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THE WEALTH OF AN OTTOMAN METROPOLITAN: AN ANALYSIS OF METROPOLITAN DIONYSIOS' TEREKE

Muazzez GÜNDÜZ OĞUL*

Abstract

Metropolitans served under the Orthodox Greek Patriarchate within the Ottoman Empire. They held not only religious leadership positions but also social and administrative responsibilities in their respective regions. They addressed the religious, legal, and social concerns of the Orthodox population in their regions and cooperated with the Ottoman authorities both to demonstrate their loyalty to the state and to safeguard the rights of the non-Muslim communities under their supervision. This study, in this context, examines the life of Dionysios, who served as metropolitan in the early eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire, through an analysis of his estate in Sinop. The study explores how Dionysios' possessions reflect his social status, economic condition, and lifestyle, and highlights that, despite holding an important position as a metropolitan, Dionysios led a modest life. To contextualize the findings and evaluate the representational limitations of Dionysios' tereke record, the estate inventory of Kalinikos, Metropolitan of Kadıköy, dating from approximately a century later, is examined comparatively. In this way, a concrete example is provided of how metropolitans played an important intermediary role in state administration while simultaneously functioning as a balancing element within the religious and social structure of the community.

Keywords: Terekes, Estate inventories, Metropolitan, Sinop, Ottoman.

*  Dr. Öğr. Ü. Sinop Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü,
mzzgndz@gmail.com, Sinop/Türkiye.

OSMANLI'DA BİR METROPOLİTİN MALVARLIĞI: METROPOLİT DİONYSİOS'UN TEREKESİ ÜZERİNE BİR İNCELEME

Öz

Osmanlı Devleti'nde metropolitler, Ortodoks Rum Patrikhanesi'ne bağlı olarak görev yapmaktaydı. Bulundukları görev bölgelerinde yalnızca dini liderlik değil, aynı zamanda sosyal ve idari sorumlulukları da vardı. Metropolitler, bölgelerindeki Ortodoks halkın dini, hukuki ve sosyal meseleleriyle ilgileniyor, aynı zamanda Osmanlı Devleti'ne bağlılıklarını göstermek amacıyla devletle iş birliği yaparak, gayrimüslim tebaalarının haklarının korunmasına yönelik çalışmalar yürütüyorlardı. Bu çalışma, 18. yüzyıl başlarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda metropolit olarak görev yapan Dionysios'un hayatını, Sinop'ta bulunan mal varlığı üzerinden incelemektedir. Çalışma, Dionysios'un eşyalarının onun sosyal statüsünü, ekonomik durumunu ve yaşam tarzını nasıl yansıttığını araştırmaktadır. Buna göre Osmanlı Devleti'nde metropolit olarak önemli bir görevi olan Dionysios'un mütevazı bir hayat sürdüğü dikkat çekmektedir. Elde edilen bulguları daha geniş bir bağlama oturtmak ve Dionysios'un tereke kaydının temsil gücüne ilişkin sınırlılıkları değerlendirmek amacıyla, yaklaşık bir yüzyıl sonraya tarihlenen Kadıköy Metropolit Kalinikos'a ait tereke kaydı karşılaştırmalı olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bu sayede, metropolitlerin, devlet yönetiminde önemli bir aracı rol oynarken, aynı zamanda toplum içindeki dini ve sosyal yapının denge unsuru olarak nasıl işlev gördüğüne dair somut bir örnek sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tereke, Miras envanteri, Metropolit, Sinop, Osmanlı.

1. INTRODUCTION

Objects hold significant pedagogical value as personal artifacts, serving not only as tools for daily living but also as integral elements that extend beyond mere social interaction within socio-material collectives. It is well-known that the closer people are to their possessions, the more these items complement and fulfill their needs (Nohl, 2018: 219-222). Within the context of material culture, the movable and immovable assets listed in estate inventories (*tereke*) reveal the wealth and accumulation acquired by individuals during their lifetime. These inventories provide rich insights into the deceased's marital status, number of children, social standing, property ownership, clothing habits, and

financial relationships. Additionally, they offer a preview into the variety of items used in daily life, the number of animals owned, and many other aspects of socio-cultural life.

Estate inventories have long been recognized as one of the most valuable sources for the study of Ottoman social and economic history. By providing detailed information on individuals' possessions, debts, credits, and material assets, they offer unique insights into patterns of wealth, social status, consumption practices, and everyday life. Consequently, estate inventories have formed the basis of numerous significant studies examining various aspects of Ottoman society. Researchers have employed these records to investigate material culture in different regions, patterns of wealth accumulation, social stratification, economic networks, and debtor-creditor relations. In particular, the estates of prominent individuals have attracted considerable scholarly attention, contributing substantially to our understanding of the relationship between property ownership, status, and economic power in the Ottoman world. The rich body of scholarship based on estate inventories demonstrates the considerable potential of these sources for reconstructing both individual life histories and broader social and economic structures.

In this context, Lajos Fekete's study serves as a notable example for Muslim community. Fekete's article can be considered as the first study focusing on "famous figures" (Fekete, 1979: 457-480). In his work, the author analyzed the estate inventory of Budinli Ali Çelebi from the sixteenth century, at a time when studies on estates were not yet widely pursued. Additionally, two other studies within the category of "famous figures" focus specifically on Ottoman judges. The first is the article titled *Judiciary and Wealth in the Ottoman Empire, 1689–1843*, authored by Zeynep Dörtok Abacı, Jun Akiba, Metin Coşgel, and Boğaç

Ergene. This study stands out as an exemplary work for its examination of the Ottoman judicial system through the lens of wealth accumulation (Dörtok Abacı and others 2023: 43-84). Similarly, the article titled “Wealth and Demography in Ottoman Probate Inventories: A database in Very Long-Term Perspective” written jointly by Hülya Canbakal and Alpay Filiztekin is a valuable study that focuses on the long-term wealth levels and changes of Ottoman judges (Canbakal and Filiztekin, 2021: 94-127)*. On the other hand, Fatih Bozkurt’s PhD thesis serves as an example of studies examining the transformation of material cultural assets through the usage practices of both traditional and Western objects. In his research, Bozkurt determined that the diffusion of Western objects within the Ottoman Empire accelerated towards the mid-nineteenth century. He further demonstrated that the pronounced differences in the ownership of Western objects among social groups were largely shaped by Muslim and non-Muslim identities (Bozkurt, 2011). Sümeyye Hoşgör Büke’s study examines the impact of social conditions on consumption in the eighteenth century through tereke records, focusing specifically on Istanbul (Hoşgör Büke, 2019).

