

# AN ORTHODOX GREEK VILLAGE ON THE SHORES OF LAKE BEYŞEHİR ACCORDING TO TURKISH SOURCES: THE CASE OF THE VILLAGE OF KESI

## Türk Kaynaklarına Göre Beyşehir Gölü Kıyısındaki bir Ortodoks Rum Köyü: Kesi Köyü Örneği

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### Abstract

The establishment of the Orthodox Greek settlements along Lake Beyşehir and its islands dates back to the Roman and Byzantine periods. With the conquests of the Anatolian Seljuks in the 12th century, these regions came under Turkish rule, and the process of Turkification and Islamization began. Some of these Greek villages, which were between the Byzantine Empire and the great powers such as the Anatolian Seljuks, Karamanids and Ottomans, continued their existence until the beginning of the 17th century.

With the collapse of the Byzantine Empire and the weakening of the Orthodox Church, they were left without a patron and were forced to establish relations with the Turks. The islands in Lake Beyşehir became a hiding place for the local Greeks to protect themselves from their enemies, the Turks and Greeks. One of these villages was Kesi, located in the Cezire district of Beyşehir. In the second half of the 13th century (the exact date is not given), the income from this village was donated to the *Atabekîyya* Madrasah in Konya by the Seljuk atabak Arslan Doğmuş b. Yaruk Inal. Over time, the peasants came under Turkish influence and were introduced to Islam.

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The non-Muslim inhabitants (dhimmis) of this village, which we know was under Ottoman rule in 1466, continued to pay jizya and customary taxes to the Atabakiyya Madrasah. A portion of the revenues of the village was allocated to the fief-holders. The exact location of this village, which had a population of approximately 1,300 in 1466, is unknown.

However, although the village itself no longer exists today, its name survives on an island in Lake Beyşehir (*Kesi Island*). Traces of the village name can also be found in local sites (*Kesi Boğazı*). During the Ottoman period, between 1466 and 1584, the population of the village more than doubled. By the end of the sixteenth century, Islamization and Turkification was nearly complete. The village was subjected to pressure from surrounding Sunni Turkish villages and *Yörüks* from the Antalya region. *Qızılbaş Tekelü Turkomans*, in particular, began settling in the village and engaging in animal husbandry and agriculture in the vacant lands of the village. The area of Kaşaklı was largely invaded by the *Serik Yörüks*. Pressure from both the *Yörüks*, the surrounding Sunni Turks, and the trustees of the foundation of Atabak accelerated this process. However, interestingly, the village was abandoned in the early 17th century and disappears from Ottoman registers. The registers do not clearly state the reason for the abandonment. However, it is documented that some Muslim peasants from Kesi migrated to the center of Beyşehir. Non-Muslims from Kesi, presumably due to family problems such as not being able to marry Muslims, migrated to Orthodox Greek villages along the lakeshore, such as Kıstıvan and Girapa (Akburun). There, they lived as non-Muslims for a while longer.

The main reasons for their abandonment of their villages are the inconvenient location, heavy taxation, lack of public order, floods in the lake, the pressure of Tekelü Shiite Turkomans and Yoruks, and the lack of political and religious patrons.

**Key Words:** Kesi, Beyşehir, Greeks, Islamization, Turkification, Anatolia, Village.

### Özet

Beyşehir Gölü kenarında ve adalarında yer alan Ortodoks Rum meskûn mahallerinin kuruluşu Roma ve Bizans dönemine kadar geriye gider. Anadolu Selçuklularının 12. Yüzyıldaki fetihleriyle birlikte Türklerin egemenliğine giren bu bölgelerde Türkleşme ve İslamlaşma süreci başlamıştır. Bizans İmparatorluğu ile sırasıyla Anadolu Selçukluları, Karamanoğulları ve Osmanlılar gibi büyük güçlerin arasında kalan bu Rum köylerinin bazıları, mevcudiyetlerini, 17. Yüzyıl başlarına kadar devam ettirdiler.

Bizans İmparatorluğu yıkılınca, Ortodoks Kilisesinin zayıflamasıyla birlikte, hamisiz kaldılar ve zorunlu olarak Türkler ile ilişkiler kurdular. Beyşehir gölündeki adalar, yerel Rumlar için, düşmanları olan Türkler ve Rumlardan korunmak için bir saklanma yeri oldu. Bu köylerden biri de Beyşehir'in Cezire nahiyesinde yer alan Kesi köyüydü. Bu köyün gelirleri, 13. Yüzyılın ikinci yarısında (tam tarih verilemiyor), Selçuklu atabeyi Arslan Doğmuş b. Yaruk İnal tarafından, Konya'daki Atabekiyye Medresesine vakfedildi. Köylüler, zamanla Türklerin etkisi altında kaldılar ve İslam ile tanıştılar.

