

TANZIMAT IN THE PROVINCE: NATIONALIST SEDITION (*FESAT*),
BANDITRY (*EŞKİYA*) AND LOCAL COUNCILS IN THE OTTOMAN
SOUTHERN BALKANS (1840s TO 1860s)

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von

ANNA VAKALIS

aus

Thessaloniki, Griechenland

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the dynamics of the triangle between subordinate groups- local notables / local councils and the Ottoman sovereign during the period of the *Tanzimat* reforms, with a spatial focus on the Ottoman southern Balkans, that is, on the provinces of *Selanik*, *Yanya*, *Manastir* and *Tuna*. The focus is on the voices of subordinate Ottoman subjects, such as peasants, all kinds of artisans, local teachers and printers, and their interactions with the Ottoman state during the *Tanzimat*.

To this aim, this thesis elaborates on the local councils, a novel institution founded during the *Tanzimat* in several provinces and provided with extensive administrative and judicial functions. Several penal cases of nationalist sedition (*fesat*) and banditry (*eşkiya*) adjudicated by these courts are being analyzed, by focusing on the men sitting in these novel courts, on the final punishments inflicted upon the defendants through Sultanic decrees (*irade*), as well as, especially, on the testimonies made by ordinary people and passed on to us today through a valuable, yet still undiscovered, Ottoman archival source, that is, the *istintakname* (interrogation protocol). Overall it is being argued that despite claims of the Ottoman sovereign to increased forms of governmentality and centralization, state-subject relationships were based on patterns of negotiation still during the *Tanzimat*. Indeed, defendants were willing to distort and adjust their descriptions of their deeds in the courtroom, while the sovereign was willing to inflict diminished punishments on the defendants in lieu of winning their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire.

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NOTES ON PLACES

I have chosen to use the Ottoman version of a geographical place throughout the thesis. The following table demonstrates the places which appear in this thesis and their contemporary names. The following abbreviations note in which state these places are today: GR (Greece), BG (Bulgaria), MK (Republic of Macedonia), RO (Rumania), AL (Albania).

| Ottoman Name | Current Name | Ottoman Name | Current Name |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Agrafa</i> | Agrafa (GR) | <i>Selanik</i> | Selanik (GR) |
| <i>Alasonya</i> | Elassona (GR) | <i>Serfice</i> | Servia (GR) |
| <i>Avrethisar</i> | Kilkis (GR) | <i>Silistre</i> | Silistra (BG) |
| <i>Berkoşa</i> | Berkowiza (BG) | <i>Siroz</i> | Serres (GR) |
| <i>Çirpan</i> | Tschirpan (BG) | <i>Turbala</i> | Trikala (GR) |
| <i>Debre-i Zir</i> | Peshkopia (AL) | <i>Turnova</i> | Malko Tarnowo (BG) |
| <i>Drama</i> | Drama (GR) | <i>Turnovi</i> | Weliko Tarnowo (BG) |
| <i>Edirne</i> | Edirne (TR) | <i>Travna</i> | Trjawnna (BG) |
| <i>Evreşe (Kadıköy)</i> | Evreşe (TR) | <i>Üsküp</i> | Skopje (MK) |
| <i>Fener</i> | Fanari (GR) | <i>Vidin</i> | Widin (BG) |
| <i>Ferecik</i> | Feres (GR) | <i>Vithkouki</i> | Vithkuq (AL) |
| <i>Filibe</i> | Plovdiv (BG) | <i>Vodine</i> | Edessa (GR) |
| <i>Gabrova</i> | Gabrowo (BG) | <i>Yanya</i> | Ioannina (GR) |
| <i>Gelibolu</i> | Gallipoli, Gelibolu (TR) | <i>Yenice</i> | Giannitsa (GR) |
| <i>Görice</i> | Korça (AL) | <i>Yenişehir</i> | Larissa (GR) |
| <i>İnöz</i> | Enez (TR) | <i>Yerköki</i> | Giurgiu (RO) |
| <i>İbrail</i> | Braila (RO) | <i>Zağra-ı Atik</i> | Stara Zagora (BG) |
| <i>İpsala</i> | İpsala (TR) | <i>Zağra-ı Cedid</i> | Nowa Zagora (BG) |
| <i>İslimiye</i> | Sliwen (BG) | <i>Zimnicea</i> | Zimnicea (RO) |
| <i>Kalabaka</i> | Kalampaka (GR) | | |
| <i>Kardiçe</i> | Karditsa (GR) | | |
| <i>Kazanlak</i> | Kasanlak (BG) | | |
| <i>Kesriye</i> | Kastoria (GR) | | |
| <i>Köprüllü</i> | Veles (MK) | | |
| <i>Nevrokop</i> | Nevrokopi (GR) | | |
| <i>Platona ma Katrin</i> | Platamonas (GR) | | |
| <i>Poliroz</i> | Polygyros (GR) | | |
| <i>Pravişte</i> | Eleftheroupoli (GR) | | |
| <i>Ruşçuk</i> | Russe (BG) | | |
| <i>Şarköy</i> | Şarköy (TR) | | |

INTRODUCTION

Rethinking the *Tanzimat*

The *Tanzimat* reforms,¹ that is, profound centralizing reforms undertaken by the bureaucratic elite of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century (1839-1878)² and encompassing the empire's military, state finances and administration, had suffered until recently from being read and interpreted backwards. Indeed, until the 1990s, the *Tanzimat* reforms had been seen through the lenses of powerful paradigms such as modernization and westernization and, especially in Turkey, the Atatürk reforms initiated during the first years of the Turkish republic. Approached thus only from an institutional point of view and measured solely by the yardsticks of top-down implemented

¹ The main edicts associated with the *Tanzimat* are the *Gülbane Hatt-ı Hümayunu* of 1839 and the *Islahat Fermanı* of 1856. The first one, in a nutshell, guaranteed the life, property and honour of all (Muslim and non-Muslim) Ottoman subjects; abolished the *iltizam*-system (the farming out of taxes to local elites) and stipulated the sending out of state-appointed officials responsible for collecting the taxes; finally, it banned favouritism and bribery. The second decree, of 1856, corroborated the regulations of 1839 and, furthermore, foresaw the following: the founding of local councils, consisting of both ecclesiastics and laymen, for the administration of the non-Muslim communities; the acceptance of non-Muslims to the civil and military schools of government, to public employments, as well as to military service; the adjudication of their commercial and penal cases by mixed tribunals; lastly, the exemption of non-Muslims from extra taxation.

² For the original Ottoman texts of the main *Tanzimat* edicts transcribed into modern Turkish, see "Tanzimat Fermanı (The Tanzimat edict)" and "Islahat Fermanı (The Islahat edict)" in *Tanzimat değişim sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu (The Ottoman Empire during the transforming period of the Tanzimat)*, Halil İnalcık, Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu (ed.), Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008, pp. 12-25. For the English translation of the edicts, see Jacob C. Hurewitz, *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics*, New Haven: Yale University, 1975, pp. 268-270, 315-318. See also on the internet, <http://genckaya.bilkent.edu.tr/documents1.html> (retrieved on 5 May 2015). For the German translation, see *Die Verfassungsgesetze des Osmanisches Reiches, übersetzt und mit einer Einleitung versehen von Friedrich von Kraeützel-Greifendorst (The Constitutional texts of the Ottoman Empire, translated and with an introduction by Friedrich von Kraeützel-Greifendorst)*, Wien: Verlag des Forschungsinstituts für Osten und Orient, 1919, pp. 15-27. For the Greek translation, see Charalampos Papastathis, *Oi κανονισμοί των ορθόδοξων ελληνικών κοινοτήτων του οθωμανικού κράτους και της διασποράς (The regulations of the Orthodox Greek Communities of the Ottoman state and the diaspora)*, Thessaloniki: Kyriakidi, 1984, pp. 21-49. For the *Tanzimat* decrees pertaining to the Empire's non-Muslims, see Murat Bebiroğlu, *Osmanlı devleti'nde gayrimüslim nizamnameleri (The regulations of the non-Muslims in the Ottoman state)*, Istanbul: Akademi Matbaası, 2008, pp. 36-189.

modernizing and westernizing reforms, actual implementation of the *Tanzimat* reforms and social reactions to them were left out of the picture.

Particularly, a volume of collected articles published in 1940 in Turkey judged the “success” of the *Tanzimat* from the perspective of a strong, secular and protectionist state, defined in clear and separate terms from society itself. Overall, the articles of the volume declared the reforms a failure -as the central government had not managed to neutralize provincial powerholders- and an “inadequate modernization.”³ An upcoming volume published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the *Tanzimat* reforms in the mid-1990s, this time affected by the neo-liberal policies followed on behalf of the Turkish government, provided more space for multifaceted economic developments during the *Tanzimat* (like the protectionist policies implemented after the 1860s, or neglected aspects of the empire’s industrialization during the nineteenth century), for stories of success and not only failures during the implementation of the reforms.⁴ Nevertheless, again, factors like the inability of the central state to counteract local power holders and the continuation of patronage relationships led to an overall negative evaluation of the reforms. Moreover, the sharp distinction between society and state continued to inform the articles of the volume published in the 1990s.⁵

Considerable ground has been covered thenceforth and overall a much more complex picture has started to be drawn. Historians have pointed to factors such as the fact that, while officially the reforms started in 1839, local initiatives of reforms had

³ Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, *Tanzimat. Yüzyüncü yıldönümü münasebetiyle (Tanzimat. On the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary)*, Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1940.

⁴ Hakkı Dursun Yıldız (ed.), *150. Yılında Tanzimat (Tanzimat on its 150th year)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1994.

⁵ Yonca Köksal, “Tanzimat ve Tarih Yazımı (Tanzimat and Historiography)”, *Doğu Batı*, 51 (2009-2010), pp. 6, 20-21.

become evident some decades earlier in the provinces.⁶ In addition, Europe had not been the sole source of inspiration when implementing the reforms: local bureaucrats in several Ottoman provinces had undertaken reforms since the beginning of the nineteenth century based on changing local conditions.⁷ Most important among them had been Mehmet Ali, ruling in Egypt since 1805 on terms resembling an independent status, and having initiated centralizing reforms so encompassing that some historians today speak of the “Egyptian *Tanzimat*” having started already between 1810 and 1820.⁸

Overall, it has been underlined that special consideration should be given to the material conditions that paved the way for the Ottoman state to accommodate new governing practices and new goals of ruling during the nineteenth century, conditions which should be understood within the context of the changing configuration of the ruling elite as well as the socio-economic developments in the preceding two centuries. According to Kırılı, “In other words, the political transformations [of the nineteenth century] were the product of a complex development of a historical process conditioned by multitude of factors, ranging from the reconfiguration of the power bloc, to the expansion of the capitalist world economy.”⁹

⁶ Maurus Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über die osmanische Reformpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert (Things of order. A comparative study of Ottoman politics of reforms during the 19th century)*, München: Oldenbourg, 2005, p. 41. Michael Ursinus, *Regionale Reformen am Vorabend der Tanzimat (Regional reforms on the eve of the Tanzimat)*, Berlin: Schwartz, 1982, pp. 260-263.

⁷ Michael Ursinus, “Osmanische Statthalterurkunden aus dem Archiv der Metropolitans Bischöfe von Manastir aus der Zeit Sultan Mahmuds II. (1808-39) (Ottoman governor documents from the archive of the metropolitan bishops of Manastir at the time of Sultan Mahmud II. (1808-39))”, *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 12 (1992), pp. 346-347. Marc Aymes, *A Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire. Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century*, London, New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 181.

⁸ Zouhair Ghazzal, “The Parallel Adjudication of the ‘Egyptian’ Majlis in Aleppo in 1838”, presentation at *Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes*, Istanbul, delivered on 6 January 2012, https://www.canal-u.tv/video/ifea/the_parallel_adjudication_of_the_egyptian_majlis_in_aleppo_in_1838.16353 (retrieved in October 2016).

⁹ Cengiz Kırılı, “The Struggle over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman Istanbul, 1780-1845”, PhD Thesis, Binghamton University, 2000, p. 284.

Regarding the nature of the reforms itself, researchers have presented the latter as a dynamic process, which prohibits any easy way of jumping into generalizations.

Different notions and intentions were mingled in state practices, oscillating between increased governmentality and the recognition of liberal, universal rights for all -Muslim and non-Muslim- subjects of the empire, between particularism and universality, Islamic and Western notions of law, as well as between centralization and decentralization.

Indeed, one could argue that the *Tanzimat* itself consisted actually of the narrative and the practice between these different concepts, a struggle whose difficult answers continue to dominate and perplex the political scene of many post-Ottoman states up to today.

To begin with, the *Tanzimat* reforms demonstrated a “twofold character”: particularly, while the bureaucracy’s basic aim had been to “reform the state finances,”¹⁰ that is, to exert greater control on the provinces pertaining to the centralization of the tax-collection procedure, this aim was “exchanged” in the eyes of the Ottoman public with the novel introduction of universal premises and the concomitant provision of universal rights.¹¹ On the one hand, pursued goals of the state for more effective taxation, a higher centralization of the provinces and universal conscription presupposed a higher degree of governmentality -that is, the collection and control of information derived from the population- and intrusion into the subjects’ everyday life. The state’s zeal to individuate, enumerate, and categorize subjects as well as to mobilize their resources and bodies responded to nearly continuous military and fiscal exigencies during

¹⁰ “Maliyede ıslahat tanzimat hareketinin temel amacını teşkil etmekteydi. İdari alanda yapılan ıslahat, daha çok mali merkezîyetçilik sistemini uygulamak için bir araç olarak kullanılmış görünmektedir.” İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimat’tan sonra mahalli idareler (1840-1878) (Local administrations after the Tanzimat (1840-1878))*, Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1974, p. 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4: “Tanzimatçı devlet adamı için gerekli şey hürriyet değil, kazanç, mal ve hayat güvenliğidir. Devlet hayatında aslolan unsur, geniş grupların siyasal katılması değil, devlete sadık olan ve çok kazanıp çok vergi veren bir tebaadır.”

the first three quarters of the century.¹² Modern states were better suited to extract taxes and to mobilize their populations into standing armies, particularly as they developed what Michael Mann has termed “infrastructural power”: “the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm.”¹³

On the other hand, the empire’s proto-citizens were fortified for the first time in the empire’s history with basic rights and a universal political identity: equality of all subjects, Muslims and non-Muslims, before the law, as well as protection of their life, honour and property were officially recognized with the *Tanzimat* reforms. Moreover, Ottoman statesmen believed that in order to save the Empire a new egalitarian citizenship and concept of patriotism, *Osmanlılık* or “Ottomanism,” had to be created;¹⁴ the Ottoman Citizenship Law was introduced in 1869.¹⁵ In short, it was a period when, one could argue, human agency was both empowered and disempowered: this was similar to many European states, which from the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries onward witnessed a similar reciprocal process, during which the emergence of “citizenship” was also the period in which they founded their own police organizations, and intensified surveillance activities at an unprecedented level. Nevertheless, while in Western Europe, both discursively and materially, the development of citizenship coincided with the birth of nation-states, in the mid-nineteenth century Ottoman political

¹² Ariel Salzmänn, “Citizens in Search of a State: The Limits of Political Representation in the Late Ottoman Empire” in *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States*, Michael Hannagan and Charles Tilly (ed.), Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999, p. 42.

¹³ Michael Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results”, *European Journal of Sociology*, 25, 2 (1984), pp. 185-213.

¹⁴ Roderic Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century”, *The American Historical Review*, 59/4 (Jul., 1854), p. 852.

¹⁵ Cihan Osmanağaoğlu, *Tanzimat dönemi itibarıyla Osmanlı tabiiyyetinin (vatandaşlığının) gelişimi (The development of the Ottoman citizenship since the Tanzimat period)*, Istanbul: Legal, 2004, p. 195.

context the idea of empire was very much alive both in the minds of the people and in the minds of rulers.¹⁶

In addition, the Ottoman society that was being introduced to the notion of universal rights and the universal rule of law was one which had been compartmentalized for centuries according to religious (through the *millet*-system) and social (through the *askeri-reaya* division) lines. With the inauguration of the *Tanzimat*, on the one hand, universal rights of life, property and honour were being recognized for all the empire's subjects. On the other hand, the *millet*-system, that is, the official compartmentalization of the Ottoman society into ethnoreligious groups when handling with the Ottoman authorities, was being retained, and, more important, further institutionalized in the middle of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the Patriarch was being recognized as the head of the *millet* (*millet-baş*) and regulations (*niẓamname*) were being issued regarding the internal structure and administration of each millet.¹⁷ In a nutshell, centuries-long practices were dismantled and reconfigured, and Ottoman subjects were being recognized both as equal and different during the *Tanzimat*.

In practice this concomitant existence of both universal and particularistic principles meant for the non-Muslim subjects of the empire that, for example, there were exempt from tax discriminations (like the payment of the *cizye*-tax, which was, nevertheless, substituted by the tax of military exemption, the *bedel-i askeriye*), but, on the other hand, were still perceived by the authorities primarily through their belonging to a

¹⁶ Kırılı, "The Struggle over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman Istanbul, 1780-1845", pp. 281-285.

¹⁷ Sia Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία, 19^{ος} αιώνας-1919, Οι ελληνορθόδοξες κοινότητες* (*Asia Minor, 19th century-1919, The Greek-Orthodox communities*), Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 1998, pp. 325-331; Athanasia Anagnostopoulou, "Tanzimat ve Rum milletinin kurumsal çerçevesi. Patrikhane, cemaat kurumları, eğitim (Tanzimat and the institutional framework of the Greek-Orthodox community. The Patriarchate, communal institutions, education)" in *19. yüzyıl İstanbul'unda gayrimüslimler (Non-Muslims in 19th-century Istanbul)*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999, p. 8; Paraskevas Konortas, "From Ta'ife to Millet: Ottoman Terms for the Greek Orthodox Community" in *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism. Politics, Economy and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, Dimitri Gondicas, Charles Issawi (ed.), Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1999, pp. 169-179.

specific *millet*, as, for example, they had the right to participate in the newly founded local courts of the *Tanzimat* only through their religious leaders and one non-Muslim notable, irrespective of the percentage they were covering in a province's population.

Religion appeared as an important parameter not only in the empire's relations with its non-Muslim subjects, but also when implementing Western law. The new Penal Code, for example, introduced in 1858, was a direct implementation of the French Penal Code. Nevertheless, the Ottoman Penal Code also paid respect to *sharia* law, as, for example in homicide trials, the penal cases had to be adjudicated by both the newly founded local courts and the *sharia* courts, inflicting thereby often two different punishments on the culprit. Nevertheless, new research has shown that Western and *sharia* law were not perceived by contemporary people as incompatible. "On a more general level, the *nizamiyye* courts [secular courts established during the *Tanzimat*] operated in conjunction with the *sharia* court within a reasonably sustainable division of labour. In the lower judicial instances, the same judges from the ranks of the *ulema* served in the both the *nizamiyye* and the *sharia* courts."¹⁸

Finally, another synthesis -or tension- which marked the *Tanzimat* reforms was the one between centralization and decentralization, as the centre intended to gain more control over the provinces, but simultaneously was forced to retain older practices of "ethnic fostering" towards local elites and populations. The term "ethnic fostering" (*ethnische Hegung*), introduced by Reinkowski, refers to the appeasement of local elites and tribal leaders through the means of presents, the awarding of titles of honour and the exempting from tax duties.¹⁹ Despite their intentions of a higher degree of centralization,

¹⁸ Avi Rubin, "Ottoman Modernity: The Nizamiye Courts in the Late Nineteenth Century", PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 2006, pp. 68-69.

¹⁹ Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über die osmanische Reformpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert (Things of order. A comparative study of Ottoman politics of reforms during the 19th century)*, p. 106.

the central authorities were often obliged to retain such methods of “ethnic fostering,” in order to avoid local resistance. Moreover, locality played a major role in the implementation of the reforms. As a comparative study of the implementation of the *Tanzimat* reforms in Lebanon and northern Albania has illustrated, in practice neither the implementation of the *Tanzimat* (with practices varying from a harsh implementation in the case of Lebanon to a more cautious implementation of centralizing administrative reforms, in the second case) nor the discourse justifying the reforms were the same in different localities.²⁰

Overall, newer research has rendered the *Tanzimat* reforms a complex process, which can not be adequately described through linear concepts such as modernization or westernization. Indeed, rather than evaluating the extent to which modernizing and centralizing reforms designed in the centre could be fully implemented by a strong state or not, much more fruitful venues of study could be opened by researching how the implementation of such complex reforms actually took place in different provinces; how the state did not “impose” reforms onto a stagnant society but negotiated in various ways with different local powerholders and other agents in order to be able to retain control of the provinces, thus producing different answers for different places;²¹ and, lastly, how the society reacted to and contributed to the outcome of the implementation of the reforms, not as a passive receiver, but as various loci of agency challenging the sovereign.

In the remaining part of this introduction, I will propose that the Ottoman province and the agency of local actors are useful and indispensable analytical categories in order to understand and analyze this complexity of the *Tanzimat*. Without “searching

²⁰ Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über die osmanische Reformpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert* (*Things of order. A comparative study of Ottoman politics of reforms during the 19th century*), pp. 267, 277-278.

²¹ Köksal, “Tanzimat ve Tarih Yazımı (Tanzimat and Historiography)”, pp. 213-214.

out” the people and the specific localities, the *Tanzimat* reforms remain abstract intentions stipulated in some dozens of official regulations.

Ottoman Province(s) in the Balkans

When I started working on Balkan cities, firstly *Selanik* and *Manastır*, and then expanding to the *Tuna* province, as well as cities near the Greek-Ottoman border of the mid-nineteenth century, I was surprised about the great lack existing in literature concerning these cities during the nineteenth-century. While existing works deal mainly with the period of the end of the nineteenth-century, information about social structures or vital persons such as the notables of each *millet* during the *Tanzimat* were in most cases non-existent. Books written by local amateur historians who nurture a special interest in the history of their places of birth provide some information, but are most times highly influenced by nationalist historiographies and can not be placed into a larger context. Why then had such vital cities of the Balkans attracted so little interest on behalf of historians?

Some practical impediments, related to the vast uncatalogued Ottoman archives existing in various local Balkan archives and waiting to be discovered by Ottomanists, or the need of multi-lingual historians who will be able to master both a Balkan language and the Turkish-Ottoman one in order to combine several archives, have already been mentioned by researchers. Even more important, deeply embedded within a strong state-centred tradition in Ottomanist historiography, historians have more often than not focused on the centre's view. The province has thereby remained as a far-away local society, the fate of which was more or less mastered by the centre. In this sense, the imperial capital was seen as the only meaningful unit of analysis in terms of historical agency that had, or should have had, a determining role in the articulation of processes

and outcomes.²² For example, Ottoman historical chronicles of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries on Ottoman Syria, all written by Ottoman officials with extensive experience in government, never actually discussed the Syrian provinces or described conditions there; when these provinces were mentioned it was simply to note appointments to office, or occasionally dismissal from office or reference to an office formerly held in those provinces.²³

Nevertheless, “if Ottoman historiography had the tendency to evaluate rulers or periods against the yardstick of an ideal “classical” system characterised by centralised governance, students of the Ottoman world no longer assume that centralisation was a prerequisite, or indeed a reality, during the centuries of Ottoman expansion and growth.”²⁴ Another outcome of this incredulity towards the necessity of a centralised state is that centre and province are not seen as necessarily rigidly separated. Rather, there was an interaction between imperial and provincial actors, a constant negotiation whereby the balance of power between the two was not always clearly defined.²⁵

Indeed, under this novel point of view the province emerges as a vibrant society itself, so much that much of the Ottoman state’s energy during the nineteenth century went into monitoring its territories, collecting detailed information about it exceeding the ones pertaining solely to state finances, increasing its correspondence and inspections, and, finally, becoming literally visible, through personal visits not only of high-ranking

²² Antonis Hadjikyriakou, “The Ottomanisation of Cyprus: Towards a Spatial Imagination Beyond the Centre-Province Binary”, *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 25, 2 (2016), p. 81.

²³ Linda Darling, “The Syrian Provinces in Ottoman Eyes: Three Historians’ Representations of Bilad Al-Sham”, *ARAM*, 9-10 (1997-1998), p. 348.

²⁴ Hadjikyriakou, “The Ottomanisation of Cyprus: Towards a Spatial Imagination Beyond the Centre-Province Binary”, p. 83.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

officials but of even the Sultan himself to various provinces.²⁶ Moreover, people inhabiting the fringes of late nineteenth century empires mobilized their distinctive assets to address contingencies that lacked uniformity, thereby requiring us to remain within the local context while analysing events.²⁷

Particularly, Marc Aymes has invited Ottomanists to undertake a provincial turn in the history-writing of the vast Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century. According to Aymes, thinking in terms of an Ottoman provincial world “necessarily brings into question the unity of what we designate as “Ottoman,” and involves going beyond monographic univocality. Such a history must perforce be *polygraphic*.”²⁸ The Ottoman province, “through feeling the aura of the capital and the pomp of the tutelary sovereign far beyond the horizon, diffracts and multiplies the forms of knowledge and power at work throughout the vast Ottoman space.”²⁹

Switching thus the focus from the centre to the province(s) means for the historian a shift from the general to the particular and multi-dimensional: one is confronted with multiple ways in which official policies or categories of political discourse were used, disused or changed. Indeed, as Aymes rightly states, knowledge scatters in multiple pieces when visiting the province, pieces which then have to be collected and provided with a coherent meaning by the historian himself. Lastly, provincial history could be one more direction of study in order to undermine the Euro-

²⁶ Kırılı, “The Struggle over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman Istanbul, 1780-1845”, p. 283; Erdoğan Keleş, *Sultan Abdülmecid'in Rumeli seyahati (The trip of Sultan Abdülmecid to Rumeli)*, Ankara: Birleşik, 2011, pp. 19-20; Darin Stephanov, “Sultan Mahmud (1808-1839) and the First Shift in Modern Ruler Visibility in the Ottoman Empire”, *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, 1: 1-2 (2014), p. 130.

²⁷ Isa Blumi, *Foundations of Modernity. Human Agency and the Imperial State*, New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 12.

²⁸ Aymes, *A Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 177. Italics followed according to Aymes.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

centric approach of the *Tanzimat*, which has been described above: “Maybe the provinciality of the Ottoman world, when carefully distinguished from provincialism in disguise, could fulfil a similar function as well, by enabling us to move beyond the Eurocentric “civilizing process” and leave behind the “denial of coevalness” underpinning it.”³⁰

The geographical scope of this thesis is on the southern Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire. I deliberately sought not to focus on only one province, although I had to limit my study to the southern Balkans, in order to be able to deal with the vast archival material within the framework of this thesis. The study especially of the Ottoman Balkans has suffered from the fact that “historians of most states located on previously Ottoman territory tended, and still tend, to concentrate upon lands situated within the borders of the modern country within which they happen to operate.”³¹ This tendency, which continues powerful up to today, has led to the fact that a specific Ottoman province of the Balkans is studied mostly by contemporary historians who live in the post-Ottoman nation-state which includes this specific province. Little dialogue thus exists between the study of different provinces and a more “synthetic picture” often evades historians.

In more general terms, the study of the Ottoman Balkans has struggled to find its place both within European history, as well as among Ottomanists. Within European and mostly South-Eastern-European studies, the Balkans have been seen as being “on the fringes,” and their study has suffered from negative images about the Balkans which “characterized them, often in a rather unreflective manner, as negative, backward,

³⁰ Aymes, *A Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 182.

³¹ Suraiya Faroqhi, Fikret Adanir, “Introduction”, in *The Ottomans and the Balkans. A Discussion in Historiography*, Fikret Adanir, Suraiya Faroqhi (ed.), Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2002, p. 25.

chaotic, and violent -terms like *powder keg* and *balkanization* immediately come to mind."³²

Such images have been often fortified by the historical sources used by Balkanologists, who have worked either with reports of European consuls, or with materials written in one of the Balkan languages of the post-Ottoman nation-states. Todorova's seminal study, "Imagining the Balkans," attempted to rework Said's analysis of Orientalism in debating South-Eastern Europe and contrasting discourses of Orientalism and Balkanism claiming that "unlike Orientalism, which is a discourse about an imputed opposition, Balkanism is a discourse about an imputed ambiguity."³³ Whereas Orientalist stereotyping produces a primitive, pre-modern Oriental Other, Balkanism constitutes the Balkans as a kind of ambiguous "pre-modern version of the self."³⁴ On the other hand, newer works, mostly volumes of collected articles, have aimed at "envisaging Southeast European history as a comprehensive part of European and global history," placing their work within a path that "has in fact begun to be trodden, albeit cautiously and often as an effect of individual academic networks rather than programmatic research."³⁵

Among Ottomanists, the Balkans have overall met with less interest in comparison, for example, to Arab provinces, mainly because it has been more difficult to place the former under one, unified paradigm. Indeed, the study of Arab provinces has seen a certain proliferation since the 2000s, with seminal works such as the one of Ussama Makdisi and Eugene Rogan.³⁶ Implementing post-colonial approaches in their

³² Sabine Rutar, "Introduction" in *Beyond the Balkans. Towards an Inclusive History of Southeastern Europe*, Sabine Rutar (ed.), Vienna: Lit Verlag, 2014, p. 8.

³³ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 17.

³⁴ Dunja Njarabi, "The Balkan Studies: History, Post-Colonialism and Critical Regionalism", *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 20: 2-3 (2013), p. 188.

³⁵ Rutar, "Introduction", pp. 7, 13.

³⁶ Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism. Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2000; Selim Deringil,

interpretation, such works have stressed that the Ottoman Empire itself developed policies and mentalities of a colonial nature towards its own Arap provinces. Thus, the Arap provinces became the Other / the “East,” which Ottoman officials in Istanbul could regard as inferior and on which they could implement and project colonial policies. While the post-colonial approach has brought truly new insights into Ottoman historiography, it has also been criticized for lending visibility to the provinces by demonstrating their subordinate and inactivated status and thus having not been able to free itself from a highly state-centred point of view.³⁷

The Balkan provinces, on the other hand, with their vast Ottoman Christian populations, or the multifaceted business relations between Christians and Muslims, present more difficulties in their conceptualization and homogenization in one, unified paradigm, as, say, post-colonialism. Detrez notes that “the economic exploitation of the Balkan population in the Ottoman empire was not particularly harsher than in Western and Central European countries, where there was foreign domination,” and that “attempting to define more accurately what it [the Ottoman rule] actually was, if not colonialism, we face an entire range of ways in which domination and oppression in the Balkans was perceived.”³⁸ Ottomans treated the submitted Balkan peoples as “regular” subjects. Nevertheless, although Ottomans displayed a great deal of religious tolerance, Christians were discriminated against in many respects.³⁹ Overall, Detrez proposes that the term colonialism is not appropriate to characterize the political and economic

“‘They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery’: The Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45, 2 (2003), pp. 313, 340.

³⁷ Köksal, “Tanzimat ve Tarih Yazımı (Tanzimat and Historiography)”, p. 203.

³⁸ Raymond Detrez, “Colonialism in the Balkans: Historic Realities and Contemporary Perceptions”, *Kakanien*, 15.5.2002, available online: <http://www.kakanien-revisited.at/beitr/theorie/RDetrez1.pdf>, p. 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

relations between the Habsburg and the Ottoman governments and the nations living in both empires.

Of course, this is not to argue that Balkans have been overall omitted within Ottoman studies. Economic aspects and especially the transformation of the *çiftlik* and the status of big landowners during the nineteenth century have triggered much interest.⁴⁰ In addition, urban studies and the spatial and economic development during the modernization process of the *Tanzimat* in various urban settings have also been studied.⁴¹ Nevertheless, in regard to the Ottoman Balkans during the middle of the nineteenth century we are still in need of both more in-depth studies, as well as -even more importantly- of a more synthetic overview combining existing studies of various provinces to more comparative and general argumenations.

Agency in Ottoman Society

Writing the history of the Ottoman Empire with a concern for the “voices from below”, that is, for those groups who possess a subordinate social, political, economic and ideological status,⁴² has only recently started attracting the attention of Ottomanists.

⁴⁰ Halil İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi (Tanzimat and the Bulgarian issue)*, Istanbul: Eren, 1992; Uğur Bayraktar, “The Political Economy of *Çiftlik*s: The Redistribution of Land and Land Tenure Relations in the Nineteenth Century Provinces of Ioannina and Trikala”, MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2009; Alp Yücel Kaya, “On the *Çiftlik* Regulation in Tırhala in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Economists, Pashas, Governors, *Çiftlik*-Holders, *Subaşs*, and Sharecroppers” in *Ottoman Rural Societies and Economies*, Elias Kolovos (ed.), Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 2015, pp. 333-380.

⁴¹ Meropi Anastasiadou, *Θεσσαλονίκη 1830-1912, Μια μετρόπολη την εποχή των Οθωμανικών μεταρρυθμίσεων (Thessaloniki 1830-1912, A metropolis in the period of Ottoman reforms)*, Athina: Vivliopoleion tis Estias, 2008; Sotirios Dimitriadis, “Transforming a Late-Ottoman Port-City: Salonica, 1876-1912” in *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History*, Pascal Firges et al (ed.), Leiden: Brill, 2014, pp. 207-221; Svetla Ianeva, “Samokov: An Ottoman Balkan City in the Age of Reforms” in *The Ottoman State and Societies in Change*, London, New York, Bahrain: Kegan Paul, 2004, pp. 47-76.

⁴² Stephanie Cronin, “Introduction” in *Subalterns and Social Protest. History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), New York: SOAS/Routledge Studies on the Middle East, 2008, p. 2.

As has been rightly pointed out by Ergene and Erdoğan more than fifteen years ago, historiographical approaches focusing on uncovering the voices and actions of the less privileged sections of society had found little resonance in the Ottoman context.⁴³

Similarly, Quataert has corroborated the fact that “historians of the Ottoman Empire have with more obstinancy than in other areas avoided covering non-elitist history, such as history of labour, the peasantry, the urban poor, slaves or the marginalized.” Yet, some differences can be detected according to the specific provinces under study: Historians of the Anatolian provinces of the Empire, unlike many studying the Arab provinces, are nearly silent on the issue of subalterns and their place in the making of history. In the Balkan provinces, on the other hand, Marxist historiography during the Soviet era centred on workers and peasants.⁴⁴

Numerous reasons have been named for this tendency in Ottoman historiography to neglect historical agency, among which are the centrality of the Turkish state in the minds of many scholars in the United States and Turkey, the rich tradition of state-centred historical writing during the reign of the Ottoman Empire, Cold War fears about workers and claims of Soviet connections, as well as the depth and richness of the Ottoman archives in Istanbul, which led to state-centred history writing.⁴⁵ Moreover, Ottomanists were often guided by an effort to utter a discourse against Orientalistic

⁴³ Necmi Erdoğan, “Devleti “idare etmek”: Maduniyet ve düzenbazlık (“Handling” the state: subalternity and trickery)”, and Boğaç Ergene, “Maduniyet Okulu, Post-Kolonyal Eleştiri ve Bilgi-Özne Soru (Subalterns school, postcolonial criticism and the question of knowledge-subject)”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 83 (Kış 1999/2000), pp. 8-31 and pp. 32-47. See also: Cengiz Kırılı, “From Economic History to Cultural History in Ottoman Studies”, *Int. J. Middle East Stud.*, 46 (2014), pp. 376-378.