A study demonstrating the versatile use of inventories has also been presented by Suraiya Faroqhi (Faroqhi, 2003). Suraiya Faroqhi’s study examines the estate inventories of Bursa merchants, craftsmen, and women across various periods with a focus on production, wealth, and lifestyle.

Although the literature contains valuable studies on non-Muslim populations living under Ottoman rule, research that specifically focuses on the properties of metropolitans and examines their socio-economic lives through tereke (estate inventory) records remains relatively limited. Generally, studies in the

* See, for example, (Ergene, 2002: 20-39; Akyüz, 2008: 188-200; Oğuz, 2013; Oğuz, 2010: 91-100; Afyoncu, 2004: 349-362; Artan, 1998: 49-64; Gündüz Oğul, 2024: 205-223; Bozkurt, 2023: 201-243).

literature address the social, economic, and legal conditions of non-Muslims, with particular emphasis on explaining their duties and responsibilities within the imperial framework.[†] As an example of studies on the non-Muslim population, Elif Bayraktar Tellan's PhD thesis investigates the transformation of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Istanbul in the eighteenth century within a social and economic context (Tellan, 2011). In another study, the same author explores the Synod reform in relation to the changes experienced by the Patriarchate in the eighteenth century (Bayraktar Tellan, 2019: 7-22). Additionally, Hasan Çolak's article, which examines Kyrillos Tanas's brief tenure as Patriarch of Antioch within the context of the 1724 Antioch Schism, stands out as a particularly notable contribution to the body of scholarship on the non-Muslim population in the Ottoman Empire (Çolak, 2023: 29-55). The last example in this category could be an article prepared by Turan Açık (Açık, 2017: 1-26). In the study the duties and lives of the metropolitans in Trabzon are examined through records from the sharia courts, *mühimme* registers, and the *piskopos mukataası kalemi*. The study also includes a detailed list of the estate inventories belonging to Trabzon Metropolitan Lavendros.

In this context, the present study aims to analyze the life of a non-Muslim cleric, Dionysios, within Ottoman society by situating him in a social and economic framework, using his estate inventory (tereke) as the primary source. Distinct from the aforementioned studies, this article adopts a microhistorical approach centered on a single tereke record to explore the material culture, daily life, and socio-economic position of a provincial Orthodox metropolitan. While much of the existing scholarship concentrates on urban elites or important Muslim figures, this study is unique in its focus on a provincial and non-Muslim religious

[†] For studies on non-Muslims, see (Ercan, 2001; Kenanoğlu, 2012; Çolak and Bayraktar Tellan, 2019; Bayraktar Tellan 2016: 99-112; Çolak, 2019: 1-20; Ergene and Berker, 2008: 23-46; Jennings, 1978: 225-293).

leader and his everyday material world. Beyond highlighting the personal aspects of his life, the article seeks to understand how such clerics operated within the broader Ottoman administrative and religious framework. The methodology combines archival analysis (specifically the tereke record dated 1737) with a material culture perspective, interpreting objects not merely as economic data but also as markers of status, taste, and identity. This study seeks to contribute to this gap in the literature by centering on the tereke of Metropolitan Dionysios. More specifically, it explores what the 1737 tereke reveals about the material culture, social position, religious authority, and everyday life of a provincial Orthodox metropolitan within the Ottoman Empire. In short, the study first examines the role and responsibilities of Orthodox metropolitans, especially their intermediary function between the state and the non-Muslim population. It then analyzes the quality and quantity of Dionysios' possessions to reconstruct the type of life he led in Sinop, one of his principal areas of service. To better contextualize Dionysios' living conditions and the limitations of his assets, the tereke record of the Metropolitan of Kadıköy, who lived approximately a century later, is also examined in comparative perspective.

2. METHODS

Beginning in the twentieth century, global historiography underwent a significant shift, turning its attention to local histories and the lived experiences of ordinary people. Historians, much like their counterparts in the social sciences, increasingly engaged with personal narratives, everyday practices, and the social structures that shaped these experiences. This intellectual transformation laid the groundwork for the emergence of microhistory as a methodological approach, one that aims to illuminate broader social patterns through the close examination of specific and small-scale events and individual

lives (Gökdemir, 2019: 142-143). In the microhistorical approach, it is not the abundance of documents but the historian's interpretive perspective that takes precedence (Yaşa, 2017: 268). In this context, the present study adopts a microhistorical approach by centering on a tereke record dated 1737. Rather than treating the estate inventory as a static list of belongings, it is approached as a narrative document embedded within broader religious and administrative structures. Through this record, which belonged to Metropolitan Dionysios, the study reconstructs his social and economic profile, interpreting material objects not only as indicators of wealth, but also as cultural symbols that reflect religious identity, personal taste, and social belonging. Accordingly, Dionysios' tereke record is examined as a cultural text that reveals both the material reality and symbolic world of a non-Muslim cleric serving in the Ottoman provinces.

Because the available information on Dionysios is limited, this study does not rely only on his tereke record. It also makes use of information about the institution of the metropolitanate to better understand the world in which he lived and served. For this reason, information concerning the institution of the metropolitanate is used not only as background information but also as a means of reconstructing aspects of Dionysios' life that cannot be directly observed through the tereke record alone.

The estate inventory is not thought to reflect the entirety of Metropolitan Dionysios' wealth; considering that his primary seat of service was in Amasya, the items recorded in Sinop represent only a portion of his estate. For this reason, rather than pursuing a strict liberal or Marxist theoretical interpretation of the entire inventory, a cautious approach focused on the contextual value of the available material has been adopted.

