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THE PROVINCE STRIKES BACK  
IMPERIAL DYNAMICS  
IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

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# Local Elites and Government Intervention in the Province of Anadolu

Suraiya Faroqhi

The interaction between the Ottoman central authorities and local élites is currently a 'hot' topic at least where the Balkans and the Arab provinces are concerned. Yet relatively speaking this question has been little studied with respect to Anatolia. I would contend that this is so because today's Republic of Turkey is a strongly centralized state and thus there is not a great deal of motivation to study the more decentralized regimes that may have prevailed in the past. Although we now possess a sizeable number of monographs covering the towns and cities of Anadolu (Fig. 1), which focus on Bursa, Edremit, Manisa, İzmir, Ankara, Çankırı and Kastamonu, the question even of urban élites in the narrow sense of the term has not too often become a major concern of historians.<sup>1</sup> However it seems that the time has come to take a closer look at Anatolia as well.

Our analysis will concentrate on the 'classical period' from the late fifteenth to the early seventeenth century, while the last section will connect with the work that has been done on parts of Anadolu during the 1700s and early 1800s.<sup>2</sup> Not that at least at first glance, this early period of Ottoman control over the peninsula appears as a very propitious period for a study of locally based political élites. It is well known that in the second half of the fifteenth century, once Ottoman power had been consolidated, provincial lords were eased out of their positions and replaced by centrally appointed officials.<sup>3</sup> Many of the latter had come into the Ottoman palace as slave-pages, received their educations in the chambers of the Topkapı Sarayı and were then appointed to a sequence of military-administrative positions that might culminate in sub-provincial (*sancak* or 'banner') commands and finally, if a given servitor of the sultan was especially fortunate, in the governor-generalship of the province itself.<sup>4</sup> Given rapid rotation from one appointment to the next, these military men cum officials would have had trouble forming ties with the localities they were called upon to administer; and that indeed must have been the rationale for instituting these procedures in the first place.<sup>5</sup> A low degree of local 'rootedness' also characterized the young princes of the dynasty who in the sixteenth century were sent to Kütahya or Manisa in order to prepare for the succession struggle. For even if in their temporary residences these princes were allowed to build mosques and covered markets, they were probably eager to leave for Istanbul as soon as was politically feasible.

Given this state of affairs for a long time it seemed unproductive to seek for provincial élites active before the second half of the seventeenth century. 'Early modern centralization', often misunderstood to mean centralization in the post-1850 sense of the

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<sup>1</sup> Gerber 1988; Yılmaz 1995; Gökçen 1946a; Gökçen 1946b; Goffman 1990; Frangakis-Syrett 1992; Ergeneç 1995; Ergene 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Inalcik 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Inalcik 1954, 103-129.

<sup>4</sup> Kunt 1983.

<sup>5</sup> Barkan 1975, 17.