⁴⁴ The term subalterns, initially applied by the homonymous historiographical school, refers, according to Quataert, to groups of inferior rank in other areas of the world. Donald Quataert, “Pensee 2: Doing Subalterns in Ottoman History”, *Int. J. Middle East Stud.*, 40, (2008), p. 379. Interestingly enough, Quataert offers as a possible space of research of subaltern history the administrative councils of the nineteenth century -dealt with in this thesis pertaining to their legal functions-, and the inquiry of whether these were only the results of policymakers’ actions or the products of activism among local elites driven to action by local peasants or workers. *Ibid.*, pp. 379-380.

⁴⁵ Quataert, “Pensee 2: Doing Subalterns in Ottoman History”, p. 379.

assumptions and anti-Turkish narratives, and consequently were led to praise the Ottoman central power, uncritically adopting the official ideology and replicating often the Turkish national narratives.⁴⁶

Particularly, in the 1960s to 1980s Ottoman historians were trying to understand Ottoman society through an analysis of the modes of production, using different versions of historical materialism. Naturally, thus, non-economic factors, pertaining especially to the religious and cultural structures of the empire did not take place in their accounts. In the 1990s, on the other hand, there returned among leading Ottomanists, like Barkey, Inan or Darling, the long-established view of the Ottoman peasants having internalized the notion of the “circle of justice” (*daire-i adalet*), according to which the Sultan was caring for his subjects, rendering them content enough to supply him with the necessary taxes for state finances. Thus, historians focused more on the hegemonic power and the discourses and material institutions created to win the support of the subjects.⁴⁷

Having said this, Ottomanists have occasionally focused on indirect ways in which Ottoman subjects tried to resist the imperial authorities; these have been named by Erdoğan popular *metis*, that is, a repertoire of non-systematic, diversionary and heterogeneous practices ranging from tactical creativity, to guile, cheating, deceit, hiding, disguise, pretending, simulation, dissimulation, escaping, cop-out, alertness and cynicism.⁴⁸ Such actions were neither constituting a revolution, nor a total obedience, but

⁴⁶ Eleni Gara, “Οθωμανική Κοινωνική Ιστορία. Αναστοχασμός και τάσεις έρευνας (Ottoman social history. Reflections and research tendencies)”, in *Οριενταλισμός στα όρια – Από τα οθωμανικά Βαλκάνια στη σύγχρονη Μέση Ανατολή (Orientalism at the limits – From the Ottoman Balkans to the modern Middle East)*, Athens: Kritiki, 2008, p.105.

⁴⁷ Ergene, “Maduniyet Okulu, Post-Kolonyal Eleştiri ve Bilgi-Özne Soru (Subalterns School, postcolonial criticism and the question of knowledge-subject)”, pp. 40-41.

⁴⁸ Erdoğan, “Devleti “idare etmek”: Maduniyet ve düzenbazlık (“Handling” the state: subalternity and trickery)”, p. 8. The word *metis* is adopted by Erdoğan from De Certeau, Detienne and Vernant.

were rather the actions of those who were “complying with the codes of the power, while at the same time transgressing them.”⁴⁹ The expression of such forms of “clandestine resistance” in practice was, when speaking about peasants, the abandoning of villages without prior permission in order to avoid taxation, the secret cultivation of lands, the mixing of stones into the harvest prior to submitting the portion of tax, the inversion of clothing rules that were destined to keep social and religious classes apart, or, lastly, the cutting of one’s fingers with the aim to avoid conscription.⁵⁰ Craftsmen of the eighteenth century, on the other hand, would open shops in far away villages or in Istanbul’s quiet and secluded corners in order to avoid the control of both the state and the guilds.⁵¹

While these works refer to centuries prior to the nineteenth one, the latter, and especially the reform era starting in 1839 has only very recently started being viewed from the perspective of ordinary people. Fahmy, for example, has shown how the Egyptian peasants, the *fellahin*, presented in Egyptian nationalist discourses as having discovered their true identities under the reign of Mehmed Ali, actually viewed his key institution, that is, the army and its conscription policies, as a heavy tax by an already oppressive and intolerant regime. Consequently, they avoided the draft either by open rebellion, or, more frequently, by deserting their villages, or resorting to individual acts

⁴⁹ Erdoğan, “Devleti “idare etmek”: Maduniyet ve düzenbazlık (“Handling” the state: subalternity and trickery)”, p. 8.

⁵⁰ Suraiya Faroqhi, “Crisis and Change, 1590-1699” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Halil İnalcık, Donald Quataert (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 437-8; Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994, pp. 9; Amy Singer, *Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials: Rural Administration Around Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 93.

⁵¹ Bruce McGowan, “The Age of the Ayans, 1699-1821” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Halil İnalcık, Donald Quataert (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 697.

such as to deliberately be declared medically unfit for service by self-mutation, chopping off the index finger, pulling the front teeth or putting rat poison in one's eye.⁵²

In addition, Abul-Magd has described how the Qina province of Upper Egypt experienced, as a result of its economic peripheralization during the nineteenth century, a series of subaltern revolts, during both Mohamed Ali's reign and the formal rule of the British Empire. Rural subaltern women and men in Qina's villages and small cities, like peasants, female textile-weavers, Nile boat captains, camel drivers, factory workers and merchants championed massive revolts, submitted an enormous number of collective and individual petitions, ran away from their lands or the state factories to escape the government heavy dues, attacked bureaucrats and propertied politicians, raided the houses of the rich, or joined the bandits in the mountains to upset any chance of political stability and security in the province.⁵³

Moreover, Akhtar has demonstrated how the subalterns of Jabal Nablus, who had been hit by higher taxes and greater debt due to the *Tanzimat* reforms, as well as the newly-privileged status of some religious minorities, especially Christians, took up arms during the period 1840 to 1860, targeting first Turkish *paşas*, while during the 1850s hostility begun to run towards European interests throughout Palestine.⁵⁴ Finally, Aykut, who has worked on archival sources stemming from various provinces of the Ottoman Empire, has tracked peasants' agency by following penal cases of arson and poisoning, demonstrating how peasant men and women from different parts of the empire resorted to extrajudicial settlements in order to attempt to solve disputes and achieve a sense of

⁵² Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men. Mehmed Ali, his Army and the Making of Modern Egypt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 99-103.

⁵³ Zeinab A. Abul-Magd, "Empire and its Discontents: Modernity and Subaltern Revolt in Upper Egypt, 1700-1920", PhD Thesis, Georgetown University, 2008, p. 286.

⁵⁴ Patricia A. Akhtar, "Subaltern Resistance in Jabal Nablus, 1840-1860", PhD Thesis, The University of Chicago, 2009, pp. 280-281.

justice outside of the court rooms, as the latter were often too far or their procedures lasted too long for providing immediate satisfaction to feelings of revenge or to issues related to poverty, misery, domestic violence and unwanted marriages.⁵⁵

However, the history of subalterns is not only a history of revolting against or tricking the official authorities. Often subordinated groups also negotiated with the same authorities and were willing to employ the language of the state in order to achieve their ends. Fahmy has shown how Egyptian peasants in the middle of the nineteenth century were eager to use newly introduced forensic medicine, including autopsy, when it served their case, in contrast to Indians who reacted to the introduction of dissections and autopsy by engaging in acts of violence against British colonial health officials.⁵⁶

Moreover, the *fellahin* were eager to resort to the newly established police stations, to petition against court rulings, to initiate legal action against members of the upper class, and to seek to readdress what they considered to be massive injustice that had befallen them.⁵⁷ Similarly, Chalcraft, based on handwritten peasant petitions in the Egyptian National Archives written during the Urabi Rebellion of 1881-2, has concluded that peasant discourse, constructed in collaboration with professional petition writers, made strategic use of the figure of the ruler and lodged sometimes assertive appeals to the rule of law and new and old rights in a dangerous and power-laden context. These peasants used an officially authorized language of complaint, performatively affirming peasant

⁵⁵ Ebru Aykut Türker, "Alternative Claims on Justice and Law: Rural Arson and Poison Murder in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire", PhD Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2011, p. 346.

⁵⁶ Khaled Fahmy, "Medicine and Power: Towards a Social-History of Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Egypt", *Cairo Papers in Social Science*, 23, 2 (2000), p. 37. In 1858 slaves working on the estate of Ilahmi *paşa*, the great nephew of the then Khedive, Said *paşa*, kept the body of a fellow slave and asked from the police to proceed to its post mortem investigation, in order to prove that he had died after severe beatings of Umar Bey Wasfi, who was the supervisor of the estate's stables.

⁵⁷ Khaled Fahmy, "The Police and the People in Nineteenth-Century Egypt", *Die Welt des Islams*, 39, 3 1999, p. 377. See also, Khaled Fahmy, "The Anatomy of Justice: Forensic Medicine and Criminal Law in Nineteenth-Century Egypt", *Islamic Law and Society*, 6, 2 (1999), p. 254.

loyalty to the *kebedive*, and simultaneously used the opportunity of grassroots elections of the village headmen in order to escape local oppression, asking in their petitions for the elections to be held by quickly adopting new constitutional discourses and making references to the system of injustice and the premises of equality.⁵⁸

Turning to the Balkan provinces, the focus of this thesis, subalterns' reaction during the *Tanzimat* reforms has gained less attention. Next to the reasons mentioned above, in the cases of the Balkan provinces the limited interest in subalterns' voices can be attributed, moreover, to the historiographies produced in the numerous post-Ottoman Balkan states, which avoided counter-voices and concentrated on institutional establishments like the Church and the Patriarchate, or the *millet*-institution itself. Indeed, their main aim has been to prove communal cohesion leading up to the modern nation-states, neglecting thus reactions of subordinate groups which did not fit into their linear nationalist-oriented narratives.

Existing works concerning the Balkan provinces, similarly to the literature just mentioned, underline either the revolutionary reaction to the newly established reforms, or the manifold opportunities opened to ordinary people by the same reforms in dealing with the state. To begin with, many tax revolts took place in the Balkan countryside during the mid-nineteenth century, as peasant populations expected that now that part of the tax burden of an area was to be placed on groups that until recently had been tax exempt or were paying decreased taxes, their own tax burden would be reduced. Such expectations though were most times not fulfilled.⁵⁹ In 1841 around 1,500 non-Muslim peasants gathered in *Niş* outside the fortress to voice their grievances and to demonstrate

⁵⁸ John Chalcraft, "Engaging the State: Peasants and Petitions in Egypt on the Eve of Colonial Rule", *Int. J. Middle East Stud.*, 37 (2005), pp. 304, 315-6.

⁵⁹ Halil İnalçık, "Application of the Tanzimat and its Social Effects", *Arhivum Ottomanicum*, 5 (1973), p. 117. Nadir Özbek, "Tanzimat Devleti, Vergi Sistemi ve Toplumsal Adalet, 1839-1908 (The Tanzimat state, taxation-system and social justice, 1839-1908)", *Toplumsal Tarih*, 252 (December 2014), p. 25.

their unwillingness to pay more than a three per cent ratio in taxes (that is, the ratio that had been announced) since everything above that was indeed unlawfully taken, be it by officials or by their own village elders.⁶⁰

Blumi, on the other side, has underlined in his work the opportunities which were opened for subalterns due to the changes of the nineteenth century. Subalterns reacted to the reforms both in violent and, as Blumi underlines, non-violent terms, e.g. through repeatedly sending telegrams and modifying thereby the state's plans, like in the case of drawing the borderline between the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro in 1878, which had to change three times after Albanians had reacted to existing plans.⁶¹ Blumi's main point is that "the dynamics of Ottoman life were such that far too many options still existed for local actors to adjust, adapt, and ultimately escape modern state coercive measures."⁶² Petrov, who has focused on Bulgarian peasants in the *Tuna* province during the time of Midhat *paşa's* governance (1864-1868), has demonstrated how Bulgarians learned very quickly to "speak Tanzimat," that is, to make use of the newly established local courts (*nizamiyye mahkemeleri*) in penal cases of homicide and employed key elements of the *Tanzimat* discourse in their legal strategies.⁶³ Blumi and Petrov are thereby following the more general tendency of "subaltern studies, history from below, *Alltagsgeschichte* and other varieties of non-elite history, which all took a decisive discursive

⁶⁰ İnalçık, "Application of the Tanzimat and its Social Effects", p. 108. Ahmet Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler (Tanzimat and Social Opposition)*, Istanbul: Eren, 2002, p. 57.

⁶¹ Isa Blumi, "The Consequences of Empire in the Balkans and Red Sea: Reading Possibilities in the Transformations of the Modern World", PhD Thesis, New York University, 2005, pp. 209-251.

⁶² Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans. Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912*, New York: Palgrave, 2011, p. 175.

⁶³ Milen Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868", PhD Thesis, Princeton University, 2006, p. 315.

turn, focusing less on acts of mass resistance and more on the power relationship between the rulers and the ruled.”⁶⁴

Having greatly benefited from the works of Blumi and Petrov, in the present thesis I aim to open the discussion of Ottoman agency furthermore, beyond the dipole of negotiation with-acquiesce to or rebellion against the Ottoman state and beyond the focus on a single ethnoreligious and / or social class. Particularly, I focus on the diversity of reactions of different subordinate groups towards both the Ottoman state as well as the newly-emerging nationalist mobilizations of the nineteenth-century in the Balkans; the agency that thereby evolves is a complex one, and the subjects appears as “fluid personalities, dynamic and warring ones.”⁶⁵ As Blumi has noted in a recent work, “rather than reading the experience of European (or) Ottoman imperialism as monolithic, and thus playing their rigid, fixed roles in the eurocentric teleology, it may be useful to highlight just how dramatically different the experience of the nineteenth century was for so many different peoples located at the intersection of these supposedly distinct historic entities.”⁶⁶

Particularly, this thesis aims to view how different, more or less subordinate, social classes beyond the local notables of various Balkan provinces, like peasants, all kinds of artisans, local teachers or printers, and, moreover, of different ethnoreligious backgrounds (Christians, that is, Greeks and Bulgarians, as well as Muslims), dealt with and presented themselves in a new institution of the reform period, that is, the local councils -founded for the first time in the empire’s history during the *Tanzimat*-, which

⁶⁴ Malte Fuhrmann, “Down and Out on the Quays of Izmir: ‘European’ Musicians, Innkeepers, and Prostitutes in the Ottoman Port Cities”, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 24, 2 (2009), p. 170.

⁶⁵ Ioanna Laliotou, “Μετααποικιακή συνθήκη και Ιστορία (Postcolonial condition and history)” in *Αποδομώντας την Αυτοκρατορία. Θεωρία και πολιτική της μετααποικιακής κριτικής (Deconstructing the empire. Theory and politics of the post-colonial critic)*, Athina Athanasiou (ed.), Athens: Nisos, 2016, p. 77.

⁶⁶ Blumi, *Foundations of Modernity. Human Agency and the Imperial State*, p. 4.

were judging penal cases. In fact, the institution of the local councils and the trials taking place within their framework are used as a showcase, a useful setting in which the encounter of subjects with the state is direct and intense, and therefore vividly illustrated. The range of social classes and ethnoreligious groups in the thesis is a deliberate one, aiming to provide a more synthetic view of subaltern behaviour. Moreover, by elaborating also on the role of the notables sitting in these local councils, as well as the state's verdicts on the penal cases, I aim to approach subaltern behaviour not as an isolated phenomenon, but through the dialectic of subject-state relationships. Overall, this is an ambitious endeavour and only preliminary answers and conclusions can be offered, in light also of minimal literature with which our findings could be compared.

Göçek has invited us in a recent article to view how power inequalities existed across time and space, how they were negotiated by different imperial communities like the non-Muslims, Kurdish tribes or Chechen, and Circassian immigrants, and how this negotiation differs along time.⁶⁷ Furthermore, both Deringil and Göçek have opened a dialogue between Ottoman and postcolonial studies aiming to compare different forms of governance during the nineteenth century and to place the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire within the larger context of imperialism and colonialism studies. Both Deringil and Göçek agree that the Ottoman case was different than its contemporary examples: Deringil -based on the Arab provinces- argues that, while the Ottoman Empire adopted a colonial stance towards the peoples of the periphery as the nineteenth century neared its end, this version of colonialism differed from its Western version to the extent that the centre was dependent on the goodwill and cooperation of the local sheikh or

⁶⁷ Fatma Müge Göçek, "Parameters of a Postcolonial Sociology of the Ottoman Empire", *Political Power and Social Theory*, 25, 2013, p. 89.

notable, or to the extent that the subject population had a far greater negotiating power than was the case in the British or French experience.⁶⁸

Göçek has similarly argued that, while postcolonial studies draw strict official and unofficial lines between the European colonizer and the non-European colonized, yet such a clear-cut divide does not hold in the case of the Ottoman Empire where the lines were much more nuanced and identities much more fluid. The local was not summarily “othered”, denigrated, and exploited; instead, it retained its agency and negotiated relations with the Ottoman capital, Western Europeans, and their local counterparts.⁶⁹ Kechriotis has described the Ottoman context as one in which the ruler and the ruled, the colonizer and the colonized, the dominant and the subaltern, were continuously changing roles.⁷⁰ While these are important insights into Ottoman governance of the nineteenth century, this thesis does not pursue the comparison with other imperial frameworks -although occasionally references to relevant practices will be made- but mainly the question of subject-sovereign relationships within the Ottoman Empire, across different geographies and ethnoreligious groups. Indeed, only after in-depth research in provinces like Anatolia or the Balkans, as well as in different periods, e.g. in periods predating the last thirty years of the empire, can Ottomanists proceed to generalizations and conclude that what they observe is indeed a new colonial relationship between the Ottoman imperial centre and its peripheries.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Deringil, “‘They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery’: The Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate”, pp. 313, 340.

⁶⁹ Göçek, “Parameters of a Postcolonial Sociology of the Ottoman Empire”, p. 90.

⁷⁰ Vangelis Kechriotis, “Postcolonial Criticism Encounters Late Ottoman Studies”, *Historiein*, 13 (2013), p. 43.

⁷¹ Göçek, “Parameters of a Postcolonial Sociology of the Ottoman Empire”, p. 90.

CHAPTER 1: THE STATE SETTING THE STAGE: Local Councils in Theory and Practice

Theory: Institutional Development

As has been illustrated in the introductory part, the *Tanzimat* reforms foresaw the introduction of novel, universal liberal rights for all the empire's subjects. The latter comprised not only the classical pillars of liberalism (universal rights of life, honour, and property), but also the right of political representation and voting -albeit in a "proto-form" due to various restrictions- for both Muslims and non-Muslims in councils established on three levels: in the capital, in the framework of the "millet-structure," and in the provincial administration.⁷² In this chapter I will focus on the latter level, that is, the institutional establishment of the local councils in the provinces,⁷³ and then present some archival work pertaining to actual implementation and daily practices of the same councils in various Ottoman cities of the Balkans. In the present section I will first describe the establishment of the various councils and follow their membership and the various functions they were bestowed with from the 1840s to the 1860s.

⁷² Davison has made this threefold distinction in "The Advent of the Principle of Representation in the Government of the Ottoman Empire" in *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West*, Roderic H. Davison (ed.), London: Saqi Books, 1990, pp. 102-103. For legislative councils found in the same period in Istanbul, see Stanford J. Shaw, "The Central Legislative Councils in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Reform Movement before 1876", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1, 1 (1970).

⁷³ Due to limited space, I will not be able to elaborate in length on the origins of these councils; I suffice to say though that the establishment of the councils has been connected either to emulations of the "Egyptian *Tanzimat*," that is, the reforms undertaken by Mehmet Ali during his occupation of Syria (1831-1840) or, also, in Egypt itself (Moshe Maoz, "Syrian Urban Politics in the Tanzimat Period between 1840 and 1861", *Bulletin of SOAS, University of London*, 29, 2 (1966), p. 280), or to European influence, and particularly the Ottomans' need to preempt foreign interventions, as the foreign powers were complaining about the status of non-Muslims in the *sharia* courts (See Maurus Reinkowski, "Ottoman 'Multiculturalism?'-The Example of the Confessional System in Lebanon", Lecture given at the Orient Institute in Istanbul, 17 February 1997, *Zokak El Blat(t)*, 19 (1999), pp. 13-14; Sedat Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlıda yargı reformu (Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat)*, Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004, pp. 38-43).

In 1840, only a few months after the promulgation of the *Tanzimat* with the edict of 1839, the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vala-ı Ahkam-ı Adliye*, founded in 1838) stipulated that every administrative unit of the empire (province, sub-province, district) would have a council carrying both administrative and judicial functions, called *muhassıllık* and later *memleket meclisleri* (in English, respectively, tax collectors' councils and dominions' councils).⁷⁴ Without a doubt, the Ottoman state's main concern at that time was of a fiscal nature, that is, the abolition of the *iltizam*-system (the rights of tax-farming distributed to local elites) and the dispatch of centrally appointed officials, the *muhassıls*, who would be authorized with the minutely registration, collection and sending to Istanbul of the subjects' taxes.⁷⁵ The big councils, to be found in places in which a *muhassıl* would be appointed, would count thirteen members, while the small councils, in places in which a *muhassıl* was not foreseen, would count five members.

The new councils thus were mainly designed to assist the new tax-collectors. The actual implementation of the new measure was astonishingly quickly, as a decree informs us that in the same year several councils had been founded in various smaller and bigger cities of the Balkans.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, as the new office of the tax-collector did not yield the expected results, the office was suspended in 1841 and the old *iltizam*-system was reintroduced. Consequently, the local councils were thus renamed to *memleket meclisleri*

⁷⁴ Reşat Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa ve Tanzimat (Mustafa Reşit Pasha and the Tanzimat)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1954, pp. 247-263. According to Ortaylı, these councils can be found in the documents also as *müşakere meclisi* (negotiation council) and sometimes also as *meşveret meclisi* (consultation council), the latter being a reference to a pre-*Tanzimat* tradition of councils (dating from the 18th century), which were meeting once in a year in the centre of a province with the participation of *kadis*, *naihs*, *voyvodas*, and *ayans* from all the sub-provinces. Ortaylı, *Tanzimat'tan sonra mahalli idareler (1840-1878) (Local administrations after the Tanzimat (1840-1878))*, p. 14.

⁷⁵ For the orders (*talimat*) given to the various *muhassıl* before being sent to the countryside, see Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa ve Tanzimat (Mustafa Reşit Pasha and the Tanzimat)*, pp. 234-245.

⁷⁶ BOA (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*, Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, Istanbul, from now on BOA), C.DH. 291 14547 (2 April 1840): "Rumeli'nin bazı kazalarında intihab olunan meclis azalarının isimleri." See Table 4 at the end of this chapter.

(dominions' councils) in the same year and to *eyalet meclisleri* (provincial councils) in 1849.⁷⁷

In time though the workload of the *eyalet meclisleri* was becoming too high, especially for the appointed members (see below) who had simultaneously other tasks to carry out. Thus, soon there were formed criminal councils (*cinayet meclisleri*), which comprised members of the *eyalet meclisleri* and were destined to work as “special councils” (*ibtisas meclisleri*) dealing only with judicial, and not administrative, cases.⁷⁸ The same problem was aimed at with the official stipulation in 1854 of the *meclis-i tahkikat* (investigative council), which were councils designed, again, to deal only with judicial cases. Their president was the *vali*, who could choose the members of the councils from among the members of the *eyalet meclisleri* and the local elites.⁷⁹ The official stipulations would remain like this until the Province Regulations of 1864, which foresaw the separation of the councils' administrative and judicial functions: from now on purely administrative councils (*idare meclisleri*) would look after the local administration, while local courts (*nizamiyye mahkemeleri*), founded in a hierarchical system from district to province, would adjudicate over trials.⁸⁰ The *nizamiyye mahkemeleri*, similar to the local councils prior to them, presided solely over penal cases, until the implementation of the *Mecelle*, a new Civil Code issued between 1868 and 1876.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlı'da yargı reformu. Nizamiyye mahkemelerinin kuruluşu ve işleyişi, 1840-1876* (Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat. The foundation and proceeding of the nizamiyye courts, 1840-1876), p. 68.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77: “Azaları eyalet meclisi azalarından ve memleket ileri gelenlerinden adil, hakkaniyeti gerçekleştirmeye muktedir kişilerden oluşacaktı.”

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁸¹ Rubin, “Ottoman Modernity: The Nizamiyye Courts in the Late Nineteenth Century”, p. 48. According to Rubin, “[The *mecelle-i ahkam-ı adliye*] was based on Islamic Hanafi law adjusted to meet current actualities. At the same time, the code echoed principles derived from the French law in terms of substance and structure.” *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Who was sitting then in these new institutions of the *Tanzimat*? The members, illustrated in Table 5 at the end of this chapter, were a mixture of state-appointed members (who were always, officially, in the majority), and of elected local notables, Muslims and non-Muslims. The state-appointed members comprised the local Muslim judge, as well as representatives of the local administration and the army. The monopoly of the *kadi* of the *sharia* courts was thus broken, and a group of local state officials resumed responsibility over -in the beginning only penal- trials. A second remarkable novelty was the participation in the councils of local notables, who were elected by their own people. In the case of the early *muhassıl* councils, the ones who wished to be nominated as candidates had to register their names at the local courts; more importantly, they had to belong to the local elites, that is, to be among the smartest, most distinguished and noble local people.⁸² Voters, on their part, were chosen by lot from among people coming from the villages, and they also had to have special characteristics pertaining to their influence, as well as property-ownership.⁸³ Following the 1864 regulations, the requirements for being elected as a member of a local council acquired a more specific character, particularly concerning one's property: For the province's centre's courts for example, the candidates had to pay at least five hundred *guruş* tax per year, next to having some social prestige ("*itibarlı, okur yazar kimseler*"). Moreover, a two-tier system was being introduced: a commission comprised of the province's governor, the appointed members of the province's courts, as well as the local metropolitan, would

⁸² Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlı'da yargı reformu. Nizamiyye mahkemelerinin kuruluşu ve işleyişi, 1840-1876* (*Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat. The foundation and proceeding of the nizamiyye courts*), 1840-1876, p. 54: "O memleketin halkının en akıllı, en ağıf ve seçkin kişilerden olup, devlet işlerinden anlayan kişilerden olmalıdır."

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 54: "Kazada ise akıllı, mal sahibi, sözü dinlenir kişilerden, büyük şehirlerde 50 kişi ortabüyüklikteki yerlerde 30, daha küçük çaplı yerlerde 20 kişi kura ile seçmen seçiliyordu."

choose some names from among a list of elected notables, while the final names would be chosen on behalf of the governor.⁸⁴

Pertaining to the functions of the local councils, it is important to underline that until the mid-1860s they, officially, carried the status both of a local administrative body, as well as of a court. Regarding their judicial powers, the local courts were given the authority to adjudicate -in the beginning only- penal cases according to new secular Penal Codes issued in 1840, 1851 and 1858. The new Penal Codes were valid for all subjects of the Empire and introduced, thus, “equality of all” before the law.⁸⁵ An important manifestation of this equality were the regulations of 1854 (introducing the investigative councils), which accepted -contrary to *sharia* law-, without any exception, the testimonies of the subjects of all the *millet*s as valid during the proceedings of these councils.⁸⁶

Thus, in the period under scrutiny in this thesis, while the civil cases would continue to be seen by the *sharia* courts, penal cases were adjudicated on behalf of the

⁸⁴ Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlıda yargı reformu (Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat)*, p. 173.

⁸⁵ For the record, non-Muslims living in the Ottoman Empire were under various judicial jurisdictions before, as well as after the *Tanzimat* reforms, depending on the legal nature of the matter they were about to solve. Before the reforms, in the case of non-Muslims, penal and intra-communal issues (especially when one part was Muslim) came under the jurisdiction of the *sharia* courts, while personal and family law were officially under the jurisdiction of communal courts, in which -in the case of Greek-Orthodox subjects- laymen and Greek-Orthodox religious persons were sitting (Najwa Al Qattan, “Dhimmi in the Muslim Court: Legal Autonomy and Religious Discrimination”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 31 (1999), p. 429). Relevant literature though has shown that also in the case of personal and family law non-Muslims were applying to the *sharia* courts, as the organization of the communal courts must not have been so strong and varied according to place and time, and as provisions of the *sharia* courts were sometimes more favourable. Indeed, research in various *sicill* records has shown that non-Muslims were actively using the *sharia* courts in a variety of cases (See Rossitsa Gradeva, “Orthodox Christians in the kadi Courts: The Practice of the Sofia shariat Court, Seventeenth Century”, *Islamic Law and Society*, 4, 1 (1997), p. 39). Non-Muslims also applied to the *sharia* courts for the purpose of recording their property and commercial transactions, recognizing thereby the *sharia* court as a public record office. For more relevant info, see Macit Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı millet sistemi: mit ve gerçek (The Ottoman millet system: myth and reality)*, Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2004, pp. 209-213; Richard Wittmann, “Before Qadi and Grand Vizier: Intra-Communal Dispute Resolution and Legal Transactions among Christians and Jews in the Plural Society of Seventeenth Century Istanbul”, PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 2008, p. 262; N. J. Pantazopoulos, *Church and Law in the Balkan Peninsula during the Ottoman Rule*, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1967, p. 53.

⁸⁶ Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlıda yargı reformu (Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat)*, p. 78.

local councils. Moreover, the files of heavy penal cases, like murder and highway robbery (*katl-i nefis, kat-ı tarik*) had to be sent to the centre in Istanbul for the issue of the final verdict. Similarly, for punishments like forced labour (*keirek*) and retaliation-capital punishment (*kasas*) the documents had, again, to be sent to the *Bab-ı Ali*; particularly, no capital punishment could be executed before prior approval by the centre. On the other hand, smaller cases like theft would have to be sent to the *vali* (provincial governor) for the execution of the respective sentence.⁸⁷

In all, the local councils of the *Tanzimat* carried some radical novelties. New legislation was introduced in order to be implemented by these councils, which foresaw the rule of law for all Ottoman subjects, equality of all subjects in front of the law, election of Muslims and non-Muslims to the public administration, and, moreover, through elections carried out among ordinary people. From the centre's viewpoint, the councils appeared as one of the main bonds between centre and province, evident in the massive correspondence kept in the archives between Istanbul and the provincial councils. As Saraçoğlu has noted: "It would not be wrong to consider the local councils as a step in establishing a means of communication between the imperial centre and the provinces."⁸⁸

Nevertheless, the current state of literature reveals that the councils have not received the attention they deserve. Existent literature on these councils has dealt either only with Egypt, where the institutional development was not always been similar to the

⁸⁷ Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlıda yargı reformu (Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat)*, p. 70. See also: Sedat Bingöl, *Hirsova kazâ deavi meclisi tutanakları. Nizamiye mahkemeleri tutanaklarından bir örnek (The records of the Deavi council in the Hirsova district. An example of the records of the nizamiye courts)*, Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2002, p. 15.

⁸⁸ Mehmet Safa Saraçoğlu, "Letters from Vidin: A Study of Ottoman Governmentality and Politics of Local Administration, 1864-1877", PhD Thesis, The Ohio State University, 2007, p. 37.

one taking place in the rest of the Ottoman Empire,⁸⁹ or, has prioritized the administrative functions of these councils.⁹⁰ In the legal sphere, homicide has attracted the bigger interest: One can thus find the yet unpublished dissertations of Milen Petrov and Ebru Aykut Türker, the former dealing with homicide after 1864 in the *Tuna Vilayeti* and the Midhat *paşa* legacy, the latter pertaining to homicide and arson cases during the *Tanzimat*, without a geographical specification.⁹¹ Avi Rubin has dealt in his PhD from a more theoretical perspective with socio-legal aspects of the establishment of the *nizamiyye mahkemeleri*, and focused on a single case of a Hamdi Bey in Istanbul, himself a public prosecutor, who was accused of beating and slandering certain persons.⁹² Cengiz Kırılı has analyzed the trials of three high officials accused of corruption, showing how local practices between officials based on gift-economy were labelled as corruption overnight during the *Tanzimat* and punished accordingly.⁹³ Finally, gender issues and especially dealing with abortion during the *Tanzimat* has recently started to acquire attention.⁹⁴ On the other hand, banditry and sedition cases, presented in this thesis, have not been dealt with in any relevant work.

⁸⁹ For examples see: Fahmy, "The Anatomy of Justice: Forensic Medicine and Criminal Law in Nineteenth-Century Egypt"; Rudolph Peters, "Sharia and the State: Criminal Law in Nineteenth-Century Egypt" in *State and Islam*, K. van Dijk and A.H. de Groot (ed.), Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1995.

⁹⁰ For an example, see: Mehmet Safa Saraçoğlu, "Some Aspects of Ottoman Governmentality at the Local Level: The Judicio-Administrative Sphere of the Vidin County in the 1860s and 1870s", *Ad Imperio*, 2 (2008); Yonca Köksal, "Local Intermediaries and Ottoman State Centralization: A Comparison of the Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Ankara and Edirne (1839-1878)", PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 2002.

⁹¹ Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868"; Aykut Türker, "Alternative Claims on Justice and Law: Rural Arson and Poison Murder in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire".

⁹² Rubin, "*Ottoman Modernity: The Nizamiye Courts in the Late Nineteenth Century*".

⁹³ Cengiz Kırılı, "Yolsuzluğun icadı: 1840 Ceza Kanunu, iktidar ve bürokrasi (The invention of corruption: The Penal Code of 1840, power and bureaucracy)", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 4, 2006.

⁹⁴ Gülhan Balsoy, "Gender and the Politics of the Female Body: Midwifery, Abortion and Pregnancy in Ottoman Society (1838-1890s)", PhD Thesis, Binghamton University, 2009.