In addition to the 1737 tereke record, an attempt was made to identify other relevant sources about Metropolitan Dionysios by consulting *şer'iyye sicilleri* from both Sinop and Amasya, the regions under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. This archival research revealed only a single *ferman* located in the Amasya court records, no additional documents directly concerning Dionysios were found. The absence of further references manifests the broader challenges in tracing provincial non-Muslim clergy in Ottoman archives. However, to provide a broader context for understanding the property ownership patterns of metropolitans in the Ottoman Empire, an estate inventory dated 1824–1825 belonging to the metropolitan of Kadıköy (Istanbul) was also examined and incorporated into the analysis[‡]. This comparison suggests that Dionysios may have possessed a relatively greater accumulation of material wealth compared to other metropolitans of the period. Nevertheless, both tereke records offer valuable insights into how material culture, religious representation, and the interplay between provincial and central dynamics were articulated through the possessions of an Ottoman cleric.

In this respect, the present study seeks to establish a foundation for future research. It is anticipated that subsequent studies will expand upon these findings by engaging with additional sources and adopting diverse analytical perspectives.

At this juncture, the dating of the tereke records emerges as a crucial factor in enabling a meaningful comparative analysis. The inventory associated with Metropolitan Dionysios was compiled in 1737, whereas the record pertaining to Metropolitan Kalinikos of Kadıköy dates to 1824-1825. The nearly century-long temporal gap between these two documents inevitably constrains the scope and precision of direct comparison. Nevertheless, both the total appraised

[‡] Kismet-i askeriye court of Istanbul (KŞS), no.1174, vr. 99a. See also, (Bozkurt, 2011: 49).

value and the composition of Kalinikos' estate lend compelling support to the proposition that the Sinop inventory captures only a partial representation of Dionysios' overall wealth.

3. Observations on the Identity of Metropolitan Dionysios

In the 1736 estate record, Dionysios was described as a priest (Dionysios *nam rahib*) responsible for the non-Muslim community in Sinop. However, just one year later, in 1737, a decree from Istanbul referred to him as a metropolitan (*patrikliğe dahil Amasya ve Sinop ve tevabi'i midropolidi olan* Dionysios) assigned to Amasya, Sinop, and the surrounding regions[§]. Based on this, it can be understood that he was a priest responsible for Amasya, the metropolitan center, as well as the regions of Sinop, Samsun, Bafra, and Aydınat, which were affiliated with Amasya**.

It is noted that the estate of Dionysios, the subject of this study, was recorded on the twenty-fifth day of *Shawwal* in the year 1149 of the Islamic calendar (February 26, 1737 AD). It is estimated that Dionysios passed away shortly before the date his estate was recorded. However, without a specific date in the archive, his exact death date remains uncertain. The estate inventory identifies Dionysios as a priest and indicates that he served as the religious

[§] As is well known, *fermans* begin with title of the person. *Fermans* written for judges vary according to the ranks of the judge. In the *ferman* related to the death of Dionysios, which instructed that the possessions of the deceased priest should not be interfered with by *ehl-i örf*, the *ferman* begins with the following title: “*mefahirü'l-kuzat ve'l-hükkam, me'adinü'l-fazl ve'l-kelam...ve...ve...kadıları.*” This title was used in *fermans* addressed to three judges. *T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul* (hereafter BOA), ŞŞS (Sinop Şer'iyye Sicili)-89, vr. 30; AŞS-39 (Amasya Şer'iyye Sicili), vr. 73. see (Kütükoğlu, 2013: 106).

** Halil İnalçık published a list of the *pişkeş* amounts paid by bishops and metropolitans between 1641 and 1651. According to the list, Amasya is the metropolitan center. *Kazas* of Sinop, Samsun, Bafra, and Aydınat, along with their associated *nahiye* and *karyes*, fall under the jurisdiction of the Amasya metropolitan. It is noted that the Amasya metropolitan paid 40 gold coins to the state during this period. See (İnalçık, 1982: 442).

leader of the Greek Orthodox community residing in a suburban neighborhood of Sinop. The document specifically states, “medine-i Sinob varoşunda sakin ehl-i zimmet taifesi üzerlerine patrik olub...” indicating that the ‘suburbs of Sinop’ refer to the area outside the city walls of Sinop (Güler, 1992: 53). Thus, the Greeks living in Sinop typically resided in neighborhoods located outside the city walls, primarily to the east of the city. It is also pertinent to mention that Evliya Çelebi, in his travel notes from the early 1640s, describes the Christian neighborhoods of Sinop as being situated by the seaside. He notes that the houses in these areas were distinguished by their multi-story and ancient architectural characteristics. The observation provides additional context to the historical and physical setting in which Dionysios served as a priest and religious leader (Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi, 2006: 44). Additionally, Paul of Aleppo, during his travels between 1654 and 1666, noted the existence of seven churches in the city, all of which were located outside the city walls (Paul of Aleppo, 1836: 428-429). By the eighteenth century, as the city developed and its population grew, it was observed that the Muslim population began to reside outside the city walls. Despite this shift, the term ‘suburbs’, traditionally used to describe areas beyond the city walls, continued to encompass all Greek neighborhoods in Sinop (Demir, 2019: 115).

4. The Social and Administrative Roles of Metropolitans in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of Dionysios

The social structure was highly hierarchical in the Ottoman Empire, and it is seen that non-Muslim subjects constituted an important part of this structure (Faroqhi, 2018: 211). The majority of these subjects are the Orthodox population. When the population structure of Sinop is examined, the presence of a significant number of Greek population as well as the Muslim population in the city draws attention (Ünal, 2008: 99-112). The Greeks in the city are

members of the Orthodox sect and are affiliated with the Amasya Metropolitanate of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Istanbul (Fener).

Detailed information about Dionysios is found in the decree from Istanbul. The document specifies that the *ehl-i örf* should not interfere with the church-related property of deceased priests^{††}. It explicitly emphasizes that this group should refrain from interfering with the church-related property left behind by Dionysios and placed under ecclesiastical authority^{††}. From this, it is understood that the priest Dionysios was a metropolitan^{§§}.