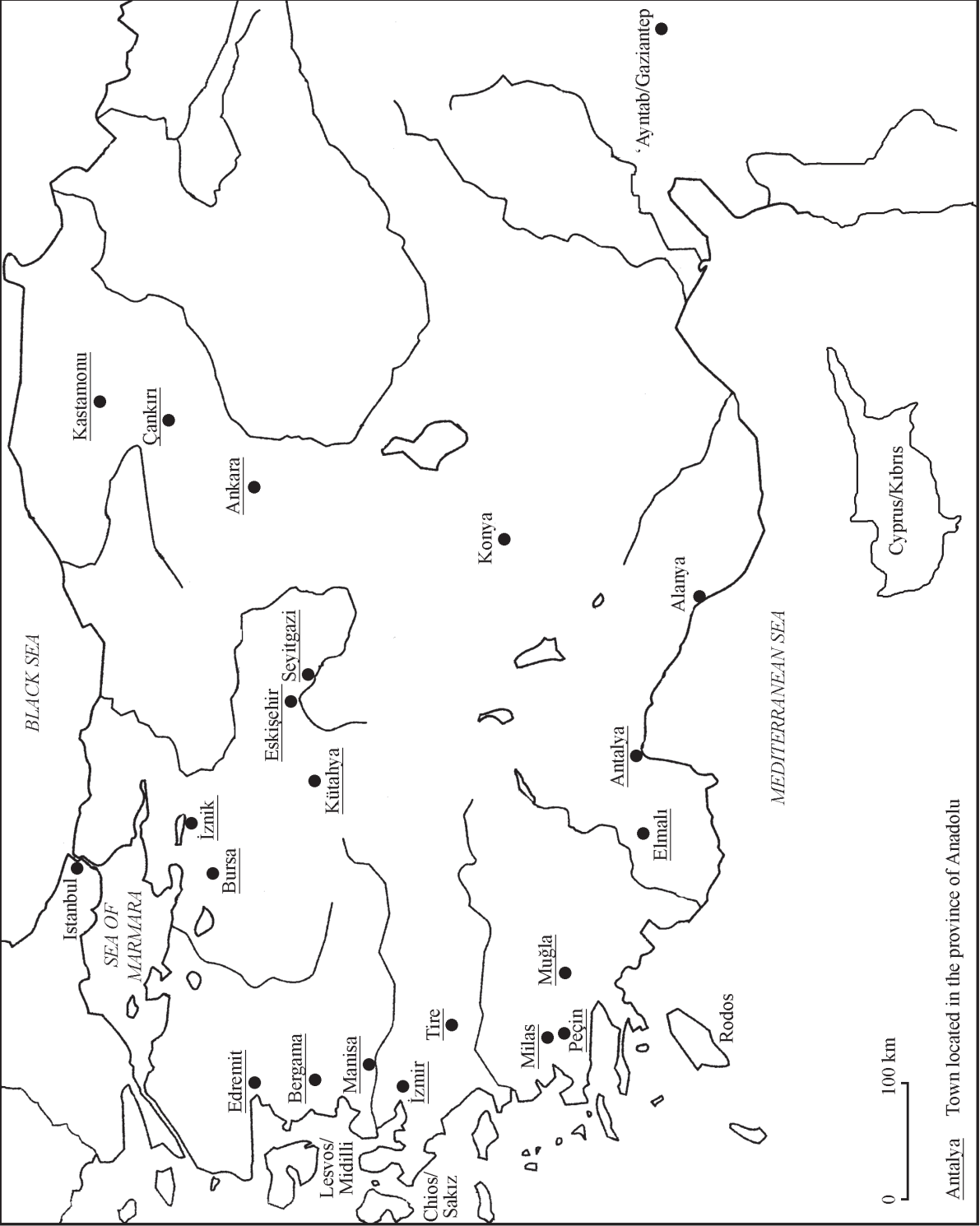


Fig. 1. Towns of Ottoman Anatolia.

word, has long appeared as one of the glories of sixteenth-century Ottoman rule, and there seemed little point in watering down that particular achievement.<sup>6</sup>

However today we are less inclined to regard centralization as a *summum bonum* and hallmark of political ‘progress’.<sup>7</sup> Recent work on Syria and also on the town of ‘Ayntab (today: Gaziantep) in south-eastern Anatolia has shown that local élites played an important role in these places, even at the height of Ottoman power in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>8</sup> And if a degree of decentralization was tolerated in a province such as Syria, wealthy and also especially important for sultanic legitimization due to its role as a staging point for the pilgrimage caravans to Mecca, the matter appears worth investigating also where other centrally-located provinces are concerned. Thus even though Anadolu in the 1500s does not seem a very favorable territory for the emergence or self-perpetuation of local élites we will see that they managed to operate none the less.

Even if fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman centralization involved control of local affairs by centrally appointed holders of tax assignments (*sipahis* and *zaims*), it is hard to imagine that these men should have done so unaided. Many *sipahis* had but very modest tax grants (*timar*), and in addition they were so often away on campaign. Certainly whenever the army was mobilized, a few holders of small *timars* might be left behind to secure public order, but given the great distances often involved, these men cannot have done their jobs without some local aid. Moreover the kadis of this early period also were usually in charge of large districts, and given the lack of surviving kadi registers for most towns before the mid-sixteenth century or even later, there is reason to suspect that the bureaucratic organization of the courts of justice (*mahkeme*) was also still in its beginnings. In addition the guilds that in later times played a major role in both defending the interests of the urban population and ensuring the collection of taxes and the provision of services, were at this time also still in an embryonic state. Therefore there must have been local élites that enjoyed certain privileges and in exchange helped the members of the administrative apparatus in the extraction of taxes and general administration. These are the people that we will attempt to track down here.<sup>9</sup>

### *The province and its parts*

The enormous province of Anadolu is already documented under Murad I (r. 1362-1389) although for that early period we cannot be sure of its borders. By the 1520s and 1530s Anadolu reached from Çankırı and Kastamonu in the north-east of the Anatolian peninsula to Antalya and Alanya/Alâiye in the south-west.<sup>10</sup> Following the coasts of the Black Sea, the Aegean and the Mediterranean while encompassing the earliest possessions of the Ottoman sultans (Hüdavendigâr, Sultan üyüği, Koca eli and Karası) Anadolu formed part of the Ottoman ‘core lands’.<sup>11</sup> In the western coastlands of the Aegean, the corresponding

<sup>6</sup> On the characteristics of ‘early modern’ centralization see Abou-El-Haj 1991, 34-40.

<sup>7</sup> Salzmann 1993.

<sup>8</sup> Abu-Husayn 1985; on ‘Ayntab/Gaziantep see Canbakal 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Khoury 2006, 135-156.

<sup>10</sup> Binark *et al.* 1993; Binark *et al.* 1994; Binark *et al.* 1995.

<sup>11</sup> On the concept of ‘core lands’ see Kreiser 1979.

province was Rum eli.<sup>12</sup> That these were for a long time the major divisions of the empire is reflected in the fact that the two military judges (*kadiasker*) throughout the empire's existence were called 'of Rum eli' and 'of Anadolu'.

Within this province quite a few 'banners' (*sancak, liva*), under which the cavalry assembled in case of war, down to the administrative changes of the nineteenth century bore the names of certain princely dynasties that the Ottomans had displaced: Germiyan, Saruhan, Aydın, Menteşe, Hamid, Teke. All these principalities have left scant records of their own, but Ottoman, Venetian and Genoese documents have made it possible in some cases for twentieth-century scholars to trace at least certain aspects of their histories in monographs. Most of these princes lost their thrones for the first time to Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402), but were reinstated by Timur after the battle of Ankara (1402); however Ottoman re-conquest followed rapidly, at varying dates during the early fifteenth century, by either Mehmed I (r. 1412-1420) or Murad II (r. 1420-1451, with interruptions).