When I set out studying the local councils in the southern Balkans and especially the position of ordinary people within / towards them I had, firstly, to deal with a big variety of penal cases, before deciding to focus on banditry and sedition. To note, compared to the *sicil* registers (the records kept by the *sharia* courts), which consist of compact volumes comprising all penal cases of a certain place for a certain year, the cases which had been heard by the local councils are not available in the form of a yearbook, but can be detained only one by one by entering keywords e.g. of cities or of specific crimes in the Ottoman archives in Istanbul, and cases appear in correspondence to the title they have been catalogued with. Local Ottoman archives in the Balkans contain penal cases referring to a later period of the nineteenth century (usually after the 1870s) and present the problem of not having been listed in catalogues and are thus, yet, difficult to work with.⁹⁵

After dealing thus with a variety of penal cases, ranging from theft, rape, homicide, to sedition and banditry, I decided to focus on the latter two cases. The former penal cases contained mostly very short interrogation protocols -an archival source which is being presented in the next page-, which revealed little about the defendants' mindset, as well as further social implications of a crime. On the other hand, the documentation of sedition and banditry cases, with interrogation protocols counting, often, up to fifty pages, provided me with much more clues regarding personal motivation, larger networks of conspirators or bandits and interactions between defendants and councils. While I am going to deal with these cases in Chapters Three to Five by focusing on the defendants, in the remaining of the present chapter I will try to approach the councils

⁹⁵ In the framework of my study for this, I have visited also following archives in Balkan cities, but was not able to find material to the councils related to the period under scrutiny in this thesis: *Ιστορικό Αρχείο Μακεδονίας* (Historical Archive of Macedonia), Thessaloniki, Greece; *Државен архив на Република Македонија* (State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia), Skopje, Republic of Macedonia; St. Cyril and Methodius National Library of Bulgaria, Sofia, Bulgaria.

(*meclis*) as an administrative body and see how they interacted in daily practice with ordinary people, as well as with the central authorities in Istanbul. The focus will not be on official stipulations, but on actual realities, as they can be extracted from the relevant archives. In Chapter Two then I will proceed from the administrative body to the actual persons sitting in the councils.

Practice: Daily Realities

Istintaknames (Interrogation Protocols): Ordinary People Facing the Councils

The local councils were among the main institutions (if not the main), which rendered the *Tanzimat* visible to ordinary people. Indeed, we can rightly assume that ordinary people did not experience the *Tanzimat* as an abstract system of new ideas and ideals introduced into the society, but rather as tangible changes in their quotidian life. Moreover, with the regulations of 1849 (with which the *eyalet meclisleri* had been introduced) the local councils were bestowed -for the first time in the Empire's history- with the function of noting down the interrogation of each defendant and litigant in a document called *istintakname*.⁹⁶

The latter constitutes a promising, yet still widely unexplored, Ottoman source. Some words are in place here regarding this rich, but still-to-be-discovered, historical source. European history, especially of the Middle Ages, has greatly benefited from the

⁹⁶ Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlı'da yargı reformu. Nizamiyye mahkemelerinin kuruluşu ve işleyişi, 1840-1876* (Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat. The foundation and proceeding of the nizamiyye courts, 1840-1876), pp. 69-72. Ebru Aykut (Marmara University, Istanbul) has shared with me the interesting information that interrogation protocols in the Ottoman archives use to be lengthy when they came from the Balkan provinces, but short or non-existent when originating from today's Anatolia.

usage of court reports in shedding light on the social life and the moral worlds of such subordinate groups as peasants or women.⁹⁷ Indeed, for “illiterate medieval English town and country folk, these [court] narratives are the closest we will get to a story told in their own words, according to their reconstructions of events, and in categories they understood.”⁹⁸

In Ottomanist historiography, the *sicil* registers of the Islamic sharia courts have been widely used since the 1990s and have contributed significantly to writing the empire’s social history.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the *sicil* registers contain merely after-the-trial summaries of legal cases heard in the *sharia* courts.¹⁰⁰ On the contrary, the *istintaknames* produced in the framework of the local courts founded in the mid-nineteenth century provide in abundance the kind of “raw social history” data whose absence in the *sicils* is so often regretted. Unlike virtually any other type of Ottoman legal source, the interrogation protocols are verbatim accounts of what has been said during the investigative process. As such, these documents contain the first-person narratives of bona fide non-elite social actors, which have proven so elusive in other types of Ottoman sources.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294-1324*, London: Penguin Books, 1980; Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992; Genelle Gertz, *Heresy Trials and English Women Writers, 1400-1670*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012; Shulamith Shahar, *Women in a Medieval Heretical Sect: Agnes and Huguette the Waldensians*, England: Boydell Press, 2001; Karen Sullivan, *The Interrogation of Joan of Arc*, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

⁹⁸ Barbara Hanawalt, “The Voices and Audiences of Social History Records,” *Social Science History*, 15, 2 (Summer 1991), p. 162.

⁹⁹ Beschara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995; Iris Agmon, *Family and Court: Legal Culture and Modernity in Late Ottoman Empire*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006; Boğaç Ergene, “Local Court, Community and Justice in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire”, PhD Thesis, The Ohio State University, 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Haim Gerber, *State, Society and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective*, State University of New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1994, p. 15.

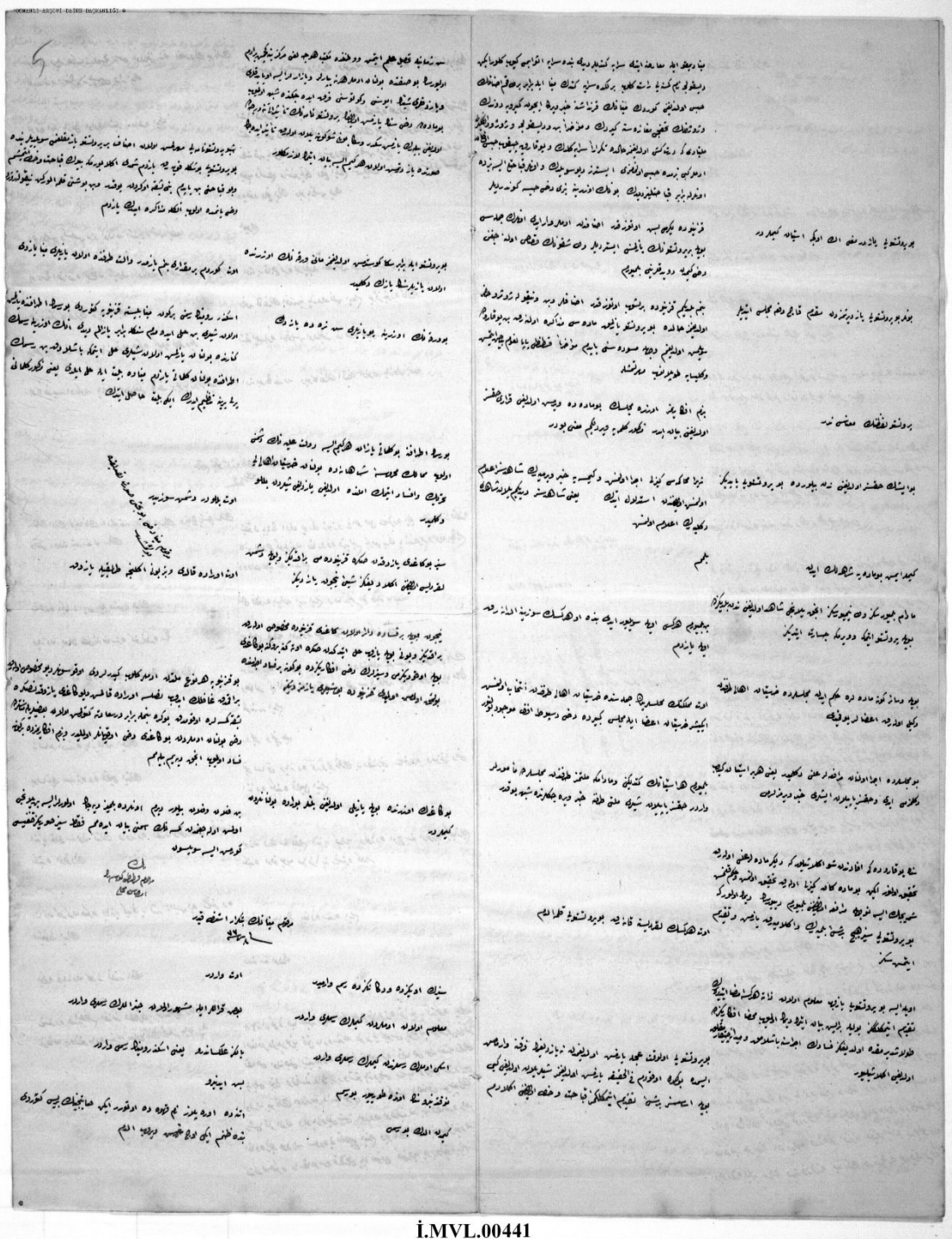
¹⁰¹ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the countryside: Midhat Pasa and the vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868”, p. 735.

For sure, historians have suggested caution in the interpretation of these verbatim accounts as the “real voices” of ordinary people. After all, the questions of the interrogators were directing the answers of the litigants; we do not read their full accounts of the story, but only answers to specific questions, in which they often borrowed part of the interrogators’ vocabulary. Moreover, these were answers uttered in the framework of a court, and the defendant is expected to have mixed lies with truth, and provided the answers which he thought might earn him the least sentence. Lastly, we do not know whether the scribe writing down the interrogation protocol was doing so by also interpreting the defendants’ words. In a nutshell, “those who study such protocols should take into account the meta-language of the scribe, then the meta-language of the historian, before extracting the voices of the subjects.”¹⁰² Keeping this in mind, while court records are the closest a historian can get to the voices of the ordinary, one should always remain cautions regarding the full authenticity of the statements kept in the archives.

For ordinary Ottoman people-defendants standing in front of a *Tanzimat* court entailed elements both of old and new experiences. Undoubtedly, people had a long tradition of dealing with (*sharia* and, in case of non-Muslims, communal) courts, and using a certain legal terminology, as well as tactics. On the other hand, in the *Tanzimat* courts they were standing no longer in front of the religious judge (*kadi*), but of a group of people, comprising state officials and local notables. To note, the office of the public prosecutor did not exist in the time under scrutiny in this thesis,¹⁰³ while there was no legal representation for the litigants.

¹⁰² Paz, Omri. “Crime, Criminals, and the Ottoman State: Anatolia between the late 1830s and the late 1860s”, PhD Thesis, Tel Aviv University, 2010, p. 122; Paz states to be quoting Carlo Ginzburg in a talk given at Tel Aviv University on 22 March 2006.

¹⁰³ The formal position of a public prosecutor was first introduced in the Provincial Law of 1864; nevertheless, only with the first constitution in 1876 was the public prosecutor given the mandate to



I.MVL.00441

Archive Sample 1: BOA, I.MVL. 441 19597 (11 January 1861). Sample of an interrogation protocol in question (on the left)-answer (on the right) form, written in Ottoman *rika* handwriting, used in nineteenth-century official correspondence

represent the rights of the public in criminal matters. Paz, "Crime, Criminals, and the Ottoman State: Anatolia Between the Late 1830s and the Late 1860s", pp. 114-115.

Moreover, the defendants' words were now being written down in detail. From the side of the litigants, one could argue that this was an experience of modernity, in the sense that the individual was asked for a long personal version of the events, and, moreover, one that was valued important enough to be recorded on paper and, thus, to gain a character of permanence. Yorgi the son of Yovan, who had been arrested for banditry, was tried in 1861 first in the sub-province council of *Siroz* and later in *Selanik*. When asked by the council of *Selanik* what the authorities had done with him in *Siroz*, Yorgi answered that he had been brought in front of a council (*meclise çıkardılar*); when asked, then, what they had asked him in this council, Yorgi -in a rare instance in which a defendant uttered something about the *meclis* itself- answered: "They were asking questions like you and writing like you do (*Sizin sorduğunuz gibi sorarlardı ve böyle yazarlardı*)."¹⁰⁴ Yorgi referred here both to the practice of a detailed interrogation, practiced firstly in the *Tanzimat* courts, as well as of literally writing down the defendants' each word in the *istintakname*, a practice which had obviously caught his attention.

Indeed, the interrogators had to make the defendants speak in detail. In Chapters Three to Five we will follow how defendants of various penal cases pertaining to banditry and sedition explained their actions in the *Tanzimat* courts; particularly, how they proceeded to do so, mostly with great eloquence, filling pages over pages of *istintaknames*. But again, there were cases in which people denied their acts or denied even to speak in front of the court. In the latter cases, we can observe how the members of the councils attempted to convince people to testify, by presenting the *meclis* as something new and less harmful than previous tactics and institutions. In 1857 Talib Ali, Muhtar and Veli were interrogated for having violated the house of the non-Muslim notable Kota in the district *Köprülü* of the *Manastır* province, stealing his belongings and killing his servant.

¹⁰⁴ BOA, LMVL. 452 20191 (25 August 1861).

Talib Ali stated in court that before being brought in front of the council he had been confronted with the governor (*vali paşanın huzuruna çıkardılar*), where Kota recognized him and his partners as the one who had assaulted him. Consequently, the governor got furious and had the men beaten with a stick thousand times (*bin değnek ayaklarına urdular [...] sonradan beni yatırıp dövmeğe başladılar*), upon which Talib Ali confessed. He nevertheless denied, also in front of the *Selanik* council, having actually taken any share of the stolen goods, upon which the council members told him: “Tell us the truth, you see that nowadays neither you nor anybody else is being beaten or tortured.”¹⁰⁵ The intention of the *meclis* members was thereby both to render the *meclis* a refined and modern institution, as well as to put the defendants at ease and make them thus speak about their deeds.

To note, based on the present documentation, it is difficult to state whether the *meclis* did employ any violence or not in order to extract a testimony from a defendant. Nevertheless, we do observe how the councils’ interrogators were employing the threat of a higher authority, for example the religious leader of the non-Muslims, towards the defendants. The Christian Bulgar Hristo from *Avrethisar*, for example, who was interrogated in the framework of a banditry-issue, was threatened by the council of *Selanik* that, in case he would not tell the truth, he would be sent to his religious leader: “doğru söylemezsen seni despot efendiye yollayacağız.”¹⁰⁶

Next to portraying the *meclis* as a “refined institution,” one which would not resort to torture in order to extract a confession from a defendant, the *Tanzimat* councils

¹⁰⁵ BOA, LMVL. 382 16735 (19 November 1857). “Görüyorsun ki şimdi sana ve hiç bir kimesneye bir guna dayak ve ezîyet olunmuyor şu keyfiyetin sahibini söyle.” The same argumentation was made by the *meclis* also to Muhtar the son of Haydar, interrogated for the same case: “İşte sana bir guna ezîyet ve dayak gibi muamele olunmayup hakikat-i maddeyi söyle...” Veli actually died later in prison, because of being, according to the Ottoman documents, in a “bad condition (*na mizaç*).” (See also a similar discourse in another case, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858): “bazılarını doğru söyledin bazılarını da korktun sakladın bunda korkacak bir şey yok.”)

¹⁰⁶ BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858).

employed also other, more traditional one could say, methods. These involved addressing the conscience and especially the religious sentiments of the defendants. The latter were thus asked to say the truth “in the name of God (*Allah için*),”¹⁰⁷ while telling a lie was characterized as a sin (*günah-günahba kalırsın*),¹⁰⁸ aiming thus to spark fear in the defendants. Other times the defendants’ sense of honour was being evoked: “Tell the truth, you seem as a man who tells the truth,”¹⁰⁹ or “Why would you act as a bandit and thus make a disgraceful act?”¹¹⁰ Other times the defendant’s low social status was being referred to: “They are rich people [your accomplices], if they are full guilty, you are only half guilty, something like this happened, let us take the money from them [from your accomplices, in order to redeem the victim].”¹¹¹

Defendants, on their part, employed their own tactics in order to convince the court that they were telling the truth. The most common tactic one encounters when reading dozens and dozens of *istintaknames* was, in case a defendant pleaded innocence, to state that he¹¹² was willing to suffer whatever punishment the court would decide, should the opposite of his testimony prove to be true. Expressions like I will “accept my punishment (*cezama razıyım*),” or “I will accept twice my punishment (*iki kat cezama razı olurum*)” were very common in this context.¹¹³ Another common tactic was to invite the

¹⁰⁷ BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858). The same was often used by the defendants themselves: “*Allah için bildiğimizi söyleriz ve yemin de ederiz*”, “*Allah için şebadet ederiz*.”

¹⁰⁸ BOA, LMVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862). “-*Şimdiye kadar verdiğin şu cevaplarında yalan mı doğru mu söyledin eğerce yalanın var ise şimdiden düşün doğrusunu ifade eyle sonra günahda kalırsın. -Ben düşünüp doğrusunu söyledim eğerce bu cevaplarda yalanım var ise günahı boynuma olsun.*”

¹⁰⁹ BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858): “*Şunun doğrucasını söyle zira doğru söyler adam benzersin.*”

¹¹⁰ BOA, LMVL. 465 21020 (22 November 1861): “*Niçin böyle eşkiyalık sıfat ile gidüp rezâlet edecek idiniz?*”

¹¹¹ BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858): “*Onlar zengin adamlardır onlar bütün kabahatli ise sen yarım kabahatlısın böyle bir şey olmuş parayı bunlardan arandıralım.*”

¹¹² In the penal cases presented in this thesis only male defendants appeared in court.

¹¹³ BOA, LMVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862). See, for example, testimonies like the following: “*Hayır ne daskal gördüm ne mezkur odaya dabi gitmedim gelsin daskal bu işi yüzüme karşı söylesin aslı var ise cezama razıyım*

persons who had testified against oneself, or had accused him of something, to come and repeat the same testimony in front of the defendant's presence: "I succumb, if he comes and tell it to my face."¹¹⁴ Other times they attributed their crime to their succumbing to the demon.¹¹⁵ Very few were the (at least documented on paper) cases in which the defendant was overtly taken by fear during the interrogation, which was evident either in his body-language ("Todor bowed his shoulders."¹¹⁶) or in his inability to provide an answer ("Ramazan got in a fever and was unable to give any kind of answer."¹¹⁷)

These reactions of the defendants must not have been unique to the *Tanzimat* courts, although the *sharia* registers do not provide similar narrations, with which our material could be compared. In addition, having read hundreds of pages of *istintaknames*, I was not able to find instances in which the defendants uttered any opinion concerning the *meclis*, the interrogation process, or, in general, the reform program of the *Tanzimat*. This is an indication for the fact that, while we study the *Tanzimat* as a separate and transforming period, everyday people living in their own locality may have experienced this transformation much more slowly, gradually or even differently that our understanding today would suggest. While in official petitions we may find standardized

benim bu işten hiç haberim yoktur zabtiyelerden işittim gayri kimesneden işitmedim bir şey bilmem," and "Eğerce benim bu işi Poş Dimitre'den ve başkasından işittiğim veya benim de bunda bir medhalım olup da başkasına söylediğim meydana çıkar ise ben iki kat cezama razı olurum." See also BOA, I.MVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857): "Benim söyleyeceğim yoktur rica ederim ki memleketimden bir zabtiye götürüleb eğerce bir kimseden bir akçe almış ve bir guna fenalık etmiş olduğum halde tertib edecek cezama razıyım." And BOA, I.MVL. 452 20191 (25 August 1861): "Ve eğer başkalarını dahi soyduğunuzu ispat ederler ise sonra cezana razı olur musun? -? cezama razı olurum efendim."

¹¹⁴ "Yüzüme karşı gelir söyler ben razıyım", BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858). Also in I.MVL. 264 10019 (14 February 1853): "Ben keşif ile reyaları öldürmedim eğer gören ve bilen var ise gelsin yüzüme karşı ben öldürdüğümü ikrar ve ispat eylesinler."

¹¹⁵ "Uydum şeytana", BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858), and "Şeytana uyup firar ettim" in I.MVL. 264 10019 (14 February 1853).

¹¹⁶ BOA, MVL. 979 49 (25 April 1864): "Todor omuzunu bükerek..."

¹¹⁷ BOA, I.MVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857): "Merkum Ramazan bu babda kemal-i telas ederek bir guna cevap verememiştir."

references to the *Tanzimat*, and to premises such as the protection of one's life, property and honour,¹¹⁸ we do not find such mentioning in the court room, where actually one would expect that the defendants would use these terms in order to strengthen their cases.¹¹⁹ I interpret this difference as an experience on behalf of the defendants of the *meclis* as something less official than the governor, or the Sultan, more like a forum-like institution in which they were asked questions and could, within certain limits, tell their version of events in a less standardized language. It is therefore that the *istintakname* offer us this rare glimpse into peoples' world, less mediated than other archival sources.

Mazbatalar (Council Reports)

Dealing with Taxation in *Selanik*

While in Chapter Two we are going to follow the trajectories of separate individuals sitting in the local councils of *Selanik*, in this and the next section of the present chapter I am going to focus on the *meclis* as an institution, as an administrative and judicial body, and the ways in which it interacted with the imperial centre. The importance of the *meclis* during the *Tanzimat*, seen from the perspective of the centre, seems to have been overlooked. As Saraçoğlu notes, "it is mostly through the reports of these councils that the imperial administration became aware of what was happening in

¹¹⁸ BOA, MVL. 133 97 (6 March 1853).

¹¹⁹ Similarly, Kırılı, who has worked on spy-reports during the early *Tanzimat*, has noted that there is no reference to be found among the statements of ordinary people -which had been recorded by the spies- to the *Tanzimat* reforms. Kırılı, "The Struggle over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman Istanbul, 1780-1845", p. 234.

the provinces.” Indeed, “to a certain extent, these councils translated provincial life to the imperial centre and explained the imperial perspective to the locals.”¹²⁰



Archive Sample 2: BOA, I.MVL. 109 2502 (6 May 1847). Sample of a council report of *Selânik* (including the members' seals) sent to Istanbul

¹²⁰ M. Safa Saraçoğlu, “Resilient Notables: Looking at the Transformation of the Ottoman Empire from the Local Level” in *Contested Spaces of Nobility in Early Modern Europe*, Matthew Romaniello and Charles Liip (ed.), Surry, England: Ashgate, p. 275.

However, the *meclis* of the *Tanzimat*, if dealt with in present literature, has too often been portrayed in rather bleak terms. As Thompson, though, has eloquently noted “Previous studies have suggested that council members acted solely from self-interest, appeasing authorities insofar as that policy aggrandized their personal influence and fortunes. [...] Evidence from the council’s register suggests however that representation on the council cannot be explained as a result of members’ ill will, but rather of negotiations between the state and local elites, with give and take on both sides.”¹²¹ Indeed, seen as an institution, the *meclis* tried to justify itself to the centre as a guarantor of order,¹²² of the *Tanzimat* provisions itself, and often represented, or spoke for the people, towards the centre.¹²³

Such was the case during the first years of the *Tanzimat* in *Selanik*, when a certain issue regarding taxation -and the inability of people to pay it- came up. As has been stated before, a higher degree of centralization and the increase of the incoming taxes had been among the main aims of the state when promulgating the *Tanzimat* reforms. The Porte sought, through broad legal and economic reforms, to extract sufficient resources to support its military needs and to appease foreign powers that would otherwise threaten it. Nevertheless, in the case of the local council of Damascus, Thompson notes that “Damascene elites sought to hedge the economic and social dislocations caused by such policies in their city, as well as to exploit new opportunities

¹²¹ Elizabeth Thompson, “Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-45”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 3 (1993), p. 461.

¹²² See for example the *mazbata* sent from the council of *Yanya* to the centre in 1850, in order to thank the Sultan for the establishment of a big council in this city: It was stated that, among others, the council would care for the full execution of the glorious *Tanzimat* and for all kinds of local affairs, including public order (*tanzimat-ı hayriyenin tamamı icrası ve her türlü islahat-ı umur-ı mülkiye ve zabita-ı belediye ve tesviye-i umur-ı maliye ve hıfz-ı asayış-ı tebaa ve icra-ı ahkam-ı hukukîye ve kanunîye ve mamuriyet-i mülkiyeye müteallik mevadın meclisce bi-l-müşakere verilecek karar vechiyle...*) (BOA, İMVL. 181 5415, (7 September 1850))

¹²³ Yonca Köksal, “Local Demands and State Policies: General Councils (Meclis-i Umumi) in the Edirne and Ankara Provinces (1867-1872)”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 53, 3 (2016), p. 471.

presented by the newly powerful and autonomous council to advance their own emerging class interests."¹²⁴ Thus, during the dry summer of 1844, the council of Damascus "would grant tax relief while at the same appropriate supplies for the government at low prices or in the form of tax that would harm peasants and businessmen -but only to a point."¹²⁵

In *Selânik*, then, during the first years of the *Tanzimat*, taxes could not be collected. It was the local council which was bestowed with the duty of explaining the situation to the centre. Before we elaborate on the ways it did so, let us take a brief look on the socio-economic profile of the city's population: According to Akyalçın-Kaya, who has worked on the income and property registers (*temettiât*) for *Selânik* in the years 1844-1845, in a city in which 42.7% were Jewish, 32.4% Muslim and 21.4% Christian, Christians were the most well-off: "It is clear that in the mid-nineteenth century, Jewish and Muslim annual household occupational income distributions followed pyramidal patterns with very large bases comprising incomes of less than 219 piastres and small apices comprising incomes of 1000 piastres or more. Christian household occupational incomes, in contrast, were more evenly distributed, and a larger percentage of the Christian population was in the highest income category" (see tables in next page).¹²⁶ As for the taxes they were paying, Akyalçın-Kaya refers only to the poll-tax, which was assessed according to the income level and classified as either high (*ala*), medium (*evsat*), or low (*edna*), and states that among Jews and Christians (the two non-Muslims groups residing in *Selânik*), "the Jewish community, although there were far more Jews than

¹²⁴ Thompson, "Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-45", p. 458.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 460.

¹²⁶ Dilek Akyalçın Kaya, "Living of Other's Aid': The Socioeconomic Structure of Salonica's Jews in the Mid-Nineteenth Century", *Jewish History*, 2014, p. 331.

Christians in Salonica, paid overall less tax overall than did Christians, indicating that the Jewish community as a whole earned less than the Christian community.¹²⁷ To note, according to the same study, an analysis of the poll taxes of *Selanik* for the years 1831, 1835 and 1845 shows a considerable decrease of the town's non-Muslim population in the decade between 1835 and 1845: nearby a quarter of the taxable population (1,460 people, or 24% -mainly Christians-) disappeared from the registers, primarily owing to plague and the political repercussions of the Greek revolution.¹²⁸

| Ethnic/religious affiliation | Number of households | Percentage | Number of people (presumed) |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| Jewish | 2683 | 42.7 | 13415 |
| Muslim | 2034 | 32.4 | 10170 |
| Christian | 1342 | 21.4 | 6710 |
| <i>Müste'min</i> | 145 | 2.3 | 725 |
| Gypsy | 78 | 1.2 | 390 |
| Total | 6282 | 100.0 | 31410 |

Taken from Akyalçın Kaya, "Living of Other's Aid": The Socioeconomic Structure of Salonica's Jews in the Mid-Nineteenth Century", p. 323. (Source: "Survey Registers of Real Estate, Land, Animals, and Income," 1844-45, BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.)

| Annual occupational incomes (piastres) | Jewish households (%) | Muslim households (%) | Christian households (%) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 0 | 24 | 17 | 15 |
| 1-218 | 545 | 58 | 31 |
| 219-999 | 20 | 24 | 50 |
| ≥ 1000 | 2 | 1 | 4 |

Taken from Akyalçın Kaya, "Living of Other's Aid": The Socioeconomic Structure of Salonica's Jews in the Mid-Nineteenth Century", p. 331. (Source: "Survey Registers of Real Estate, Land, Animals, and Income," 1844-45, BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.)

¹²⁷ Akyalçın Kaya, "Living of Other's Aid": The Socioeconomic Structure of Salonica's Jews in the Mid-Nineteenth Century", pp. 334-335.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

Table 3: Distribution of Poll Tax Paid by Non-Muslim Salonicans, 1845

| | Number (%) assessed at high income level | Number (%) assessed at middle income level | Number (%) assessed at low income level | Number (%) exempt | Total |
|------------|--|--|---|-------------------|-------|
| Christians | 100 (7) | 750 (52) | 470 (32) | 132 (9) | 1452 |
| Jews | 65 (1.8) | 340 (9.4) | 2928 (81.2) | 275 (7.6) | 3608 |
| Gypsies | 30 (35.3) | 46 (54.1) | 8 (9.4) | 1 (1.2) | 85 |
| Total | 195 (3.8) | 1136 (22.1) | 3406 (66.2) | 408 (7.9) | 5145 |

Taken from Akyalçın Kaya, "Living of Other's Aid: The Socioeconomic Structure of Salonica's Jews in the Mid-Nineteenth Century", p. 334. (*Source*: "Survey Registers of Real Estate, Land, Animals, and Income," 1844-45, BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.)

In October 1846, the local council of *Selanik* (with the participation of bureaucrats and Muslim and non-Muslim notables further elaborated on in Chapter Two) addressed the imperial centre in a writing concerning the taxation of the city. In fact, the three communities of the city had not been able to pay their taxes and the council took it upon it to explain the situation. As was indicated in its *mazbata*, the distribution of taxes to the three *millet*s residing in *Selanik* had been before the *Tanzimat* (on a yearly basis) 100,143 *guruş* (and 10 *para*) to the Rum millet, 94,850 to the Jewish *millet* and 50,970 to the Muslim *millet* (the latter, as it was pointed to, *esnaf ve fukarasına*).¹²⁹ Nevertheless, from the Greek *millet*, similiary to what was stated above by Akyalçın-Kaya, some had died and some had migrated (*fırar*) in the meantime.

As for the other two communities, they were simply described as being marked by poverty. The Muslims had been able to pay (*muktedir*) only 30,000 *guruş*, while the rest of their tax amount had been distributed to the whole province. Most of the Muslims were said to be poor people, preoccupied with education, and, moreover, offering their men to the army (*ekserisi fukara ve yerli topçu olarak talim ve taallim ile meşgul olmak ve sene be*

¹²⁹ BOA, LMVL. 109 2505 (11 May 1847).

sene asker nizamiye için neferat olunmak cibetleriyle). Similarly, the Jews were also described as being among the poorest (*efkar-ı fukarasından*), many had been destroyed (*perişane*) by last year's fire, and from among the five to ten notables (*sarraflar ve tüccarlar*) most had gone bankrupt (*iflas*). Overall, the arrears of the taxes from the year 1840 had been piling up, and so a reduction (of 20,000 for the Muslims, 25,100 for the Rums, and 25,000 for the Jews) per year had been ordered plainly; this meant a 25% reduction for the Rums, a 26% reduction for the Jews, and a 39% reduction for the Muslims, the overall amount changing from 245,963 to 175,863. But, again, the taxes had not been paid, and the council proposed to forgive the taxes (*afi*) and reduce them. The respective final decree ordered the forgiveness and the reduction of the payment. In all, we observe here how the council tried to speak for the people and succeed a suspension of their taxes, acting as an interlocutor between the two parts.

Similar was the role of the *meclis* some years later, as it becomes evident from a writing of the council dating 1853. In this latter case, the centre had noticed that some exceeding amounts of taxes that had been collected among the Jewish and the Christian communities of the city for the years 1850 and 1851. A previous decree had asked for the situation to be clarified, and to investigate whether the extra amounts of taxes had been collected by the communities' leaders for expenses of the community itself, as well as under what name they had been collected. The city's council responded that the execution and the implementation of every single decree was "an absolute necessary responsibility of their servitude (*mütebattim-i uhde-i rıkkıyetimiz*)."¹³⁰ Moreover, the council, after studying the respective tax registers, and speaking to the *kocabaşlar* of the two millets, stated that it had become clear that the respective amounts were being collected

¹³⁰ BOA, LMVL. 262 9879 (7 January 1853).

from the people not in the name of taxation, but separately, for the expenses of the millet. Finally, people had been aware of this situation (*cümlenin malumu olan*).

Mediating in Homicide Cases

The role of councils as “interlocutors” between imperial centre and people becomes even more illustrative in the case of homicide trials. To understand the importance of the role of the *meclis* in homicide cases, we have to shortly dwell upon the premises of Islamic law on which these trials rested. Classical Islamic law divides crimes into two categories: into those committed against the rights of a person (*hakk-ı ademiye*), like homicide, and those which had been committed against God (*Allaha karşı*), like adultery, theft, drinking alcohol, banditry or apostasy.¹³¹ Crimes falling into the first category necessitated the initiative of the relatives of the deceased person in order to be brought to court, as well as regarding the kind of punishment that would, or not, be inflicted on the culprit. It was the relatives who would decide whether the culprit would receive retaliation (*kasas*, that is, the death punishment), or would have to pay a certain amount of bloodmoney to them (*diyet*) for reconciliation and then be set free.

Following the establishment of the local councils, homicide cases were the only penal cases to be tried both in the *sharia* courts and in the newly-founded local courts.¹³² Indeed, with the new Penal Code being issued in 1840 crimes of killing taking place in

¹³¹ İlhan Akbulut, “İslam hukukunda suçlar ve cezalar (Crimes and punishments in Islamic law)”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 52, 1 (2003), pp. 167-168.

¹³² Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlıda yargı reformu (Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat)*, p. 60. According to Haim Gerber, in case of murder the *sharia* gave the plaintiff the right to decide whether the defendant should be put to death through the principle of *kasas* (retaliation), or be liable instead to *diyet* (blood money). The latter sum was fixed also in classical Islam at ten thousand *dirham* (equivalent to 3.8 grams of silver), the money value of a healthy man according to the *sharia*. Gerber, *State, Society and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective*, p. 33.

the provinces of the empire had to be seen by both the mixed local councils and the *şeri* courts, and the final decision had to be taken only after consulting the centre.¹³³ First the *kadi* would deal with the *sharia* aspects of the case, applying the *sharia* rules on evidence. Then the council would try the case according to the Penal Code, which allowed much more freedom in considering evidence. If the *kadi* did not rule for *kıyas*, eg., if he sentenced the defendant to pay bloodmoney (*diyet*), or if he acquitted him for lack of evidence or as a result of pardon granted to the defendant by the victim's heirs, the council would try the defendant again according to the Penal Code and, if it found him guilty, sentence him to forced labour.¹³⁴

A series of homicide cases judged in the local councils of *Selanik*, *Üsküp* and *Yanya* show that *sharia* courts and local courts worked actually closely together, or, at least, that even in cases in which the deceased's relatives had decided for *kıyas* the local councils still tried to play their own part in the procedure. Indeed, relevant council reports reassured the centre that they had used the new methods of interrogation, and that they tried (and often achieved) to persuade the accusers to change their initial decision for *kıyas* to the one of *diyet* (see expressions like "*madde-i kıyas tekrar bi-tekrar ab-ı mersumdan istihbar ve istilam olunduk da*" or "*merkumu kıyasdan af edip etmiyecekleri verese-i mersumundan bi-d-defaat bir kaç kere sual ve istintak olunduk da*").¹³⁵ In cases the relatives did

¹³³ "Taşralarda dahi vuku buldukdâ memleket meclis-i meşveretinde marifet-i şeri ile şerait-i muharrerereye tatbikan davası görüliüb badehu şerisi ve meclis mazbatası Der-i Saadete bil-ırsal tafar-ı penabiye takdim ile tasdik olunub andan sonra dahi keşalilik hake-i pay-i hümayuna arz ile ferman-ı ali gönderilmedikçe icra olunmıya." Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa ve Tanzimat* (*Mustafa Reşit Pasha and the Tanzimat*), p. 304.