In the Ottoman Empire, metropolitans served as religious leaders of the Orthodox Christian community within the patriarchate (Pakalın, 1983: 494). The relationship between non-Muslims and the Ottoman state was mediated through their religious leaders. At the apex of the Greek Orthodox spiritual hierarchy stood the Patriarch of Istanbul. Directly subordinate to the patriarch

^{††} The estates of priests, monks, kalogerye and other clergymen belonging to any metropolitanate, with an amount under 5,000 akçe, were left to the disposal of the metropolitan/patriarch. (Bilgin and Bozkurt, 2010: 1-31).

^{††} *Ehl-i örf* is described as follows in *ferman*: “*beytü'l-mal ve kassam adamları mütevelliler ve voyvodolar ve subaşılar ve sair ehl-i örf taifesi*”. (BOA, AŞS-39, vr. 73; SŞS-89, vr. 30). It is known that metropolitans carrying out their duties in different locations faced similar issues while fulfilling their responsibilities, see, for example, (Açık, 2017: 11-12).

^{§§} In 1755, at the request of the then Patriarch Kyrillos, the metropolitanates of Amasya and Sinop were transferred from Amasyalı Benjamin to Gabriel in exchange for an annual tribute of 6,400 akçe. Although Patriarch Kyrillos claimed in his petition that the former metropolitan Benjamin had resigned, there are also claims that he was forced to resign by the patriarch and exiled to Mount Athos. The tension between the two parties regarding the appointment was brought before the Imperial Council (*divan-ı hümayun*), and orders were issued concerning the matter. To summarize within the scope of the article, the former metropolitan Benjamin wishes to retrieve his personal belongings in Sinop either personally or through a representative, but Patriarch Kyrillos requests that the Sinop court issue an order prohibiting the return of the personal belongings to Benjamin until the dispute between them is resolved. From this, it is likely that, similar to the late Dionysios, Benjamin also had a room in the suburbs of Sinop where his personal belongings were kept. It is conceivable that this room existed for the residence of the metropolitan officials and that both metropolitans, Dionysios and Benjamin, may have stayed in the same room. (Tellan, 2011: 213-214).

were the metropolitans, who served as the heads of churches within a given city or region and played a pivotal role in managing relations between the Christian populace and the patriarchate through these local ecclesiastical structures. Additionally, metropolitans were charged with overseeing the administration of village churches within their jurisdictions. Notably, although metropolitans were formally expected to reside in the regions to which they were appointed, it was documented that many, particularly during the eighteenth century, predominantly resided in Istanbul and governed their dioceses through appointed deputies (Tellan, 2011: 109). However, the estate record of Metropolitan Dionysios provides evidence that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he was residing in his assigned region.

In order to become a metropolitan, it was necessary to have certain characteristics. It is an important prerequisite that they must be over 30 years old and single (Ercan, 2001: 113-115). In this context, Dionysios must have been over thirty years old and unmarried, as these were essential prerequisites for assuming the office of metropolitan. Another critical qualification for candidates aspiring to this position was the maintenance of a positive relationship with the patriarch, given that metropolitans were nominated by the patriarchate. From this perspective, it is reasonable to infer that Dionysios actively cultivated his relationship with the patriarchate to secure his appointment. Individuals selected by the patriarchate and presented to the Sultan for approval were also required to make a payment, known as *pişkeş*, prior to formally assuming their duties as metropolitan (Kenanoğlu, 2012: 83-99)^{***}. The appointment of a metropolitan was contingent upon the payment of the *pişkeş*. Once the metropolitan received the *berat* (official decree), the

^{***} Halil İnalçık states that documents related to the appointments of metropolitans existed even before 1453, and that the oldest of these documents was issued to the Metropolitan of Antalya during the reign of Bayezid I. (İnalçık, 1991: 415).

appointment process was formally completed. Although the amount of *pişkeş* increased over time, it has been observed that the payments made during the same period could vary significantly from case to case (İnalcık, 1991: 447-448)^{†††}. The primary reason for this difference is considered to be related to the administrative significance of the metropolitan area and the size of its Orthodox population (İnalcık, 1991: 447). It is not known exactly how much money (*pişkeş*) Dionysios paid to take office.

The term of office for metropolitans was not unlimited; they could be reappointed or dismissed upon the conclusion of their tenure, a decision left to the discretion of the patriarchate. Individuals whose term had ended continued to be referred to as bishops. The responsibility for appointing a new metropolitan to replace those who died or were removed from office during their tenure rested with the patriarchs (Kenanoğlu, 2012: 167-170). The estate record of Dionysios indicates that he died while actively serving as metropolitan.

The duties of metropolitans were multifaceted^{§§§}. They had responsibilities in religious, social, legal, and economic areas^{§§§}. Metropolitans were responsible for the administration and property of the church and for the maintenance, repair and preservation of church property. They were also responsible for organizing religious rituals and ceremonies, as well as arranging the education of bishops and monks (Yaşar Keskin, 2023: 2013-2016). Metropolitans had

^{†††} Filiz Yaşar Keskin, in her work, found that *pişkeş* payments made at similar dates in the early eighteenth century differed from one another. Yaşar Keskin, 2023: 2005-2006.

^{†††} The oldest document related to metropolitans is the *Metropolit Kanunnamesi* from the Fatih period. The date of this *berat* is not available. The *berat* is organized in a simple and clear manner. It specifically addresses the appointment of metropolitans after paying *pişkeş*, their areas of authority, and matters related to taxation. (Akgündüz, 1990: 406); See for a comparison of the first metropolitan appointments. (Kenanoğlu, 2012: 78-83).

^{§§§} For more detailed information about the duties of the metropolitans affiliated with the Istanbul Greek Patriarchate in the Ottoman administrative system, see (Yaşar Keskin, 2023: 1992).

authority over bishops, priests, and monks in the region and played a significant role in the financial affairs of the state (Yaşar Keskin, 2023: 1994; Açık, 2017: 7). Financial duties, especially the collection of taxes, fell under the responsibility of the metropolitans. The taxes collected can be listed as follows: *miri rüsum*, *patriklik ve metropolitlik vergisi*, *zitiye*, *zarar-ı kassabiye*, *tasadduk*, *ayazma*, *ayasmoz*, *manastır resmi*, *panayır ve nikah resmi* (İnalcık, 1991: 422).