1466 yılında Osmanlı egemenliğinde olduğunu bildiğimiz bu köyün gayrimüslim insanları (zımmiler), Atabekiyye Medresesine cizye ile örfi vergileri ödemeye devam ettiler. Köyün bir kısım gelirleri ise tımarlı sipahilere tahsis edildi. 1466'da yaklaşık 1300 kişilik bir nüfusa sahip bu köyün yeri, tam olarak bilinmemektedir. Ancak, köyün kendisi zamanımızda mevcut olmasa da, köyün adı, Beyşehir gölündeki bir adada yaşıyor (Kesi adası). Ayrıca yerel mevkilerde de köy adının izlerine (Kesi Boğazı) rastlanıyor.

Osmanlı idaresi döneminde, 1466 ila 1584 yılları arasında, köyün nüfusu iki katından fazla arttı. On altıncı yüzyıl sonlarında İslamlaşma neredeyse tamamlanmak üzereydi. Zira köy, çevredeki Sünni Türk köyleri ile Antalya civarından gelen Yörüklerin baskısına maruz kaldı. Özellikle Kızılbaz Tekelü Türkleri, bu köyde yerleşmeye ve boş bırakılan alanlarda hayvancılık ve tarım yapmaya başladılar. Kaşaklı civarı ise büyük ölçüde Serik Yörükleri tarafından istila edilmişti. Hem Yörüklerin, hem de çevredeki Sünni Türkler ile Atabek vakfının mütevellisinin baskıları, bu süreci hızlandırdı. Ancak, ilginç bir şekilde, bu köy, 17. Yüzyıl başlarında terkedildi ve Osmanlı devlet kayıtlarından çıktı. Kayıtlarda, köyün terkedilme sebebi açık olarak belirtilmiyor. Ancak, Müslüman olan bazı Kesi köylülerin, Beyşehir merkeze göç ettikleri belgelenebiliyor. Müslüman olmayanlar ise, sanırım, Müslümanlarla evleneme gibi ailevi sorunlardan dolayı, Kısıtvan ve Girapa (Akburun) gibi göl kenarında bulunan Ortodoks Rum köylerine göç ettiler. Burada bir müddet daha gayrimüslim olarak yaşadılar.

Bunların köylerini terk etmelerinin temel nedenleri arasında, lokasyonunun uygunsuzluğu, ağır vergilendirme, asayişsizlik, göldeki su taşkınlıkları, Tekelü Şii Türkmenlerin ve Yörüklerin baskısı, siyasi ve dini hamilerden yoksun oluşlarıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kesi, Beyşehir, Rumlar, İslamlaşma, Türkleşme, Anadolu, Köy

### Introduction

Kesi is the name of an Orthodox Greek village located on the southern shores of Lake Beyşehir, which does not exist in Beyşehir (a district of Konya province in Turkey) today but continued its existence from the 13th century to the beginning of the 17th century. Byzantine ruins around Lake Beyşehir and Greek toponyms reflected in Ottoman documents confirm the presence of Orthodox Greeks around Beyşehir.<sup>1</sup>

What makes this village important is that it is an interesting example of Islamization and Turkification in Beyşehir and its surroundings, from the Byzantine period onwards, in the line of Anatolian Seljuks, Qaramanids and Ottomans. The name of this Orthodox Greek village was first announced to the scientific world in 1968 by İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı (d. 1984), a Turkish historian who published many academic studies on the history of regions of Konya and Beyşehir of Turkey. He published a Turkish translation of an Arabic document (*hujjat*) dated 1447, concerning the foundation of the *Atabakîyya* Madrasah in Konya, bearing the original monogram of İbrahim Bey II. the Qaramanids (d. 1463).<sup>2</sup> In this document, it is stated that the village of Kesi, an Orthodox Greek village located in the Cezire district (nahiyya) of Beyşehir, was donated to the *Atabakîyya* Madrasah established in Konya by *Atabak*<sup>3</sup> Arslan Doğmuş b. Yaruk İnal, one of the Anatolian Seljuk *atabaks* in Konya.

The story of Kesi village is also a good example of the history of villages abandoned in the Beyşehir region in the 17th century. Konyalı founds this document in the private library of Mr. Selçuk Es (1911-1980), one of the prominent figures of Konya, and described it as a 'sharia hujjat'. Yusuf Akyurt (d. 1958), one of the directors of the Konya Museum, defined this document, a copy of which is in the Archives of Foundations in Ankara, as a 'foundation deed'. He also provided a Turkish translation of this document in his new work published by the Turkish Historical Society in 2024 in Ankara.<sup>4</sup> When we

<sup>1</sup> Anna Komnena writes in her *Alexiad* (a 12th-century manuscript) that in the first half of the 12th century, there were close relations between the Turks and the local Greeks in the Beyşehir region, and that the Greeks did not heed the orders of the Byzantine Emperor (F. Köprülü, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire*, Istanbul 1981, p. 139). When the Byzantine Emperor Manuel passed through Beyşehir with his army to capture Konya, he asked the Greeks of Beyşehir to join his army, but they did not join Manuel's army, claiming that they got along well with the Turks.

<sup>2</sup> İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, "Bir Hüccet İki Vakfiye" Vakıflar Dergisi, 7,1968, p.99

<sup>3</sup> *Atabak*, a title of a high dignitary under the Saldjukids and their successors (Cl. Cahen, 'Atabak', *EI*, second edition, Leiden, pp. 731-732).