¹³⁴ Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868", p. 275.

¹³⁵ BOA, I.MVL. 80 1586 (16 July 1846); in the sub-province of *Üsküp* the hearsman Mustafa had been killed by the two Christians Angeli and Yani. While the relatives of Mustafa had been insisting on the execution of the murderers (*kıyas*), they changed their opinion into reconciliation upon a *diyet* of 7,600 *guruş*, while the culprits had to serve five years of hard labour (*vaz-ı küreke*) each, according to the Penal Code. BOA, I.MVL. 146 4102 (17 July 1849): In another case, the Jew Mişon had been killed in *Selanik* by Yusuf. The victim's heirs were insisting on the killing of Yusuf, but after they had met in the city's local courts they decided on a *diyet* of 4,000 *guruş* (*verese-i mersumu ile katil-i merkum meclis-i aciznemizce celb ve muvaciib olunduklarında verese-i mersume dava kıyasdan katil-i merkum Yusuf ile ba tavasut muslihün ikrar 4.000 guruş bedel*

not step back from their decision, the local councils reassured the centre in their reports that they still would leave the possibility of an opinion's change open.¹³⁶ Last but not least, the councils also justified the right execution of their legal function, reassuring that, although the murderer had not confessed the murder, the council had searched for witnesses and thus the murderer had been identified.¹³⁷

In pushing for the solution of *diyet*, the councils were actually conforming to the policy of the centre: The respective *irades* for these cases sent back to the provinces on behalf of the Sultan reveal how the bureaucracy was in favour of *diyet*, and, moreover, pushing for such a decision. In the case of Tute having been killed by Osman in *Trnova*, and Pezo in *Selanik*, having been killed by Abu Bakir and Nako, and in which the relatives insisted on retaliation, the answer in the *irade* of both cases is similar, that is, that in case that there would, at the end, take place a reconciliation, the culprits should be sent immediately to the centre: *ve eğer af eder ve ba sulh olurlar ise ol-halde kısas sakat olacağından icab-ı şerisinin icrasıyla keyfiyetin ba mazbata ve ilam bu tarafa işar kılınmış ve katil-i merkumun dabi hapis-i tarihini gösterilerek ? irsal zımnında ferman-ı ali..*¹³⁸ It is obvious that the Ottoman state wished to diminish the number of capital punishments executed on its territory, conforming to the civilizational discourses and practices of the nineteenth century, the gaze of the foreign powers, as well as to its own practices of an increased

üzerine baada-s-sulh ve-l-kabul bedel-i sulh olan mebliğ-i...). Of course, Yusuf was also charged with five years of hard labour.

¹³⁶ Even in cases when the relatives insisted on *kısas*, like in the case of the father of the *zimme* Triandafillo in *Yanya* who was killed by the *zimme* Petro, the documents always repeat and leave open the possibility for *sulh* (reconciliation): "*eğer varis-i mezbur mersumu kısasdan ? af eder ? ve ba sulh olur ise ol halde kısas sakat olacağından...*" (I.MVL. 80 1584 (13 July 1846)).

¹³⁷ See for example the case of Ramazan's murder in *Üsküb*, in which the council had found the witnesses who would testify against Ritov as the murderer of Ramazan: *delil taleb olunduk da mezkur? Kalkandelen kaçasında kain karye olub led-el-tezkıye makbulu-ş-şehadet olan Zubeyir bin Arif ve Sadık bin Hüseyin şehadetıyla madde-i katil mersum Ritov üzerinde takrir eylemiş...* BOA, I.MVL. 198 6136 (22 January 1851).

¹³⁸ BOA, I.MVL. 292 11738 (15 December 1853), I.MVL. 159 4584 (13 January 1850).

governmentality. Indeed, the birth of prisons in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire and the passage from corporal punishment to imprisonment show a bigger involving of the state in the judicial process and a new logic of “investment on the population.”¹³⁹ The local councils conformed to these tendencies prescribed by the centre, aiming thereby to justify themselves as a powerful judicial body in provincial life.

Conclusion

The newly founded institution of the local *meclis* was one of the key institutions of the *Tanzimat* reform. The *meclis* was entrusted with almost the bulk of all matters concerning provincial affairs, mediating relevant information to the centre. One could argue that the province was “translated” to the centre to a big extent through the *meclis*. Being a manifestation of the reforms, the *meclis* expressed also the two-fold character of the *Tanzimat* itself, pendling between centralization and decentralization, as well as between dis- and empowerment of local agents.

In this chapter, we followed how the *meclis*, as an institution, tried to assume its own role in local affairs towards both the people and the centre. Towards litigants it tried to render itself a modern and refined institution, one that would not resort to previous tacticts of torture towards defendants when trying penal cases; indeed, by stating to defendants that no kind of torture or harm would be employed during the court proceedings, the *meclis* tried both to make the defendants speak openly, as well as present itself in the eyes of the people as congruent with the new, modern and civilizational discourse of the *Tanzimat* itself. On the other hand, in its relations to the imperial centre,

¹³⁹ Hasan Şen, “*The Transformation of the Politics of Punishment and the Birth of Prison in the Ottoman Empire (1845-1910)*”, MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2005, p. 120.

the *meclis*, as a collective body, mediated between people and the centre, for example, by explaining the inability of the residents of *Selanik* to pay their taxes in the first years of the *Tanzimat*, or by reconciling, in cases of murder, the culprits with the family of the victim, and convincing the latter to opt for the decision of a material compensation (*diyet*) and not for retaliation (*kisas*) and the capital punishment (*idam*) of the culprit. In all, describing the *meclis*, as has often been done in literature, as nothing more than another corrupt local institution of the Ottoman government system, fails to understand its complexity, the range of the manifold roles it assumed during the *Tanzimat*, as well as its impact on imperial policy, which was shaped based on the council reports coming from the centre.

Table 4: Members of Various Local Councils of *Rumeli* According to an Imperial Decree of 1840

| (BOA, C.DH. 291 14547 (2 April 1840): <i>Rumeli'nin bazı kazalarında intihab olunan meclis azalarının isimleri</i>) | |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Kaza-1 Selanik</i> Müfti Abdulkadir Efendi maaş 1000 guruş Kapucubaşı Yusuf Refik Bey Efendi maaş 750 guruş Mustafa Necib Bey maaş 600 guruş Ata Bey maaş 600 guruş Ahmed Ağa maaş 500 guruş Kocabaşı maaş 200 guruş</p> | <p><i>Kaza-1 Silistre</i> Müfti Efendi Mehmed Emir Efendi Mestan Bey Hacı Tahir Ağa Hacı İshak Ağa Kocabaşı Kostantin Kocabaşı Ahmed Aziz</p> |
| <p><i>Kaza-1 Manastr</i> Müfti Efendi Kapucubaşlardan Nedim Bey Kapucubaşılardan Hacı İbrahim Ağa Kapucubaşılardan Şerif Ahmed Bey Defter nezaretiyle sandık emanetini idare etmek şartıyla Mehmed Ağaya Kocabaşı Nağon (?) Kocabaşı Kostantin</p> | <p><i>Kaza-1 Ferecik</i> Müfti Seyid El-Haç Hüseyin Efendi İbrahim Ağa Omer Ağa Hacı Hasan Efendi Sandık Emmini Mustafa Ağa Kocabaşı Lambroraki Kocabaşı</p> |
| <p><i>Kaza-1 İnöz Edirne</i> Muhassıl vekili Habib Efendi Ahmed Hilmi Efendi Kocabaşı</p> | <p><i>Kaza-1 Mekri</i> Muhassıl vekili Seyyid Omer Ağa İstavraki</p> |
| <p><i>Kaza-1 İpsala</i> Muhassıl vekili Hacı Mehmed Ağa Kocabaşı Papa Yovan</p> | <p><i>Kaza-1 Yenişebir Fener Tırhala</i> Müfti Abdülhamid Efendi Mevali-i azadan Şefik Bey Müderresinden Ahmed Edib Efendi El-Haç Mehmed Bey Muhittin Bey Yovan Yagnomi zimmi Kostandi Esteriadi zimmi</p> |
| <p><i>Nahiye-i Tırnova Edirne</i> Muhassıl vekili Hasan Bey Vucuhdan Ağa Kocabaşı</p> | <p><i>Nahiye-i Görice</i> Muhassıl vekili Abdullah Ağa Vucuhdan Ağa Kocabaşı</p> |
| <p><i>Nahiye-i Yenice</i> Muhassıl vekili Kocabaşı Kocabaşı</p> | <p>? <i>Platona ma'a Katrin</i> Muhassıl vekili Derviş Bey Katrin vucuhdan Platona'dan ?</p> |
| (table continues at next page) | |

| Members of Various Local Councils of <i>Rumeli</i> According to an Imperial Decree of 1840 | |
|--|--|
| <p><i>Kaza-ı Zağra-ı Atik</i> Müfti Ali Efendi Mahmud Kamil Bey Mahmud Tahir Bey Feyzizade Ahmed Ağa Memiş Ağa Kocabaşı Hacı Zeco Kocabaşı Papazoğlu Patri</p> | <p><i>Kaza-ı Çirpan</i> Muhassıl vekili El-Haç Mahmud Ağa Vucuhdan Ağa ? Kocabaşı Dako</p> |
| <p><i>Kaza-ı Zağra-ı Cedid</i> Muhassıl vekili Mehmed Emir Ağa Vucuhdan Ağa Kocabaşı Eslaf</p> | <p><i>Kaza-ı Gelibolu</i> Müfti Efendi Ahmed Bey Hasan Azmi Efendi Emin Bey Ali Rıza Bey Kocabaşı Rafaki Kocabaşı Bulgaroğlu Yanko</p> |
| <p><i>Kaza-ı Şarköy</i> Muhassıl vekili El-Haç Osmanağa Sadık Ağa Mustafa Bey Hacıyorgaki Kostantin</p> | <p><i>Kaza-ı Evreşe</i> Muhassıl vekili Arif Ağa İbrahim Ağa Hacifenar</p> |

Table 5: Members of the Local Councils According to Official Stipulations (The table has been made according to the information given in Bingöl (Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlıda yargı reformu (Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat)*), pp. 53, 55, 69, 76, 157). M stands for Muslim, nM for non-Muslim.)

| <i>muhassılık meclisleri</i> (<i>büyük meclisler</i>) | <i>küçük meclisler</i> (in places in which there was no <i>muhassıl</i>) | <i>memleket meclisleri</i> (renaming of the <i>muhassılık meclisleri</i> after 1841, changed into <i>eyalet meclisleri</i> in 1849) | <i>cinayet meclisleri</i> | <i>tabkikat meclisleri</i> (1854) | <i>nizamiyye mahkemeleri</i> (after 1864) in the province's centre: <i>meclis-i temyiz-i hukuk ve meclis-i kebir-i cinayet</i> (similar membership) |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Appointed members | Appointed members | Appointed members | | | |
| <i>reis</i> : In the province's centre the <i>müşir</i> , in the sub-province and districts the <i>ferik</i> | | <i>reis-i meclis</i> | chosen from among the members of the <i>memleket / eyalet meclisleri</i> | <i>reis: vali</i> , the rest of the members were being chosen from the members of the <i>eyalet meclisleri</i> | <i>reis: müfettiş-i hükkam</i> |
| | | <i>eyalet valisi</i> | | | <i>hukuki işlerden anlayan bir memur</i> |
| <i>muhassıl</i> | <i>muhassılın vekili</i> | <i>defterdar</i> | | | |
| <i>katib-i emlak ve nüfus</i> | | | | | |
| <i>mal katibi</i> | | | | | |
| | | <i>ulemadan bir zat</i> | | | |
| <i>hakim</i> | <i>naib</i> | <i>hakim</i> | | | |
| <i>müftü</i> | | <i>müftü</i> | | | |
| <i>asker zabiti</i> | <i>zabit-i memleket</i> | | | | |
| (table continues at next page) | | | | | |

| Members of the Local Councils According to Official Stipulations | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Elected members / Notables | Elected members / Notables | Elected members / Notables | | | Elected members / Notables |
| M (Muslim): 4 <i>kişi vücut-u memleketten</i> | M: 2 <i>kişi (reaya varsa bir kişi)</i> | M: 4 <i>muteberan</i> | | | M: 3 <i>mümeyyiz</i> |
| nM (non-Muslim): <i>metropolit</i> | | | | | nM: 3 <i>mümeyyiz</i> |
| | nM: <i>kocabaş</i> | nM: <i>millet-i saire muteberanından birer kişi</i> | | | |
| nM: <i>kocabaş</i> (A decree of 1840 ordered the representation of every <i>millet</i> , BOA, I.MVL. 9 144 (27 September 1840)) | | | | | |

CHAPTER 2: ACTORS REPRESENTING THE STATE: The Men Sitting in the Councils: The Case of *Selanik*

This chapter aims to approach the persons sitting in the local councils which were founded during the *Tanzimat*. It thereby focuses on the city of *Selanik*, over an extended period stretching from the 1840s to the 1860s. The particular choice of *Selanik* as a showcase rests on several factors, including *Selanik* being a vital urban centre of the southern Balkans within the given period, as well as the availability of some secondary literature on the persons presented here (which, for example, does not exist in cases like the one of *Manastır*). Last but not least, *Selanik's* population consisted not only of Ottoman Christians and Muslims, but also of Jews, who, more importantly, were in the majority during the nineteenth century, a reality carrying important implications for power relations and representation of the *millets* within the councils, as will be shown below.

According to official stipulations, described in Chapter One, local councils were staffed both with state-appointed members, that is, Muslim bureaucrats, as well as with local notables originating from every *millet* which resided in a given place. The state-appointed members were persons who, most times, had received relevant training, and, moreover, accumulated political, economic, military and / or religious powers in their hands; they could either be newcomers to a certain place, or stem from the local nobility. Indeed, Muslim local notables appeared as quite a fluid social category of persons who were able to gather various kinds of powers in their hands. On the other hand, the elected members of a council comprised also of Muslim local notables, as well as of Christian and Jewish ones. While I am going to touch upon the appointed members of *Selanik's* councils, especially through the issue of corruption, the chapter's focus will

remain on the elected members; their presence in the councils, based on elections carried out among the people as well as on constant negotiation with the state -remember here that after the Province Regulations of 1864 elected members were chosen on behalf of the governor from a final list of candidates- was especially telling regarding local power relations. The main question I will pose in this chapter will connect the issue of agency raised in the Introduction of this thesis to provincial notables during the *Tanzimat*: To what degree did (or did not) the state increase, in the framework of its centralizing policies of the nineteenth century, its power and influence over provincial notables?

One has to note here that the study of notables has been hindered especially by a strong state-perspective inherent in Ottoman historiography, as well as by nationalist-oriented approaches. State-centred perspectives have viewed local notables as a threat to the central state and an obstacle to its nineteenth-century centralizing reform attempts.¹⁴⁰ Nationalist historiography, on the other hand, has found it difficult to explain the complex activities and allegiances of (especially non-Muslim) local notables, who often cooperated and negotiated with, up to the extent of defending the interests of, the Ottoman state.

Hourani has been the first to question the traditional historiographic paradigm of an "Ottoman decline" materializing during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, coining, instead, the same period as the age of the "politics of the notables," that is, of "those who can play a certain political role as intermediaries between government and people, and -within certain limits- as leaders of the urban population."¹⁴¹ These notables derived their power from religious, military, administrative and tax-related duties which they were exercising. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries thus arise as a period

¹⁴⁰ Köksal, "Tanzimat ve Tarih Yazımı (Tanzimat and Historiography)", p. 7.

¹⁴¹ Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables" in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*, Albert Hourani et al. (ed.), Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993, p. 89.

during which “individuals and families in various localities in the Ottoman Empire, from the Balkans to Egypt, consolidated power, accumulated wealth, built headquarters, and formed regional zones of influence. [...] By holding offices and contracts from the empire [such as becoming governors, deputy governors, ancillary contractors] these provincial notables not only integrated themselves into the institutional apparatus of the empire, but also monopolized taxation, public finance, policing, provisioning, conscription, and other imperial and public services in the business of governance in the Ottoman provinces.”¹⁴² Yaycıoğlu proposes that these notables, who were in an ongoing process of negotiation with the central state, were engaged with the empire not as *servants*, but as *servicers*. Contrary to nobilities as we know them in Europe and elsewhere, “these magnates did not enjoy their offices and contracts as hereditary rights, being not only entrepreneurs, but also active risk takers and risk managers in a volatile imperial sector.”¹⁴³

Having thus ascended to the position of local power-brokers, literature has often viewed the curtailing of the notables’ power as a necessary condition for the implementation of the centralizing *Tanzimat* reforms. Yet, very recently this type of understanding, which reduces the dynamics of Ottoman governance in provinces to binary nodes, has been challenged. For example, Köksal has shown how local intermediaries whose interests were most threatened by the reforms supported the *Tanzimat* in the hope of finding better appointments as a result of new administrative openings in provinces.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, local notables, who held also state posts in local

¹⁴² Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire. The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016, p. 67.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁴⁴ Köksal, “Local Intermediaries and Ottoman State Centralization: A Comparison of the Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Ankara and Edirne (1839-1878)”, p. 4.

administration, were willing and passionate agents of social and economic development when they realized that their interests were closely linked with the development plans of the state.¹⁴⁵

In addition, the state itself neither could nor would easily establish its dominance over local notables during the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁶ A short experiment between 1839 and 1841 to abolish tax-farming, which had been valid for more than a century and had been in the hands of local notables, soon proved unsuccessful. Indeed, the appointment of state-officials (*muhassıl*), who would be responsible for the collection of taxes, led to a diminishing of the final amounts collected by the central treasury and obliged the state bureaucracy to resume tax-farming, albeit in new forms.¹⁴⁷ As a result, while the state managed during the same century to curve the power of big notables, who had been controlling the taxation of wider areas, these notables were replaced with new families of notables, who were not only participating in the taxation-process -this time of smaller administrative units-, but were also members of the local administrative councils which determined the amounts to be collected.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, these new local notables proved powerful, as they often managed to stay in these councils much longer than the foreseen

¹⁴⁵ Köksal, *Local Intermediaries and Ottoman State Centralization: A Comparison of the Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Ankara and Edirne (1839-1878)*, pp. 8, 156.

¹⁴⁶ To note, the incorporation of notables in the local councils during the *Tanzimat* has been interpreted by literature both as a step of decentralization and of centralization. Thomas Scheben has argued that the councils "constituted an institution of decentralization, as the local elites (*ayans*), whom the central government had tried to eliminate even from the time of Mahmud the Second, were getting now their position back, albeit in an institutionalized way", see Thomas Scheben, *Verwaltungsreformen der frühen Tanzimat (Administrative reforms during the early Tanzimat)*, Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York, Paris: Peter Lang, 1991, p. 123. According to Patricia Akhtar though, "The policy of replacing the local appointees to the post of qa'immaqam with governors sent from Istanbul, along with allowing the notables of the region to share power as members of the *majlis* was a sound one in terms of implementing central government control in Jabal Nablus" (Akhtar, "Subaltern Resistance in Jabal Nablus, 1840-1860").

¹⁴⁷ Ayla Efe, "Muhassıllık teşkilatı (The organization of the tax collector-muhassıl)", PhD Thesis, Eskişehir Anadolu Üniversitesi, 2002, p. 110.

¹⁴⁸ Özbek, "Tanzimat devleti, vergi sistemi ve toplumsal adalet, 1839-1908 (The Tanzimat state, taxation-system and social justice, 1839-1908)", p. 28.

two years, sometimes by switching from one type of local council to the other. Indeed, they even created an organic link between the administrative and the judicial sphere, e.g. by jumping from an administrative council to a court and vice-versa.¹⁴⁹

On the other hand, nationalist historiography produced mainly in the post-Ottoman Balkan states has been having difficulties in dealing especially with non-Muslim local notables and their complex relationship both to local populations, as well as to the Ottoman authorities and the central state. Opposing the widespread notion of an Ottoman yoke equally oppressing all non-Muslims, newer research has shown that local non-Muslim notables often held important positions in the local administration, for example with regard to tax-collection.¹⁵⁰ Especially efforts to undermine local (Muslim) *ayans* even since the 1830's decade, opened new opportunities for the non-Muslim notables of the empire, the political inclusion of whom -especially following the Greek "defection"- had been viewed as a necessary precondition for retaining the empire's integrity.¹⁵¹ Moreover, especially with the rise of various nationalisms in the Balkans during the nineteenth-century, the position and activities of non-Muslim notables have proven to be far from clear-cut. As Vezenkov has shown in the case of Bulgarian notables "many of the [Bulgarian] revolutionary committee-members also occupied different posts in the local Ottoman administration." They were not necessary officials,

¹⁴⁹ Saraçoğlu, "Resilient Notables: Looking at the Transformation of the Ottoman Empire from the Local Level" in *Contested Spaces of Nobility in Early Modern Europe*, p. 274.

¹⁵⁰ Andreas Lyberatos, "Men of the Sultan: the *beğlik* Sheep Tax Collection System and the Rise of a Bulgarian National Bourgeoisie in Nineteenth-Century Plovdiv", *Turkish Historical Review*, 1 (2010), p. 64. Svetla Ianeva, "The Rumelian Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Tax-Farming System of the Nineteenth Century" in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire*, Antonis Anastasopoulos (ed.), Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005, p. 198.

¹⁵¹ Andreas Lyberatos, *Οικονομία, πολιτική και εθνική ιδεολογία. Η διαμόρφωση των εθνικών κομμάτων στη Φιλιππούπολη του 19^{ου} αιώνα (Economy, politics and national ideology. The configuration of the national parties in Phillipoupoli of the 19th nineteenth century)*, Irakleio: Panepistimiakes Ekdoseis Kritis, 2009, p. 102.

but rather members of various administrative councils and mixed courts established during the *Tanzimat*.¹⁵²

Furthermore, referring mainly to a period of intense political mobilization, that is, the Young Turk era, a new historiographical approach has focused on the loyalty of non-Muslims to the Ottomanist ideal, instead of the treacherous character of their revolutionary movements. Particularly, Kechriotis has presented two such figures, that is, Emmanouil Emmanouilidis and Pavlos Karolidis. Both originally from Cappadocia, they were elected to the Ottoman parliament with the ticket of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), representing the province of *Aydın* (with Izmir as its centre). In the Ottoman parliament, Emmanouilidis devoted considerable efforts to support the political positions of the CUP; in his view, a legitimate Ottoman government should represent patriotism, justice and equality (among the members) of the “blessed Ottoman nation that represents the unity of all elements (*unsur*).”¹⁵³ Similarly, Karolidis nurtured a deep belief that a new ground of understanding between the different ethnicities could be built in the empire, that the Turkish-Muslim majority would eventually respect the “national rights of Hellenism,” as long as the Rums residing in the empire would abide to its laws. In the end, it was the Slavic danger, which had become imminent in the Macedonian

¹⁵² Alexander Veznekov, “In the Service of the Sultan, in the Service of the Revolution: Local Bulgarian Notables in the 1870s” in *Conflicting Loyalties in the Balkans. The Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and Nation-Building*, Hannes Grandits, Nathalie Clayer, Robert Pichler (ed.), London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2011, p. 135.

¹⁵³ Vangelis Kechriotis, “On the Margins of National Historiography: The Greek İttihatçı Emmanouil Emmanouilidis - Opportunist or Ottoman Patriot?” in *Untold Histories of the Middle East. Recovering Voices from the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Amy Singer, K. Neumann, Selcuk Akşin Somel (ed.), Oxford: Routledge, 2014, p. 137. See also Vangelis Kechriotis, “Osmanlı imparatorluğu’nun son döneminde Karamanlı Rum Ortodoks diasporası: İzmir Mebusu Emmanouil Emmanouilidis (The Karamanli Greek-Orthodox diaspora at the end of the Ottoman Empire: Emmanouil Emmanouilidis, deputy of Izmir)”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, 251 (November 2014), p. 42.

question, that was uniting the two.¹⁵⁴ To note, similar accounts exist also for Armenian notables of the time.¹⁵⁵

Unburdened by the state-centred and the nationalist perspectives just described, in the remaining of this chapter I will approach the members of *Selanik*'s local councils in their full complexity, reconstructing their power relationships especially to the central authorities situated in Istanbul during the *Tanzimat*.

Appointed Bureaucrats and Corruption

Tables 6A and 6B of the next pages present the members of the local councils of *Selanik*, appointed and elected ones, for the first three decades of the *Tanzimat*. I have detected the names from a random sample of penal cases (including murder, rape and theft) adjudicated by the local councils of *Selanik* (see Appendix 1), as well as from the cases of sedition and banditry, as presented in Chapter Six (Appendix 2).¹⁵⁶ Given that we lack the names of local power holders for many Ottoman Balkan cities, the council reports are a valuable source for making the province “visible,” as they provide as with a quick overview (at least of some) of the main Muslim and non-Muslim local notables of a given geography. To note, the names presented in this chapter should not be regarded as

¹⁵⁴ Vangelis Kechriotis, “Atina’da Kapadokyalı, İzmir’de Atinalı, İstanbul’da mebus. Pavlos Karolidis’in farklı kişilik ve aidiyetleri (In Athens a Cappadocian, in Izmir an Athenian, in Istanbul a parliamentarian: The various personalities and state of belongings of Pavlos Karolidis)”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, 257 (May 2015), p. 32.

¹⁵⁵ Rober Koptaş, “Armenian Political Thinking in the Second Constitutional Period: The Case of Krikor Zohrab”, MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2005.

¹⁵⁶ After collecting and processing the names presented here, a much later visit to the Ottoman archives in Istanbul, during which a further sample of cases was taken, revealed the same names of members of the councils, see for example BOA, A.MKT.UM. 21 85 (8 July 1850), A.TŞF. 13 43 (14 September 1852), I.MVL. 269 10358 (21 April 1853), MVL. 210 10 (18 July 1853), MVL. 264 60 (24 October 1853), MVL. 938 32 (25 November 1861), A.MKT.UM. 102 100 (10 July 1853).

a complete list, as only a sample of council reports (*mazbata*) drafted by the *Selanik* councils could be evaluated within the framework of this study.

Looking at the activities of the bureaucrats sitting in the *Tanzimat* councils of *Selanik*, one is faced with many incidents of corruption, as well as of powers and activities assumed by these same bureaucrats, which exceeded their responsibilities within the councils. While I am going to describe in this section some such incidents of corruption, the main question I will try to answer pertains to the role of the state in dealing with these incidents: did it follow the requests of the people, who were petitioning the Sultan informing him about the wrongdoings of the state officials, or did it leave the local state officials undisturbed in their wrongdoings?

Table 6A: Short List of the Appointed Members of the Local Councils of *Selanik*:
(BASED ON APPENDICES OF THIS CHAPTER AND OF CHAPTER SIX)

| 1840s | 1850s | 1860s |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Vali</i> Bekir Sami Mustafa Hıfzı | <i>Müşir</i> Rıza | <i>Vali</i> Hüsnü |
| <i>Müşir</i> Yakub | <i>Vali</i> Sıddık Yusuf Mehmed | <i>Hakim</i> Mehmed |
| <i>Mir-i miran</i> Yusuf Sıddık | <i>Naib</i> Mustafa | <i>Muhasebeci</i> Mustafa |
| <i>Naib</i> İbrahim Edhem | <i>Mir-i miran</i> Sıddık Yusuf | <i>Müftü</i> Mustafa |
| <i>Müdür-i mal</i> Ahmed Raşid Ahmed Şakir Ali Namik İshak Nureddin | <i>Müdür-i mal</i> İsmail Hakkı Ishak Nureddin | <i>Müdür-i nüfus</i> Ahmed |
| <i>Mevali</i> Mehmed Attaullah Mehmed Said | <i>Müftü</i> Feyzullah Attaullah | <i>Müdür-i evkaf</i> Abdülkadir |
| <i>Müderris</i> Numan Tayyib | <i>Rütbe-i sani</i> Yümni Numan Tayyib | <i>Katib</i> Ali Rıza Ahmed Zinalabdin Mehmed Eşraf |
| <i>Müftü</i> Feyzullah Hüseyin Zühdü | <i>Müfettiş</i> Mehmed Remzi | <i>Reis-i muvakkat</i> Abdurrahman İbrahim Namık Mehmed Rıza |
| <i>Hakim</i> Ali | <i>Tefrik-i tebaa</i> Ahmed Rasim | <i>Katib-i mal</i> Mehmed Şükrü |
| | <i>Müdür-i ziraat</i> Abdurrahman | <i>Katib-i emval</i> Mehmed Piri |
| | <i>Mevali</i> Mehmed Vahid | |

Table 6B: Short List of the Elected Members of the Local Councils of *Selanik* (BASED ON APPENDICES OF THIS CHAPTER AND OF CHAPTER SIX)

| Decade | Jewish notables | Muslim notables | Greek-Orthodox notables |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1840s | -Yakov veled-i Avram Fransez - Shelomo son of M? Abastado? | -Yusuf Refik (ser bevvabin aza) -Ahmed (ser bevvabin aza) -Mehmed Şefik (ser bevvabin aza) -Şerif Mustafa Faik (an ıstabl-ı amire aza) | -Isteryo Yorgi (Στέργιος Γεωργίου) -Gavriil Zarkadi (Γαβριήλ Ζαρκιάδη) -metropolitan Ieronimos |
| 1850s <i>(italics for temporary or smaller councils)</i> | -Gadalya veled-i Isak <i>-Gadalya veled-i Isak</i> <i>-Ovadiya Benjamin</i> <i>-Yaakov son of David Angel</i> | -Ahmed (ba paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza) -Salih Vehbi (ser bevvabin aza) -Mehmed (ba paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza) -Şerif Mustafa Faik (an ıstabl-ı amire aza) <i>-Hakkı</i> <i>-Davud Fedai</i> | -Dimitri -Gavriil Zarkadi -Nikola the son of Dimitri -metropolitan Ieronimos / Kallinikos <i>-Dimitri Blaci (Δημήτριος Μπλάτζης)</i> <i>-Hacıyorgi İstekli? Hacı</i> |
| 1860s <i>(italics for temporary or smaller councils)</i> | -Behor Saltiel <i>-Gadalya veled-i Isak</i> <i>-Ovadiya Benjamin</i> <i>-Behor Saltiel</i> <i>-Shelomo son of M? Abastado?</i> <i>-Hebrew seal 4</i> <i>-Hebrew seal 5</i> | -Şerif Mehmed ? -Faik -Mehmed İzzet -Şakir İsmail -İbrahim Namik -Osman <i>-Hüseyn Hasan</i> <i>-Davud Fedai</i> | -metropolitan (absent) -Hacimihal the son of Hacikonstantin <i>-Atanas Bladi (Αθανάσιος Μπλιάτσης)</i> <i>-Hristaki</i> |

(table continues at next page)

| Short List of the Elected Members of the Local Councils of <i>Selanik</i> | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| | | <p>Muslim notables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Nadiri Teyfik</i> -<i>Elbaç Rıza Mehmed</i> -<i>Osman Teyfik</i> -<i>Hilmi Hüseyin</i> -<i>Enver</i> -<i>Yako bin Musa</i> -<i>Hüseyin Hüsnü</i> -<i>Naşid</i> -<i>Feyzi</i> -<i>Numan Sabit</i> -<i>Ahmed Şevki</i> -<i>Mehmed Şükrü</i> -<i>Mehmed Feyzi</i> -<i>Hüseyin Ali</i> -<i>Hasan Rifat</i> -<i>Mehmed Refih</i> | <p>Greek-Orthodox notables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Istefan Vetati (Στέφανος Τάττης)</i> -<i>Hacimihal the son of Hacikonstantin</i> -<i>Dimitri</i> -<i>Atanaş Havotov?-Gavriil Zarkadi</i> |

Tayyib Numan, referred to more often in the documents as Hacı Tayyib, appears in the Ottoman archives as the most powerful figure in the councils of *Selanik* during the 1850s. The grievances against him are abundant in the archives and portray a person similar to a local mafia. We first encounter Hacı Tayyib's wrongdoings in the spring of 1853, when the people of *Selanik* (signing as the representatives of the Muslims, and of the *Rum* and Jewish millet¹⁵⁷) delivered a petition to the Supreme Court, describing Tayyib's transgressions in full detail.¹⁵⁸ The latter, who was despised (*müteneffir*) on behalf of the people, was accused of an old and innate harshness and corruption (*öteden beri mecbul olduğu huşunet ve irtikabı*) and of disrespect to the just procedures of the glorious *Tanzimat* (*hiç bir şekilde usul-u madeleşümül-u tanzimat-ı hayriye riayet etmediğinden*). The activities of Tayyib covered various aspects of public administration and had been tormenting people for the past five to ten years.

Particularly, Tayyib was accused by the people of interfering in the auctions of various cases of tax-farming (*mukataa*), whereas only the tax-farmers (*mültezim*) who would cooperate with him would get the necessary permission (*kendisinin şirketiyle istihsal-ı rubsatına mecburiyetleri*). Moreover, Hacı Tayyib could skilfully exert his obvious influence (*meclis-i kebirde derkar olan teferrüd ve galebesinden*) over the big council, which was involved in the administration of tax-farming. Furthermore, Hacı Tayyib was forcing the town's artisans to support him and was taking bribery (*rüşvet*) from every one of them. In addition, he was cooperating with the bandits operating in the districts around *Selanik*, forcing them to share with him their booties (*ahz ettikleri akçe ve eşya-ı saireyi kendisiyle beylerinde taksim eylemekte*); he had some vagabonds be appointed as gendarmerie, so that the bandits would not be caught; and were they, finally, in some cases caught, he would

¹⁵⁷ "ahali-i İslam kolları, millet-i Rumîyan kolları, millet-i Yahudîyan kolları."