5. The Estate Inventory of Metropolitan Dionysios: Economic and Social Aspects

The estate of Metropolitan Dionysios provides important information about his personal life and social status. The items in his estate include various materials for his daily life and court fees. The absence of receivables and debts suggests that Dionysios may have limited such financial transactions as a priest. However, the considerable *pişkeş* payments he made to take office and the impression that he lived in financial prosperity also reveal his social and economic situation. The existence of movable and immovable properties in Amasya could not be determined with certainty due to incomplete records. The fact that Kenofon, who died while serving as the metropolitan of Trabzon, owned a house described as “*fevkani ve tahtani*” (a two-storey structure),**** may suggest a certain level of comfort or social standing. However, such architectural descriptions do not necessarily imply significant wealth but rather reflect a standard or slightly above-average residence for a person of his position (Açık, 2017: 20). It should be noted that the estate inventory analyzed in this study uncovers only the possessions found in Dionysios’ Sinop residence and may not represent the entirety of his wealth. Given that Amasya was the primary center of his ecclesiastical duties, it is quite plausible that he owned

**** The upper floor of the house is referred to as “*fevkani*”, and the lower floor is referred to as “*tahtani*” (Sami, 2015: 349, 1166).

movable or immovable properties there, which were not included in the Sinop inventory. This possibility points to one of the inherent limitations of interpreting an individual's overall economic condition solely through a single tereke record. Accordingly, the conclusions drawn in this study consider the fragmentary nature of the available evidence and acknowledge that Dionysios' actual wealth may have been more substantial than the inventory suggests^{††††}.

Throughout history, there have been various practices regarding the inheritance of property belonging to deceased non-Muslim priests. After Yavuz Sultan Selim conquered Jerusalem, he sent a *ferman* to the Armenian patriarch stating that the patriarch would confiscate the properties of the metropolitan, bishops, priests, and other Armenians, which remained in effect during the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. However, the practice changed with the issuance of the *tecdid-i berat* in 1649, promulgated by Sultan Mehmed IV following his accession to the throne. According to this decree, if the property of deceased monks (*keşiş*), priests (*papas*), and other clergymen was valued at less than 5,000 *akça*, it would be transferred to the patriarchate to which they were affiliated; if the value amounted to 5,000 *akça* or more, the property would be claimed by the state (Ercan, 1983: 1145). It is clearly stated that the property of Dionysios, who died without heirs, was handed over to a priest named Baba İgnatios, who was described as his *kethüda*. After paying the court costs, the value of the items in Dionysios' estate, which originally totaled 490 kuruş 10 para, was reduced to 472 kuruş (ŞŞS, 89, vr. 71). While this amount does not reflect great wealth, it suggests a modest yet self-sufficient level of

^{††††} However, it is difficult to make any definitive conclusions on this matter. This is because Paul of Aleppo, during his travels from 1654 to 1666, also visited Sinop. He reports that the Christian community in Amasya had become completely impoverished, and that because of the collapse of the metropolitanate, the Amasya Metropolitan had been living in Sinop for a long time. If the same situation was applicable in the year under investigation, it could be concluded that Dionysios' all estate consisted only of his inheritance. However, nothing definitive can be stated about the issue. (Aleppo, 1836: 429).

prosperity appropriate for a provincial cleric. According to Fatih Bozkurt's classification of estate wealth based on late eighteenth-century tereke records, individuals with assets between 420 and 1000 kuruş were considered to belong to the middle-income group. Although Dionysios' estate value places him at the lower end of this range, it is important to note that he died in 1737, about fifty years before Bozkurt's baseline (Bozkurt, 2011: 102). Given this temporal gap, the purchasing power of 490 kuruş in the earlier period would likely have been higher, reinforcing the interpretation that Dionysios led a financially modest life consistent with his provincial status.

In the tereke record of Kadıköy Metropolitan Kalinikos, dated 1824–1825 and compiled approximately a century later, the total assets were recorded as 8,281 kuruş, with a net amount of 6,875 kuruş remaining after court expenses. Kalinikos' net wealth was approximately 14.5 times greater than that of Dionysios. This disparity underscores the significantly greater financial means available to a metropolitan serving in the imperial center. The fact that a cleric serving in a major urban center such as Istanbul was supported by a robust community structure and maintained close relations with the patriarchate further reinforces this observation.

On the other hand, Dionysios' estate only includes the items found in his room in Sinop. This estate, which seems quite limited when compared to Kalinikos' rich estate record, supports the view that it does not reflect Dionysios' entire wealth. Therefore, when making a comparison, not only the numerical differences but also the places where the individuals served, the conditions of the period and the limitations in the scope of the document must be taken into consideration.

Among the items in Dionysios' estate, clothing and personal belongings stand out. It should be noted that, depending on an individual's wealth and social

status in Ottoman society, tereke records often list caftans, shirts, turbans, and belly bands made of cotton, silk, linen, or wool. Dionysios' estate includes 8 'new' shirts, 9 pairs of pants, and 4 colorful *şalvar*-bends (*elvan uçkur*), along with a variety of fabrics in different colors and types, including percaline (*elvan boğası*). The percaline is recorded as the most valuable single item in Dionysios' estate, valued at 60 kuruş. In contrast, the most valuable item in Kalinikos' estate was his staff, appraised at 12,020 kuruş in silver. While the inclusion of Kalinikos' crosse (asâ) in his estate inventory can be interpreted as a physical symbol of his spiritual authority, no such item appears in Dionysios' estate. Notably, the clothing listed among Dionysios' possessions consisted of a limited number of garments made from various colors and fabrics, suggesting that these items were sufficient for his needs during his time in Sinop. Furthermore, the absence of thick winter clothing implies that he likely resided in Sinop primarily during the warmer months. In early modern Ottoman society, clothing often functioned as a visible marker of religious identity: non-Muslims, except for certain privileged groups, were not permitted to dress like Muslims, and vice versa (Quataert, 1997: 403-425). In this context, items such as *şalvar*-bends (*elvan uçkur*), percaline (*elvan boğası*), and several new shirts may reflect Dionysios' non-Muslim status as well as his clerical position^{****}.