As a result only the names remind us, as they must have reminded some educated people of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, of the pre-Ottoman political situation in western and central Anatolia. However the history of these principalities was not really part of the intellectual baggage of Ottomans educated in Istanbul, even of those who were reasonably well versed in the history of their own rulers. Thus to the seventeenth-century Ottoman gentleman and traveler Evliya Çelebi the town of Muğla (in antiquity: Mogolla), located in the sub-province of Menteşe, had been founded by a perfectly imaginary lord named Muğlı bey. While the latter supposedly had been a vizier to the Menteşe, it was an encounter with the Prophet Muhammad himself that had induced this personage – or so the story went – to convert to Islam.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Putting down roots: a former palace dignitary and local charities*

In their attempts to connect pre-Ottoman and Ottoman provincial histories, present-day historians try to do a little better, even though when studying local personages who but rarely made it to the seat of the central government, it is often very difficult to locate suitable sources. In the absence of family names not much can be gathered from registers enumerating fifteenth- and sixteenth-century *sipahis* and *zaims*, but records concerning pious foundations are sometimes more helpful. Such types of documentation often form the final sections of the famed tax registers (*tahrir*), long a favorite source for historians of Ottoman society and indispensable even today. Further information can sometimes be found in the records compiled by the scribes of local judges: for Bursa the series begins in the last decades of the fifteenth century, while for Manisa and Ankara these registers are available starting with the mid-1500s. When all is said and done, the men and women rich enough to finance mosques, schools or dervish lodges must have formed part of some kind of social élite.

Certainly some of these personages had come into the regions where they established their pious foundations as officials of the sultans. Yet no matter what members of the central administration, and in their wake modern historians, may have thought, not every Ottoman official conformed to the image of the eternally mobile servitor of his

<sup>12</sup> *Encycl. Islam*, sub voce 'Anadolu' (by F. Taeschner).

<sup>13</sup> Evliyâ Çelebi 2005, 105.

sultan who never developed any local ties. To the contrary the very fact that these servitors of the ruler chose to establish their charities in a town of Anadolu and not in the Ottoman capital or its environs, means that to a degree they had put down ‘roots’ in a place where they had once officiated. This may for instance have applied to the chief black eunuch (*Kızlar ağası*) Ahmed Ağa who built a primary school in Manisa: however by 1593-94 the teacher complained that since the foundation was administered from Istanbul, necessary repairs had been neglected and now the building was in a parlous state.<sup>14</sup> Possibly Ahmed Ağa, deceased by 1593, had spent time in Manisa as a young man, perhaps accompanying a prince who had once resided in this town, and remembered this episode in his biography after rising to prominence in the sultan’s palace.

*A (former) dynasty of viziers and the pious foundations of its members*

In 1575-76 a certain *sipahi* had farmed revenues in the region of Bergama; as his guarantor, who was to stand surety for the punctual discharge of his debts to the exchequer, the candidate tax farmer proposed the administrator of the local dervish lodge bearing the name of İlalı Hatun. This foundation administrator put up the not inconsiderable sum of 5000 *akçe*, and also involved his own son in the deal.<sup>15</sup> Given the rarity of the name of İlalı, especially for a woman, quite possibly the founder of this lodge was the daughter of a fifteenth-century Ottoman vizier of the Çandarlı dynasty who was in fact known by that name.

As to the Çandarlı/Çendereli family as a whole, they are a fine example of a particular type of local élite, namely the descendants of prominent personages that had been allies of the Ottoman sultans while the latter were still small but dynamic princes in the course of expanding their power to the east and west of the Sea of Marmara. Contrary to what is often believed, these families did not always disappear into obscurity when from the late 1400s the principal offices had come to be filled by slaves of the sultans (*kul*). A case in point is this Çandarlı family whose members were so often buried in İznik that they must have cultivated a special tie to that town. Yet in their heyday during the 1400s many of these men had traveled all over the empire while officiating as high-level judges. In a remarkably large number of cases moreover scions of the Çandarlı dynasty changed course in mid-career to serve as governors and ultimately become grand viziers.

By the sixteenth century, however, members of this family no longer achieved the highest offices in the realm. But they still might become governors and judges in places as remote from İznik as Buda, Aleppo or Damascus. Yet even now the Çandarlıs often had themselves buried in their old home-town by the lake, once a centre of the fledgling Ottoman principality. Moreover some latter-day descendants of the family even show up as notables (*ayan*) in the very same area during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This means that over more than four hundred years certain Çandarlıs were part of the local élite of this small town, which due to its production of fine colorful faience has gained lasting fame among art connoisseurs.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Gökçen 1946a, 28.

<sup>15</sup> Gökçen 1946a, 45-46.