<sup>4</sup> Yusuf Akyurt, Resimli Türk Abideleri, 9, Ankara, Turkish Historical Society publications, 2024, p.70a.

carefully re-examine this document in the light of other data, we reach new conclusions regarding the settlement history of Beyşehir.

It is interesting that a Seljuk foundation established in Konya in the 13th century was accepted as legal validity by all Qaramanids rulers and continued its legal validity until the Ottoman period. Both this village and the aforementioned Seljuk foundation continued under Ottoman rule until the end of the 16th century. Konyalı claims that the original endowment deed text (wakfiyya) of this foundation has not survived to our time. According to the aforementioned document, in 1447, during the Qaramanids administration, the *Atabakîyya* Madrasah teacher (muderris) in Konya, Mavlana Şeyh Ahmed ibn Mahbub Mustafa ibn Bahtiyar, filed a lawsuit claiming that this village belonged to the foundation of the *Atabakîyya* Madrasah. İbrahim Bey II. the Qaramanids (d. 1463), who held this region in 1447, asked Server Ağa, one of the Mongolian origin lords of Beyşehir of the period, to investigate this issue. Upon his negative opinion on the case, the plaintiff, the muderris Şeyh Mehmed, submitted to the court the decision regarding the foundation given by the judges of Konya, Mavlana Şemseddin Ahmed and Şerefeddin Yakupzade. Based on this decree, the Beyşehir judge of the period, Mavlana Bedreddin Mahmud Qaramani, confirmed that the village of Kesi was belonged to the foundation of the *Atabakîyya* Madrasah. These legal transactions was also registered by Mehmed b. Ali Fenari and Ahmed b. Yakup, the judge of Konya, and Mehmed b. Muhsin b. Yusuf, the judge of Qaramaniyya<sup>5</sup> and İbrahim b. Mehmed, other judge of Qaramaniyya. The leading figures of the period also testified to the truth of this event. As I mentioned above, re-examining this legal document in the light of other data is important both in terms of the history of the villages located on the shores of Lake Beyşehir and the procedure of Islamization and Turkification in the region.

### Who is *Atabak Arslan Doğmuş*?

Arslan Doğmuş b. Yaruk İnal was one of the Seljuk *atabaks* who played important roles in the political history of the Anatolian Seljuks in the 13th century. We know quite a bit about his life. Seljuk historian Osman Turan (1914-1978) provides important information about his life and political activities in the struggle for the throne among the Seljuk princes.<sup>6</sup> Mikail Bayram (1940-1924), an important expert in the studies of Ahism, provides further information about him in his article. When Calaladdin Karatay died as *atabak* in 1254, İzzeddin

<sup>5</sup> It means all the places belonging to Qaramanids.

<sup>6</sup> Osman Turan, *Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye*, İstanbul, Boğaziçi publications, 1996, p.436, 468, 470, 475, 481. Turan emphasizes that he is not of slave origin. His father was Sevinç b. Yaruk İnal.

Keykavus II appointed Arslan Dođmuş as *atabak*. He carried the banner of Gıyaseddin II as the commander of the flag in the war of Kösedađ. He saved Gıyaseddin, who was defeated in this war. For a time, he served as emir-i ahur (a commander in charge of the palace horses). It is highly probable that this person is the commander of the flag, Dođan Arslan b. Yaruk, mentioned in the 1247 inscription in the village of Mülk in Sivrihisar. In the struggle for the throne between İzzeddin Keykavus II and Rukneddin IV, he first sided with Keykavus II and became his *atabak*. Later, after the Battle of Sultan Hanı, he sided with IV. Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Arslan Dođmuş appears as one of the important people who know the topography of Beyşehir well. Although we do not have a clear historical record of when this Islamic foundation, which includes the village of Kesi, was established, it could be dated roughly to the second half of the 13th century.

#### Location of the village of Kesi and the meaning of the word 'Kesi'

*Kesi* is mentioned in Ottoman archival documents as one of the villages belonging to the foundation of *Atabakiyya* Madrasah in Konya. First, Konyalı put how the word 'Kesi' should be read, its meaning and the localization of the village forward as a problem in 1968. He reads the name of this village as 'Kāsi' and 'Kisi' in his publication. He also made etymological comments about both words. While attributing meaning to this word, he focused on the word "Kashi", which is a term related to tile making, and the word "Kisi", which means, "washing stone" in Arabic. I think both of Konyalı's comments are fabricated. In my opinion, the name of this village is not Turkish, Persian or Arabic.<sup>8</sup> It probably comes from Greek. It seems more appropriate to read it as 'Kasi', since it has the letter 'alif' in its Arabic spelling. In Arabic, pottery-like items are called 'Ke'si'. In Turkish, Kesi means "clothes made of cloth." If it is reads as 'Kesa' and 'Kuse', it means 'laundry'. Turkish 'Kesi Taş' means 'laundry stone'. In addition, the size of one shot of gunpowder is called a cut. If read as 'Gusi' in Persian, it means 'dismissal'. Konyalı writes that this village was "on an island in Lake Beyşehir", that it was named the island of Kesi, and that the peasants of Üskerlos<sup>9</sup> used this place as pasture. He also states that this island was once a peninsula, with ruins here, which later became an island. During the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror,

<sup>7</sup> Mikail Bayram, 'Sadru'd-din Konevi ile Ahi Evren Şeyh Nasirü'd-Din Mehmed'in Mektuplaşması', *Selçuk Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Edebiyat Dergisi*, 2, Konya 1983, p.58.