¹⁵⁸ BOA, MVL. 133 97 (6 March 1853).

rescue them by intervening in their trials. Hacı Tayyib was employing various oppressions (*enva-ı mezalim ve taaddi vukubulmaketa*) and could manipulate any opposition: knowing well the methods of politics (*usul-u politikaya aşina bulunduğundan*) he could silence every member of the council, and would employ accusations, imprisonment and threats to everybody who would oppose him. Even the notables had been afraid of his almighty power. The petition was thus asking the transfer of Hacı Tayyib to another duty and the “liberation” (*tablis*) of the poor people from his oppression.

Few months later though, in August of the same year, Hacı Tayyib was reported to have erected a coffeehouse between the fortress of *Kelemerye* (*Kelemerye kalesinden*) and the imperial barracks (*kaşla-ı hümayun*). This coffeehouse had been built against the regulations (*mugayyir-i nizam*) and in a place for which people did not, usually, get permission.¹⁵⁹ One year later, in August 1854, no action seemed to have been undertaken regarding Hacı Tayyib, as a document sent to an official temporarily residing in *Selanik* - in which the peoples' petition against Tayyib was summarized- asked him to carry out some secret investigation concerning the whereabouts of Tayyib.¹⁶⁰ A similar document was sent in February 1855 to the governor of the city, asking for a thorough investigation of the case and a more detailed report of the complaints against Tayyib.¹⁶¹

Indeed, this time the residents of *Selanik* proceeded to a more detailed petition, and, more importantly, one signed by the impressive number of one hundred sixty two seals, comprising members of the *ulema*, head-men of the city-quarters (*muhtar*), non-Muslim and Muslim notables, as well as members of the city's local councils, that is, the

¹⁵⁹ BOA, LMVL. 281 11026 (21 August 1853).

¹⁶⁰ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 163 59 (31 August 1854): As no date of the petition, which was being summarized in this document, was provided, we cannot be sure whether it was the one just described or another one that had followed afterwards. This document stated that Hacı Tayyib was taking bribes and thus annulling justice (*iptal-ı hak*), and proceeding to various mischief (*enva-ı uygunsuzluğa*).

¹⁶¹ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 182 86 (18 February 1855).

administrative one, the investigative one and the trade court.¹⁶² Remarkably, it was only following this latter petition, which seemed to have summoned most of the city's important men, that the state proceeded to a definite move, expelling Tayyib from the council membership (*aşalıktan ibraç*) with a degree issued in May 1855.¹⁶³

This massive petition against Tayyib seemed to have been the decisive factor which resulted in his being expelled and transported to Istanbul, either to be tried or to be positioned in another duty, as the final decree just mentioned foresaw. In the cases of other council members of *Selanik* during the 1850s, like the ones of Abdurrahman *bey* or Yümni *efendi* illustrated below, who were accused of various misdeeds and corruptions, the state did not seem to have been eager to intervene. Particularly, Abdurrahman *bey*, whom we encounter in the local councils of the 1850s and 1860s, was a notable from *Selanik*, from among the old noble families (*vucüb ve hanedan-ı kadimeden*) of the town, and, also, the city council's agricultural administrator (*müdir-i ziraat*). In 1854 the council of *Selanik* proposed in a *mazbata* to give him the title of imperial doorkeeper (*rikab kapıbaşı*), and to make him responsible of the military office (*asakir-i zabtiye sergerderliğine*).¹⁶⁴

Two years later, in the summer of 1856, Abdurrahman was accused by the administrator of the religious institutions of near-by *Karaferiye* that he had received bribes during the procedure of drawing the lots for military conscription (*kura-ı şerhiyesi*

¹⁶² BOA, I.MVL. 332 14253 (25 May 1855).

¹⁶³ See BOA, I.MVL. 332 14253 (25 May 1855), as well as A.MKT.UM. 250 55 (31 August 1856), in which document it was stated that, while the relevant decree had forbidden him from returning to *Selanik* and ordered his employment in another, suitable place, or even his punishment according to the Penal Code, it was suggested that the case would be investigated in more detail, in order to exclude the possibility that the petition against Tayyib had been the product of some of his enemies' instigations.

¹⁶⁴ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 152 80 (27 February 1854); see also A.MKT.MHM. 79 3 (10 November 1855).

keşidesine) in the districts of *Karaferye*, *Vodine* and *Yenice*.¹⁶⁵ Particularly, in the case of *Karaferye* he had collaborated with some of the local notables, receiving bribery (*rüşvet*) of more than 100,000 *guruş*, in order to change the names of the ones who had been chosen by lot. In any case, the accusations against Abdurrahman did not seem to have acquired bigger dimensions, like in the case of Tayyip. Some days later, the local governor of *Selanik* Ahmed assured that relevant investigations had proven that the accusation against Abdurrahman had been unfounded and that no other complaint (*sikayet*) against Abdurrahman had been uttered during the time of Ahmed's service. Indeed, we continue seeing Abdurrahman in the local council of *Selanik* also in the 1860s.

Yümni *efendi*, originally from *Karaferye* and member of the district's local council, had been transferred to *Selanik* after some transgressions (*taaddiyat*) on his behalf had been reported, and acted as one of the city's appointed council members.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Yümni *efendi* was accused of continuing to interfere in *Karaferye's* local politics -namely by dismissing Yusuf Bey, from among the notables of *Karaferye* (*Karaferye hanedanından*) and, moreover, one being supported by the district's people, and putting the notable Haşim *efendi* in his place-, as well as of receiving bribery from some of the district's people.¹⁶⁷ Both Yusuf *bey* and the people (Muslims and Christians together) submitted relevant petitions; the former assured that he had been serving in *Karaferye's* council by following the premises of the *Tanzimat* (*ber tubk-ı tanzimat-ı hayriye-i usula müstahsen*), but that Yümni *efendi* had come to *Karaferye*, taken bribery from some people, and dismissed him, that is, Yusuf *bey*, who had informed the authorities about Yümni's activities. In the place of Yusuf, he had put Haşim *efendi*, who was famous for helping the bandits (*eşkiya*

¹⁶⁵ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 245 80 (25 July 1856); see also A.MKT.UM. 247 16 (5 August 1856).

¹⁶⁶ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 220 61 (8 January 1856).

¹⁶⁷ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 217 94 (11 December 1855).

makulesinin muavini). Despite these complaints, *Selanik*'s governor assured in December 1855 that during his term in *Selanik* no transgression undertaken by Yümni had been proven. As of *Karaferye*, the latter was often visiting the district, because of owning farm estates within its borders, but there had been no indication that he was interfering in the administration of the district (while Haşim *efendi* had been, apparently, elected by the people), nor taken any bribery.¹⁶⁸ The matter seemed to have ended there. Moreover, a relevant document from February 1857 stated that the son of the deceased (by then) Yümni, named Mehmed Faik, had expressed the wish to be given the title of the fourth degree (*rütbe-i rabia*) and to be employed as a clerk at the report office of the Supreme Council in Istanbul.¹⁶⁹ Yümni's family thus continued to be an important local family of *Selanik*, and no action seemed to have been undertaken regarding the accusations against the former.

In all, in the case of *Selanik*, corruption appeared as a widespread practice among the members of its councils. In addition to the cases described here, in a document dating 1853 written by a member of the Supreme Council (acting as an inspector in the province of *Selanik*), it was stated that the financial administrator of *Selanik*, as well as two further members of its councils, Ahmed and Necib *ağa*, were prone to corruption, and were often providing protection to inappropriate men.¹⁷⁰ On the other hand, the residents of the city proceeded often to collective petitions to the Sultan, describing the wrongdoings of the bureaucrats and asking for their dismissal. Nevertheless, Kırılı, who has described the struggle between the ordinary people of the district of *Ivranya* and their governor Hüseyin Pasha in the early 1840s, during which -despite continuous petitioning

¹⁶⁸ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 220 61 (8 January 1856).

¹⁶⁹ BOA, A.DVN. 120 90 (5 February 1857).

¹⁷⁰ BOA, LMVL. 285 11256 (11 September 1853).

on behalf of the Muslim and non-Muslim residents of *Ivranya*- the state was unwilling to intervene and curb Hüseyin's power, has commented that "this struggle [...] exposed how little influence the Ottoman state had over its provincial bureaucrats and local dynasts, even after it accelerated its bid to bring the provinces into its orbit through the financial and legal means of the *Tanzimat*."¹⁷¹ In a similar vein, in the case of *Selanik* central authorities did not seem willing to persecute local power-holders, surely not in cases in which the latter's corrupted activities were not causing an excessive dissent among the people; massive petitioning, on the other hand, uniting all kinds of local power-holders and representatives of the people, could, indeed, lead to the dismissal of a state official, like we observed in the case of Hacı Tayyip. It seemed, thus, that the state's response to corruption entailed a calculation between the need to rely on bureaucrats needed for the governance of the provinces, as well as to prevent dissent among people from becoming too massive, and thus lead to a more general discontent or even uprising.

Socio-Economic Profile of the Elected Local Notables

Following the Appendices at the end of this thesis, we observe that in the big councils of the 1840s-*Selanik* elected Muslim notables seemed to have hold three seats (out of four reserved for them), identical to the number of seats hold on behalf of non-Muslim notables: The Muslims whom we encounter in these positions were Yusuf Refik, Ahmed, Mehmed Şefik and Şerif Mustafa Faik. In addition, non-Muslim representation during the same decade followed the official stipulations (except in instances of politically sensitive penal cases (seditions) / issues, as presented in Chapter Six), that is,

¹⁷¹ Cengiz Kırılı, "Tyranny Illustrated: From Petition to Rebellion in Ottoman Vranje", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 53 (2015), p. 32.

the participation of the metropolitan and of one elected notable of each *millet*. The councils of *Selanik* in the 1840s were thus staffed with the metropolitan Ieronimos and a Jewish plus a Christian member. Particularly, the Christians were represented by either Isteryo Yorgi (*Στέργιος Γεωργίου*) or Gavriil Zarkadi (*Γαβριήλ Ζαρκάδης*); the Jews (mostly) by Yako the son of Avram (sometimes accompanied by the adjective Fransez), or (in one case) by Salomo (the son of M? Abastado?).

Following on from the middle of the 1850s mostly smaller, temporary or investigative (*muvakkat / tabkikat*) councils carried out the penal trials. The official stipulations prescribed that these temporary councils would be headed by the provincial governor and comprise (Muslim and non-Muslim) notables chosen by the same governor from among the members of the provincial council -with no further specifications concerning the number of the members.¹⁷² Interestingly enough, one observes that in these councils non-Muslims were often even the majority, sometimes with four members out of seven in total (two Christians and two Jews); a similar tendency will be detected in the case of the *Tuna* province in Chapter Six. In any case, in the temporary councils of *Selanik* of the 1850s, the Christian members were Dimitri Blaci (*Δημήτριος Μπλάτζης*), Hacıyorgi Istekli(?) Hacı, Nikola the son of Dimitri, while the Jews were Gadalya the son of Isak, a certain Ovadiya Beniamin (Hebrew seal One, see explanations of Appendix) and a Yaakov the son of David Angel (Hebrew seal Three). From among the Muslim notables we find the names Hakkı and Davud Fedai.

The metropolitan was present only in the city's big council of the same decade. For example, in the big council (counting, irregularly, to nineteen members instead of thirteen) convening on the Greek uprisings of 1854 we find metropolitan Kallinikos; next

¹⁷² Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlı'da yargı reformu. Nizamiyye mahkemelerinin kuruluşu ve işleyişi, 1840-1876* (*Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat. The foundation and proceeding of the nizamiyye courts, 1840-1876*), p. 76.

to him appeared the seal of a Dimitri (as representative of the *Rum millet*), and Gadalya the son of Isak representing the Jewish *millet*. Occasionally, however, big councils dealt also with penal cases: In 1853, in a banditry case, familiar to us names, that is, metropolitan Ieronimos, Gavriil Zarkadi and Gadalya the son of Isak were present as members of the big council (*meclis-i kebir*) of *Selanik*. On the other hand, the Muslim notables participating in the big councils were Ahmed, Salih Vehbi, Mehmed and Şerif Mustafa Faik.

In the 1860s the smaller temporary or investigative councils dealing with penal cases of theft, rape or murder demonstrated a participation of two or three non-Muslims (with sometimes two Jews or sometimes two Christians), out of, most times, eleven members; the Christians were Atanaş Bladi (*Αθανάσιος Μπλιάττης*), Hristaki, Istefan Vetati (*Στέφανος Τάρτης*), Hacimihal the son of Hacikostantin, Dimitri, Atanaş Havotov(?), Gavriil Zarkadi; the Jews were Behor Saltiel, Ovadiya Beniamin, Gadalya the son of Isak, Shelomo the son of M(?) Abastado (?), as well as the owner of Hebrew seal Four, which has been impossible to be deciphered. In banditry cases, we find mostly nine-member-temporary councils, out of which two or four members (in the latter case comprising two Jews and two Christians) were non-Muslims: The Christians Gavriil Zarkadi, Atanaş Bladi, Istefan Vetati, and the Jews Ovadiya Beniamin, Behor Saltiel, and the Hebrew seal Five of the explanations (see Appendix). In these provisional councils of the same decade, the 1860s, we find the Muslims Hüseyin Hasan, Davud Fedai, Nadiri Tevfik, Elhaç Riza Mehmed, Osman Tevfik, Hilmi Hüseyin, Enver, Yako bin Musa, Hüseyin Hüsni, Naşid, Feyzi, Numan Sabit, Yako the son of Musa, Ahmed Şevki, Mehmed Şükrü, Mehmed Feyzi, Hüseyin Ali, Hasan Rifat and Mehmed Refih.

The big council was staffed in a case of 1861 by the metropolitan -who nevertheless was indicated as absent-, Hacimihal the son of Hacikostantin, and the Jew Behor Saltiel. One must note at this point that, while the first councils established during

the 1840s foresaw the participation of the (Orthodox) metropolitan, the 1864 Provincial Regulations foresaw the participation of all the religious leaders of the non-Muslim communities. While we did not encounter the name of the *babambaşı*¹⁷³ in the sample of the cases discussed here, an analysis of the yearbooks (*salname*) of *Selanik* has shown that, at least from the year 1876, the chief-rabbi was present in the *Selanik* administrative council, next to the metropolitan.¹⁷⁴ Lastly, on the Muslim part we find the following names in the big councils of the 1860s: Şerif Mehmed, Faik, Mehmed İzzet, Şakir İsmail, İbrahim Namik and Osman.

What firstly strikes one's attention when observing the above-mentioned names is the fact that, on the one hand, the names in each decade change, while some, fewer, names (like Gadalya and Ovadiya on behalf of the Jewish community or Zarkadi on behalf of the *Rum* community) show a constant appearance in the local councils over two or even three decades. Furthermore, regarding the analogy between Muslims and non-Muslims we observe that, especially in the case of the provisional councils, the number

¹⁷³ It was only in 1835 that the Jewish communities were integrated into the Ottoman political system, with the institutionalization of the office of the *babambaşı* (chief-rabbi); the latter would function as both the secular and religious leader of the Jewish community, and would, furthermore, represent it in front of the Ottoman authorities. Firstly (in 1835) the chief rabbi of Istanbul was being recognized, and one year later the ones of *Selanik*, *İzmir*, *Bursa* and *Kudüs* (Rena Molho, *Oi Eβραίοι της Θεσσαλονίκης, 1856-1919 (The Jews of Thessaloniki, 1856-1919)*, Athens: Themelio, 2001, pp. 54, 58). Nevertheless, the relationship between the chief-rabbi in Istanbul and the various *babambaşıs* throughout the empire was not clearly defined (Daniel J. Schroeter, "The Changing Relationship between the Jews of the Middle East and the Ottoman State in the Nineteenth Century" in *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth Through the Twentieth Century*, Avigdor Levy (ed.), Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002, p. 96).

¹⁷⁴ Dragi Georgiev, "Selanik, Manastır ve Kosova vilayetlerinin kuruluşu ve yerel idareye hristiyan ahalisinin katılımı (The founding of the provinces of Selanik, Manastır and Kosova and the participation of the Christian people in the local administration)", paper under preparation for publication provided to me on behalf of the writer during a research-stay at the National Archives in Skopje in 2010. While we do not know the exact date on which the chief-rabbi of *Selanik* started participating in the local administration of the city, Kadric has shown that in the Bosnian province, based on the analysis of yearbooks (*salnames*), already in the year 1867 there were two Jewish members in the administrative council of the Bosnian province: the *babam* (rabbi) Avram Efendi and the member of the council Isak Efendi. Moreover, present were the metropolitan, an Orthodox and a Latin member. Ten years later (to name just one further example out of the many given by Kadric), in 1877, in the same council were sitting Avram Efendi, as an assignee of the Sarajevo *babambaşı*, as well as the Jew Solomon Efendi. Adnan Kadric, "Jews in the State Agencies and Offices of the Bosnian Vilayat from 1868 to 1878 (A Framework of Understanding Issues of Minorities in the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the 19th century)", *OTAM (Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi)*, 33 (Spring 2013), pp. 98, 106.

of non-Muslim members was on the increase. These provisional councils -bestowed with the adjudication of penal cases- proved to be quite flexible judicial bodies, convening with various numbers and proportions of Muslim and non-Muslims notables. Indeed, particularly the temporary councils established after the mid-1850s and operating like ad-hoc courts presented a high number of non-Muslims, sometimes even outnumbering the Muslims. This clearly points to the need to question the basics of the *millet*-system and its prolonged assumptions on non-Muslims' role (that is, their absence) in Ottoman governance.

Notably, these ad-hoc courts had no adjudication of defining the punishment of culprits in the case of severe crimes but could just state their opinion about the guiltiness or not of the defendant(s). However, I argue that the increased number of non-Muslims in these courts was important. The members of such courts were entrusted with the most sensitive part of a trial, namely the interrogations of the defendants and the summary of these interrogations in a respective council report. Based on these reports the Supreme Council in Istanbul would utter its opinion on a legal case and the subsequent final decree of the Sultan would be issued. For the decades under scrutiny in this thesis, the majority of non-Muslims in local councils speaks for an increased integration of the latter into provincial governance and thus a strengthening of the Empire's political culture.

In addition, elaborating on the seats occupied by non-Muslims, that is, by Jews and Christians in the case of *Selanik*, one observes that, following the official stipulations, these were most often equally distributed between the two *millets*. In a few cases Jews or Christians outweighed, albeit no distinct pattern could, yet, be detected. On the other hand, one has to approach this "equality" within the bigger context of *Selanik's* population and compare it with other Ottoman cities. Indeed, Ottoman *Selanik* of the nineteenth-century has often been stressed due to the uniqueness of its population, being the only Ottoman city with a Jewish majority (and, moreover, a remarkable majority),

followed by the numbers of Muslims and then Christian residents. Particularly, the census of 1831 counted, out of a total male population of 12,720, 44.55% Jews, 33.76% Muslims and 21.69% Orthodox Christians.¹⁷⁵

Akyalçın Kaya, analysing the income and property registers of *Selanik* for the years 1844-1845 (drafted as a direct result of the *Tanzimat* reforms), states that the registers included 6,282 households, which (with an average of five people per household) add up to a total population of 31,410 (a number being comparable to the census of 1831, which comprised only male -and thus around half of the- population).¹⁷⁶ Out of the latter number, 42.7% were Jews, 32.4% Muslims, 21.4% Christians, 2.3% foreigners and 1.2% gypsies.¹⁷⁷ Added to the numerical superiority of *Selanik*'s Jews was their dominance in the town's economy: The Jewish community of *Selanik* enjoyed high respect, owed to a great extent to their being responsible for the smooth running of the local economy. Indeed, as Dumont notes, based on the archives of the Alliance (*Alliance Israelite Universelle*), "unlike other cities, like Smyrna, where often it happened that Jews had reasons to complain of the unfriendly behaviour of their fellow-citizens, in *Selanik* on the contrary the community enjoyed, at least until the last years of the nineteenth century, a remarkable climate of tolerance."¹⁷⁸

One is tempted then to ask whether the numerical superiority of Jews and their decisive role in the town's economy could have been translated into a higher number of members of Jewish notables in the local councils, clearly and constantly outweighing the

¹⁷⁵ Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life: Reflections from Salonica, 1830-1850*, Istanbul: Isis, 2003, p. 75.

¹⁷⁶ Akyalçın Kaya, "Living of Other's Aid: The Socioeconomic Structure of Salonica's Jews in the Mid-Nineteenth Century", p. 322.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

¹⁷⁸ Paul Dumont, "The Social Structure of the Jewish Community of Salonica at the End of the Nineteenth Century", *Southeastern Europe*, 5 no. 2 (1979), p. 63.

number of Christians? Of course, official stipulations foresaw one representative of each *millet*,¹⁷⁹ but then, for example in the council of *Manastır*,¹⁸⁰ we observe how one *millet* (that is, the numerically dominant one, in *Manastır* the Christian members, in *Selânik* it would then be the Jews) was constantly represented in the local councils, while the other (the Jews in *Manastır*, that would be the Christians in *Selânik*) appeared sometimes, but not always.

Pertaining to the egalitarian representation of Jews and Christians in the councils and courts of *Selânik*, one could dare to proceed to a comparison with the beginning of the twentieth century, and the distribution of members in the same city's professional associations. As Papamichos-Chronakis notes, despite middle-class associationism being shaped to a great extent by Jewish merchants (Jewish associations surpassed those of any other ethno-religious group, particularly those of the Greek-Orthodox), their administration was distributed between Jews, Europeans and Greek-Orthodox merchants. Indeed, Jewish entrepreneurs built their hegemony by promoting multi-ethnic associationism rather than by practicing exclusion; they transformed inter-ethnic coexistence into a means of forwarding their hegemony.

Particularly, the presence of Western Europeans furnished much-needed information channels and demonstrated their friendly attitude towards Western powers. Similarly, the inclusion of a Greek Orthodox insurer (the latter refers to the case of the

¹⁷⁹ BOA, I.MVL. 9 144 (27 September 1840). An *irade* (order) issued in 1840 was answering to petitions of some tax collectors to consider the places in which members from more than one of the Greek-Orthodox, Armenian, Jewish and Catholic millets were residing in one and the same area, and act respectively. The *irade* ordered that in such cases there should be appointed one elected member of each *millet* to the councils (*tertîp olunan küçük meclislere her hangi millet bulunur ise onlardan dahi birer nefer aza tayınıyla beşer nefere münbasır olmayıp*).

¹⁸⁰ A random sample of similar cases, like in the case of *Selânik* has been taken for *Manastır*, although it is not described here in more detail. For more information, see BOA, I.MVL. 40 756 (20.6.1842), I.MVL. 229 7871 (6.11.185), I.MVL. 238 8424, (1.3.1852), MVL. 884 41 (1) (17.1.1858), MVL. 884 41 (2) (25.2.1858), HR.MKT. 267 41 (8.10.1858), I.DH. 01290 101502 (005 001) (6.12.1859), I.DH. 01290 101502 (001 002) (30.1.1860), I.DH. 01290 101502 (002 001) (3.2.1860), I.DH. 01290 101502 (003 001) (7.3.1860), I.MVL. 440 19560 (1) (27.6.1860), MVL. 976 35 (10.12.1863), I.MVL. 1029 60 (10.3.1866).

Syndicat des companies d'assurance) acknowledged the Greek Orthodox economic weight and safeguarded Jews against Greek irredentism.¹⁸¹ Thus, if we were to draw a parallel between the *Tanzimat* and the period described by Papamichos-Chronakis, it could be very much the case that also in mid-nineteenth century Jews favoured a similar policy of equal representation in the new courts and councils of *Selanik*.

Coming back to the notables sitting in the councils of *Selanik*, what is known to us beyond their mere names and numbers? To be sure, in order to be eligible to be elected as such a member, one had to stem from the economic elite of his own community. As described in Chapter One, in the first decades of the *Tanzimat* it was stipulated that the notables elected in the councils had to be among “the smartest, most uncorrupted and distinguished” persons (*en akıllı, en afif ve seçkin kişilerden olup*), while later, with the Province Regulations of 1864, it was ordered that the council members had to be among the ones who were paying at least five hundred *guruş* tax per year, and were “respectful and literate” (*itibarlı, okur-yazar*).¹⁸² The quest thus regarding the elected notables in the councils is translated simultaneously into a quest for the town’s economic elite and its socio-economic activities.

The few information I have managed to gather about the elected Muslim notables¹⁸³ in the *Selanik* council suggest that the latter were either landowners and / or

¹⁸¹ Paris Papamichos-Chronakis, “Middle-Class Sociality as Ethnic Hegemony. Jewish and Greek Merchants from the Ottoman Empire to the Greek Nation-State, 1880-1922”, unpublished paper presented at the workshop: Crossing Borders: New Approaches to Modern Judeo-Spanish (Sephardic), UCLA, 4-5 April, 2011, p. 12. Contrary to this “inter-ethnic coexistence as Jewish hegemony,” Papamichos-Chronakis notes that the leading merchants of the Greek-Orthodox community fostered a “minority mentality.” Almost all of this community’s leading members had very recently migrated to Salonica from the Macedonian hinterland and were thus still strangers in the city and with no ties with its commercial elite. In addition, ethnic struggle against Bulgarians and economic pressure from the Jews produced phobic and defensive syndromes. Thus, they posed multiple symbolic barriers to inter-ethnic sociality and pushed instead towards ethnic entrenchment. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁸² Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlı’da yargı reformu. Nizamiyye mahkemelerinin kuruluşu ve işleyişi, 1840-1876* (*Judicial reform in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat. The foundation and proceeding of the nizamiyye courts, 1840-1876*), pp. 54, 173.

¹⁸³ The Muslim population of *Selanik* displayed a unique character, as it comprised both *dönme* Muslims, as well as the Muslims stemming from various geographical and ethnic backgrounds. The *dönme* were Jewish

collectors of taxes (in the form of tax-farming).¹⁸⁴ Salih Vehbi for example, appearing in the councils of the 1850s, was often absent with the explanation that he had been either “in Istanbul,” or “at his farm (*çiftliğinde idiği*).” Additional documents I have found in the Ottoman archives refer to Muslim notables of the town, the names of which coincide with the ones in the tables of the Appendixes; sometimes they were described also as “member of the *Selanik* council” (*Selanik meclis azaşından*), sometimes not, so that in the latter case we can merely guess whether it was the same person or not. Izzet *efendi*, for example, a member of the councils in the 1860s, was, indeed, referred in a document of 1862 as a council member and, moreover, the possessor (*mutasarrıf*) of a land-estate (*çiftlik*), which he had rented to a Hasan from *Pravišta* for the sum of 120,000 *guruş*.¹⁸⁵

In other occasions, we can only suggest the names found in the Ottoman archives were the ones present in the councils. Osman *efendi* (probably a member of the *Selanik* councils in the 1860s) appears in a document of 1853, holding the title of “ıstabl-ı

followers of the “pseudo-Messiah” Sabetay Sevi (in Jewish Sabbetay Zvi), who, following his own example, had massively embraced Islam after 1666, retaining thus some doctrinal peculiarities. Paris Papamichos-Chronakis, “Οι έλληνες εβραίοι και ντονμέ έμποροι της Θεσσαλονίκης, 1882-1919. Ταξικοί και εθνοτικοί μετασχηματισμοί σε τροχιά εξέλιξης (The Greek Jewish and Dönme merchants of Thessaloniki, 1882-1919. Class and ethnic reshaping in the course of Grecification)”, PhD Thesis, University of Crete, 2011, pp. 75-6. Location of *dönme* in the Ottoman archives is rather difficult, and, for reasons of space, I will not dwell more upon this issue in this thesis. Notably, I could not locate any of the Muslim names presented here among the two-page-list of “Important Dönme Salonicans” created by Marc Baer and provided to me by Papamichos-Chronakis. For further information, see Dilek Akyağın-Kaya, “Formation of a ‘Salonican Lineage’: Ahmed Hamdi and his Family in the Nineteenth Century” in *Η Θεσσαλονίκη στις παραμονές του 1912 (Thessaloniki on the eve of 1912)*, Evangelos Hekimoglou (ed.), Thessaloniki: Jewish Museum, 2015; Marc David Baer, *The Dönme. Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010.

¹⁸⁴ Concerning the Muslim economic elite of *Selanik*, as Papamichos-Chronakis notes, very few information exists up to today about concrete persons. As literature has focused on external trade, where non-Muslims were dominating, internal trade patterns in the Ottoman Empire, where the presence of Muslims was more remarkable, have been neglected. Papamichos-Chronakis, “Οι έλληνες εβραίοι και ντονμέ έμποροι της Θεσσαλονίκης, 1882-1919. Ταξικοί και εθνοτικοί μετασχηματισμοί σε τροχιά εξέλιξης (The Greek Jewish and Dönme merchants of Thessaloniki, 1882-1919. Class and ethnic reshaping in the course of Grecification)”, p. 78.

¹⁸⁵ Particularly, the document referred to a dispute among the two men. While Hasan had paid the whole sum in advance, he accused Izzet Efendi of not having delivered him the estate in a good condition, some of its parts having being destroyed. As a consequence, Hasan demanded his money back. BOA, A.MKT.UM. 52 16 (16 June 1862).

amire” (imperial stables) and member of the noble families of *Selanik* (*Selanik hanedanların*). This Osman *efendi* was bestowed with the right to practice tax-farming regarding the tithe (*ondalık*) and sheep tax (*ağnam*) of the sub-provinces of *Selanik*, *Drama* and *Manastır*, as well as other revenues.¹⁸⁶ It could very much be the case that this Osman *efendi* was the father of the *dönme* Ahmed Hamdi, a known figure of late-nineteenth century *Selanik*; according to Akyalçın Kaya, Ahmed Hamdi’s father was named Osman *efendi*, was registered in mid-nineteenth century *Selanik* as a tax farmer, and was, moreover, stated to be part of the “Salonican lineage.”¹⁸⁷ Finally, Salih *efendi*, mentioned before as often absent in his farm-estate, is probably encountered also in a document of 1851, in which, together with an Abdurrahman *ağa*, they were mentioned as the tax-farmers (*mültezim*) of the sheep tax (*ondalık-i ağnam*) of the *Siroz* district, amounting up to 30,000 *guruş*.¹⁸⁸

Much more information is available to the researcher of today concerning some of the non-Muslim notables of *Selanik*, mainly because of a more extensive secondary literature existing on the latter. According to this information, the non-Muslim notables participating in the *Tanzimat* councils were (not exclusively, but mainly) professionally active as merchants. Indeed, wealth in Ottoman *Selanik* during the nineteenth-century was increasingly being based on commerce. Some decades before, during the eighteenth-

¹⁸⁶ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 140 60 (16 August 1853).

¹⁸⁷ Akyalçın Kaya, “Formation of a ‘Salonican lineage’: Ahmed Hamdi and his Family in the Nineteenth Century”, pp. 39, 40. Ahmed Hamdi bey, a member of the Yakubi community of Sabbatians, a farm-owner (having inherited from his father several farms in the province of *Selanik*), was part of the Salonican notables in the mid-nineteenth century. His activities were not limited to the rural ones, as he used his entrepreneurial abilities also in the urban context; his demand to construct the tramway for the city was accepted and in 1889 he got concession for the construction of a tramway from the quay to the newly built Hamidiye quarter. In the 1880s he was part of the administrative council of the province of *Selanik*. The nephew of Ahmed Hamdi, Osman Said, was elected to the administrative council of the province in March 1903, then became a member of the municipal council in February 1904, and finally obtained the post of mayor of Salonica between 1912-1916 and 1920-1922. *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 43, 46.

¹⁸⁸ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 86 78 (13 December 1851).

century, the main economic sectors had been credit and *çiftlik* (large-estate)-exploitation.¹⁸⁹ Stamatopoulos has argued that the economic elite of *Selanik* during the nineteenth-century was a “multivalent” (*πολυσθενική*) one; it comprised both the big landowners, as well as those who were engaged in trade, bank or industrial business. The possession of land was mostly functioning additional, if not being a prerequisite, for other bourgeois activities.¹⁹⁰ Akyalçın Kaya, who has analysed the property registers of *Selanik* for the years 1844-1845, notes that the majority of the town’s households (on the whole 6,282) were practicing artisanship (2,221), commerce (1,315), while 702 were living “off others aid.”¹⁹¹

To note, of the 1,315 men registered as merchants, 71% were Jewish, 17% Muslim and 12% Christians. But, according to the same analysis based on the registers of 1844-45, by the mid-nineteenth century *Selanik*’s Jews had largely relinquished their predominance in international trade to Christian and foreigners. Only two of the twenty-six substantial Salonican merchants (*başerhan*) engaged in international trade were Jewish. The latter seemed to be much more prevalent in domestic trade, engaged in small-scale local and regional commerce or functioning as intermediaries, buying hinterland products for sale to the big international merchants.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Phokion Kotzageorgis, Demetrios Papastamatiou, “Wealth Accumulation in an Urban Context. The Profile of the Muslim Rich of Thessaloniki in the Eighteenth Century on the Basis of Probate Inventories”, *Turkish Historical Review*, 5 (2014), p. 190. This same study, nevertheless, similarly showed that pluralism of financial activity was the rule in the city’s urban economy: there was no royal route to capital formation and economic supremacy.

¹⁹⁰ Dimitris Stamatopoulos, “Η ενδοκοινοτική σύγκρουση στη Θεσσαλονίκη (1872-1874) και η σύνταξη του πρώτου κοινοτικού κανονισμού (The intercommunal conflict in Thessaloniki (1872-1874) and the composition of the first communal regulations)”, *Valkanika Symmeikta*, 10 (1998), pp. 54-55.

¹⁹¹ Akyalçın Kaya, “Living of Other’s Aid’: The Socioeconomic Structure of Salonica’s Jews in the Mid-Nineteenth Century”, p. 325.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 326, 328. The picture would change from the 1870s onwards, when the Jews of Italian origin residing in *Selanik* would become the indisputable protagonists of the external trade, the money-business and processing sector. On the other hand, the indigenous Greek-Orthodox merchants would, in the same period, be replaced by Greek-Orthodox from the wider Macedonian area, part and parcel of a wider urbanization and explosion of *Selanik*’s population. Papamichos-Chronakis, “Οι Έλληνες εβραίοι και ντονμέ έμποροι της Θεσσαλονίκης, 1882-1919. Ταξικοί και εθνοτικοί μετασχηματισμοί σε τροχιά εξελληνισμού (The

Coming back to the specific notables in *Selanik*, Ovadiya and Gadalya were mentioned in separate documents as principal merchants of the city (*bazergan*): Ovadiya in 1874,¹⁹³ and Gadalya in 1844,¹⁹⁴ while the latter was also called as one of the city's money-changers (*sarraf taifesinden Yabudi Gadalya nam bazergan*).¹⁹⁵ An Ovadiya David, probably a descendant of Ovadiya Benjamin present in the mid-nineteenth century *Selanik* councils, was mentioned as member of the Chamber of Commerce of *Selanik* in a catalogue of 1908.¹⁹⁶

Yako the son of Avram, who was present in the city's council at the beginning of the *Tanzimat*, that is during the whole 1840s, is linked through his surname (Franséz) to the family of Fransezoglu, a powerful old merchant family of the city, known from the research of Ginio in the *sicils* of *Selanik* of the 18th century. Indeed, Isak the son of Yako Fransezoglu (a nickname that, according to Ginio, might indicate this family's affiliation

Greek Jewish and Dönme merchants of Thessaloniki, 1882-1919. Class and ethnic reshaping in the course of Grecification)", pp. 52-3.