<sup>16</sup> *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* VIII, *sub voce* ‘Çandarlı’, 208-210 (by M. Aktepe). Unfortunately the patrons of most pieces of faience remain unknown; therefore we cannot tell whether any Çandarlıs employed the artists/artisans of İznik.



From our point of view the ties of the Çandarlı to ‘their’ region are demonstrated mainly by their pious foundations. Çandarlı Kara Halil Hayreddin Paşa who lived in the time of Sultan Osman (d. 1326) and seems to have been the founder of the family’s fortunes established a mosque in İznik that is still extant, and a family burial place came into being next to this charity. An Ottoman register of pious foundations compiled in 1530 records the benefactions of Hayreddin Paşa in some detail; however in the absence of sobriquets distinguishing individuals bearing the same names from one another it is difficult to say whether all the pious foundations on record were linked to the founder of the dynasty or else to some homonym about whom nothing is known.<sup>17</sup>

In order to protect their assets against the vicissitudes of public office the Çandarlı also established a family foundation properly speaking of which members of the dynasty were the principal beneficiaries; this institution was somehow connected to Sultan Murad I (r. 1362-1389). In addition women who were probably members of the Çandarlı family by birth or marriage including İlaldı Hatun and Hundi Hatun also immortalized themselves by pious foundations.

Moreover in 1442 Çandarlı Mahmud Çelebi, who had the misfortune of being captured by Janos Hunyadi (1444), was later handed over to the Serbs and only released after paying a ransom of 70,000 ducats, also founded a mosque in the family’s home town.<sup>18</sup> A relative by marriage of the Ottoman dynasty, he was ultimately buried next to his İznik foundation. In addition the family instituted some charities in Edirne and when its political fortunes were in decline, some of its members went to live in this city and administered them. We may assume that the family’s great interest in pious foundations was also connected to the fact that so many of them had trained as religious scholars before embarking on military-administrative careers. But if we look beyond the province of Anadolu to other prominent families of the early Ottoman period active in Anatolia we find that this behavior was by no means unique.

### *Traces of pre-Ottoman princes*

When the Ottomans conquered the territories of Muslim rulers they normally respected the pious foundations of these predecessors. Ottoman charities were always recognized by entering them into the official registers of pious foundations, and the identical procedure was followed whenever defeated Muslim princes were concerned. Throughout the Ottoman Empire the late 1520s and early 1530s were a time when a grand set of summary (*icmal*) tax registers was prepared, presumably in order to facilitate the re-distribution of state revenues to augment the Ottoman armies in a period of conquest in Hungary as well as Iraq. Now available in publication, the sections of these compilations dealing with charitable enterprises will form the basis for much of our discussion.<sup>19</sup>

A good example is the double foundation of the Menteşe prince Ahmed Gazi (d. 1391): a mosque of his was situated in the town of Milas and in addition there was a larger complex in nearby Peçin, then a thriving town and princely residence but today

<sup>17</sup> Binark *et al.* 1994, 801-805 (facsimile section).

<sup>18</sup> *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* VIII, *sub voce* ‘Çandarlı’, 208-210 (by M. Aktepe).

<sup>19</sup> Binark *et al.* 1993; Binark *et al.* 1994; Binark *et al.* 1995.

more or less abandoned.<sup>20</sup> Ahmed Gazi's theological school in Peçin which also contains his mausoleum is still in existence; it has intrigued researchers by the strange shape of its gate, which shows features reminiscent of Cypriote or Rhodian gothic structures.<sup>21</sup> But due to the near-absence of written documentation nothing can be said about Ahmed Gazi's artistic interests or the origins of his workmen.

From the revenue sources recorded in the register of 1530 it is immediately apparent that this was the enterprise of a very highly placed and indeed princely personage, for the foundations had been granted the entire taxes payable by three villages. Non-royal pious foundations typically only enjoyed this privilege in two specific cases. Either the sultan might have granted the settlements in question to the original donor, thus permitting him/her to prepare for the hereafter: while this was a relatively common occurrence in recently conquered regions of the Balkans it was quite rare in Anatolia.<sup>22</sup> Or else, as was true in our case, the charity in question pre-dated the arrival of the Ottomans. In addition five Christian families had been assigned to the service of the public soup kitchen that formed part of the Peçin complex. This was also an arrangement that by the early sixteenth century a non-member of the Ottoman dynasty would not have easily secured, and the same consideration applied to the rice-fields which the foundation also possessed and which by the sixteenth century were so often a state monopoly.<sup>23</sup>

As for the administrators of the two complexes, they must originally have been determined by the founder; unfortunately our text does not tell us anything about their backgrounds. However the will of Ahmed Gazi as the founder of this charity probably did not prevent the Ottoman sultans from getting involved in the running of these two foundations. For the expenditures of the latter, which reached the – in 1530 – very substantial sum of 56,833 *akçe*, were determined not by the will of the founder as would normally have been expected, but by a 'new distribution document of the ruler' (*tevzi' name.i şahi*).<sup>24</sup> These expenditures included pensions to ten people who knew the Koran by heart and in addition to fifteen men who recited prayers, to say nothing of a numerous staff serving the upkeep of the foundation itself. In a small town such as Peçin all this must have formed a source of considerable patronage to be exercised by the top administrator. We may wonder whether the latter was perhaps a descendant of a former Menteşe household member, himself closely supervised by the administration in Istanbul.