<sup>8</sup> It has been stated on social media that the word Gesi/Kesi is the name of a Turkish tribe. It refers to a pioneer unit conducting reconnaissance in the Turkish armies and is the name of one of the Turkish tribes that settled in Hungary. I have discounted such baseless theories because they lack any evidence.

<sup>9</sup> The local pronunciation is Üskelles. Its modern name is Üstünler.

the village fell into ruin.<sup>10</sup> Akyurt, however, wrote the word directly as 'Kasi' without commenting on it.

Where is the localization of this village, which does not exist today? There seems to be a lack of localization in Konyalı's explanation of the word "Cezire" (*ada*, island in Turkish). In the foundation document dated 1447 (in Yusuf Akyurt's document), the location of the village of Kesi was described as follows: "To the east are the villages of Savcılar and Sağır Kaya. To the south is the border of Yaycılar<sup>11</sup> (in fact it should be Yağılar) village and the road to Kaşaklı and Antalya. It is bordered by mountains to the west and Bahr (Lake Beyşehir) to the north". Because the word 'Cezire' in the Arabic phrase '*al-karyati'l-mad'uvveti bi-Kasi al-kaineti Cezireti'l-madinati'l-Suleymaniyya*'<sup>12</sup> in the document in question was translated as 'island' by Konyalı. Based on this, he concluded that this village was on an island. However, this word, in addition to its literal meaning, also carries the meaning of an administrative and military unit in Ottoman organization.

In the Ottoman administrative organization, the villages on the shores of Lake Beyşehir and the village of Mada on the island of Mada were affiliated with an administrative unit called "Cezire". This unit had separate administrators. In fact, we know that the Ottomans accepted the administrative divisions of the Seljuks and Qaramanids as they were. In the 15th and 16th century Ottoman administrative documents, the word "Cezire" is not used in its literal sense, but is used as the name of one of the districts (*nahiyya*) of Beyşehir. Indeed, an Ottoman foundation record from 1483 clearly states that the village of 'Kesi' was a small village within the Cezire (district) of Beyşehir, and that the *jizya* and tithes (*öşür*) belonged to the foundation of *Atabakiyya* Madrasa. Again, the document states that although the village's *jizya* was allocated to the fief owners before the Ottoman Empire, they never used it.<sup>13</sup>

First, to locate the Cezire district of Beyşehir, let us identify the villages and other settlements within the Cezire.<sup>14</sup> These are either villages located along the shores of Lake Beyşehir or inhabited areas on islands within the lake. We know the names of the villages, islands, and agricultural farms within the Cezire district in 1584, including the village of Madi on the island of Madi. Locally, this island

<sup>10</sup> Konyalı (1968), p. 98.

<sup>11</sup> Both Konyalı and Akyurt most likely misread this place name. It should have been read as Yağılar, not Yaycılar. Yağılar was a small Turcoman village in the district of Yağan of Beyşehir. (Erdoğan (2024), 231-232. It is a Turkish word meaning enemy or foe.

<sup>12</sup> It is another name for the city of Beyşehir. This name was given in honor of Suleiman Bey, son of Aşraf, who dominated the region in the late 13th century.

<sup>13</sup> M. Akif Erdoğan, 'Murad Çelebi Defteri: 1483 Yılında Karaman Vilayetinde Vakıflar I', *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, XVIII/ 1, 2003, Ege University publications, p. 153

<sup>14</sup> For more information on the history of the Cezire region, see: M. Akif Erdoğan, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Beyşehir Sancağı (1522-1584)*, IQ Culture and Art Publishing, İstanbul, 2006, pp. 73.

is known as the island of Mada among the natives. Located in the northern part of Lake Beyşehir, this large island is currently administratively part of the Şarkikaraağaç district of Isparta province (formerly part of Beyşehir). This island once housed an agricultural farm and fields. The adjacent island was called the island of Oruç. This name, in Turkish, may mean an island belonging to a Turkish man named Oruç, or it may refer to an island where wild animals were taken for breeding. Unable to find food, the animals quickly became domesticated.

The second settlement in this region is the village of Mili.<sup>15</sup> This place name is not Turkish. The village was abandoned from the early 17th century onwards and requires further research. The phrase "monastery field," which is held as a common property in this village, suggests that it was originally a non-Muslim village, probably a Greek village, and later converted to Islam.

The third settlement is the village of Girapa<sup>16</sup>, whose Turkish name Ottoman scribes clearly record as "Akburun" (in meaning white-colored peninsula in Turkish) Islamization and Turkification was still underway in this village in 1584. Place names such as "Father's son Constantine's field" in Girapa indicate the character of Orthodox Greek of the village. In 1584, some of the Girapa Greeks migrated to the quarter of Cami (Mosque) of Beyşehir.

