "classical" Ottoman Empire generally, but more particularly in the reign of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, there was a concerted effort to set standards valid for broad regions of the Empire, associated particularly with the name of Kanuni's *şeyhülislam* Ebusuud Efendi⁽³⁰⁾. This should have involved the "ironing out" of local peculiarities, and the specific conditions under which a family of tribal leaders turned into hereditary administrators of rice fields were probably no longer considered relevant.

For the social historian, on the other hand, the 1519 text is important because it tells us that tribesmen and tribal leaders could of their own free will, transform themselves into *çeltükçi*. The cases examined by Halil İnalcık have shown us a totally different type of rice grower, namely servile workmen who in the course of time had shed most of the characteristics of their unfree status but who had never succeeded in acquiring a peasant holding of their own. Such people seem to belong to a very different milieu than the nomad or semi-nomad tribal leaders, who were able to direct the work performed by their fellow tribesmen, probably controlled substantial funds and belonged to a group of the rural population whom the Ottoman administration found notoriously difficult to control. Obviously the Tarsus case at the present state of our knowledge constitutes an exception, and it may well turn out to be the exception that proves the rule. But even so, the story of the Tarsus tribesmen -*çeltükçi* demonstrates once again the degree of local and regional variety that existed in early Ottoman Anatolia.

Conclusion

A comparison of the Adana and Tarsus registers thus leads to the following conclusions: In the Çukurova of the sixteenth century, the eastern part - that is Adana - gained population and economic importance at the expense of the western part, namely Tarsus. Thus Adana as a town expanded vigorously

(30) Halil İnalcık, "Kanuni Sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver and Ottoman Law", *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 1 (1961), 105-138.

while Tarsus declined. Cotton production grew in the region of Adana and decreased in Tarsus. This tilting of the balance can be explained by the assumption that the pilgrimage route from Istanbul to Damascus probably gained a new importance in Kanuni Süleyman's time, and this route happened to pass through Adana. Ties to Syria and to the Ottoman capital made possible a much more active commercial life than had existed in the Çukurova of the recent past. This increase in commercial potential is reflected in the public construction that took place in mid-sixteenth century Adana: Contrary to what one might expect, it was only *after* the princely family of the Ramazanoğulları had lost the semi-independence which they had possessed in Mamluk times, that this dynasty began to undertake major construction projects. As Ottoman governors, they embellished Adana with a elaborate covered market, in addition to shops and workshops, an expense which could only be justified if increased commercial activity provided tenants for these buildings⁽³¹⁾. Tarsus on the other hand was at a disadvantage due to its remoteness from the main route. In this context, it is worth noting that access to the sea was of very minor importance in determining the fortunes of the two towns. Neither Adana nor Tarsus possessed a good harbour, and the growth of Mersin into a major regional port was as yet a long way off. This fits in with observations concerning sixteenth-century Anatolia as a whole. Caravan traffic determined the prosperity or otherwise of Anatolian towns, and few ports developed into major urban centres.

Semi-nomads, who practised agriculture as a secondary occupation by which they secured an appreciable share of their food needs, were typical for the Çukurova as a whole. In the course of the sixteenth century, these semi-nomads increasingly specialized in the cultivation of barley, in part probably because they needed to meet the Ottoman state's demand for fodder and transportation services. Some leading figures among the tribesmen began to engage in rice cultivation, a branch of production in which the Ottoman state was actively interested. It is very possible that this was also intended as a political move, and that the desire to establish good relations with the newly established Ottoman state power accounted for the very considerable sum of money that at least one local family was willing to invest.