#### *Scanning the surface of a town, or how to find traces of sixteenth-century urban élites*

These *icmal* registers permit us to search through entire towns and look for traces of local élites in the sections covering pious foundations. As an example we will take the town of Tire, once a residence of the Aydınoğulları princes and much more important in the sixteenth century than it is nowadays.<sup>25</sup> Some of the local pious foundations, such as the

<sup>20</sup> Binark *et al.* 1995 (facsimile section) 492-495; Arel 1968; Sözen 1970, I, 179-182; Wittek 1967, 128-129; Uykucu 1983, 78-80.

<sup>21</sup> Arel 1968, 78-79.

<sup>22</sup> Barkan 1942.

<sup>23</sup> Inalcik 1982.

<sup>24</sup> It is unlikely that in a tax register from the year 1530 a document issued by any ruler but the Ottoman sultan would have been referred to as *şahi*.

<sup>25</sup> Aslanoğlu 1978; Binark *et al.* 1995, 379-390.

theological school (*medrese*) of Firişteoğlu or the dervish lodge of Ahi Baba, in fact went back to the time when Tire had been a princely residence. Moreover the vizier Lütü Paşa, who had belonged to the entourage of Selim I had also paid for a complex of charities.<sup>26</sup> This means that apart from its princely past, just like Manisa the town attracted some high-level administrators willing to put down roots.

But many Tire mosques, some of which were still extant in the 1970s, had been established by people of less elevated positions. Thus the mosque of Mevlana Hüsamzade Musliheddin also called Kara Hasanoğlu possessed the right to collect 10 *akçe* a day from the Aydın saltpans, while a village mosque not far from Tire received half this sum from the same sources. Mevlana Hüsamzade evidently had connections to Istanbul for he must have been a judge, and his success in deriving income for local mosques from a state source of revenue such as the saltpans also demonstrates that he had friends in high places. But on the other hand the homely name of Kara Hasanoğlu – which the scribe was at pains to record in addition to the founder's more elevated official identity – makes us wonder whether this was not a native son who had made good at the Ottoman center.<sup>27</sup>

Other Tire foundations had been established by people who lacked official status of any kind. In some cases the markedly urban and commercial character of the properties that these people had set aside for their charities makes it likely that they were townsmen. Thus apart from a piece of rural land, the lodge of Kaziroğlu possessed 110 shops and a workshop for the production of millet beer. These sources of revenue were located close to the covered market and in the streets where shoemakers and saddlers plied their trades.<sup>28</sup> A certain Hoca Bahşayış had donated a shop/some shops to the small mosque bearing his name (*mescid*).<sup>29</sup> As to Hoca Alaeddin, for his charities he had set aside shops or perhaps stalls in the apple and grape markets, a workshop for the manufacture of soap and an entire caravansary; given their title of *hoca/h'ace*, these two men may well have been successful merchants. Among many others, the *mescid* of Hasan Çelebi also possessed numerous shops; in this case they were located in the sword-makers' and blacksmiths' streets while others were mere stalls in the weekly fruit and vegetable market.<sup>30</sup>

Some of Tire's mosques, still extant and identified by inscriptions but which we have not been able to trace in the archival documentation, were also built by personages who bore no official titles and about whom nothing is known but their names. From the inscriptions and also from architectural characteristics the buildings have been dated to the late 1400s and more often to the 1500s. It thus makes sense to conclude that there existed in this former capital of the Aydınoğulları a stratum of reasonably well-to-do people who were not members of the sultans' provincial administration.<sup>31</sup> This observation is important for our understanding of sixteenth-century Ottoman society in general: for at least in Istanbul, such wealthy men were often integrated into the state apparatus as tax

<sup>26</sup> I am not sure whether this person is identical with the grand vizier Lütü Paşa who wrote both a chronicle and the advice book known as the *Asafnâme*. The article 'Lütü Paşa' in *Encycl. Islam* (by Colin Imber) does not mention any foundations of this personage in Tire. But the latter had at one time been *sancak beği* of Aydın, so the possibility should not be excluded altogether.

<sup>27</sup> Binark *et al.* 1995, 379-390.

<sup>28</sup> Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü, Ankara, section Kuyudu kadime (TK) No. 571, fol. 61a (no date, from the time of Kanuni Süleyman).

<sup>29</sup> TK No. 571, fol. 62a.

<sup>30</sup> TK No. 571, fols. 66a-68b.

<sup>31</sup> Aslanoğlu 1978, 40-45.

farmers and their fortunes therefore became liable to confiscation. As the foundations of Tire and other towns indicate, in the provinces this mechanism so inimical to capital formation probably operated to a much lesser extent.