The fourth settlement is the village of Zaviyecik<sup>17</sup>, which was abandoned in the early 17th century. Zaviyecik means small Islamic lodge or 'small corner' in Turkish. Its location requires further investigation. Although the peasants were Muslim, the Ottoman administration demanded the jizya tax from the peasants in 1584, indicating the origins of Christian. According to Islamic law, a non-Muslim would be legally and theoretically exempt from the jizya tax after embracing Islam. However, in practice, it appears that the foundation administration demanded the jizya tax from these new Muslims, at least nominally. In this case, since the jizya was the most important tax item for the Atabakiyya foundation, the foundation's revenues automatically disappeared. We have no concrete evidence that the jizya tax was actually collected from these new Muslims. The jizya registers for the region of Beyşehir are late in date. Because these villages were abandoned, they are not mentioned in these registers.

Some of the agricultural land here was cultivated by the peasants of Devletşah, a Turcoman village (this village has also been abandoned). The island of Çoban<sup>18</sup>, located between the villages of Kısıtvan<sup>19</sup> (Gölkaşı) and Zaviyecik, is part of Zaviyecik. It means shepherd's island in Turkish.

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<sup>15</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 199

<sup>16</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 200

<sup>17</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 201

<sup>18</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 203

<sup>19</sup> The local pronunciation is Kısıtvan.

The fifth settlement is the village of Kıstıvan.<sup>20</sup> This toponym is most likely the Turkish pronunciation of Stefan, the Byzantine commander of the region in the 13th century. In 1584, this was a mixed village where Muslim Turks and Orthodox Greeks lived together. The island of İlanluca<sup>21</sup>, in the Turkish meaning of this name is "snake-shaped island", is connected to the village of Kıstıvan. Tax records for this island are based on the records of the village of Kıstıvan.

The sixth settlement is the village of Kesi<sup>22</sup>, the subject of our study. Ottoman scribes record that the tithe taxes of the village of Kesi and the hamlet of Çardak were belonged to the foundation of the *Atabakıyya* Madrasah. The *salarıyya* (a type of forced labor assigned to the peasants by the state to care for the horses of spahis) and customary taxes of the village were allocated to fiefholdings, spahis. In the Arabic document dated 1447, it is stated that the taxes (*bukuk*), irrigated and non-irrigated agricultural lands, water mill (*ruha*), trees (*eşcar*), vineyards (*kürüm*), threshing floor (*hut*) and jizya of the village of Kesi belonged to the foundation of *Atabakıyya* Madrasah in Konya.<sup>23</sup>

In 1466, the population of the village of Kesi was around 130 people. In 1584, the population of the village doubled. However, during this period, the tax pressure on the peasants from both the Ottoman administration and the administrators of the foundation of *Atabakıyya* increased. As seen in Table 1, the agricultural product that provided the peasants with the most income was wheat. Mostly wheat was probably cultivated by the peasants both on the lands on the island and on the agricultural lands on the lakeshore. As an income-generating item for the peasants, vineyards come in second place. After viticulture, barley farming was an important wealth resource for the peasants. It is also interesting that the peasants were not charged a fish tax (*öyr-i mahi*) in 1466, because some of the other villages on the lake shore were subject to this tax. However, in 1584 fishing was taxed. The jizya, which was collected in cash, was a truly heavy tax burden for these peasants. The non-Muslim men of the village of Kesi had to pay cash, approximately 33 silver coins per person, to the foundation of *Atabakıyya* every year. The amount of jizya, along with other taxes, was very heavy for the villagers. Therefore, the non-Muslims of Kesi had to pay an amount of approximately 125 silver coins per person per year as tax to the state treasury and the waqf. Almost every taxpayer of the peasants paid three *mudds* of wheat (approximately 1540 kg) as tax to the state.

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<sup>20</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 203

<sup>21</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 205

<sup>22</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 205-7

<sup>23</sup> Akyurt, 2024, 70b

Table 1: A taxation rates of the village of Kesi by the Ottoman administration in 1466 (Sources: Erdoğan, M Akif (2015), *1466 Tarihli Akşehir Mufassal Defteri (Metin ve İnceleme)*, Ankara, p. 120, 398, 399)

Tax items	number of data taxpayers and units of measurement	In silver coin ( <i>akça</i> )	Total percentage rate %
Tithe on wheat	15 <i>mudd</i>	600	30.48
Vineyard	--	450	22.86
Tax on <i>çift</i>	8	288	14.63
Tithe on barley	10 <i>mudd</i>	250	12.70
<i>Salarlık</i> (a kind of tax on wheat and forced labor)	3 <i>mudd</i> and 15 <i>kile</i>	150	7.62
<i>Caba</i> (?)		120	6.09
<i>Salarlık</i> (a kind of tax on wheat and forced labor)	2.5 <i>mudd</i>	62	3.15
Tax paid by married men living with their fathers who owned agricultural lands ( <i>bennak</i> )	6	48	2.43
Total		1968	100
Revenue		858	
Jizya		709	

*Notes on the table:*

1 *çift* of agricultural land is equal to 120 acres in Konya.