But on the whole, we know very little about the manner in which prominent families of the Tarsus district reacted to the Ottoman conquest. The registers which have been examined to date do not indicate whether members of families prominent in Mamluk times were able to secure *timars* and *zeamets*, and thereby retain powers in local administration. Nor do our sources indicate how established families reacted to the "new men" which the Ottoman conquest doubtlessly brought into the district. Even less is known about

(31) Suraiya Faroqhi, *Towns and Townsmen of Ottoman Anatolia, Trade, Crafts and Food Production in an Urban Setting* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 29-30.

the manner in which the Ottoman takeover affected relations between ordinary tribesmen and the leading families of the area. In the seventeenth century, when the Ottoman central administration was actively promoting the settlement of nomads, no effort was spared to gain the support of these leading families, usually by boosting their authority *vis à vis* the rank and file⁽³²⁾. But whether something analogous happened in the sixteenth century remains unknown.

Since the tax registers tell us so little about these social and political processes, and as for the more outlying regions of the Ottoman Empire, these documents often constitute our only source, writing the history of districts such as Tarsus somewhat resembles archeology. Similar to the archeologist, the historian in such a case can discern phenomena "on the ground", such as changes in administrative divisions, patterns of settlement, or harvest sizes. But the social and political conflicts which led to these changes have to be reconstructed from very little evidence, and in many instances, can merely be guessed at. The temptation is great to regard the phenomena recorded in the *tahrir* as the outcome of almost impersonal pressures, or else as the more or less automatic result of central government policies. However with respect to the better documented parts of Ottoman Anatolia, we know that even in the sixteenth century, supposedly the heyday of Ottoman centralization, local forces were not without influence upon the destinies of towns and provinces⁽³³⁾. Unfortunately in districts such as Tarsus, the tensions and power struggles that preceded the compilation of the so impersonal-looking tax registers remain largely hidden from view.

The present paper has thus attempted to regard the *tahrirs* as records of local power struggles. Obviously they are not impartial records, for they were composed by and for officials representing the central state, and these officials, similar to their colleagues in other times and places, had a tendency to represent their own side as ever victorious. But when we read the *tahrirs* in this manner, we can slowly accustom ourselves to the picking up of signals which emanate from a layer of reality that is not immediately obvious. Some tribal leaders rapidly made their peace with the Ottoman administration, while others avoided contact and even became followers of heretical movements. The Ramazanoğulları were quick to respond to the opportunities provided by the Istanbul-Damascus connection, while certain merchants and craftsmen probably abandoned Tarsus when they realized that their town was being bypassed by the area's main trade route. The data concerning cotton harvests, administrative divisions and the like only make sense in this particularly context.

(32) Orhonlu, *İskân Teşebbüsü*, p. 49ff.

(33) Suraiya Faroqhi "Town Officials, *timar*-holders and Taxation. The Late Sixteenth-Century Crisis as Seen from Çorum", *Turcica*, XVIII (1986), 53-82.

I. Taxpayers and Agricult Production: Tarsus Nahiyesi⁽¹⁾

	925/1519	950/1543-4	980/1572-3
wheat	154.540 <i>keyl</i>	200.800 <i>keyl</i>	208.850 <i>keyl</i>
barley	118.000 <i>keyl</i>	86.090 <i>keyl</i>	221.490 <i>keyl</i>
cotton	106.040 <i>men</i>	781.60 <i>keyl</i>	96.300 <i>men</i>
taxpayers	3395	4735	6030

(1) *Mezraas* whose product is only recorded in money have been excluded. In Tarsus 10% of the agricultural product was taken as tax (compare *kanunname* preceding TK 134).

II. From 1519 to 1572-73: A Matching of *mezraas*⁽¹⁾

	925/1519	980/1572-3
wheat	52.940 <i>keyl</i>	55.670 <i>keyl</i>
barley	37.300 <i>keyl</i>	54.200 <i>keyl</i>
cotton	30.390 <i>men</i>	23.400 <i>men</i>

(1) *Mezraas* whose product is given in money only have been excluded.

III. The number of *cemaats* and *mezraas* in Tarsus⁽¹⁾

	925/1519	900/1572-3
<i>cemaat</i>	142	211
<i>mezraas</i>	219	315 ⁽¹⁾

(1) *Mezraas* from this *tahrir* excluded if tithes only given in money. Only 92 *mezraas* could be matched, with varying degrees of confidence.