¹⁹³ BOA, ŞD. 2006 9 (17 December 1874).

¹⁹⁴ BOA, A.DVN.DVE. 1 49 (20 January 1844).

¹⁹⁵ Pertaining to the Jewish notables of *Selanik*, available information is much more detailed pertaining to the end of the nineteenth century. Dumont speaks about fifty family clans, led by the "aristocracy," the Morpurgo, the Fernandez, the Saias, the Mizrahi, the Bajona, the Tiano, and the Periere. They were followed by the Modiano, the Abravanel, the Saporta, the Scialom, the Benveniste, the Covo, the Nahmias, the Saltiel, the Molho, the Matalon and others. Several other families such as the Asso, the Calderon, the Beraha, and the Carasso also enjoyed real prestige, but they were far from being able to rival the great households that ensured the leadership of the community. Dumont, "The Social Structure of the Jewish Community of Salonica at the End of the Nineteenth Century", pp. 53-4. The split within the Jewish community of *Selanik* unfolded after 1856, when the "Francos" (Western Jews from Livorno who had migrated to the city during the seventeenth century), including Jews such as the Allatini and Shelomoh Fernandez decided to embark on a new approach and to plunge into community affairs. The latter opted for a style of life and for ideas imported from the West and heartily greeted the schools of the Alliance. Minna Rozen, *Facing the Sea: The Jews of Salonika in the Ottoman Era (1430-1912)*, Afula, 2011, pp. 55, 57.

¹⁹⁶ "Chambre de Commerce de Salonique, Noms de Négociants de Salonique enregistrés à la chambre de commerce (avec l'indication des classes auxquelles ils appartiennent) (Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki, names of the merchants of Thessaloniki registered to the Chamber of Commerce (with the indication of the classes they belong to))" in *Annuaire Commercial & Administratif du Vülayet de Salonique publié par J.S. Modiano sous le patronage de la Chambre de Commerce de Salonique (1908) (Commercial and administrative yearbook of the Salonica province, published by J.S.Modian under the sponsorship of the Chamber of Commerce of Salonica (1908))*, J.S. Modiano (ed.), Thessaloniki, 1908, p. 37.

with the French community) was a local Jewish merchant and community leader in the 1740s. In addition, the connection of the Fransez family with the European consuls was to be a long-lived one, as was demonstrated by the continuing employment of Yako's sons as dragomans and through the European protection bestowed on this family during the following two centuries.¹⁹⁷ Yako the son of Avram Fransez of the mid-19th-century *Selanik* was probably a descendant of him. Moreover, a money-changer Yakov Frances was robbed off two hundred gold pounds and killed in December 1912 in *Selanik*, together with his partner David Amir, by five armed Greeks, speaking of a continuous presence of the Fransez-family in the socio-economic life of the city. The murder, which took place few months after the annexation of *Selanik* to the Greek Kingdom, shock the Jewish community and led to all their shops being closed on the days of the funeral.¹⁹⁸

Similar to the Jews, most of the Greek-Orthodox elected notables were merchants. To begin with, the first among them, Isteryo Yorgi (Στέργιος Γεωργίου), whom we find in the *Selanik* councils of the 1840s, seemed to have gained his membership thanks to his previous title as a *vekil* (προεστός) of the Greek-Orthodox community (similar thus to Yakov Fransez just mentioned), that is, of representing the community "towards the government, being designated by the twelve notables (πρόκριτοι) and the heads of the guilds, confirmed by the metropolitan and certified by the town's *kadi*..."¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Eyal Ginio, "Jews and European Subjects in Eighteenth-Century Salonica: The Ottoman Perspective", *Jewish History*, 28, 3 (Nov. 2014), p. 14.

¹⁹⁸ Yitzhaq Shmuel Emmanuel, "Toledot Yehudei Saloniki (Generations of the Jews of Salonika)" in *Zikbron Saloniki (A Memoir of Salonika)*, David A. Recanati (ed.), Tel Aviv, 1972, p. 204. I thank Minna Rozen (University of Haifa) for providing me this information (and translating for me the necessary abstract) during the CIEPO-conference in Budapest, 2014, and in following email correspondence. According to the whole abstract, "all the Jews closed their shops on that day and went to the funeral of Frances with Rabbi Yaaqov Meir leading them. When the funeral reached the beach front, they were confronted by Greek soldiers armed with guns who barred their way. [...] The funeral continued, but not on the beach front where the foreign consuls lived, but in the parallel street."

¹⁹⁹ Evaggelos Chekimoglou, Thaleia Mantopoulou-Panagiotopoulou (ed.), *Η ιστορία της επιχειρηματικότητας στη Θεσσαλονίκη. Η Οθωμανική περίοδος: Κτηματολογικές πηγές, Θεσσαλονίκη τέλη 19^{ου} αρχές 20^{ου} αιώνα (History of entrepreneurship of Thessaloniki. The Ottoman period: Land registers, Thessaloniki, end of 19th to beginning of 20th century)*, Thessaloniki: Politistiki Etaireia Epicheirimiton Voreiou Ellados, 2004, p. 225. This book is widely based, among many others sources, on church registers to be found in the Historical Archive of Macedonia

Isteryo Yorgi (born around 1790, died in 1848, originally from *Siroz*) was accordingly marked in the tax-registers of 1831 as “*veki*” and was thus exempted from taxation. Interestingly enough, while serving in the *Selanik* councils, the king of Greece awarded Isteryo in 1844 with a bronze commendation, honouring him thus for his services during the Greek Independence War (1821-1829).²⁰⁰

On the other hand, following his death in 1848, the position of Isteryo in the council of *Selanik* was filled by Gavriil Zarkadi (*Γαβριήλ Ζαρζάδης*). Zarkadi (born around 1795, died in 1878) seemed to be a powerful notable, who retained his position over the whole period under scrutiny in this chapter, that is, from the 1840s to the 1860s. The Zarkadi family belonged to the oldest families of the Panagouda parish. His profession has not been verified, but probably he was a merchant or a landowner.²⁰¹ In an Ottoman document of 1854 he is referred to as “master, non-Muslim notable” (specifically, “*Selanik boca kocabaşılardan*”).²⁰²

For some of the later Christian notables we have more detailed information. In the 1850s, one of the Greek-Orthodox members sitting in the councils of *Selanik* was Dimitris the son of Georgios Blatsis (*Δημήτρης Γεωργίου Μπλάτσης*). Blatsis was a *berath* merchant, who had been enlisted in the registers of the parish of Agios Athanasios of *Selanik* in 1831, at the age of 38. He was originally from the village Blatsi (today's Oxya,

(Thessaloniki), and on the well-known books of Dimitriadis (Vasilis Dimitriadis, *Τοπογραφία της Θεσσαλονίκης κατά την εποχή της Τουρκοκρατίας, 1430-1912* (*Topography of Thessaloniki during the Turkish yoke, 1430-1912*), Thessaloniki: Afoi Kyriakidi, 2008), Vakalopoulos (Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, *Οικονομική λειτουργία του μακεδονικού και θρακικού χώρου στα μέσα του 19^{ου} αιώνα* (*Economic function of the Macedonian and Thracian space in the middle of the 19th century*), Thessaloniki: Etaireia Makedonikon Spoudon, 1980) and Vasdravellis (Ioannis K. Vasdravellis, *Ιστορικά Αρχεία Μακεδονίας* (*Historical Archives of Macedonia*), Thessaloniki: Etaireia Makedonikon Spoudon, 1952).

²⁰⁰ Chekimoglou, Mantopoulou-Panagiotopoulou (ed.), *Η ιστορία της επιχειρηματικότητας στη Θεσσαλονίκη. Η Οθωμανική περίοδος: Κτηματολογικές πηγές, Θεσσαλονίκη τέλη 19^{ου} αρχές 20^{ου} αιώνα* (*History of entrepreneurship of Thessaloniki. The Ottoman period: Land registers, Thessaloniki, end of 19th to beginning of 20th century*), p. 225.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

²⁰² BOA, A.MKT.DV. 77 17 (25 December 1874).

Ozva) near *Kesriye*, and thus member of the city's merchant-group stemming from the wider Macedonian area and having moved only recently to *Selanik*. His merchant activities stretched to Europe, Iran and India; he was importing industrial products from England, sugar and coffee from France. To the former he was exporting corn, as well as silk. In 1851, the French consul-authorities estimated his capital at about 400,000 *francs*. Furthermore, he had commercial relationships with Alexandria, from where he imported coffee and rice, as well as with the island of Syros, and the cities of Izmir, Istanbul and Vienna.²⁰³ Indeed, together with Stefanos Tattis (whose life will be portrayed in detail below), Blatsis belonged to the main merchant families of the city.²⁰⁴

Another notable, Atanas Bliatis (*Αθανάσιος Ν. Πλιάτης (Βλιάτης ή Μπλιάτης)*), appeared in the councils of the 1860s. A merchant of currant, simultaneously he was one of the richest and socially most active Christians of *Selanik*.²⁰⁵ The son of Atanas, named Christaki Atanas Bladi, appeared in a list of the members of the city's Chamber of Commerce in 1908.²⁰⁶ Similarly, Stefanos Tattis, also originally not from *Selanik*, but from the village *Vithkouki* (today's Vithkuq) in present-day southern Albania (see below), was engaged in trade, especially of tobacco. Notably, all of the Christians mentioned above were active not only in the Ottoman local councils, but also in the affairs of their own *millet*, like in the main administrative body of the community, the Elders' Council (for

²⁰³ Chekimoglou, Mantopoulou-Panagiotopoulou (ed.), *Η ιστορία της επιχειρηματικότητας στη Θεσσαλονίκη. Η Οθωμανική περίοδος: Κτηματολογικές πηγές, Θεσσαλονίκη τέλη 19^{ου} αρχές 20^{ου} αιώνα (History of entrepreneurship of Thessaloniki. The Ottoman period: Land registers, Thessaloniki, end of 19th to beginning of 20th century)*, p. 218.

²⁰⁴ Anastasiadou, *Θεσσαλονίκη 1830-1912, Μια μετρόπολη την εποχή των Οθωμανικών μεταρρυθμίσεων (Thessaloniki 1830-1912, A metropolis in the period of Ottoman reforms)*, p. 498.

²⁰⁵ Chekimoglou, Mantopoulou-Panagiotopoulou (ed.), *Η ιστορία της επιχειρηματικότητας στη Θεσσαλονίκη. Η Οθωμανική περίοδος: Κτηματολογικές πηγές, Θεσσαλονίκη τέλη 19^{ου} αρχές 20^{ου} αιώνα (History of entrepreneurship of Thessaloniki. The Ottoman period: Land registers, Thessaloniki, end of 19th to beginning of 20th century)*, p. 228.

²⁰⁶ "Chambre de Commerce de Salonique, Noms de Négociants de Salonique enregistrés à la chambre de commerce (avec l'indication des classes auxquelles ils appartiennent) (Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki, names of the merchants of Thessaloniki registered to the Chamber of Commerce (with the indication of the classes they belong to))", p. 37.

example Zarkavi, in the years in 1854, 1856 and 1861 or Blatsis in the years 1854, 59, 62, 75), or in the committee of the schools (Zarkavi from 1847-1851, or Blatsis between 1845-6).²⁰⁷ Bliatis himself, as well as Blatsis's son, Dimosthenis, were among the representatives of the town who composed the "Regulations of the Greek-Orthodox community of Thessaloniki" in 1886 (the very first regulations had been composed in 1874), according to the premises of the *Tanzimat*.²⁰⁸

Granting Honorary Titles to Muslim Notables

What is especially interesting about the Muslim notables of *Selanik*,²⁰⁹ contrary, for example, to the ones in *Yanya* (which appear in Ottoman documents simply as "vucüh: notable", see Appendix 2), was the fact that they hold high-ranking imperial titles, given to them by the Sultan. Titles like "ser bevabbin aza" (member, head of the doorkeepers), "ıstabl-ı amire aza" (member, belonging to the imperial stables), or "rikab kapıcıbaşı" (royal doorkeeper) were more often than not accompanying the seals of the *Selanik* council members at least in the 1850 and 1860s. To note, by this time, these titles carried no more than a symbolic function, and did not refer to an active service.

²⁰⁷ Chekimoglou, Mantopoulou-Panagiotopoulou (ed.), *Η ιστορία της επιχειρηματικότητας στη Θεσσαλονίκη. Η Οθωμανική περίοδος: Κτηματολογικές πηγές, Θεσσαλονίκη τέλη 19^{ου} αρχές 20^{ου} αιώνα* (*History of entrepreneurship of Thessaloniki. The Ottoman period: Land registers, Thessaloniki, end of 19th to beginning of 20th century*), pp. 219, 235.

²⁰⁸ These were regulations of the Greek-Orthodox community, issued according to the premises of the *Tanzimat* and the National Regulations (*Εθνικοί Κανονισμοί*) stipulated by the Patriarchate; Papastathis, *Οι κανονισμοί των ορθόδοξων ελληνικών κοινοτήτων του Οθωμανικού κράτους και της διασποράς* (*The regulations of the Orthodox Greek communities of the Ottoman state and of the diaspora*), p. 157.

²⁰⁹ Although in the Ottoman archives non-Muslim notables don't appear with specific honorary titles given to them by the Sultan, secondary literature points to examples of Christian notables being granted such titles. Bliatis was granted an honorary title by the Sultan in 1894, for all his services to the state. Chekimoglou, Mantopoulou-Panagiotopoulou (ed.), *Η ιστορία της επιχειρηματικότητας στη Θεσσαλονίκη. Η Οθωμανική περίοδος: Κτηματολογικές πηγές, Θεσσαλονίκη τέλη 19^{ου} αρχές 20^{ου} αιώνα* (*History of entrepreneurship of Thessaloniki. The Ottoman period: Land registers, Thessaloniki, end of 19th to beginning of 20th century*), pp. 227-228.

Yaycıoğlu has argued that such titles, which originally connoted the outer circle of the imperial palace, were granted during the eighteenth century to the members of the provincial *hanedans* who were not formally in the Ottoman imperial hierarchy as viziers or governors but rendered services to the empire with ancillary offices and contracts thanks to their local power. These titles symbolized the extension of the Sultan's might in the provinces. But they also functioned as a new titular mechanism to connect local notables to the empire and, symbolically, to the Sultan and his palace in an alternative web that differed from former imperial hierarchies of governors, judiciary authorities, and janissaries and holders of religious honorific titles, such as *seyyid* or *şerif*, which were used to proclaim ancestral connections to the Prophet Muhammad.²¹⁰ In the case of *Selanik*, the retaining of these titles much into the period of the *Tanzimat*, a period during which the state, actually, sought to curb the power of local notables and centralize its own powers, can be seen as an indication of its continuous high reliance on provincial power-holders: imperial titles were still used and needed in order to “appease” local notables, and the Sultan was still in need of incorporating these same notables into his symbolic power network.

Particularly, the *Selanik* council member Osman *bey* (*meclis-i azâlarından*) was promoted (*terfi*) in 1863 from “rikab kapıcıbaşı” to “ıstabl-ı amire aza”, while in the same document Salih *efendi*, indicated as member of *Selanik* council, was given the title of “kapıcıbaşılık.”²¹¹ A document concerning Davud Fedai, a member of the councils in the 1850 and 1860s, provides us with some clues for what it took to be seen as eligible for such a title: property, loyalty to the Sultan, as well as a certain social profile. The governor of *Selanik* wrote in January 1854 that Davud Fedai, who had obtained a lot of

²¹⁰ Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire. The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions*, p. 76.

²¹¹ BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 259 7 (2 April 1863).

landed property in *Selanik* and had entered the “local benevolence (*yerli hikmene*)” by making a lot of public and other constructions, and was, moreover, from among the “wise and knowledgeable, skillful and marked by his loyalty (*edip ve dirayetkar bendegan-ı sadakatşiar bulunup*),” had, yet, not achieved to acquire a title (*bir rütbe-i refiye nail olmaması*). The same document also noted that most of the Muslim notables of *Selanik* (*Selanik vucühunun ekserisi*) were carrying a title and asked, finally, for Davud Fedai to be given one.²¹²

Non-Muslim Notables: Silent Participants or Active Agents?

The participation especially of non-Muslim notables in the newly-founded councils of the *Tanzimat* has been occasionally diminished by literature as being merely “decorative.” According to this explanation, as the councils’ majority was always Muslim, and the decisions were being taken by majority vote, non-Muslims were simply integrated in the councils as a superficial condition of the *Tanzimat* reforms and the concomitant equality of all before the law. Especially European consuls of the time have described in their reports non-Muslim members of the councils as “nonentities”, “completely overawed” and “practically useless.”²¹³ On the contrary, I argue here that analyzing the participation of notables in the councils and courts of the *Tanzimat* based on concrete archival sources reveals that the participation of non-Muslims was not unimportant, a

²¹² BOA, LDH. 287 18058 (4 January 1854). In another document around the same time, Davud Fedai (together with another man residing in Istanbul) was praised for securing military provisions adding up to 10,000 *gurus*. Moreover, he was named “from among the friends (*asduka*) of the Empire.” BOA, A.MKT. 110 30 (27 January 1854).

²¹³ “Acting Consul Abbott to Lord J. Russell, Monastir, 9 July 1860” and “Consul Calvert to Lord J. Russell, Salonica, 23 July 1860” in *Reports Received from her Majesty's Consuls Relating to the Condition of Christians in Turkey. 1860*, London: Harrison and Sons, 1861, pp. 6, 12.

conclusion that could be further corroborated with the accumulation and comparison of data relating to several places.

For sure, there seems to have been certain hierarchy among the members of a council, as first the state-appointed members (the governor always coming first) appended their seals on the council reports, followed by the elected notables, the non-Muslims among them coming last. In addition, we are left today only with the end-product of the *maẓbata*, and not with detailed recording of the opinion of a council's each member, or of the negotiations taking place among the various members. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that notables were simply sitting in the councils, without expressing any opinion.²¹⁴

Moreover, the cases of absence of some seals (indicating that their owners were not present at the council on a specific day) can provide us with some clues concerning their presence: Particularly, I describe in Chapter Six how the seals of non-Muslim notables were absent when politically sensitive issues were being discussed in a session concerning, for example, nationalist seditions and their trials during the nineteenth century. In a similar vein, Elizabeth Thompson has described how non-Muslim notables were expelled from councils in the case of Damascus, because they were not agreeing neither with the conscription of non-Muslims to the Ottoman army nor with the

²¹⁴ Authorities were, at least on paper, trying to render non-Muslim equal participants in the councils. An *irade* from 1840, which answered to a relevant petition from the Patriarchate, ordered that the various *talimname* (document of instructions) which had been given to the *mubasssils* should also be given to the *reaya*, that is, the *metropolit* and the *kocabaşı*, who were participating in the councils (see BOA, I.MVL. 3 57 (31 May 1840)). In addition, in a document mentioned also by İlber Ortaylı in his book on the local administration during the *Tanzimat*, the Supreme Council asked to avoid incidents of insult to the non-Muslims members of the councils (*memleket meclislerine dahi olan metropolit ve kocabaşlar her ne arz ve ifade iderler ise sair azımlar hiçe saymak*) (see BOA, I.MVL. 15 226 (12 January 1841)). Lastly, Çadırcı is referring to a decision sent from the centre to all provincial governors, trying to impede the practice of putting difficulties to the participation of non-Muslims to the local councils or to force them to sign in their houses the minutes of meetings in which they had not participated, see Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat sürecinde Türkiye ülke yönetimi (The administration of Turkey during the Tanzimat)*, Istanbul, Ankara: Imge, 2007, p. 272.

payment of an exemption tax.²¹⁵ Being expelled or absent from some sessions is rather indicative of the fact that non-Muslim notables did have, at least to some extent, a say in the council's proceedings.

In addition, the absence of non-Muslim notables was sometimes becoming the issue of complaints, for example on behalf of the Patriarchate, indicating that it was not unimportant. In a document dating 1858, for example, in which Patriarch Kyrillos expressed his opinion about a tax-dispute that had arisen between the Muslim and Christian communities of *Manastır*, he complained that in the relevant council report he had been sent, the places reserved for the seals of the metropolitan and the non-Muslim notable (*kocabaşı*) had remained empty.²¹⁶ This example indicates that the presence of non-Muslim notables carried an importance for the Patriarchate, meaning that these notables could, at least to a point, influence the discussion of events. In fact, the Patriarchate was concerned with the elections of Christian notables even in small villages: according to a document of 1841, the Patriarchate was concerned with the election of a member in the council of the village *Maroşya* of the *Gümülcine* district, whose seat had remained empty as no suitable person had been found.²¹⁷

Moreover, as has been shown above for the case of *Selanik* and is observed also in the case of *Ruşuk* in Chapter Six, non-Muslim notables could even form a majority in the councils, refuting thus the argument stated above that Muslim majority had been the rule. Indeed, non-Muslim notables' majority has been detected in the cases of provisional

²¹⁵ Thompson, "Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-1845", p. 466. See also B. Abu-Manneh, "Jerusalem in the Tanzimat Period: The New Ottoman Administration and the Notables", *Die Welt des Islams*, 30, 1 4 (1990), p. 12.

²¹⁶ BOA, MVL. 884 22 (20 June 1858).

²¹⁷ BOA, C.DH. 107 5319 (31 May 1841).

councils (*meclis-i muvakkat*) which carried out a sensitive part of the penal trials, namely the process of interrogations.

Lastly, one should not forget that local notables in the *Tanzimat* councils, similar to the *ayans* in the eighteenth century, were being elected by the people, according to procedures described in Chapter One. While we do not have information, yet, as to how these elections were being carried through, we have indications that they did, actually, take place, with the centre watching over the cases in which the elections were by-passed and valuing thus the participation of the suitable representatives of people: In 1857 a report was sent by the Supreme Council (*Meclis-i Vâla*) to the governor of *Selânik* stating that new members had been included to the city's council (*meclis-i kebir*) without following the method of election by the people and that this went against the regulations (*intihab-ı ahali olmayan kimesnenin meclise alınmaması nizamı iktizasından olduğuna*). New members thus, who would have been elected by the people, should be submitted for approval to the Supreme Council.²¹⁸

Stefanos Tattis: A Greek-Orthodox Notable Narrated Through his Grandson

One of the families of *Selânik* mentioned above which has been more extensively researched, namely by its own descendants, is the one of Stefanos Tattis (1825-1910). Thus, we are able to compare Tattis's depiction by his great grand-son with various other archival materials. Indeed, while his great grandson, Dimitris Seremetis, argued in an article in 1986 that Stefanos Tattis was living in the Ottoman Empire "in pain," hiding his "real feelings," organizing communal life and awaiting the suitable conditions for

²¹⁸ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 295 96 (29 October 1857).

ending the yoke,²¹⁹ Tattis' activities and, more important, allegiances as presented below appear much more multi-faceted and puzzling than Seremetis would probably accept.

The Tattis family was originally from the village *Vithkouki* (today's Vithkuq) in present-day southern Albania, near Korça. Stefanos's father, Konstantinos Tattis (1787-1864), had been a member of the *Filiki Etaireia*, which had been secretly preparing the Greek Independence War starting in 1821.²²⁰ Nevertheless, unlike other notables who had supported the uprising of 1821, he had managed to escape the punishment of being hanged in "Kapan," one of *Selanik*'s main squares. Stefanos himself was born in 1825, while his family finally moved to *Selanik* in 1832.²²¹ The Tattis family was engaged in trade, especially of tobacco. In addition, they immediately bought a considerable number of real estates in the city of *Selanik*, which spoke for their wealthy background. Stefanos Tattis was living both from the tobacco-trade, as well as from the incomes of these real estates.²²²

His activities during his younger years are not much known, except of his being active in the commercial profession. After the 1860s and the growing organization of the city's Greek-Orthodox community's institutions -in accordance with the regulations of the *Tanzimat*-, Tattis played a central role in the representation of his community. Indeed,

²¹⁹ Dimitris Seremetis, "Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki's society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))", *Makedonika*, 25 (1985-1986), p. 269. Seremetis is a great grandson of Tattis (son of Kalliopi Tatti, daughter of Stefanos Tattis's son Konstantinos) and he used as a source for his article a personal notebook of Stefanos Tattis, which he inherited from his mother Kalliopi.

²²⁰ The *Φιλική Εταιρεία* (Society of Friends) was a secret 19th-century organization whose purpose was to overthrow the Ottoman rule of Greece and establish an independent Greek state.

²²¹ Dimitris Seremetis, "Ο φιλικός Κωνσταντίνος Παν. Τάττης (1787-1864) (Konstantinos Pan. Tattis (1787-1864), member of the *Filiki Etaireia*)", *Makedonika*, 23 (1983), p. 70.

²²² Seremetis, "Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki's society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))", pp. 266-267.

between 1875 and 1885, as well as in 1891, he actively participated in the Elders' Council of the town.²²³ He also appeared among the members of the same council signing a document in 1862.²²⁴ In addition, Stefanos Tattis played an active role during the conflict taking place in the interior of the Greek-Orthodox community between the years 1872 and 1874, in which metropolitan Neofytos and some of the most important bourgeois families of *Selamike* had been involved.²²⁵ In 1874 Tattis was among the committee which composed the first regulations in the history of the community, according to the *Tanzimat*.²²⁶

Moreover, Tattis participated in the administrative committees of the Church of Agios Athanasios, the city's main Orthodox parish (in which he was also residing), in the years 1873, 1876 and 1886. In fact, he had been enlisted in the relevant registers as the member with the greatest financial contributions to the parish (200 *gurus* per year).²²⁷ Furthermore, he was one of the founding members of the town's communal charity association, called "Charitable Fraternity of Men of Salonica" (*Φιλόπτωχος Αδελφότης*

²²³ Seremetis, "Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki's society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))", pp. 277, 285.

²²⁴ Stamatopoulos, "Θεσσαλονίκη: 1858-1874. Η εφαρμογή των γενικών κανονισμών και ο Μητροπολίτης Νεόφυτος (Thessaloniki: 1858-1874. The Implementation of the General Regulations and Metropolitan Neofytos)", *Thessalonikeion Polis* 1 (1997), p. 90.

²²⁵ Seremetis, "Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki's society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))", p. 276. Stamatopoulos, "Η ενδοκοινοτική σύγκρουση στη Θεσσαλονίκη (1872-1874) και η σύνταξη του πρώτου κοινοτικού κανονισμού (The intercommunal conflict in Thessaloniki (1872-1874) and the composition of the first communal regulations)", p. 56.

²²⁶ Stamatopoulos, "Η ενδοκοινοτική σύγκρουση στη Θεσσαλονίκη (1872-1874) και η σύνταξη του πρώτου κοινοτικού κανονισμού (The intercommunal conflict in Thessaloniki (1872-1874) and the composition of the first communal regulations)", p. 84. The main characteristic of these first regulations was that it stipulated, next to the Elders' Council (the members of which were diminished from twelve to eight), a new communal body, a twenty-four-member-committee, the members of which would serve in various smaller committees dealing with the school and charity institutions of the community. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²²⁷ Seremetis, "Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki's society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))", p. 276.

Ανδρών Θεσσαλονίκης), and founded in 1871; he served as its chairman in 1873, as well as between 1886 and 1890.²²⁸ In later years, Stefanos's son, Konstantinos, occupied the same position. Stefanos's wife Kalliopi, on the other hand, was involved in the founding of the respective women's organization, the "Charitable Fraternity of Women" in 1873. In his article, Seremetis justified his great grandfather's election as a member of the Fraternity's board over many years by the fact that he "realized well and promoted the national and social goals of the association..."²²⁹



Photo 1: Stefanos K. Tattis (1825-1910), retrieved from www.faath.org (25 May 2014). The photo was taken during his duty as a deputy of the Ottoman parliament in Istanbul (1876).

²²⁸ www.faath.org.gr (retrieved in May 2014), official website of the "Charitable Fraternity of Men of Salonica" (*Φιλόπτωχος Αδελφότης Ανδρών Θεσσαλονίκης*).

²²⁹ Seremetis, "Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki's society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))", p. 276.

In addition to all these activities, Tattis participated in many local institutions of the Ottoman authorities. To begin with, as demonstrated in the Appendix 1 he participated in the provisional courts of *Selanik* judging crimes related to theft, at least in the year 1862. In Appendix 2, Stefanos Tattis appears as a member of the city's provisional courts, which judged two banditry cases in the years 1861 and 1862 (among them also the case of the bandit Yorgi Karbuluke(?), who received the death penalty). These constituting only selective cases from the archives, we can easily assume that Tattis participated in many more local councils trying Ottoman subjects of the *Selanik* province in various crimes. Also, later, in December 1878, Tattis was referred to in the local Greek newspaper to have been elected as one of the judges of the city's commercial tribunal;²³⁰ in 1892-93 he was mentioned to be a member of the municipal council and intervening through this position in the conflict between the then metropolitan and a monastery located in the upper part of *Selanik* (the Vlatades Monastery), using his power of decision over the setting of the new water conduit.²³¹

In the year 1879 Tattis participated in a committee (composed of Ottoman Muslims, seven Orthodox-Greeks and three Jews), which was summoned by the provincial governor Galip *paşa*, in order to introduce new reforms according to the article twenty-three of the Berlin Treaty (1878). Within the framework of this committee, the Christian members managed to achieve the equal recognition of the Ottoman and Greek

²³⁰ «Μετ'ευχαριστήσεως αναγγέλλομεν ότι ο ομογενής κ. κ. Στέφανος Τάττης εξελέγη πάρεδρος δικαστής του Εμποροδικείου της πόλεώς μας, το οποίον πρό τιμος πολύ παρημελήθη», *Ermis*, 5 December 1878 (no. 352, p.1 / c. 2), taken from Eirini Kalogeropoulou, "Stefanos Tattis: A Notable of the Greek-Orthodox Community and Deputy of Salonica in the Second Half of the 19th century", unpublished paper presented at the workshop "Subjectivity beyond Community in a Multi-Confessional Society: the Case of the Greek-Orthodox in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic", organized by Vangelis Kechriotis, Bogaziçi University, Istanbul, January 2009, p. 7. Kalogeropoulou based her article, among others, on two local Greek newspapers of the period 1875-1885, *Ermis* and *Pharos tis Makedonias*, both edited and published in *Selanik* by Nikolaos Garbolas, as well on the minutes of the first Ottoman parliament.

²³¹ Kalogeropoulou, *ibid.*, p. 7.

languages during the court proceedings and at the promulgation of edicts and laws.²³²

Some of the other participants in the committee, according to the local newspaper *Ermis* of December 1879, were a member of the council of the prefecture, Ibrahim *bey*, the mayor Arif *bey* and the vice-governor of the prefecture, Alexandros Konstantinidis *paşa*.²³³

Finally, Tattis was elected deputy for the *Selanik* province in the first Ottoman parliament founded in 1876.²³⁴ He thus resided in Istanbul between 1877 and 1878.

Although the selection procedure has not been clearly exemplified, it seems that, if -as assumed- the members of the provincial administrative councils served as electors, then Tattis enjoyed the appreciation of high-ranked Muslim Ottoman officials.²³⁵ In fact, the local newspaper *Ermis* contained some information on the selection-procedure of deputies at the Governing House for both sessions of the parliament in January and October of 1877. In both selections Tattis was included among the Christian deputies.²³⁶

There existed also relevant information concerning the deputies' departure to Istanbul in

²³² Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, *Ο βόρειος ελληνισμός κατά την πρώιμη φάση του μακεδονιού αγώνα 1878-1894* (*Northern Hellenism during the first phase of the Macedonian Struggle 1878-1894*), Thessaloniki: Stamoulis, 2004, pp. 35-37, and Seremetis, "Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki's society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))", p. 280.

²³³ *Ermis*, 11 December 1879 (no. 431, p.1 / c. 2), taken from Kalogeropoulou, "Stefanos Tattis: A Notable of the Greek-Orthodox Community and Deputy of Salonica in the Second Half of the 19th century", p. 7.

²³⁴ Seremetis, "Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki's society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))", p. 278. See also Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period*, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963, p. 264.

²³⁵ Enver Ziya Karal, "Non-Muslim representatives in the first constitutional assembly, 1876-1877" in *Christian and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (ed.), New York: Holmes and Meier, pp. 393-395.

²³⁶ Papers of 28 January and 25 October 1877 (no. 171, p. 3 / c. 2 and no. 238, p.1 / c. 2 respectively), where Tattis was mentioned following the glorious Ibrahim Bey, Mustafa Bey and Tahir Ömer Bey from Drama, as well as the Christians the glorious Michalaki Efendi from Serres and Mr. Vassilios Papazoglou. For the second session Tattis was mentioned following the glorious Mehmet Sefik Pasa, the respected Ibrahim Bey, Mr. Michalakis Efendi, the glorious Mustafa Bey, Mr. Vassilakis Papazoglou and the glorious Riza Bey, while there followed an Avram Efendi; taken from Kalogeropoulou, "Stefanos Tattis: A Notable of the Greek-Orthodox Community and Deputy of Salonica in the Second Half of the 19th century", p. 7.

which it was mentioned that Tattis, together with his family, travelled to Istanbul via Athens. Interestingly enough, Seremetis took the opportunity in his article to argue, without further archival support, that Tattis had used this trip in order to foster his relationships with Athens, the “national centre,” concerning the problems of “Macedonian Hellenism.”²³⁷

To note, none of Stefanos Tattis’s interventions at the Ottoman parliament sessions was direct, in the sense that he does not appear uttering his own voice in the parliament. On the other hand, he did co-sign the speech of another deputy of *Selanik*, namely Michalaki Efendi, who praised the degree of protection provided to non-Muslims by the Ottoman state and emphatically supported the values of the fatherland and independence in the context of the military turmoil taking place in the Balkan provinces during the Russian-Ottoman war, while condemning European trickery.²³⁸ In his second intervention, in January 1878, Tattis appeared contributing a sum of money for the appeasement of the needs of war refugees together with the totality of the other deputies.²³⁹ Contrary to that, Seremetis himself argued in his article that Stefanos Tattis was “representing the Greek expatriates (*την ελληνική ομογένεια*) of the *Selanik* province” in the Ottoman parliament.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Seremetis, “Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki’s society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))”, p. 279.