For 120 acres of agricultural land, 36 silver coins will be paid as tax.

For 1 *bennak*, he will pay 6 silver coins as tax.

For 1 *mudd* wheat, 40 silver coins will be paid as tax.

For 1 *mudd* of barley, 25 silver coins will be paid as tax.

The value of 1 *mudd* wheat as *salarlık* (or *salarlığı*) is 40 silver coins.

The value of 1 *mudd* barley as *salarlık* is 25 silver coins

The value of 1 *kile* of wheat as *salarlık* is 0.2 silver coins

1 non-Muslim male will pay 32.2 silver coins as *jizya* tax.

1 Konya *kile* is equal to 32.073625 kg.

1 Konya *mudd* is equal to 513.160 kg.

In 1584, Kesi appears to have been a primarily Muslim village. The document mentions the presence of a Muslim preacher and *muezzin* in the village.

However, male names such as Murat, son of Kiresun, Mehmed, son of Yorgi, Ali, son of Mihail, Vasil, son of Mihail, Mustafa, son of Savantos, and Arslan, son of Savantos, indicate that the village was not yet fully converted to Islam.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, the settlements along the shores of Lake Beyşehir demonstrate the continued Islamization of the village in the late sixteenth century. Furthermore, it is well documented that the Ottoman administration recruited boys from these areas for the palaces.<sup>25</sup> Another interesting situation here is that a Muslim father from the Kesi gave his son a Christian Greek name: Georgy (Yorgi in pronunciation), son of Mustafa.<sup>26</sup> This was normally against Ottoman policy. Therefore, this situation was due to either the errors of Ottoman scribes or the ongoing transition between Islam and Christianity due to the lack of control by the administration in this region. In fact, the Greeks of the Lake Beyşehir coastal region, under Turkish pressure, gathered in the villages of Girapa and Kıstıvan at the end of the sixteenth century. The fact from the Beyşehir census of 1584 that the Girapa Greeks carried not only ordinary Greek personal names such as Anastas, Georgy, Vasil, Constantine, Dimitri, Nicholas, Savantos, and Christos, but also Turkish names such as Çakır, Hüdaverdi, Göç Begi, Yağmur, and Oruç, indicates that Turkification and Islamization was ongoing among them.<sup>27</sup> Among the Greeks of Kıstıvan, men with Turkish names such as Kaplan, Evren, Aydın, Murad, and Ağal are also encountered in the census of 1584.<sup>28</sup>

A distinctive feature of the village of Kesi is that members of the Shiite Tekelü Turcoman community settled there. The 1584 census includes non-Sunni Turkish names such as Shah Kulu, son of Karlı, Pir Kulu, son of Tekelü, and Hasan, son of Tekelü<sup>29</sup>. This reveals that the population of the village of Kesi was comprised of four distinct segments: Sunni Muslim Turks, Shia Turks, converts (those who converted from Christianity to Islam), and Orthodox Greeks. There is evidence that some of Sunni Muslims of Kesi migrated to the city center of Beyşehir.

Table 2: The annual tax amount that the peasants of Kesi would pay to the *Atabakıyya* Madrasah in 1584 (Source: Erdoğan, M. Akif (2004), *Beyşehir Sancağının 1584 Tarihli Nüfus Sayımı (Beyşehir, Seydişehir, Bozdoğan)*, İzmir, p.207)

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<sup>24</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 205-206.

<sup>25</sup> Ménage, 1991, p.211-213.

<sup>26</sup> Erdoğan, 2004 206.

<sup>27</sup> Erdoğan, 2004 201

<sup>28</sup> Erdoğan, 2004 204

<sup>29</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 206. For more information about the history of the tribe of Tekelü, see: M. Akif Erdoğan "Tekelü Cemaati Üzerine Notlar", 800. *Fetih Yılı'nın Eşiğinde Alanya / Alaiye ve Alaaddin Keykubat Sempozyumu Bildiri Kitabı*, Ed. Özgür Kasım Aydemir - Irmak Karabulut, Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University publications, 2022, p.232.

Tax items	Units of measurement and quantity	Cash value	Total percentage rate %
Wheat	212 <i>kile</i>	1.484	41.68
Barley	212 <i>kile</i>	1.060	29.77
Vineyard		500	14.04
Grass		200	5.61
Almond		100	2.80
Vegetable gardens		96	2.69
Honey	half	90	2.52
Water mill (1 piece)	half	30	0.84
		3.560	100

*Notes on the table:*

- 1 *kile* of wheat is worth 7 silver coins in 1584.  
 1 *kile* of barley is worth 5 silver coins in 1584.  
 1 Konya *kile* is equal to 32.073625 kg.