When the inheritance of Kalinikos is examined, the presence of valuable clothes he owned attracts attention. There is a total of four furs in the estate record of Kalinikos. Two of them are *zerdeva*, and one is squirrel fur; no information is given about the type of the fourth fur. The most valuable furs in the estate are the *zerdeva* furs; one is valued at 142 kuruş and the other at 130 kuruş. The value of the squirrel fur is 100 kuruş, and the value of the fur whose type is not specified is 60 kuruş. *Zerdeva* and squirrel furs were among the most valuable

**** For the use of clothing as a marker of religious and social identity in the Ottoman Empire, see (Ercan, 1990: 119-121; Faroqhi, 2002: 124).

furs in the Ottoman Empire (Açikel and Alkoç, 2024 341). The fact that Kalinikos had such furs is an important feature not only in terms of their economic production, but also in terms of social solutions and the demonstration of their power of representation. On the other hand, in terms of religious identity, Kalinikos' inheritance notably included various priests' robes, such as atlas, ipek (semai), and tricolette, items absent from Dionysios' estate. Alongside these, the shirts and belts listed in Kalinikos' inventory are similar to those found in Dionysios' estate. However, Kalinikos' tereke record offers significantly more detailed insights into his personal life. Items such as his three beard combs, handkerchiefs, and purse reflect the basic objects he used in his daily routine.

The majority of the items listed in Dionysios' estate in Sinop consist of furnishings and household objects associated with his personal quarters. Items such as a basin (*leğen*), ewer (*ibrik*), decorated seat (*mak'ad*), two decorated chests (*münakkaş sandık*), quilt and pillow covers, thread, and pillows of various colors and types illustrate the diversity of his household possessions. Notably, the quilt cover, made from "Amasya" fabric, suggests either a personal connection to Amasya or that it was a commodity sold in Sinop under that designation. Additionally, it is understood that ten sheepskins were used as floor coverings. The presence of these sheepskins, alongside other household goods, offers insight into Dionysios' domestic arrangements and standard of living. The selection of these items appears oriented towards ensuring the comfort and multifunctionality of his living space in Sinop. It is further believed that the basin and ewer were likely used for daily ablutions such as washing the hands and face in the morning. Chests, commonly employed not only for storing valuables but also for organizing household textiles like covers, towels, and garments, unveil both practical utility and domestic order within his residence (Küçükerman, 2007: 80; Ögel, 1978: 285-287). In short, the listed household goods indicate Dionysios' attention to his social life and comfort.

Unlike today's multi-roomed and spacious houses, Dionysios' room in Sinop demonstrates the versatile and functional use of space. In this context, alongside the clothing and furnishings, the presence of kitchen items suggests that the metropolitan had an interest in cooking activities. Items such as two knives, 8 bone spoons, 1 guest plate, and a tablecloth (*makrama*) provide insights into his dining habits and how he hosted guests. Dionysios' estate includes 14 coffee cups and a guest plate, which supports the view that he had a hospitable personality. The absence of detailed information about the origin of the coffee cups in the estate suggests they were likely made of Kütahya tiles (Faroghi, 2005: 175). During that period, ordinary coffee cups were typically made from Kütahya tiles, while wealthier individuals often used cups made of Chinese porcelain. Additionally, Dionysios' belongings include 8 silver coffee cup saucer (*zarf*) and 10 silver goblets with a total value of 35 kuruş (Faroghi, 2005: 212, 215). Besides, it is known that many of the items used in Orthodox churches in Istanbul were made from fabrics adorned with gold embroidery. Although it is not known to what extent the religious items used in the church in his field of duty are reflected in Dionysios' estate, the presence of 1 silver thread in his estate is noteworthy. However, it is known that goblets and metal plates were used to pour wine and consecrate bread during church services. From this perspective, the presence of 10 silver goblets in Dionysios' estate becomes significant. In short, the silver thread and silver goblets in the estate are categorized as items used in religious rituals. These items reveal the objects Dionysios used in his duties. Information about Kalinikos' domestic life can be inferred from the limited number of household items recorded in his estate inventory. Among these, bedding such as quilts and pillows stand out. In addition, objects such as a silver coffee cup saucer (*zarf*), twelve coffee cups, a wicker chest, a basin, and an ewer are listed as items likely used in his daily routine.

Given the demands of his role and the responsibilities of his position, the presence of a clock (valued at 25 kuruş) in his estate is significant. For a metropolitan, managing and controlling time would have been essential, making the clock a meaningful item in his possession. The presence of a single candlestick, essential for lighting in that period, is noteworthy. Although the size of the room is unknown, the fact that one candlestick sufficed suggests that it met the lighting needs adequately. Viewed from the perspective of non-Muslims, the inkstands found in Dionysios' estate (one pearlescent and one cardboard inkstand) take on particular significance. These writing tools further highlight Dionysios' intellectual pursuits and his role in the community. Although these items may seem modest individually, their combined value – particularly the 25 kuruş clock – represented a notable portion of Dionysios' estate, which totaled 490 kuruş. This suggests that such items were not merely functional but also meaningful indicators of status and personal investment^{§§§§}. Although Dionysios' estate inventory includes various writing instruments, it does not contain any mention of books. In contrast, Kalinikos' inventory notably lists a considerable number of books, including a Bible and a dictionary. The value of the Bibles recorded in Kalinikos' inventory ranges from 2 to 30 kuruş, while the dictionary is listed at 12 kuruş. The presence of these works reveals Kalinikos' connection to religious and intellectual life, and it also indicates that written culture held a significant place in both his daily routine and his clerical responsibilities.