²³⁸ 13/25 April 1293/1877, Parliaments minutes, v. 1, p. 174, based on Kalogeropoulou, “Stefanos Tattis: A Notable of the Greek-Orthodox Community and Deputy of Salonica in the Second Half of the 19th century”, p. 6.

²³⁹ Parliament minutes, v. 2, pp. 153-154, based on Kalogeropoulou, “Stefanos Tattis: A Notable of the Greek-Orthodox Community and Deputy of Salonica in the Second Half of the 19th century”, p. 6. The sum he contributed was 500 *gurus*, which was the lowest accepted limit. Nevertheless, he was among many to act so.

²⁴⁰ Seremetis, “Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki’s society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))”, p. 278.

More than that, his great grandson argued in his article that simultaneously with his duties as a deputy in Istanbul, Stefanos Tattis took part in the secret organizations taking place in the interior of *Selanik's* Greek-Orthodox community in the period of 1877-1878, when the victories of the Russian army brought enthusiasm to some of the town's Greeks, who under the secret auspices of the metropolitan Ioakeim the Third were organizing themselves. Realizing the contradiction (as Tattis was in Istanbul at that time), Seremetis added that "maybe his name [of Stefanos Tattis] was added to the relevant documents in order to add prestige."²⁴¹ Finally, Tattis died in 1910, when he took his life, unable to bear the pains of an ongoing-disease.²⁴²

Tattis's case is important for many reasons. On the one hand, his representation by his great-grandson provides evidence that a nationalist mindset cannot grasp the complexity of these persons seen through the eyes of today. Solely the combination of a wide array of archives, stemming, moreover, from many different languages, can offer us a full picture of all the activities of notables during the nineteenth-century, a picture subject, again, to various interpretations. What seems contradictory from the viewpoint of today may have seemed as simple strategies of survival and building local power networks during the fluid political atmosphere of the *Tanzimat*. Contrary to the "new Hellenic urban elites" as described by Kechriotis for the case of *Izmir*, that is, of "Ottoman individuals who had studied in Athens, and then returned to their hometown where they exercised their professions as teachers, lawyers or medical doctors, bringing their community in dialogue with different loci, both in geographical and in cultural

²⁴¹ Seremetis, "Ο Στέφανος Κων. Τάττης (1825-1910) στη δομή της κοινωνίας της Τουρκοκρατούμενης Θεσσαλονίκης (19^{ος} αι.) (Stefanos Kon. Tattis (1825-1910) in the structure of Thessaloniki's society under the Turkish yoke (19th c.))", pp. 289-290.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 294.

terms,”²⁴³ Tattis and the other notables of *Selanik* did not present in their biography such a close connection to the Greek Kingdom. They had spent all their lives in the Ottoman Empire and were acting as the leading figures of one of its communities.

Finally, Tattis' career in the short-lived constitutional experiment of the Ottoman Empire in the years 1876 to 1877 links the local councils to the Parliament in Istanbul. Indeed, the local councils during the *Tanzimat* had offered notables such as Tattis a valuable and long-lived experience in representing his community, as well as discussing, dealing and negotiating with other notables, as well as Ottoman officials, in bigger and smaller councils. Akiba has presented the telling example of Rasim *bey*, representing Edirne in the first assembly, who had praised the tradition of the local councils in the first Ottoman parliament: “Vasilaki Efendi and Sebuĥ Efendi know less about elections than we do, because they are from Istanbul and only started to hold elections this year. We are from the provinces. So, we surely know much more about it.. We have been conducting elections since the year 55 (1839-40), that is, since the beginning of the *Tanzimat*.”²⁴⁴ In all, Akiba argues that “at the time of the inception of the first Ottoman parliament, the base of the parliamentary government had been prepared in the provinces.”²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Vangelis Kechriotis, “The Greeks of Izmir at the End of the Empire: A non-Muslim Ottoman Community between Autonomy and Patriotism”, PhD Thesis, University of Leiden, 2005, p. 64. *Μικρά Ασία, 19^{ος} αιώνας-1919, Οι ελληνορθόδοξες κοινότητες* (*Asia Minor, 19th cent.-1919, The Greek-Orthodox communities*), pp. 307-308.

²⁴⁴ Jun Akiba, “The Local Councils as the Origin of the Parliamentary System in the Ottoman Empire” in *Development of Parliamentarism in the Modern Islamic World*, Tsugitaka Sato (ed.), Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 2009, p. 176.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

Conclusion: (Dis-) Empowering of Local Agents?

This chapter has attempted to approach Ottoman local notables and functionaries in the urban context of *Selanik* -all members of the city's local councils- as complex agents. Overall, it is argued that imperial authorities in Istanbul remained highly dependent on these agents, even during the time of centralizing reforms carried out during the nineteenth century. Needing local bureaucrats and notables in order to carry out provincial governance and collect taxes, Istanbul remained in a state of negotiation with both Muslim and non-Muslim local power-holders in the Balkans. To note, while a similar argument has been made for the Arab provinces of the Empire,²⁴⁶ or for the case of the Phanariotes (that is, Phanar based Christian elites and their retinues or affiliates),²⁴⁷ the Balkan itself stills lacks a more general argumentation on the issue, freed from nationalist approaches unwilling to analyze this complexity.²⁴⁸

To begin with, instead of systematically fighting corruption -one of the main concerns of the Penal Codes stipulated after the 1840s-, the state intervened in cases of corrupted bureaucrats in *Selanik* only when complaints against them acquired a massive character. In the case of Hacı Tayyip in *Selanik* we have followed how a local functionary, resembling a local mafia collecting all kinds of revenues from ordinary people, was left untouched despite continuous petitioning against him. Only when a detailed petition was

²⁴⁶ Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 16. Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism, The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 11.

²⁴⁷ Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire-Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2011, p. 7.

²⁴⁸ For a recent and similar approach, regarding especially the non-Muslim local elites of the Balkans, see: Seçil Uluşık, "Empire, Province and Power: Chorbadzhi Networks in the Ottoman Empire, 1790s-1850s", PhD Thesis, The University of Arizona, 2016, p. 193.

being sent, one which was followed by dozens of seals and uniting all the important Muslim and non-Muslim men of the town, did the state actually dismiss Hacı Tayyip from office.

Negotiation was even more evident in the case of the elected members of the councils, Muslims and non-Muslims. In the case of *Selanik* we have followed how the local upper-class, comprising Muslim landowners and Jewish and Christian merchants (while activities were probably more complex than this distinction), staffed the city's local courts. The concrete actors participating in the councils were changing from decade to decade, speaking thus for social mobility and not for the monopolization of the councils' seats by certain notables over the whole *Tanzimat*.

Granting Muslim notables with honorary titles still during the *Tanzimat*, a practice dating back to the eighteenth century, can be viewed as a manifestation of the ongoing negotiation between notables and state. Those titles had no specific value, neither corresponded to a certain function; instead they aimed at tightening Muslim local notables to the state and to its extended power network. On the example of Davud Fedai we have viewed how loyalty to the state, public service and a certain social profile comprising knowledge and prestige were the necessary prerequisites in order to acquire such a title.

On the other hand, pertaining to non-Muslim notables, their mere participation in the local councils can be viewed as a form of negotiation, as it was the first time in the empire's history that non-Muslims acquired an extended role in public administration. At a time of increased need of the state to secure allegiance of non-Muslims, providing their leaders with a place in the councils made easily sense. But the story did not end with their mere participation, which was far from decorative, as has been shown above. The participation of non-Muslims in the councils in some sessions, but their absence from others (concerning sensitive issues like nationalist seditions), their changing numbers

from being minority to forming the majority in the councils, or the combination on behalf of these non-Muslims of activities within the councils with activities within their own *millet* institutions, all these speak for a constant negotiation between them and the state, as well as with the local Muslim and non-Muslim population.

CHAPTER 3: ACTORS REFUTING THE STATE: Bulgarian Nationalists

Tried in the Local Councils for Sedition (*Fesat*)

Part of the importance of the “fragmentary” point of view lies in this, that it resists the drive for a shallow homogenisation and struggles for other, potentially richer definitions of the “nation” and the future political community.
Gyanendra Pandey, “In Defense of the Fragment”²⁴⁹

The present and the following two chapters, that is, Chapters Three to Five, respond to the main quest of this thesis. Particularly, in these chapters I will try to describe how ordinary Ottoman subjects, Muslims and non-Muslims, perceived, allied with or questioned the Ottoman state of the nineteenth century. Combining thus the parameters of agency, Ottoman provinces and the period of the *Tanzimat*, I will approach ordinary Ottomans of various Balkan provinces as autonomous agents and try to understand what they, and not their leaders or representatives, thought of the state, the Sultan, the ongoing reform project as well as of the spreading nationalisms which were vying for their allegiance.

In order to implement this “history from below” approach I have made extensive usage of *istintakanmes* (interrogation protocols), a historical source which has been more widely elaborated in Chapter One. After reading a series of interrogation protocols regarding all kinds of penal crimes, I have finally focused on penal cases regarding nationalist sedition (*fesat*) and banditry (*eşkiya*), described respectively in this and the following chapters. Indeed, these were by far the most abundant cases in the archives,

²⁴⁹ Taken from Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993, unnumbered page.

and the ones containing the longest interrogations, signaling thus a special interest on behalf of the local councils (and the state) to understand the motives of the respective defendants.

To begin with, sedition often acquired during the Ottoman nineteenth century the form of nationalist mobilization. In the previous centuries, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottomans had encountered widespread heterodox and “heretical” Muslim religious and sectarian dissent, which they fought vigorously, persecuting the extremists and assimilating the moderates.²⁵⁰ While then the incorporation of non-Muslim communities was facilitated through the straightforward Islamic set of guidelines for Muslim-non-Muslim relations, accompanied by the clear-cut boundaries that such principles advocated, Muslim mystical orders (*tarikāt*) did not fit any organizational pattern, rendering these popular religious movements more difficult to dominate than were non-Muslim communities.²⁵¹ This picture would change in the nineteenth century, when non-Muslims started posing their (various) claims, also, in a nationalist language. Indeed, encouraged by the *Tanzimat* reforms, but especially by newly-founded Balkan states vying for their allegiance, non-Muslims mobilized in unprecedented forms of networking and connected over wider geographies. Thus, the Ottoman sovereign was faced with new forms of dissent and was divided between following the stipulations of the *Tanzimat* foreseeing the equality of all Muslims and non-Muslims in front of the law and punishing nationalist dissent which threatened its own power.

In Chapters Three and Four I have deliberately sought both to analyze different forms of this nationalist mobilization (including local uprisings, organizing nationalist

²⁵⁰ Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 155.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-3.

clubs and committees, building networks, printing nationalist material) and their concomitant trials and interrogations, as well as to focus on a variety of Ottoman Balkan provinces and a variety of nationalisms (that is, Greek and Bulgarian). Both aim at providing a comparative and, thus, synthetic viewpoint. Similar developments took place simultaneously in the empire and thus should be treated, also, as part of one (Ottoman) society. A further study could expand then on including similar trials of e.g. Serbian, or, on the other edge of the Empire, Armenian nationalism and detect similarities and differences. I thus claim that Ottoman history would profit much from a more comparative approach cutting across geographies, languages and social phenomena. For this to happen, historians (e.g. Balkan historians) should expand their research from focusing on writing the history of their co-religionists or co-nationals who had, once, lived in the Ottoman Empire, to elaborating on all the *millets* residing in a certain place, as well as on the same phenomena taking place in various provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

I will now proceed to discuss the different forms of Bulgarian and Greek nationalist mobilizations separately, and then combine and compare my findings in the conclusion section of Chapter Four.

First Local Uprisings in the 1860s

The Bulgarian national movement is widely known through its defining milestones, that is, the foundation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, and especially the uprising of April 1867, which indirectly resulted in the establishment of Bulgaria in 1878. Minor uprisings though, driven by manifold motives, had started already in the early 1860s. The 1860s and early 1870s were a period in which ethnic Bulgarian nationalism and supra-ethnic Ottoman *Osmanlılık* coexisted as rival modernist ideologies and

competed for the “hearts and minds” of the Bulgarian communities in the *Tuna* province.²⁵² In addition, the *Tanzimat* reformers hoped to use the example of the *Tuna* province (especially during its governance by Mithat *paşa* between 1864 and 1868) to argue that the “empire was not stagnant but independently moving -and dragging all Ottoman subjects- toward modernity.”²⁵³ Nevertheless, in the same period dozens of Bulgarians (for sure a tiny minority given the whole population of the province) participated in uprisings posing proto-nationalist demands. In this section, we will focus on the trajectory of these uprisings, which are mentioned in international research literature in English language, if at all, in passing. Particularly, I will follow the trials of the participants in the Bulgarian seditions of the 1860s in the Ottoman local councils of *Ruşuk*, *Turnovi*, *Vidin* and *Lom*.

In fact, also during the previous decade, the 1850s, had Ottoman local bureaucrats been reporting about a possible uprising on behalf of the Bulgarians. A writing from the governor of the *Vidin* sub-province in 1851 stated that news about a possible uprising on behalf of the Bulgars had been arriving from time to time (*aralık aralık Bulgarların ayaklanacakları havadisleri çıkarılmakta*).²⁵⁴ In 1853 the governor of the *Sofya* sub-province was complaining that “spies in beggars’ clothes” were wandering around in Bulgaria inciting the non-Muslims.²⁵⁵ In February 1861, one year before the first uprising tackled in this section, the governor of the *Rumeli* province (based in *Manastır*) reported that rumours had been spreading that several provokers (*muharrıklar, eşbas-ı müfside*) in the majority of his province (*Rumeli'nin ekser mevakinde*) had been trying

²⁵² Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of the Danube, 1864-1868”, p. 316.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, Petrov cites here a report from the province’s newspaper “*Tuna-Dunar*” (June 1866).

²⁵⁴ BOA, LMTZ. (4) 3 44 (3 March 1851).

²⁵⁵ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 125 11 (7 February 1853).

to spread sedition among the Bulgarians (*tobum-ı fesad saçılacağı riyyet olunduğundan*). The majority of the people were described to be poisoned with seditious ideas (*çoğunun ezham zehir-i ifsad ile mesmum olduğu*), which they had gathered from reading foreign, and especially Greek, newspapers.²⁵⁶

In July 1862, around forty Bulgarians (*Bulgarlar, hristiyanlar*) -coined in the Ottoman documents also a mob (*ayak takımı, takım-ı fesede, esafil-i nasımdan*)- from the city of *Tirnovi* and its surroundings gathered at the monastery of the nearby-village *Leskofça*. Their final aim had been to organize sedition (*ika-ı fesat, sai bil-fesat, niyet-i faside and fitne*²⁵⁷) in *Tirnovi*.²⁵⁸ The assembled group comprised mainly of artisans (*esnaf*, among whom remarkably many tailors and shoe-makers) and few priests and monks. They were provided with guns, ammunition and food by the monastery's monks, Iosif and Teodos (*fesedenin muharrikleri*), and were then led by these same people to the monastery of *Kapınovo*, in the south-east of *Tirnovi*. While being on the mountains and progressing from *Kapınovo* to *Gabrova* (south-west of *Tirnovi*), news arrived that in a nearby-village one of the *Travna* gendarmeries, together with a Christian, was collecting taxes.

After a series of events, during which the group's leaders²⁵⁹ had the gendarmeries fetched to them and murdered, these same leaders deserted the group. According to the

²⁵⁶ BOA, A.MKT.UM. 457 67 (26 February 1861).

²⁵⁷ The term *fesad*, which is further elaborated in Chapter Six, belonged to Ottoman bureaucratic-political terminology and referred to disruptions of the public order carrying a severe character.

²⁵⁸ The main files comprising the interrogations of the *Leskofça* sedition are the following: BOA, I.MVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862), I.MVL. 474 21489 (7 October 1862). Further information about this sedition can be found in following files: A.MKT.UM. 574 88 (26 June 1862), C.ZB. 16 788 (13 August 1862), MVL. 412 16 (18 January 1863), MVL. 951 80 (1 June 1862), A.MKT.MHM. 261 83 (26 April 1863). It has to be underlined at this point that the files used in this chapter are most probably not the only files existing on the relevant cases. Many more files of similar or the same trials should exist both in the Ottoman archives in Istanbul, as well as in Sofia.

²⁵⁹ Four persons were named by most defendants as the actual instigators of the *Leskofça* sedition (see BOA, I.MVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862), I.MVL. 474 21489 (7 October 1862)), that is, Hacı İstavri, Bocoğlu Todor (from a village outside *Tirnovi*), Dulker İstanooğlu Mihal and Gaçoğlu Petri (both from *Tirnovi*). In addition, one defendant stated that even higher in the hierarchy were other persons, namely Hacıniçooğlu Hacı Dimitri, Hacı Pandeli and İştiryakoğlu Koso. The same defendant argued that their leaders had been given money by Kenkisoğlu Nikola from *Tirnovi* (see also next footnote) in order to

defendants later in court, news had been also arriving that Ottoman soldiers around *Gabrova* were looking after them. Consequently, the rest of the group -more than forty people- dispersed in various directions and most of them, unlike their leaders, were arrested and tried by the authorities in the local council of *Tirnovi*. Particularly, among them were twenty-four men from *Tirnovi*,²⁶⁰ a group of seven men from *Gabrova*,²⁶¹ two monks, that is, Iosif and Teodos Povaniki, and two priests, papa-Makaryo and papa-Ilaryon -all from the monastery of *Leskofça*-, the priest of the village of *Leskofça*,²⁶² as well as a farmer and a furrier from the same village,²⁶³ a group of men which was originally from *Tirnovi* but had been situated in Bucharest for the last years,²⁶⁴ and, lastly, a Russian

persuade also other Christians to participate in the sedition. Lastly, also a Hristaki the son of Hacı Nikola from *Tirnovi* was being mentioned as among the main instigators, as well as a certain Marko.

²⁶⁰ Interrogated in file BOA, I.MVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862): The tailor Krai Konço the son of Momço, the shoemaker Simyon the son of Petri, the tailor Simyon the son of Kolvo, the shoemaker Anastas the son of Ponvo, the shoemaker Yovanço the son of Kolvo, and (interrogated in file I.MVL. 474 21489 (7 October 1862)) the tobacconist Pavli the son of Gato, the silk manufacturer Tryfon the son of Momço, the shoemaker Koleoğlu Angeli, the assistant shoemaker Mizrakoğlu Yorgi, the cook Dimitrioğlu Simyon, the tailor Banbuleoğlu Kostaoğlu Piev, the kettlemaker Bokçooğlu Diço (from *Zagra-i Atık*), the tailor Nikolaoğlu Panayot from a nearby village, the shoemaker Pencooğlu Tanas, the shoemaker Dimitrioğlu İstefan, the shoemaker Yorgi the son of Nikola, Hacıpetre the son of Monkoroğlu Tanas, the assistant shoemaker Kolvo the son of Ustuyan (lived near *Travna*), the tailor Ilaryon the son of Hivarkooğlu Hacı Petri, the tobacconist Maris the son of Hacı Nedalko, the shoemaker Ilya the son of Sari Nedalko, the tailor Istat the son of Dimço, the tailor Vasil the son of Ikstat and the tailor Nikola the son of Petri Kenkis. Many of the defendants stated to reside in the suburbs (*varoş*) of the city.

²⁶¹ Interrogated in file BOA, I.MVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862): The shoopkeeper Donko the son of Todor, the cutter Donko the son of Boto, the merchant Taco the son of Aftem, the tobacconist Todor the son of Pop Kolco, the grocer Yovan the son of Dayco, the shoemaker Boto the son of Yovan and (in file I.MVL. 474 21489 (7 October 1862)) the priest of one of *Gabrova's* churches, Pop Dimitre the son of Ilya. The latter stated in his interrogation that Nikola the son of Petri Kenkis had told him while they were drinking wine that he had 200,000 piasters, which he was planning to spend for the organization of this sedition. Nikola had also added that he would make him (that is, Pop Dimitre) rich and would give him a good amount of money (*ben seni zengin ederim ve elbette sana bir iyi bahşış veririm*).

²⁶² The priest Dobre the son of Dobre, who had sent the farmer Dimo the son of Yorgi Doke to bring two pistols and a sword to the monastery of *Leskofça*.

²⁶³ The farmer Dimo, mentioned in the previous footnote, and the furrier Donço the son of İstayko, who had brought a letter from priest Dobre to the monks of the monastery.

²⁶⁴ Their names are mentioned latter in this chapter, see section about the Diaspora.

citizen originally from *İslimiye*, the scribe and translator Yovan Panof the son of Mihail,²⁶⁵ who had facilitated, according to the statements of Nikola Kenkis, the connection with Georgi Sava Rakovski.

To note, from the defendants' testimonies it becomes clear that the *Tirnovi* sedition was influenced by the Bulgarian Legions set up in Belgrade by G. S. Rakovski (one of the most important figures of the Bulgarian National Revival movement), as well as by the Bulgarian diaspora situated in Bucharest. The Bulgarian Legions were military units set up in Belgrade in the 1860s with a view to the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule through coordinated actions of Bulgarians and Serbs. The *Tirnovi* uprising described here coincided timely with the first such Bulgarian Legion, founded by Rakovski in 1862, financed by the Serbian government, trained by Serbian officers, and consisting of about six hundred Bulgarians, including Vasil Levski, Vasil Drumev, and Stefan Karadzha. On 15 June 1862, this Bulgarian Legion crushed with Ottoman troops during the siege of the Ottoman garrison in Belgrade by the Serbian army. Nevertheless, after the conflict was settled, the Serbian government disbanded the Bulgarian Legion and forced its members to leave the country.²⁶⁶

Five years after the sedition unfolding around *Tirnovi*, a new uprising took place further north, in the vicinity of *Ziştovi*.²⁶⁷ In June 1867 a band of around twenty-five people, under the leadership of Filip Totiu (Tute in the Ottoman documents) penetrated the Ottoman territories from *Zimnicea* to the Ottoman side of the Danube, that is, to

²⁶⁵ Yovan had worked in various places as a translator, among which the latest had been the Russian embassy in Bucharest.

²⁶⁶ Raymond Detrez, *Historical Dictionary of Bulgaria. Second Edition*, Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2006, p. 78. The Second Bulgarian Legion was founded in 1867, but never went into action.

²⁶⁷ BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867), I.MVL. 581 26079 (14 November 1867), MVL. 882 41 (1867), MVL. 1080 25 (13 October 1867), A.MKT.MHM. (7 July 1867), MVL. 1081 2 (14.12.1867), I.MTZ. (4) 4 94 (13 March 1868).

Ziştovi, with the intention of inciting the locals (*ifsad-ı ahali için*). In *Ziştovi* some dozens of locals joined the band and followed it to the mountains, while others provided it with ammunition, food and clothes. Except for the “*Ziştovi* committee” the band failed to attract followers from the province’s ethnic Bulgarian population.²⁶⁸ Some fights with Muslim villagers ensued in the mountains, during which at least five Muslim children²⁶⁹ were killed.²⁷⁰ Few days later the group dispersed in several directions and was caught by villagers and the Ottoman authorities.

Following these incidents, dozens of men were being tried in the local courts of *Ruşuk* and *Tirnovi*. The accusation comprised the organization of a seditious group in Bucharest (coined by the Ottomans *cemiyet-i fesadiye, ittifak-ı hafıye, eşkiya fırkalarından, ehl-i fesad*), which had aimed at inciting the Bulgarian people against the Ottoman state and, moreover, had proceeded to banditry and other shameful acts.²⁷¹ From the group of Tute, only the trials of two persons have been unearthed so far: the scribe Kostaki the son of Dimitri originally from *Ruşuk*, who had been living for the last ten years in *Yerköki*, and Trayfo from *Manastır*. Particularly, Kostaki stated that he had been authorized by the Bucharest Committee’s leader Marinoviç (see below) to follow Tute into the Ottoman territories, write down the incidents and respectively inform the bandit

²⁶⁸ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of the Danube, 1864-1868”, p. 394. According to Jelavich, “the chetas, like the Bulgarian movement in general, enlisted the support of very few people. There was never to be the mass peasant support for a revolt that we have seen in Serbia or even in Wallachia at the time of Tudor Vladimirescu”, Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans. Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 345.

²⁶⁹ The children were referred to as three Turks and two Circassians (*üç nefer Türk ve iki nefer Çerkez çocukları*). Their murder was being described by many defendants: They were caught by Tute’s men, after they had asked the latter for their papers (*tezkereler*), and afterwards Tute beat them, and then brutally murdered them (*parçaladıklarını*).

²⁷⁰ Other incidents included fighting with villagers, during which one Muslim villager was killed, and many injured. Also from the side of Tute many men were injured and at least one killed.

²⁷¹ “*Bulgaristan abalisini saltanat-ı seniye aleyhine tabrik etmek ve haydudluk yolunda gasb-ı emval ve esya ve sair guna ifal-ı fazîha icra eylemek kastıyla*” in BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

leader Panayot (probably Panaiot Hitov). Trayfo, who had been working in *Ibrail* as a servant, stated that he had been incited by Tute himself, who told him that he had earned lots of money through banditry on the Ottoman territories and asked him to join him in his new endeavour, as he was after a rich man living in the mountains.²⁷² In *Ziştovi* itself dozens of locals (mainly artisans) either joined²⁷³ the band²⁷⁴ of Tute and then followed it to the mountains, or, at least provided it with ammunition and food,²⁷⁵ or even with clothes²⁷⁶ (the latter in order not to be recognized as bandits). To note, from the testimonies of the defendants we understand that the situation of Tute's band's members was destitute. Their provision with food was a crucial issue; often they had to stay hungry for days, wandering around in the fields, eating mushrooms and leaves. They also resorted to tricks, like entering a village and pretending (by speaking Turkish) to be soldiers who were looking for thieves and, consequently, asked to be given food and money.²⁷⁷ The destitute state of the bandits was described also by a man from *Ziştovi*, the

²⁷² This rich man apparently had sixty *kzyye* (okka) of gold, and Tute planned to go and steal half of it. Trayfo accepted the invitation, and then Tute, himself and another six persons (Arnavud Yorgi, Arnavud Simo, Sırp Milan, Arnavud Karadağlı Yovan, Arnavud Hristo, Nikola from the *Köprülü* district) met in *Ibrail* and started their endeavor. Other head bandits, who were not caught, but were mentioned during the interrogations, were the following: Islimiyele Panayot, Hacı Dimitri, Küçük İstefan from *Tulça*, Vasil from *Plevne*, Çervena Vodalı Kurti and Zivkov. Interestingly enough, they were mentioned in the Ottoman documents also as *voivoda* (*komite voivodaları yani eşkiya firakalarının reisleri*).

²⁷³ One defendant stated that when they went to meet Tute's group near the forest of the village Tekfur, they screamed the code word "bomba" to recognize each other in the forest.

²⁷⁴ Following persons from *Ziştovi* actively joined the group of Tute and participated in the ensuing fightings, or helped the group eg. by showing them places to hide: Yakin Dobçioğlu Nikolai, coffee shop owner Hristooğlu Mito, the grocer Todoroglu Nikolai, the maker of wollen cloth Yankooğlu Yovan, Kole the son of Niko from *Ziştovi*, the tailor Tanasoğlu Yovance, Kolvo İlya, the butcher Karayovan, Kabayovanoğlu Mito, the dyer Gorgioğlu Çelni and the butcher Gorgi from *Trnovi*.

²⁷⁵ Following persons were among the leading members of the *Ziştovi* group, and they had provided Tute's group with food, guns and ammunition: (The leader Kenkoviç mentioned also before), Yordan, Vankooğlu Yanko, Vilooğlu Pandeli, the brother of Tome Petre Pandeli (among them only Yordan was caught and tried). For other people of the town having taken the oath of the Committee, see below.

²⁷⁶ The butcher Gorgi from *Trnovi* stated to have given some new clothes to one of the bandits, so that he was not being recognized as a bandit.

²⁷⁷ "Biz bölükbaşınız hırsız arıyoruz." BOA, I.MVL. 581 26079 (14 November 1867).

butcher Karayovan, who was sent to bring provisions to Tute's group, but abandoned the idea of joining them, when he saw their condition.²⁷⁸

This time the defendants' testimonies bore the strong impact and involvement of the Bulgarian Committee based in Bucharest (*komite* in Ottoman).²⁷⁹ Literature has associated the seditions of 1867 and 1868, described hereafter, either with the BSCC (Bulgarian Secret Central Committee)²⁸⁰ or with the BRCC (Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee);²⁸¹ both were committees founded in Bucharest in the mid-1860s - the first one by Ivan Kasabov, a rival of Rakovski, the second one led by Luben Karavelov and closely connected to the BRCC-in-Bulgaria, or International Revolutionary Organization (IRO) created by Vasil Levski, who, backed by the BRCC in Bucharest had created a network of revolutionary cells in Bulgaria²⁸² - aiming to promote the idea of an independent Bulgaria and to coordinate political activities to this end. In any case, the *komite*, with its local branches in Ottoman territory (in cities like *Yerköki* and

²⁷⁸ "dört nefer haydut gelerek hallerini görünce onlarla gitmek canım istemediğinden". BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

²⁷⁹ In the interrogations of the case described here, we see following names appearing as members of the Committee in Bucharest: the leader Nikola Marinoviç, and the members Rust Korkskov, Hristo Gorgiev from *Tirnovi* (also Hacı Hristaki from *Tirnovi*), Hristo Nikolof, Gurdof from *Gabrona* and the scribe Yovanço from *Ruşçuk*.

²⁸⁰ Duncan Perry, *Stefan Sambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria, 1870-1895*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1993, p. 8.

²⁸¹ Detrez, *Historical Dictionary of Bulgaria. Second Edition*, p. 215.

²⁸² Nevertheless, according to Perry, Karavelov's associates, who were largely armchair revolutionaries, came to resent the active revolutionaries operating inside Bulgaria, and vice versa (Perry, *Stefan Sambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria, 1870-1895*, p. 9). After Levski was arrested and hanged in February 1873, the BRCC was on the verge of collapse. When in August 1874 the radical Hristo Botev was included in the BRCC leadership and Stefan Stambolov was appointed leader of the IRO, the national liberation movement built up momentum again. Founded in Gyurgevo (now Giurgiu in Romania) the Gyurgevo Revolutionary Committee (GRC) resumed the activities of the BRCC. The GRC played an important role in the planning of the April 1876 Uprising (Stara Zagora Revolt). Detrez, *Historical Dictionary of Bulgaria. Second Edition*, pp. 88-89, 211.

*Ziştovi*²⁸³) had succeeded in short time to penetrate in and organize the lives of some dozens of Bulgarians north and south of the Danube river.²⁸⁴

One year after the penetration of the Ottoman side of the Danube by Tute and his men, a group of more than one hundred twenty bandits (*fırka-ı eşkiya / cehennisi*), lead by Islimiye Hacı Dimitri (Hadzhi Dimitar) and Tulcalı İstefan (Stefan Karadzha), had been sent by the Bucharest Committee to penetrate, again, the Ottoman territories.²⁸⁵

From the village Pietroşani north of the Danube they passed to the other side, that is, to the mountainous area between *Ziştovi* and *Ruşçuk*. The imperial government, concerned with the ability of Sabri Pasha (Mithat's replacement as *Tuna's* governor) to deal swiftly and decisively with the challenge, quickly recalled Mithat from his new duties as chair of the Council of the State and dispatched him back to the province. By the time of

²⁸³ From the interrogations, we learn that the leader of the Committee in *Yerküki* was the teacher Zapranoviç and in *Ziştovi* Dimitri Kenkoviç. Yordan, a member of the latter group, described how he had gone to Bucharest, where they had informed him about the sedition (*fesat*), that is, about the Committee and its goals, and had given him also regulations (*kanun*) which he had brought to his hometown, and they had been read to the Christians.

²⁸⁴ The tension between the IRO and its branches and the BRCC (described in a previous footnote) is corroborated in the interrogation documents. Kostaki for example, the scribe of Tute, described in his statement how Marinoviç, the leader of the Bucharest Committee, had ordered that the money they would collect should be sent to the cash box of the latter (*komite kasasına göndermek üzere*). Yordan, on the other hand, described how Kenkoviç, after returning from one of his visits in Bucharest during eastern 1867, had informed him that the Bucharest group was part of the past, and that from now on "groupings" would be used ("*Bükreş'te bıraktığımız evvelki komite geriye kalıp bunların yerine ihtiyar takımları işlemek*"). Moreover, according to Kenkoviç, the Bucharest committee had been worried about Tute's group, and asked for their return, fearing that they were not experienced enough (*kaşa erbabı olmadılarından*), that they would do banditry and thereby harm the Bulgarian cause (*hırsızlık ve Bulgar milletine fenalık edecekleri*).

²⁸⁵ Also from the testimonies of this case we understand that the disagreements between different branches of the committee were continuing. According to one participant, Maris, the main committee in Bucharest had two branches, one of the elders (*ihiyar*) and one of the younger ones (*genç*). The one of the elders had gathered 540.000 golden Hungarian coins with the aim to send younger men to Serbia for military education, and in order to buy six hundred rifles from Prussia. On the contrary, the younger committee didn't want to proceed in slow steps (*ağır ağır işlemek olmayıp*), and wanted to start immediately a fight with the Ottoman state. Specifically, about the sedition of 1868, Maris stated that he had heard how Petkev from *Tirnovi* had openly held a talk in a barber's shop Bucharest, where the committee members used to gather. There he had reprimanded some of the committee members that they shouldn't send people this year without preparations, like they had done in the last year, and proceed to the endeavor only if they were really ready. These men's opinion, on the other side, was different: It had not been lack of preparation, but a willingness to awake the people.

Mihat's arrival in *Ruşçuk* (July 15), the band had been thoroughly defeated.²⁸⁶ Some of the fighters, including Stefan Karadzha, were wounded, captured and later executed. The remaining men under the leadership of Hadzhi Dimitar were crushed at Buzludzha Peak in Stara Planina.²⁸⁷ Like the 1867 band, this new attempt had failed to elicit any measureable support among the vilayet's Bulgarian communities -although, unlike Totiu's men in 1867, its members had not committed any atrocities against the civilian population.²⁸⁸

In autumn 1868 ten of these men were tried in the local council of *Ruşçuk*, facing the accusation of instigating a sedition and a rebellion in Bulgaria against the Ottoman Empire (*Bulgaristan'da hükümet-i devlet-i aleyhine fesad ve ihtilal çıkarmak için*), as well as of aiming at the establishment of a new ruling power (*orada teşkil cemiyetiyle bir hükümet-i cedide meydana götürmek*).²⁸⁹ The coining of the endeavour not only as a *fesad*, but also as a *ihtilal* accounted both for the quantity of the men participating in this sedition, as well as for the violence employed by the sedition's participants targeting directly the government: the men had pulled down some telegraph pillars on the *Ziştovi* way and had cut the telegraph lines. In addition, much fighting among the Ottoman soldiers and the bandits took place, with great losses on both sides.