In 1584, wheat and barley farming was the main source of income for the peasants of Kesi, as it was in 1466. For almost more than a hundred years, wheat and barley remained the staple food of the peasants of Kesi. They even had a flourmill to grind their grain. Viticulture retained its importance among them. In 1584, the collector of the foundation of *Atabakiyya* demanded separate taxes from the peasants for foods they produced, such as almonds, honey, herbs, and garden products. However, he had not demanded these taxes in 1466. The fief-owner demanded taxes from the peasants for half of the sheep, fish, and honey produced by the peasants. In addition to these, he asked them to pay him taxes for marriages, title deed tax, *badibeve*,<sup>30</sup> *deştbanı*<sup>31</sup> and water mill. This situation indicates an increase in the tax burden as the population increases of the region and new tax items are created by the administration. The emergence of these new tax items was not due to the increase in production or the emergence of new products, but because the administration was looking for new tax sources due to its need for cash.

<sup>30</sup> If they occur, they are taxable. This covers many tax items: penalties for murder and abuse, the capture of male and female slaves, lost animals, and estates without heirs.

<sup>31</sup> It means to wait so that the crops in the countryside are not damaged. It is one of the customary taxes.

Table 3: The annual tax amount that the peasants of Kesi would pay to the fief-holders in 1584 (Source: Erdoğan, M. Akif (2004), *Beyşehir Sancağının 1584 Tarihli Nüfus Sayımı (Beyşehir, Seydişehir, Bozdoğan)*, İzmir 2004, p.207)

Tax items	Units of measurement and quantity	Cash value (in silver coin)	Total percentage rate %
<i>Çift</i> and <i>bennak</i> and <i>caba</i> <sup>32</sup>		2.148	56.52
Sheep		390	10.26
Wheat (including <i>salarıyya</i> )	53 <i>kile</i>	371	9.76
Barley	53 <i>kile</i>	265	6.97
<i>Badihena</i> and marriages	half	216	5.68
Title deed tax and countryside watchman		200	5.26
Fish		90	2.36
Honey		90	2.36
Water mill (1 piece)	half	30	0.78
Total		3.800	100

In 1584, the distribution of revenues of the village of Kesi was as follows: all taxes on barley, wheat, almonds, vineyards, and orchards, as well as half of the honey and mill taxes, were allocated to the foundation of *Atabakiyya* Madrasah founded in Konya by the *Atabak* Arslan Doğmuş b. Yaruk İnal. All taxes on farms, sheep, fish, wheat, and barley, as well as half of the mill, honey, and marriages (*resm-i arus*) taxes, were allocated to the fief holders.<sup>33</sup> The origin of the method of dividing taxes between the Islamic foundations and the fief holders, as can be seen, dates back to the 13th century, during the Seljuk period. Although non-Muslims were present in Kesi in 1584, the fact that the *jizya* tax was not demanded from them is, presumably, due to negligence on the part of the *Atabakiyya* foundation administration.

One of the agricultural lands held collectively by the peasants of Kesi is the hamlet of Pantalos<sup>34</sup>, probably a Greek word, which is not included in the

<sup>32</sup> It refers to unmarried adults who work for their fathers. It is one of the customary taxes.

<sup>33</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 207

<sup>34</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 207

aforementioned foundation. The island of Kızıl is also near the border of the village of Kesi, and the peasants cultivate it. In 1584, the island of Kızıl was under the control of the Kasım Oğulları, a local Turkish family.<sup>35</sup> The island was given this name by the Turks because of the reddish color of the soil.

The hamlet (*mezraa*) of Sünye<sup>36</sup> was located somewhere on the border of the village of Kısıvan. The fact that the inhabited place names are Greek suggests that settlements on the islands or shores of Lake Beyşehir date back to the Roman or Byzantine period and are of a Christian character. These are likely Byzantine ruins. Because of the intense Turkish settlement in the region, they were forced to Turkify and convert to Islam.

The villages of Savcılar<sup>37</sup> and Yağılar, adjacent to the village of Kesi, were originally Yörük villages. The Beyşehir census of 1584 confirms the existence and activity of these villages. Later, these villages dispersed for various reasons, including epidemic diseases, banditry, food shortages, pressure from the administration, and the strict supervision of foundation administrators. In the mountainous regions of Karaman province, banditry was a general problem, without even needing to be proven. There is very little data on infectious diseases such as malaria for this period.

In his aforementioned article, Konyalı mentions a village called Zindan Söğüt, which is located near the village of Kesi and is now abandoned (p. 97). So, was this village located on what is today the island of Kesi? Or was it located on a peninsula on the lakeshore on the island's southern shore? Furthermore, was the peninsula separated from the mainland over time as it was submerged? We do not know these details. What we do know is that most of the villages along Lake Beyşehir were forced to relocate due to flooding in certain years. They moved from the shore into the interior of the mainland; examples of villages affected by flooding include Yarangözü, Kısıvan, Budak, and Akburun.

It is important to note that, regarding Islamization and Turkification in the region, there are examples in Anatolia of villages with non-Turkish names but with Turkish-Muslim residents, and conversely, of villages with Turkish names but with non-Muslim residents. In this context, the names of non-Muslim villages in Beyşehir are not Turkish. Over time, these villages became Islamized and Turkified, but they retained their non-Turkish names.