^{§§§§} In the eighteenth century, owning a clock was generally regarded as a symbol of wealth and social status. The monetary value of clocks varied depending on their type and craftsmanship. Although the specific type of the clock listed in Dionysios' estate is not mentioned, its appraised value of 25 kuruş suggests that it may have served not only a functional purpose but also acted as an indicator of personal status. (Artan, 1998: 57; Oğuz, 2013: 134)

In addition, it is noteworthy that there were six items listed as “ablution cloths” in Dionysios’ room in Sinop. While this term typically refers to cloths used by Muslims in the performance of religious duties, its appearance in the estate of a non-Muslim cleric suggests a different practical function. It is likely that these clothes served as hand or face towels used in daily hygiene rather than for religious purposes. Moreover, it should be noted that the terminology used in tereke records usually highlights the scribes’ habitual phrasing rather than the actual usage by the deceased (Bozkurt, 2011: 244). Therefore, the inclusion of “ablution cloths” in this context may reveal more about bureaucratic conventions than religious practice.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study centers on the estate of Metropolitan Dionysios, who served in Amasya and its surrounding regions in the early eighteenth century, and aims to analyze the material resources, social roles, and routine practices of a non-Muslim spiritual leader operating within the Ottoman provinces. The tereke record in question illustrates how a seemingly simple inventory of belongings embodied Dionysios’s spiritual authority, how a balance was negotiated between his public and private life, and how his possessions functioned both practically and symbolically.

The ritual objects, writing implements, silver goblets, and simple household accessories listed in the estate provide important insights into how Dionysios’ identity was materially constructed and sustained. However, the inventory encompasses only the belongings located in Sinop and offers no information regarding his possessions in Amasya or other locations. This limitation indicates that the record does not account for the entirety of Dionysios’ assets. It also underscores the extent to which the close examination enabled by the

microhistorical approach depends on careful interpretation within the boundaries set by the available documentation.

To address this limitation, the study undertakes a comparative evaluation of the estate of Kadıköy Metropolitan Kalinikos, dated 1824–1825. Kalinikos’s estate, with its wealth of ceremonial garments, ritual objects, books, and particularly four valuable furs made of zerdeva and squirrel pelts, reveals how spiritual authority, rooted in ceremonial representation, was institutionally reinforced at the imperial center. In contrast, the absence of heavy winter clothing and furs in Dionysios’s estate, as well as the predominance of items more suited to the summer season, point both to the specific documented location (his room in Sinop) and to seasonal considerations. Moreover, the contrast highlights not only the economic disparities between the imperial center and the provinces but also the representational challenges inherent in archival documentation, which reflects the distinct material worlds in which such records were produced.

The comparative examination of the tereke records of Dionysios and Kalinikos points to differences in terms of the reproduction of material capabilities and perspective. Kalinikos’s estate, dated 1824–1825 and compiled in Istanbul, reflects the rich material culture and institutional prestige associated with a metropolitan supported by a strong community structure and a well-established patriarchal network. In contrast, Dionysios’s estate, dated 1737 and limited to records pertaining solely to his residence in Sinop, presents a much more modest picture. It is also highly likely that his primary duty station in Amasya was not accounted for and that assets such as immovable properties or items held in church storage were excluded from this record. Undoubtedly, the cash payments made by metropolitans upon assuming office indicate that these individuals had access to considerable financial resources and did not lack

significant economic power. Therefore, while the comparison between the estates of the two metropolitans offers valuable insights, it must be interpreted cautiously, with careful attention to the fragmented nature of Dionysios' record and the broader archival limitations associated with provincial clergy.

In conclusion, this study opens a new window onto the lives of the most prominent non-Muslim clerical elites in the Ottoman provinces and highlights both the analytical possibilities offered by microhistorical approaches and the inherent representational limitations of surviving documents. It invites a critical reassessment of generalized assumptions about wealth, status, and religious authority by foregrounding the material worlds of individual figures. It also demonstrates that local context, seasonality, and archival production practices can be traced and interpreted within historiographical inquiry. Future research may build on this foundation by comparing metropolitan estates across different periods and regions or by further examining the symbolic dimensions of material accumulation within the frameworks of social and sectarian governance.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Nesneler, yalnızca gündelik yaşamın devamını sağlayan araçlar değil, aynı zamanda bireyin toplumsal statüsünü, dini kimliğini ve sosyo-ekonomik ağlarını

görünür kılan sembolik göstergelerdir. Maddi kültür çalışmaları, bireylerin sahip olduğu menkul ve gayrimenkul varlıklar üzerinden, dönemin tüketim alışkanlıklarını ve toplumsal hiyerarşisini okuma imkânı sunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, “tereke” olarak adlandırılan miras envanterleri, vefat eden kişinin sosyal mevkii, aile yapısı, finansal ilişkileri ve yaşam tarzı hakkında önemli veriler sunan birincil kaynaklar niteliğindedir. Osmanlı tarih yazımında tereke defterleri, servet dağılımı, tüketim kalıpları, sosyal tabakalaşma ve borç-alacak ilişkilerinin incelenmesinde önemli bir kaynak grubu olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Literatürde genellikle devlet ricali veya Müslüman elitler üzerine yoğunlaşan tereke çalışmaları mevcut olsa da gayrimüslim ruhban sınıfının maddi dünyasına dair analizler oldukça sınırlıdır. Bu çalışma, 18. yüzyıl başlarında Sinop ve Amasya çevresinde görev yapan Metropolit Dionysios’un 1737 tarihli tereke kaydı üzerinden, bir Ortodoks din adamının taşradaki sosyo-ekonomik portresini mikro-tarihsel bir perspektifle incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Osmanlı millet sistemi içerisinde metropolitler, İstanbul Rum Ortodoks Patrikhanesi’ne bağlı olarak, belirli bölgelerdeki dini ve idari işleyişten sorumlu üst düzey ruhban sınıfını temsil ederlerdi. Metropolitler, devlet ile gayrimüslim tebaa arasında bir köprü vazifesi görerek, vergi toplama, dini ritüelleri yönetme, kilise mülklerini idare etme ve cemaat içi hukuki meselelerde aracı olma gibi çok boyutlu görevler üstlenmişlerdir. Çalışmaya konu olan Dionysios, 1737 yılındaki belgelerde metropolitlik merkezi olarak Amasya başta olmak üzere Sinop, Samsun ve Bafra bölgelerinden sorumlu bir metropolit olarak tanımlanmaktadır.