*Facing the state and keeping alive the privileges of pious foundations:  
a strategy of local élites*

We have seen that throughout the province of Anadolu, some local élites went back to pre-Ottoman times. These families usually protected their possessions against dispersal among multiple heirs by converting freehold property into pious foundations and holding on to the administration of the mosques and especially dervish convents financed through their pious donations. However this was not always an easy task. It would seem that Abdal Musa, a famous Bektaşî saint active both in Bursa and in the ‘banner’ (*sancak*) of Teke, was able to recruit the son of the governor of Alanya, later to become the Bektaşî poet Kaygusuz Abdal. However the governor at first tried to forcibly prevent his son from joining the dervishes, and it was only the dervish sheik’s (*şeyh*) superior spiritual power that finally obliged him to change his mind.<sup>32</sup>

In the *vita* of Abdal Musa the governor is called a *sancak* commander. But Barbara Flemming who has studied the late medieval history of this area in detail assumes that this title must be a later addition to the text, for the events recounted probably took place when the Ottoman sultans did not as yet control south-western Anatolia. In the fifteenth century it was rather the Mamluk sultans of Egypt that played the dominant role in the area. But for our purposes, namely the explication of the tension between *şeyh* and governor inherent in the story, the question whether the title of ‘*sancak* commander’ should be viewed as a later addition is not really relevant. We can interpret this story as an indication of the fact that both in pre-Ottoman and in Ottoman times, dervish lodges often owed their possessions to the support of government élites; yet this help was not something available as a matter of course.<sup>33</sup> Rather the dervishes secured supporters and revenues only by judicious networking, or ‘spiritual powers’ according to the language of the saints’ *vitas*.

However in spite of the vicissitudes that they periodically encountered, quite a few heads of dervish lodges must have retained the wherewithal to intervene in local politics and administration. Where the sixteenth-century Ottoman central government was concerned tax exemptions to dervish lodges were granted because the beneficiaries were obliged to feed and house travelers. But this duty could only be fulfilled if the heads of such institutions enjoyed a degree of local prestige, power and financial resources.

A case in point is the struggle of the *şeyhs* and dervishes of Seyyid Gazi, a major lodge located not far from Eskişehir on the long caravan route leading from Istanbul to Konya and ultimately to Damascus. The town of Seyitgazi, today totally eclipsed by nearby Eskişehir, around 1600 seems to have depended on the dervishes for financial credit and probably also for political protection.

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<sup>32</sup> Flemming 1964, 116-119; Evliya Çelebi has relayed another foundation legend concerning this dervish lodge, but here no outside intervention was involved. According to this latter story, which may well be of later date but predates the 1670s, the saint is supposed to have caused a hail of stones which allowed the dervishes to pave the muddy yard that made access to the building difficult and thereby inconvenienced both visitors and inhabitants of the lodge: Evliya Çelebi 1935, 275.

<sup>33</sup> Barkan 1942.

Yet the institution was itself under severe pressure because the dervishes had a reputation for heterodoxy and therefore had been forced to share their foundation income with the students of a latterly founded theological school.<sup>34</sup> At times the *şeyh* and dervishes of Seyyid Gazi tried to mobilize allies in Istanbul: in the later 1500s candidate janissaries visited the lodge as devotees of its patron saint Seyyid Gazi, and seemingly were well received. The young soldiers participated in ceremonies that were quite annoying to pious Sunni Muslims. We are left to wonder whether accusations of heterodoxy, which officially were given considerable weight due to the ongoing conflict of the Ottoman sultans with the Shiite Safawids, in the eyes of the central administration were not also a convenient manner of curbing the local 'influence' of the dervishes.

In other instances the central government apparently tried to nullify the tax privileges of dervish lodges. As we have seen, on condition of providing hospitality to travelers the heads of the latter normally were exempt from certain burdensome payments, particularly the extraordinary wartime taxes soon transformed into regular payments (*avarız-ı divaniye*) and further dues not instituted by religious law (*tekâlif-i örfiyye*). The following instance provides a graphic example: at the turn of the seventeenth century the sultan ordered all retired *sipahis*, sons of *sipahis* not holding down any *timars* as well as heads of dervish lodges to provide twelve days of service in the workshops that manufactured the saltpeter needed for the manufacture of gunpowder.<sup>35</sup> Some people in the sub-province of Saruhan liable for this service protested that no such workshops existed in their region and they would have to travel long distances to comply with the sultan's order. But the answer that the authorities sent to Manisa was uncompromising. Those who for whatever reason did not provide service would be asked to pay a substantial amount of money as compensation. In addition they would have to defray a slew of taxes from which at least some of the men and institutions in question hitherto must have been exempt. Apart from the sultan's overriding concern with gunpowder supplies at a time when the Long War with the Habsburgs was still raging, this measure may well have been aimed at reducing the privileges especially of the poorer dervish lodges as well as the lowest level of local élites typically associated with these institutions. For those tax-exempt persons unable to comply with the sultan's order were liable to find themselves pushed back into the tax-paying population.

In yet other instances local figures might lose control of important pious foundations because an ever impecunious central government was inclined to grant military men willing to forego their soldiers' pay positions as administrators of pious foundations. Concerning the İshak Çelebi lodge of Manisa, founded by a member of the Saruhanoğulları dynasty such a takeover was documented as early as 1597-98; a further case of the same kind, involving the lodge of Kılıç Işık in Palamud near Manisa was recorded in 1602-03.<sup>36</sup> Similar grants typically concerning positions as guild headmen were encountered in the 1600s and became commonplace by the eighteenth century.<sup>37</sup> The insertion of the military into all kinds of occupations that had no direct connection to

<sup>34</sup> Refik 1932, 32-33; Faroqhi 1981a.