Returning to the village of Kesi, due to pressure from both the trustees of the *Atabakîyya* foundation and the surrounding Turks, as well as other reasons, the village dissolved in the early seventeenth century. Information about the

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<sup>35</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 207

<sup>36</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 207

<sup>37</sup> Erdoğan, 2004, 225

village suddenly disappears from Ottoman archival records. The peasants of Üskerlos cultivated the abandoned village's agricultural lands, a neighboring village further from the lake.

Finally, the narration that Kesi Dede, an imaginary Alevi clergyman, gathered the people of three Turcoman villages (Savcılar, Yağılar, and Zindan Söğüt) in the village of Üskerlos is undoubtedly incompatible with historical fact.<sup>38</sup> The Turks did not use 'Kesi' as a male name. Üskerlos and Kesi were registered as separate villages in the census of 1584. Yağılar and Savcılar were among the existing villages in the Yağan district (*nahiyya*) of Beyşehir in 1584. These villages would also dissolve in the 17th century.

In conclusion, the reasons for the abandonment of this village are as follows: 1. The location of village is inappropriate. The settlement is constantly negatively affected by lake floods. 2. As the Tekelü Shiite Turkmens transition to a semi-nomadic lifestyle, they begin to claim their pastures and agricultural lands. Not only this village, but also the entire region is invaded by semi-nomadic Yörüks from Antalya and Manavgat of the region of Teke. 3. The surrounding settled Sunni peasants begin to claim for their pastures and lands. 4. The peasants of Kesi are subjected to heavy taxation by both the foundation of Atabakıyya the fief-holding sipahis. The easiest way to escape this is to convert to Islam. However, for the region of Beyşehir, embracing Islam is not an effective justification for the villages not to be abandoned. 5. They are both insufficient in number to protect their pastures, vineyards, and lands, and they are left without a religious and political patron. Although the population increases in numbers by the end of the 16th century, migration to Beyşehir and surrounding villages leaves no permanent population to take over the village. One of these reasons must be that, although there is no official proof (because not being able to marry was not a problem that directly concerned the Ottoman administration), the surrounding peasants did not marry the man and women from the village of Kesi due to differences in language and traditions. Finally, in the early 17th century, the village was completely dispersed and could not be reassembled.

Addition: A translation of an Ottoman register from 1466 regarding the village of Kesi from Ottoman Turkish into English (Source: Erdoğan, M Akif (2015), *1466 Taribli Akşehir Mufasssal Defteri (Metin ve İnceleme)*, Ankara, p. 120)

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<sup>38</sup> The strait of Kesi is reached approximately 20 km from the center of Beyşehir via the Antalya road. With the excessive receding waters of Lake Beyşehir in 2025, the island of Kesi merged with the mainland. It reverted to a peninsula. It has been suggested that this village may be on the island of Kesi or in the Karaburun area. I thank Mr. Mustafa Büyükkafalı, President of the Beyşehir Culture and Tourism Association, for informing me of this narrative and information.

Non-Muslim subjects of the village of Kesi in Cezire of (Beyşehir), customary taxes (*örfiyye*) belong to the fief, its subjects are belonged to the foundation of the *Atabak* Madrasah in Konya, and the legal validity of the foundation has been confirmed.

- 1-Ismayıl, son of Monk (*Keşiş*), half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 2-Bahşayış, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 3-Qalakdos, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 4-Nicholas, son of Hatail, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 5-Lefter, son of Georgy, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 6-Savatinos, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 7-Karaca, son of Şahin, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 8-Ine Begi, son of Hoca Rahman, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 9-Vasily, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 10-Ak Bıyük, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 11-Durmuş, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 12-Duty, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 13-Constantine, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 14-Yanni, Son of Yahşi, half a farmland (he cultivates)
- 15-Arap, half a farmland (he cultivates)

16-Andoni, *bennak* (an Ottoman tax paid by married men living with their fathers who owned agricultural land).

17-Michael, *bennak*

18-Şadi, *bennak*

19-Nicholas, *bennak*

20-Göç Eri, *bennak*

21-Sevastos, *bennak*

22-Vasil the Great, half a farmland (he cultivates)

Total: 22 men

Total amount of tax: 120 (in silver coins)

Total: 8 houses

- 1-Total amount of *çift* tax: 288 (in silver coins)
- 2-Total number of farmers paying *bennak* tax: 6 men
- 3-Total amount of *bennak* tax: 48
- 4-Tithe on wheat: 15 mudd (in kind), or, the amount of tithe to be paid in cash: 600 (in silver coins)
- 5-Tithe on barley: 10 mudd (in kind), or, the amount of tithe to be paid in cash: 250 (in silver coins)
- 6-Tithe on vineyard: 450 (in silver coins)
- 7-*Salarlık* (a kind of tax on wheat and forced labor): 3 mudd wheat and 15 *kile* (in kind), or, the amount of tithe to be paid in cash: 150 (in silver coins)
- 8-*Salarlık* (a kind of tax on barley and forced labor): 2.5 mudd barley (in kind), or, the amount of tithe to be paid in cash: 62 (in silver coins)
- 9-Total tithe tax to be paid to the foundation: 1,100 (in silver coins)
- 10-Jizya: 709 (in silver coins)
- 11-Total revenue: 658 (in silver coins)

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