Yöntem

Çalışma, büyük tarihsel anlatıların yerine bireysel deneyimlere ve yerel ölçekteki verilere odaklanan mikro-tarih metodolojisini benimsemektedir. Bu doğrultuda, 1737 tarihli tereke kaydı, yalnızca miras listesi olarak değil, bir “kültürel metin” olarak okunmuştur. Analiz sürecinde nesneler ekonomik değer, kullanım amaçları ve taşıdıkları değer bakımından incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, elde edilen verilerin tarihsel bağlamını güçlendirmek amacıyla, yaklaşık bir asır sonra (1824-1825) İstanbul’da görev yapan Kadıköy Metropolit Kalinikos’un terekesiyle karşılaştırmalı bir değerlendirme yapılmıştır. Çalışmanın temel kaynağını 1737 tarihli Sinop Şer’iyye Sicili’nde yer alan tereke kaydı oluşturmaktadır. Arşiv araştırmaları kapsamında Amasya ve Sinop sicilleri taranmış, Dionysios’a dair yalnızca bir ferman kaydına ulaşılmıştır. Terekenin kapsamını ve temsil gücünü değerlendirebilmek amacıyla, yaklaşık bir asır sonrasına ait Kadıköy Metropolit Kalinikos’un (1824-1825) tereke kaydı karşılaştırmalı olarak analize dahil edilmiştir. Her ne kadar iki belge arasında yaklaşık yüz yıllık bir zaman farkı bulunsa da merkez-taşra ayrımı ve maddi kültür unsurlarındaki farklılaşmalar açısından bu mukayese açıklayıcı veriler sunmaktadır.

Dionysios'un Sinop'ta kaydedilen tereke toplamı, mahkeme masrafları düşüldükten sonra 472 kuruş olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu miktar, büyük bir servete işaret etmemekle birlikte, taşrada görev yapan bir metropolit için mütevazı fakat yeterli bir ekonomik düzeyi yansıttığını düşündürmektedir. Bununla birlikte terekenin yalnızca Sinop'taki odasında bulunan eşyaları kapsadığı, Amasya'daki muhtemel taşınır ve taşınmaz malları içermediği anlaşılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla mevcut kayıt, Dionysios'un toplam servetinin tamamını değil, belirli bir mekâna ait kısmını temsil edebileceğini düşündürmektedir.

Dionysios'un gardırobu, dönemin taşra modasını ve din adamı kimliğini yansıtan yeni gömlekler, şalvarlar ve elvan uçkurlardan oluşmaktadır. En değerli varlığını 60 kuruşluk "elvan boğası" oluşturmaktadır. Kışlık ve kürk türü ağır kıyafetlerin eksikliği, metropolitin Sinop'ta daha çok yaz aylarında bulunduğu dair mevsimsel bir ipucu sunmaktadır. Ev eşyaları arasında münakkaş sandıklar, leğen, ibrik, yorgan ve yastıklar, koyun postları ve çeşitli örtüler yer almaktadır. Bu unsurlar, tek odalı ya da çok amaçlı kullanılan bir yaşam alanında düzen ve konforun sağlanmasına yönelik pratikleri yansıtmaktadır. Bu eşyalar, metropolitin gündelik hayatının sade fakat işlevsel bir çerçevede sürdürüldüğünü göstermektedir.

Dionysios'un terekesinde dikkat çeken bir diğer unsur, kahve kültürü ve misafirperverlikle ilişkilendirilebilecek objelerdir. Fincan, gümüş kadehler ve zarf hem sosyal hem de dini işlevler açısından önem taşımaktadır. Kahve tüketimi, Osmanlı toplumunda sosyal etkileşimin önemli bir parçası olup, bu eşyalar metropolitin cemaat içindeki temsilini güçlendirmektedir. Ayrıca bir saat (25 kuruş değerinde), iki hokka ve çeşitli yazı araçları, Dionysios'un idari ve entelektüel faaliyetlerine işaret etmektedir. Zamanı düzenleme ve yazışmaları yürütme kapasitesi, metropolitlik makamının kurumsal sorumluluklarıyla doğrudan ilişkili gözükmektedir.

Diğer taraftan Kadıköy Metropoliti Kalinikos'un tereke kaydı ile yapılan karşılaştırma, merkez-taşra arasındaki ekonomik ve temsili farklılıkları belirgin biçimde ortaya koymaktadır. Kalinikos'un net serveti 6.875 kuruş olup, Dionysios'un servetinin yaklaşık 14,5 katına denk gelmektedir. Zerdeva ve sincap kürkleri, atlas ve ipek ruhani kıyafetler ile çok sayıda kitap Kalinikos'un maddi dünyasında törensel temsilin ve entelektüel üretimin daha görünür olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu durum, İstanbul gibi merkezî bir bölgede görev yapan metropolitin, güçlü bir cemaat yapısı ve patrikhane ile yakın ilişkiler sayesinde daha geniş ekonomik imkânlarla sahip olduğunu düşündürmektedir. Ancak, Kalinikos'un aksine Dionysios'un envanterinde kitap kaydına rastlanmaması dikkat çekicidir. Bu durum kitapların kilise kütüphanesine veya Amasya'daki merkezine dahil edilmiş olma ihtimalini güçlendirmektedir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, mikro-tarihsel bir perspektifle ele alınan tek bir tereke kaydının, Osmanlı taşrasında görev yapan bir gayrimüslim ruhani liderin maddi dünyasını ve sosyal konumunu anlamada ne denli önemli veriler sunduğunu göstermektedir. Dionysios'un tereke kaydı, bir yandan mütevazı fakat düzenli bir yaşamı işaret ederken, diğer yandan ruhani otorite ile gündelik hayat arasındaki dengeyi ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, tereke kayıtlarının temsil sınırlarını vurgulamakla birlikte, maddi kültür unsurlarının statü, kimlik ve kurumsal rol bağlamında okunabileceğini göstermektedir. Gelecekte yapılacak çalışmaların farklı bölgelerdeki metropolit terekelerini kapsayacak şekilde genişletilmesi, bu sosyal sınıfın imparatorluk genelindeki sosyo-ekonomik haritasını daha net bir şekilde ortaya koyacaktır.