<sup>35</sup> Gökçen 1946b, 62-63, 68-69. On gunpowder manufacture see Ağoston 1993.

<sup>36</sup> Gökçen 1946b, 59.

<sup>37</sup> Genç 1994, 59-86.



warfare was an overarching characteristic of Ottoman society during the later 1600s and especially the 1700s.<sup>38</sup>

However it is quite possible that at least some of the military men who acquired the revenues of lodges in this fashion ultimately adapted to the dervish milieu. Thus the lodge of Kılı İşıık in Palamud continued to enjoy appreciable revenues until it was closed down in 1826 as a Bektaşî possession; this means that the ‘outsider’ *şeyh* did not plunder the lodge to such an extent that it was obliged to suspend operations. Alternatively the dervishes may have resumed control over their lodge by buying out the newly arrived military man: at least such transactions have been encountered among Ottoman guildsmen and may have been employed in other walks of life as well.

#### *Ulema and dervish networks as sources of local ‘influence’*

Thus in spite of numerous hindrances the administrators of pious foundations continued to play an important role in Anadolu’s towns and villages. Where dervishes were concerned affiliation with one or another of the recognized orders such as the Halvetîs, the Nakşbandîs or the Bektaşîs must have provided solutions to many of their problems; for in this case the *şeyhs* and dervishes of provincial lodges might even be able to mobilize fellow members who had the ear of sultans or viziers. Ever since the work of Fuat Köprülü in the 1930s scholars have studied the formation especially of the Bektaşîs; unfortunately there are very few sources referring to this process. But we do know that certain heads of lodges out in the Anatolian provinces used the mediation of fellow members of their orders well established in Istanbul in order to make their wishes known to the central authorities.<sup>39</sup> Especially when the sultan was personally favorable to particular dervishes – as was for instance true of Murad III (r. 1574-95) – such networks must have been a source of empowerment at the local level.

However, religious cum legal scholars associated with mosques and teaching institutions in Manisa, Tire or Bursa could exercise even more political ‘influence’ in their respective towns. Kadîs were appointed only for short periods of time and thus often knew little about local conditions. Apart from records that their predecessors had kept, they must have relied on what ‘respectable’ witnesses told them; and who in the eyes of an incoming kadî was better qualified for this purpose than a teacher at a *medrese*, or if such a person was not available a preacher at the local Friday mosque? Recent studies have shown that the kadîs were much aware of social status and took account of it in giving judgment, even though at the same time, it was necessary for them to listen to the complaints of ordinary people if the court was to continue ‘attracting customers’ that preferred its services over other types of dispute resolution.<sup>40</sup>

Lower-level kadîs often seem to have officiated within a given geographical area and did not migrate over great distances as was true of their more prominent colleagues. We may assume that when out of office such former lower-level kadîs often lived in places like Tire or Manisa and helped out the court by informally advising the incumbent judge. Teachers and preachers were often asked to witness contracts and in the course

<sup>38</sup> For the fullest discussion to date see Raymond 1973-74, 659-808.

<sup>39</sup> Köprülü 1935; Faroqhi 1993.

<sup>40</sup> Ergene 2003; Peirce 2003; Canbakal 2007.

of so doing, some of them had occasion to meet officiating judges and recommend to them their own offspring still studying Islamic law and divinity while contemplating the move to Istanbul, momentous indeed in so far as it determined the young men's future careers. Another recent study has determined that at least in the seventeenth century many successful members of the religious cum legal establishment were the sons of such teachers, mosque administrators and preachers, who thus made better careers for themselves than had been possible to their fathers.<sup>41</sup> In fact it was largely the influx of these people that prevented the high *ulema* from becoming a closed corporation. At least for the 1600s we can, therefore, postulate connections of local men of religion to the Ottoman center that served as sources of empowerment in their home towns; and for a select few, these contacts were a resource to be used in building high-level official careers. By the eighteenth century, however, increasing 'aristocratization' of the high *ulema* in Istanbul progressively cut off these connections to the provincial world.<sup>42</sup>

#### *Upper- and lower-level élites?*

At the end of our study an interesting problem can be formulated although its resolution remains tentative: as far as we know practically none of the local magnates who dominated provincial administration in Anadolu and elsewhere during the 1700s and early 1800s came from the foundation-linked milieu discussed here. Nor incidentally did such power-holders very often emerge from the circles of *timar* or *zeamet* holders. Magnates of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were often of unknown backgrounds, even though occasionally they seem to have claimed 'noble' descent. Thus the Tekelioğulları of the Antalya region around 1800 used the name of a princely pre-Ottoman dynasty, with what justification if any, remains unknown. For the sake of argument, let us therefore assume that between the early seventeenth century, when tax-farming expanded dramatically and the early 1800s, the province of Anadolu was run by two types of local élites. There was a more powerful 'upper' stratum that by and large owed its fortunes to the tax-collection processes instituted by Istanbul and in addition, a more modest 'lower' notability many of whose members had connections with local pious foundations. Some of the latter institutions might go back to pre-Ottoman times, even though that did not necessarily imply that the administrators were physically the descendants of the Hamid-, Aydın- or Menteşeoğulları.

We thus have to postulate that a connection to established pious foundations – whether they were theological schools or else dervish lodges did not make much of a difference – kept people on the lower rungs of provincial notability. These men had virtually no chance of ever breaking into the tax-farming circuit or even the distribution of provincially assessed dues among individual villages and households.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand it was these latter activities, and also the chance to act as deputies for absent governors or major life-time tax farmers, that might catapult a family line of particularly fortunate locals into magnate status, as most famously was achieved by the Kara Osmanoğulları of İzmir and Manisa.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Klein 2007.

<sup>42</sup> Zilfi 1988.

<sup>43</sup> Inalcik 1980, 283-337.

<sup>44</sup> Darling 2006; Nagata 1997.

On the other hand, at least until the *de facto* confiscation of the resources of pious foundations under Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839), in many places an élite with a local base and control over these *vakıfs* remained in place. Apparently well into the eighteenth century the central bureaucracy, albeit considerably expanded in the mid-1700s, did not regard it possible to govern without such local supports. As a result older pious foundations might expand and new ones be instituted. Thus the Bektaşî lodge of Abdal Musa, located not far from Elmalı in the province of Antalya seems to have benefited from the wheat boom of the Napoleonic wars to round out its patrimony. The *şeyhs* purchased land and as a status symbol of provincial gentility, had acquired over fifty horses by the time the lodge was closed down and its properties confiscated in 1826, when the janissary corps was abolished.<sup>45</sup> Moreover the Kara Osmanoğulları once they had risen to power in the Manisa-İzmir region engaged in the foundation of mosques, schools, hospitals and other charities with a frequency that seems near-royal, even if the individual buildings they put up were much more modest than those constructed in the names of the sultans and their relatives.<sup>46</sup> Less prestigious pious foundations were put up by their Antalya neighbors the Tekelioğulları around 1800; but even today a mosque in this city perpetuates the family name.<sup>47</sup>

We may assume that pious considerations apart, the dynasties in question wished to establish reputations as promoters of local welfare, with special emphasis on the towns or villages where their main residences were located. But vesting administrative responsibilities in the hands of family members and trusted servitors must also have been intended to establish these people and later their descendants as members of the 'lower' élites of their respective localities. Of course given the confiscations of *vakıf*-properties under Mahmud II these projects quite often did not come to fruition. But that is a different story.

### *In conclusion*

As the first major point it is worth stressing that even at the high time of Ottoman 'early modern' centralization in the middle and later sixteenth century, the administrators sent out by the government were not in a position to run the districts and sub-provinces making up the vast province of Anadolu all by themselves. There may have been members of local élites of which no trace remains today, because their activities were circumscribed and thus if at all documented, recorded mainly in the kadi registers. However, as we have seen these documents in most cases have not come down to us.

By contrast those local notabilities that we can 'nail down' typically had some connection to pious foundations. These included the descendants of pre-Ottoman rulers and the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of people once connected to the courts of these princes, but also the progeny of personages who had once been associated with the early Ottoman sultans themselves. In some instances the descendants of such fourteenth- and fifteenth-century lords were able to hold more or less elevated official positions even under Sultan Süleyman and his successors, when most positions of power were however

<sup>45</sup> Faroqhi 1981b, 54-68.

<sup>46</sup> Kuyulu 1992.

<sup>47</sup> Halaçoğlu 2002; Faroqhi 2005. Unfortunately I only found Halaçoğlu's monograph after my own article had gone to press.



held by palace-trained 'slave' servitors. But office-holders who had 'struck roots' in the places to which they had been sent, as well as their offspring, also figured among local élites documented in the foundation registers, in spite of the central government's attempts to prevent such occurrences. In addition it is noteworthy that in certain localities a few merchants might also become wealthy enough to enter this group.

Many such families achieved a degree of permanency in the provincial towns of Anadolu. But due to their modest powers, these households should be classified as members of 'lower' élites. Before the nineteenth century, the central government does not seem to have regarded these small-scale notabilities as a threat. Certainly there were attempts to erode their tax-related and other privileges. But this occurred in a piecemeal fashion and the erosion could sometimes even be reversed; on the whole the sultans' bureaucrats respected privileges that were considered 'ancient' and recorded as such in the registers of the financial administration. Only by the mid-nineteenth century did this policy change, and I would suggest that here we have a valuable indicator concerning the difference between Ottoman centralization in the 'classical' as opposed to the Tanzimat style.

Secondly: it was almost unheard of for members of this lower-level group to pass into the 'upper' élite of substitute governors, major tax-farmers and other people in a position to influence the processes of revenue appropriation. Certainly wealthy provincial kadis were by no means a rarity, and their families were often able to hold on to their possessions from one generation to the next, as *ulema* enjoyed a degree of immunity from confiscation. The *şeyhs* of large dervish lodges were also sometimes money-lenders in their own localities and thus must have been accustomed to financial activity. Therefore these people probably were not debarred from bidding for minor and middle-level lifetime tax farms due to lack of money. But rather it was perhaps their very privileges and local status that made the central government wary of according positions of financial responsibility to these men. We will need to delve more deeply into provincial history before we can get a fuller answer to this question.

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