Particularly, the band entering the Ottoman territories in 1868 was composed of jobless persons. Most of them stated to have passed from the Ottoman territories to the

²⁸⁶ Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the vilayet of the Danube, 1864-1868", p. 397.

²⁸⁷ Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920*, University of Washington Press, 1986, p. 137.

²⁸⁸ Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the vilayet of the Danube, 1864-1868", p. 397. One defendant recalled in his testimony how, when entering a village called *Sariyara*, the leader Hacı Dimitre gathered the, Muslim and non-Muslim, notables of the village, and said to them that they ought to behave like brothers to each other; otherwise he would beat them (*birbirleriye karındaş gibi geçinesiniz eğer geçmezseniz sizî döver döver ve terbiye ederim tenbih ettikten sonra*).

²⁸⁹ BOA, I.MTZ. (4) 4 103 1 (9 October 1868), I.MTZ. (04) 4 102 (14 September 1868), I.MTZ. (04) 4 103 (17 September 1868).

other side in order to seek for work, had been wandering around doing various jobs, and then were persuaded by one of the group's leaders to participate in the violating of the Ottoman territories. Angel, stating to have no job, was seduced by Istefan in *Yerköki*, Uzun Yovan in the same city, where he was working as a tailor, by Hacı Dimitri. Nikola had been working as an arranger in the pressing houses (*matbualarda mürettiblik*), and, as the Ottoman sources tend to say, had been incited by the committee member Nikola who was working next to the Russian Embassy in Istanbul. From Istanbul, he had gone to Bucharest, where he had worked in the farm of the committee member Hristo Korkiof, and after that in the pressing house of the committee's newspaper "*Narodnoz*." There he had been incited by Hacı Dimitri (*haydi biz Bulgaristan'a geçeceğiz sen de bizimle geç*). Vasil had passed to the other side working in estates and as a worker (*amelelik*), and was incited by Istefan. Sava had gone to *Yerköki* to work next to his brother, who was working as a goldsmith there and he was the one who incited him. Hristo, also without a job, had been living in *Ibrail* and then in Bucharest, where he had been incited by Hacı Dimitri and Istefan. Maris and Todorof had been both incited by Dimitri, the first while working as a tailor and worker in Bucharest, the other while working in the service of a notable. Diçevoğlu Maris stated that he had followed the band out of his own free will, without being incited by anybody (*hiç bir taraftan işgal olunmayarak kendi ihtiyar ile bu işe girdiğini ikrar ve itiraf*).

To sum up, the bands entering Ottoman territories in 1867 and 1868 consisted mainly of persons who were jobless and had migrated from the empire to the other side of the Danube in an effort to make ends meet. Their situation was destitute, up to the point of staying hungry for days. On the other hand, the majority of the participants who joined these bands from the Ottoman territories, mainly inhabitants of *Tirnovi*, *Gabrova* and *Ziştovi*, were artisans. Moreover, the local notables often openly expressed their objection to the abovementioned endeavours. An indication for the stance of non-

Muslim notables towards nationalist mobilization is provided by documents sent by these local notables to the central authorities on the occasion of the incidents of 1862 and 1868 in the *Tuna* province. Particularly, the notables of *Islimiye*, *Kazanlık* and *Zağra-ı Atık* south of *Tirnovi* sent documents to the Sultan following the incidents of 1868, in which they were thanking him for repulsing the bandits. They stated that the Committee in Wallachia was “apparently” (*güya*) fighting for the profits (*fevaid*) of their nation, albeit they themselves were living in a state of tranquillity and peace (*huzur ve rahat*) and continued to be perfectly loyal subjects (*kemal-i sadık*) of the Sultan.²⁹⁰ Back in 1862 a letter of gratitude (*teşekkürname*) signed by more than one hundred individuals from *Tirnovi* (from its loyal non-Muslim subjects, *sadık reayası*) was submitted to the provincial governor. In this they were condemning the acts of the bandits, for damaging their tranquility (*rahat*), and asked the Sultan to punish the ones who had been caught.²⁹¹

To note, while only the urpisings of the 1860s are dealt with in this section, spreading of Bulgarian nationalist ideas continued throughout the 1870s with an even bigger intensity. A decree from the year 1872 estimated that around five hundred persons had been incited by the Bucharest committee in the *Tuna* province (from the group of the local notables and the teachers).²⁹² On May 1876 a writing to the commander-in-chief ordered that, as some men had been planting the seed of sedition in the vicinity of *Filibe*, which could be spread out (*müntesir*) to all of Bulgaria, a respective investigation should take place. The aim of the investigation would be to understand how the sedition set off in a certain place, and how the seditious men managed to convince the “loyal people” to

²⁹⁰ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 102 (14 September 1868).

²⁹¹ BOA, LMVL. 474 21489 (7 October 1862).

²⁹² BOA, LMTZ. (4) 5 118 (1 December 1872).

participate in banditry and murder, as we all as what the measures of the authorities had been.²⁹³

Defence Discourses: From Multiple to Homogenized Motives

Following the interrogations of the dozen of participants in the seditions described above, one can follow their changes in the short time between the consecutive seditions and their tendency to homogenize in time around the goal of “liberating Bulgaria (*serbestiyet*).”²⁹⁴ Viewing thus the seditions not from the perspective of their main instigators, as has mainly been done, but from the perspective of the ordinary people participating in them provides us with a more complicated, often even confused picture.

To begin with, the defendants of the *Tirnovi* sedition described during their interrogations in similar ways at least the main plan of the sedition. The plan, which did not materialize, had been to proceed and attack first *Gabrova*, and then *Tirnovi*. Target groups had been all kinds of elites and notables, as well as Ottoman soldiers. Indeed, in *Gabrova* they would attack the Ottoman soldiers and seize their weapons and ammunition, as well as the money belonging to the government (*miri akçelerini aldıktan sonra*, and according to another defendant *müdür konağını basıp bulunan akçeyi aldıktan sonra*). In addition, some defendants mentioned that they had planned to attack the rich non-Muslim notables of *Gabrova*, in order to take their money (*bazı zengin çorbacıları basıp akçelerini almak*). Some defendants even named the main *çorbacı*, whom they planned to

²⁹³ BOA, A.DVN.MKL. 14 3 (30 May 1876).

²⁹⁴ For a short reference to the evolution of the meaning of freedom (*serbestiyet*) in Ottoman political thought during the nineteenth century, see Marinos Sariyannis, *Ottoman Political Thought up to the Tanzimat: A Concise History*, Rethymno: Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas - Institute for Mediterranean Studies, 2015, p. 170.

kill, that is, Ilya Vidinlioğlu.²⁹⁵ One defendant stated that their plan involved also sending a doctor to *Gabrova*, who would mix poison in the soldiers' bread, causing thereby their immediate death, so that the Bulgarians could easily take their weapons and ammunition. *Turnovi* then had been the next target, where they would gather more people and ammunition, kill the town's Muslims (*Turnovi İslamlarını katl edüp*) and take their properties (*mallarını plaçka ederiz*), as well as murder the Christians who wouldn't submit to their plans (*kendileri tebaiyyet etmeyen hıristiyanları katl edüp*). Constant in the interrogations was the division into a fighting "we" (coined Bulgarians or, more generally, Christians) on the one side, and an enemy, on the other side, comprising Islam and Muslims in general, but containing also a class character, by targeting their own elite co-religionists, that is, mainly Christian local notables (*çorbacılar*), as well as the Christians who would show unwillingness to complicit in the sedition.

Decisive for the plan's success had been the participants' conviction that soldiers from abroad were preparing to come and support their sedition: Particularly, according to their statements, around 200 soldiers (the number varied, other defendants spoke of 3000, 4000, or even 10,000 soldiers)²⁹⁶ from Serbia and from Wallachia would join, as well as many others from near-by towns like *Filibe* and *Travna*. Nikola Kenkisoğlu, moreover, mentioned that he had been told by Hristaki that Rakovski would come from Serbia to the Serbian-Ottoman borders with 3000 volunteers.

These being the main common elements, the defendants' statements also show that the participants had imagined quite different things pertaining to the further aims of the sedition: The group would either proceed to Serbia, to start a sedition from there, or

²⁹⁵ Pop Dimitre from *Gabrova* stated during his questioning in court that it was this notable who finally informed the authorities about the sedition.

²⁹⁶ The numbers were important, as some of the defendants stated in court that when they hesitated to join the sedition, the instigators tried to convince them by referring to the big numbers that would participate in the sedition from abroad, a factor which apparently guaranteed the venture's success.

would divide the seized money and disperse to both Serbia and Wallachia; others mentioned putting a flag on the mountains (*bayrak dikeceğiz*), or that, following the attack on *Turnovi*, they had been promised to be able to seize whatever lands they would like (*sonra istediğimizi memleketleri / vilayetleri / yerleri* - wording chosen by different defendants- *alup zabt edeceğimiz, sair mahalleleri istila edüp*);²⁹⁷ and, finally, the prospect of establishing a Bulgarian government (*Bulgar hükümeti teşkil edeceğimiz diyerek beni işfal ettiler*).

Others' motives had been more mundane, as they stated that they had participated in the sedition in lieu of money that would be paid to them for their services (*çıktıktan sonra para veririz / bir gün odasına çağırıp yüz yirmi gurus verdi*, while another defendant mentioned that he had been given sixty piasters by Dulkeroglu Mihal).²⁹⁸ Isolated cases of defendants stated that they had been seduced to the sedition by proposals that they were going to get money hidden in a cave in the mountains (*Gabrova balkanında bir mağarada para var imiş*); or, that the gathering in the mountains actually aimed at writing to the provincial sub-governor pertaining to the problem of bandits (*bırsızlar*) robbing mainly Christians, or even that they would themselves catch the bandits and take their stolen money back.

Lastly, the dialogue between a miller and the headmen of the village *Lovnidol* near *Gabrova*, that is, Yovan the son of Petkov and Marko, reproduced in the courtroom, pointed to tax grievances as the source of the sedition: Marko had shown Yovan barrels with wine in a wine shop (*meyhane*) and told him that they were full with gunpowder, and that next to them were cannonballs, and that a sedition was being organized. Marko denied having said so, and argued that Yovan, instead, had informed him of the

²⁹⁷ In the final report of the commission the word *teshir* (conquest) was being used.

²⁹⁸ Priest Dimitre from *Gabrova* stated that he had tried to incite people from his township by using money, but most of them did not agree (*muvafakat göstermediler*). Other defendants stated that everybody received money in the monastery, according to "his power" (*ve herkesin kudretine göre para alup*).

upcoming sedition: “*Sana bir şey söyleyeceğim bu kaim parasından ve vergi maddesinden dolayı cumbur kalkacaktır ve burada iki üç yerde barut vardır.*”²⁹⁹

Five years later, the defendants of the Tute uprising near *Ziştovi* demonstrated more homogenized discourses in court. To be sure, certain intentions were being repeated, like targeting any kind of elites and authorities, Muslim and non-Muslim. Indeed, in the courtroom we witness plans to kill the rich non-Muslim local notables who would not be willing to contribute financially to the fight -in fact, the rich non-Muslim notables (*çorbacılar*) would be asked to contribute financially to the endeavour, while the stingy ones among them would be murdered (*vermeyen tamakalarının kafalarını koparmasını*³⁰⁰)-, the existence of a plot against the Ottoman provincial governor in *Gabrova*, as well as against the Greek-Orthodox metropolitan residing in *Turnovi*. Lastly, constant were again the references to help expected to arrive from abroad, from Russia, Serbia, Wallachia, but also from the French and English governments, similar to the continuous involvement of Rakovski. Yordan for example, stated in court that the Russian, Serbian and Vlach governments would provide any possible help for the freedom of Bulgarians, and that Russian soldiers were ready to pass to the other side (that is, to the Ottoman one), and that, finally, the brother of the Russian tsar, Nikola, had taken the oath to help the Committee.³⁰¹ Similarly, according to Yordan, Kenkoviç had stated after returning from a visit to the Bucharest Committee that the English and

²⁹⁹ “I will tell you something, because of this printed money and the tax issue people will rise, and there is gunpowder in two three places here.” BOA, I.MVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862).

³⁰⁰ Yordan, from the *Ziştovi* group, described how a group of seven men from the town asked for 1,700 piasters from the group’s leader Kenkoviç in order to buy guns and ammunition and join Tute’s group; while Kenkoviç initially denied, following the men’s threatening that they would set on the house of one of the *çorbacı*s, he gave them the requested amount. BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

³⁰¹ In the statement of one defendant: “*Bulgaristan serbesti için Rusya devleti ve Sırp ve Ulah hükümetleri her türlü muavenet edeceklerini ve Rusya askerinin Türkiye’ye geçmek için hazır bulunduğunu dahi Rusya imparatorun karındaşı prensi Nikolannın komite zâkone mücibince muavenete hazır bulunduğuna yemin ettiğini birinci komite şifâhen söylediğinden...*” BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

the French states would demand from the Ottoman Empire Bulgarians' freedom, and that some Russian soldiers would be ready to fight against Islam.³⁰²

On the other hand, most defendants stated this time to have been fighting for the "freedom of Bulgaria" (*Bulgaristan'ın serbesti için*). In contrast to the sedition around *Turnovi*, where the defendants mentioned a plurality of reasons for having participated in the gathering of the group in the monastery, this time the answers were identical, as all defendants answered that their goal had been to "liberate Bulgaria." In addition, the enemy, in *Turnovi* coined mainly as the Muslims and Islam, was now coined by most defendants as the "Turks." The adjective "Turk" appeared in their narrations either in connection to territory (eg. Kostaki mentioned that Russian soldiers were ready to pass to Turkey, *Rusya askerinin Türkiye'ye geçmek için hazır bulunduğunu*), or to people, as, for example, Mito mentioned that they had taken the oath to fight against the Turks (*isyan ederek Türk ile kavgaya edeceğime yemin ettim*). Similarly, another defendant stated that he was told that they would fight with the Turks (*Türklerle kavgaya edeceğiz*). Lastly, while describing their days on the mountains, one defendant described how they had sent one member of the group to bring water from a nearby-river, but that he had then been seen by the by-passing Turks (*Türkler gördüler*).

As for the reasons of the 1868 uprising, all defendants arrested in the framework of this sedition stated in court to have participated in it for bringing a king to Bulgaria (*Bulgaristan'a krallık kazandırmak için*) and for fighting with the Muslims / Turks. The defendants stated that the *vojvodas* (that is, their leaders) assured them that many Bulgarians would join them, and that they would become five or then thousands, and then set on *Gabrova* or *Islimiye* or *Kazgan*, wait there until spring would set in and then

³⁰² "ve Bulgarlara Avrupanın politikası üzerine serbestlik verilmek için İngiliz ve Fransız devletleri kuvvetleriyle devlet-i aliyyeden serbestlik talep olunması Bulgarlara ilan olunmasını ve bir kaç nefer zabiti kumandan Bulgar askerler ile balkana çıkup İslam ile kavgaya edeceklerini." BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

start the fighting (another defendant said that they would write to the Sultan asking for freedom, and if he wouldn't give it, they would fight).³⁰³

Noteworthy, the adjective "Turk" remained widely in use during the interrogations of 1868, e.g. in expressions related to geography (*Türk yakasına geçeceklerimi*), as well as to people (*Türkler*). The notion of "waking up the Bulgars" (*keş basalım Bulgarları ayaklandıralım*) and not loosing time, because there had already been some mobilization among the Bulgars which could fade out in time, was also prominent.

To sum up, the uprisings of 1860s, seen from the perspective of the ordinary people participating in them, demonstrated some common features, but also some changing elements towards a more homogenous and unilinear "nationalist discourse." To be sure, targeting Ottoman authorities (governor, metropolitan) and Muslim and non-Muslim notables was a constant feature in the defendants' interrogations. On the other hand, these aims were combined with other expectations or motives, spanning from "conquer some territory", "make money" to "form an own government." This plurality of motives though developed in very short time towards a homogenized discourse of "liberating Bulgaria" and "bringing a king to Bulgaria."

Nationalism as Connectivity

The testimonies of the defendants of the Bulgarian uprisings of the 1860s demonstrated novel forms of organizing and connecting between individuals, and, moreover, over wide geographies. The preparation of the proto-nationalist uprisings described above and, more important, the communication and connectivity taking place

³⁰³ "Beş altı bin kişi olunca Gabrova veyahud İslimiye veyahud Kazgan bu üç kasabadan birisini basılıp unularak bu kırs orada kışlanılıp berii taraftan asker toplanılıp ilk bahara kadar kuvvetlenerek gelecek yaz kavgaya edilecek idi." BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

in advance of them (in the form of spoken language and rumours, as well as written exchanges -through pamphlets, newspapers, handwritten letters bearing an encoded language, and, lastly, photographs- and, finally, “business trips” of artisans used simultaneously in order to transmit information) highly alarmed the authorities. For the Ottoman Christians involved in these exchanges it seemed that less Ottomanism and more the emerging Bulgarian nationalism fuelled their political mobilization. In this section, we are going to follow the forms this political mobilization acquired, comment on peoples’ increased need to connect to each other, and, finally, detect the councils’ reaction to this increased connectivity. Indeed, it seems that less the nationalist idea itself and more the power of nationalist ideas to connect people through novel and long-distancing communication was worrying the authorities.

Rumours were spreading among people and discussions regarding imminent uprisings were initiated in coffeehouses. The defendants of the 1862 uprising described how the whole region around *Tirnovi* and *Gabrova* had been in a state of anticipation and preparation for a sedition. Mouth-to-mouth communication and rumours seemed to have played a decisive role in the spread of the sedition’s idea. According to Yovan, Marko had told him: “*Ortalıkta böyle işler vardır Gabrovalılar hazırlanıyorlar bakalım bizçi ne vakit koyun gibi kesecekler.*”³⁰⁴ One defendant stated that all pupils in the schools of *Gabrova* had heard about the sedition. Many defendants described meetings in coffeehouses, khans or private houses, during which people drank alcohol and after a while one of them opened the discussion about the upcoming sedition and tried to persuade the others to participate.

³⁰⁴ “There are things like this going around, people in *Gabrova* are preparing themselves, let’s see when they are going to chop us like sheep.” BOA, I.MVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862).

Rumours, nevertheless, were not a novelty of the period described here, as they had been prevalent in previous centuries also. Printed material though was intrinsically connected to the period under scrutiny here; in fact, in Chapter Four we are going to follow the increased number of emerging printers in the Balkans and their trials for circulating nationalist material. In addition, handwritten letters drafted by ordinary artisans could also be seen as a sign of their times: they speak for a wider (true, still minimal given the whole population) number of literate Christians, who had either studied in the Empire's new schools or abroad. Moreover, the defendants of 1868 described how they had been distributing pamphlets to the Bulgarian shepherds they were coming across in the mountains: Maris from *Ziştovi* described how they gave a Bulgar shepherd they had met on their way printed pamphlets they had been carrying with them (*basma ilanatından üç dört tanesini ismi bilmediğim bir Bulgar çobana verdik*); they did the same with many other Bulgarian farmers they met on their way. Angel said in court that they had distributed pamphlets to whomever they had taken bread from. When asked what was written in these pamphlets, they said things like “we came, you should also be ready (*işte biz geldik siz de hazır olun*).”

In addition, the communication between the Committee members was secured through individuals, who were transferring messages and “seditious documents” (*evrak-ı fesadiye*) from one branch to the other. Yordan for example described how he had transferred documents and coded documents (*şifreli evrak*) from *Zabranoviç* in *Yerköki* to the Committee in Bucharest, and from there back to his hometown, *Ziştovi*, and the group's local leader, *Kenkoviç*. Another time, he had brought from Bucharest two hundred fifty copies of the newspaper “*Mihver*.”

In addition, in the same year as the 1868 uprising, the 33-year-old priest of the village *Vasilofça* near the city of *Lom*, pop Mito, was arrested for carrying with him some

seeditious documents of the Committee (*cemiyet-i fesadiye*).³⁰⁵ The documents comprised one newspaper, two declarations (one of the Committee in Bucharest, dating 1867),³⁰⁶ and a handwritten letter bearing the signature Lef.³⁰⁷ He was returning from a visit to the Orthodox metropolitan of the near-by town *Berkofça* in the sub-province of *Vidin*.³⁰⁸ The metropolitan had actually set a trap for Mito, inviting him to the village of *Eslavateyn* and then informing the authorities about the seeditious documents in the priest's hands, so that the inspector Ismail *efendi* arrested Mito while on his way back home. In the final report of this case, the metropolitan was being praised for the services to the state (*devlete ibraz-ı hizmet ettiği gösterilmiştir*).

The arrest of pop Mito was followed by the arrest of the grocer Dimitri Angeli from *Lom*, whom Mito accused of having given him the seeditious documents. Particularly, he maintained that all the documents (*fena kağıtlar*) had been given to him by the grocer Dimitri the son of Angeli in his shop in *Lom*, in order for pop Mito to disseminate them and thus deceive the people (*bunları ortalığı kandırmak ve inandırmak için*). Following the accusations of pop Mito, the grocer Dimitri was also arrested, and many harmful documents were found in his house and store. Both Pop Mito and Dimitri,

³⁰⁵ BOA, IMVL (4) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869).

³⁰⁶ Particularly, these documents were: 1. The tenth issue of the newspaper *Dunavska Zora* (The Danube's Dawn), dating 15 January 1868, 2. The Memorandum of the Secret Central Bulgarian Committee, Bucharest, 1867, 3. A declaration: "Bulgaria to its sons," Leipzig, 1867, issued by an exiled priest. Specifically, the central article of the newspaper *Dunavska Zora* stated, among other, that the *Tanzimat* reforms were rejected, as they were merely an effort of the Ottomans to gain the allegiance of the elites, leaving the rest of the people in the same condition. The Eastern Question would be solved only through the insurrection of the Bulgarian people, while it should not be believed that the Bulgarians are farmers and, thus, have no revolutionary spirit. I thank Andreas Lyberatos for the translation of the Bulgarian documents.

³⁰⁷ The letter bore the signature Lef, meaning lion in Bulgarian, and was found to be a letter of the aforementioned committee with seeditious content, sealed also with the name Boğdan Zapranof and carrying on it also the names Larko and Blado Msirof Profsodhiv.

³⁰⁸ Pop Mito, on the other hand, maintained that he had gone to the metropolitan in order to receive help in reading the documents and understanding their actual meanings, as he himself, being a simple village priest, didn't really know how to read ("*... köy papazı olup pek okumaya bilemeyip layıkıyla anlayamadığımdan meallarını anlamak için Berkofça despotuna götürüp okuttum*"). BOA, IMVL (4) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869).

together with some other men from *Lom*, were tried in the local courts of *Lom* and *Vidin* (pop Mito and Dimitri also in *Rusçuk*) and their testimonies reveal a network of artisans around the Danube river, all connected with the Committee and its branches operating on Ottoman territories.³⁰⁹

While pop Mito denied all charges, and put the blame on Dimitri,³¹⁰ the latter emerged through the testimonies of both men as a vital link between various Committee members. A simple grocer from the city of *Lom*, Dimitri, turned out to have made several trips, have used many of his “business trips” (that is, trips to bring supplies for his shop) in order to meet Committee members, exchanged information and letters hidden in products, secretly showed around photographs of the committee members, as well as disseminated various pamphlets.

Particularly, Dimitri Angeli had travelled to Wallachia and Serbia, and to Bucharest, where he had met the Russian consul of the city, who had given him some harmful documents and told him “our brothers, 5-6000 soldiers, are ready.”³¹¹ Furthermore, in Serbia and Wallachia he was meeting the Committee’s people, who had assured him that soldiers and guns had been ready, that every state would help them, and that the main goal of the organization was to ask from the Ottoman Empire for Bulgaria’s rights and appoint a member from the Prussian royal house to be the king of

³⁰⁹ Apart from the main two defendants, pop Mito and Dimitri, following persons, residents of *Lom*, were interrogated for keeping contact with these two persons: the weighmaster Bozin (had worked also as a tailor and a vaccinator), Beşvorke the son of Ustuyan (former inspector who was acting as the treasurer of the city’s council), grocer Yovanço the son of İzdırakof, tailor İstefan İzlatna, agency scribe Daniel Cenov (he was receiving the letters of Dimitri at the port of *Lom*). BOA, IMVL (4) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869).

³¹⁰ Pop Mito repeated some of the information Dimitri had provided him with, but when he was asked about more information, he stated that he was afraid to talk further, and the metropolitan should come and testify instead (*ben ziyade korkmuşumdur despot gelsin bildiğim ne var ise yüzüne söyleyeyim*). BOA, IMVL (4) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869).

³¹¹ “Bizim kardaşlarımız hazırdir Eflak'ta beş altı bin kişi asker olduğunu ve kara ? yedi top olduğunu ve bize Prusya kralı hanedanının birisinin kral olacağını ve devletten bütün hukukumuzu istiyoruz ve patriğimizi dahi isteyeceğiz devlet eğerce bunu vermezse Rusya Prusya ve Serbiya ve Vilah beraber olup devlet üzerine muharebe açacaklarını ve bize yirmi güne kadar bildireceğini kendisine haber verdiklerini.” BOA, IMVL (4) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869).

Bulgaria.³¹² Finally, he had met the military leaders of the organization in Belgrad, Filip voyvoda and the teacher Aramiye from *Lom*, who had given him their photographs, which Dimitri had shown to pop Mito (see below).³¹³



Photo 2: BOA, IMVL (4) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869). Photo found in the hands of the grocer Dimitri, given to him by Bulgarian nationalists in Belgrade.

³¹² “*Bulgaristan’da olan kaffe-i bukukunu devleti aliyeden istemek ve Prusya hanedanından birini kral-ı nasb ettirmekte...*”. BOA, IMVL (4) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869).

³¹³ In fact, one photograph depicting three men is included in the file, although no names accompany the picture.

Visits to Belgrad, *Yerköki*, Wallachia and *Vidin*, which initially he had stated to have served his professional purposes (buying products for his shop, like nails, iron, olive oil, fishes etc.), proved to have been visits serving the purposes mentioned above. The file of this case contains the letters exchanged between Dimitri and Todor Bonev, the servant of Zapranoviç -the latter being the leader of the Committee's branch in *Yerköki*. The interrogators focused especially on the content of the letters, which was marked either by metaphors or encoded language: In one letter, sent on 13 March 1868, Dimitri was asked by Todor Bonev to find out during his upcoming visit to Belgrad in what condition the citizens and supporters on the other side had been (*orada bulunan vatandaş ve taraftarları ne halde olduğunu*). Dimitri nevertheless answered in court that "by citizens were meant Petre and Vangel from *Lom*, who were residing in Belgrad," and by *taraftar* (supporter) he had meant "*abbap ve emniyetli* (friend and trustable)", and that "the goal about the citizens and supporters is that they would be reliable friends."

In a letter from 19 March 1868, again from Bonev, Dimitri was informed that "our master is very pleased that you found a lot of animals and got your letter about it and showed it to many people." Dimitri answered that Bonev had ordered him to find and send some animals, and this is why he was praised in the letters, but that he, Dimitri, could not remember the peasants from whom he had found the animals. In another letter, Todor asked the latter "why the business had still not been enlarged" (*gayetle esef ediyoruz ki işi niçin şimdiye kadar daha büyültmediğimizi*) and regretted the fact that this hadn't happened still.

It is important to note that, while connectivity through pamphlets, newspapers and letters presupposed a literate audience, another form of increasing connectivity among, also, illiterate Bulgarians was promoted in the form of "taking the oath." Most defendants -especially after the organization of the Committee in Bucharest, but also before- referred to the procedure of "taking the oath" as a vital part of their participation

in the seditions mentioned above. Actually, whether willing or not, all participants were obliged to swear the oath, that is, mainly that they would not reveal the plans to strangers, and that otherwise they would be killed. This procedure of “taking the oath” took sometimes an even more symbolic character: Kenkisoğlu, for example, from the 1862 sedition, described how in the house of Hristaki in *Turnovi* all the participants had to step on a big knife, which had been put on the floor with its good side looking to the ceiling (*yüzü yukarı yere koydu*), and swear the aforementioned oath of not revealing to anybody the plans of the sedition.

In the later years, especially the Committee had been organizing and connecting its members through procedures of oath, which foresaw death for any member and his family who would betray his followers and the committee's secrets.³¹⁴ The exact procedure is described in identical terms in the interrogations of dozens of the defendants. Yakin Dobçioğlu Nikolai for example, described the following scene: One night he visited the house of Kolvo Ilya, after the invitation of Andrya Kenkoviç, and he met there another eleven men of the town; a book was being put in the middle, it was being read, and then all attendees took the oath that they would make a revolution for the independence of Bulgaria (*Bulgaristan'ın istihsal-ı esbab-ı serbestisi isyan etmek üzere taahhüt olunacağı*).

Mito the coffee-shop owner described a similar meeting in one of *Ziştovi's* houses,³¹⁵ during which a sword and a pistol were being put in the middle, and all together they took the oath that they would give up their properties, their lives, relatives and any kind of connections (*mamelekten canımdan akraba ve taalukatımdan vazgeçtiğim*), that

³¹⁴ “Refiklerinden biri kendilerini terk ile gidecek olur ise onu telef etmeğe firka-ı mecmuanın hakkı olduğunu”, BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

³¹⁵ Mito talked about following men: Todoroglu Nikolai, Köçloğlu Petre, Başooğlu İlya, Kirov the son of driver Kosta, Sarıyovaoglu Kolvo, Milantooğlu Petre.

they would fulfill the orders of the Bulgarian Committee, and that the latter had the right to kill any traitor and his family, if he exposed the secrets of the Committee to outsiders.³¹⁶ Also, that they would seduce (*kandırmak*) some other Christian youngsters and persuade them to take also the oath. Other defendants added that the oath comprised a commitment until the end of their life (*ölmüncüye kadar*), or that the Committee's aim was to rise the people (*cumhuri kaldırmak*).

In addition, people stated to have persuaded each other to take the oath. Yordan for example, admitted that he had incited more than twenty people to take the oath. Nevertheless, he was also somehow derogatory about the new recruits, arguing that the committee members were convincing every "silly" person to take the oath (*bulabildikleri şaşkınları birer mahalle toplayıp yemin verdikleri gibi*). Other individuals added that they had been given the newspaper *Mihver* to read and after reading it they had decided to join the Committee. Similarly, the defendants stated that they also took the oath to follow the "*Mihver's*" content. All in all, dozens of people were being interrogated and arrested because they had "taken the oath."³¹⁷

Last but not least, all these forms of connectivity of Bulgarians highly alarmed the central authorities, as well as the local councils. Today's reader of the interrogations of the 1860s' seditions is initially surprised about the insistence of the interrogators to

³¹⁶ "Arkadaşlarımı ve komitenin esrarını meydana koyacak olur isem beni ve ailemin kaffesini komite telef etmeğe baklı olduğunu..." Many defendants also stated that the pistol and the sword in the middle symbolized the threat of death in case of treason (*su meydanda olan kılıç veyahud bıçak ile ölmekliğe razı olacağıma*). BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

³¹⁷ Most of the main figures of *Ziştovi's* local committee organization were not caught, but were extensively mentioned in the interrogations (that is, the leader Dimitri Kenkoviç, his brother Andrya, Vankooğlu Yanko, Yorgi Matovic, Viloğlu Pandeli, Pandelioğlu Tome, his brother Petre), as they had recruited people from *Ziştovi* and cared for sending them to Tute's group. In addition, dozens of others of its members appeared in court for having taken the committee's oath: Kirkinçeoğlu Yordan (he had been recruited by Zabranoviç in *Yerköki* and by Hristaki in Bucharest and had been also among the important figures), the teacher Yorgi from *Ziştovi*, the teachers Todorof and Koçeloğlu Dimitri, the tailor Paraşkevaoglu İlya, Nikolaoglu Peni, Ustuyanoğlu Mihal, the grocer Başoğlu İlya, Miloşoğlu Yovan, Tanail İlya, Bonev Kosti, Jorci Yovan, grocer Ustuyan, butcher Andarya the son of Petri, grover Yanko, and (from the second file two) Sökeoğlu Mito, Vasiloglu Miloş.

focus not so much on the possible reasons / motives of the seditions, or on wider ideological issues, but mainly on the ways people connected to each other. Whole sessions of interrogations were devoted to questions like “Where did you meet x?”, “How long have you been communicating with x?” and so on. While this tendency may be surprising in the beginning, the repetitive reading of such dialogues gradually reveals to the researcher the main intention (or even anxieties) of the interrogators: How were people connected to each other over wider geographies? Who was connected to whom and how? How often were people communicating and on what grounds?

Consider for example following representative dialogues; the first one stems from the interrogation of the grocer Dimitri from *Lom*:

Interrogator: When did (Istefan) send you a letter?

Dimitri: Last year on the month *Tesrinışani*.

IR: What did he write on the letter?

D: He wrote hi.

IR: When did you go to *Yerköke*?

D: Last year and two months ago.

IR: In whose house did you stay?

D: Sometimes in the house of Hacipetro and sometimes in the house of Dimitraki.

IR: Who did you meet in these houses?

D: In the first house I stayed only one night and then went to Dimitraki's house.

IR: What was your purpose of going to *Yerköke*?

D: I brought cooking pots.

IR: Where is Dimitraki from?

D: From Lom.

IR: Why did you go to his house?

D: He invited me.

In the framework of the same trial, many similar dialogues repeated, like the following dialogue between the interrogators and Beşvorke.

IR: Did you travel anywhere for trading?

B: I went to Vidin.

IR: What for?

B: The people of Lom sent me as a representative for the trial of the metropolitan.

IR: In whose house did you stay?

B: In the *gazino* of Manoli.

IR: Who did you meet?

B: I meet the notables Zaiko and Sevastaki.
IR: Who else did you meet?
B: Nobody.

Or consider the following dialogue between the interrogators and Donço, one of the members of the Bulgarian diaspora who had come to the Ottoman Empire during the 1867 uprising:

IR: When you came to *Ziştovi* with Yovanço, Ustuyan and Nikola and Bonko in whose house did you stay?

D: We stayed at an inn for two hours, changed our documents (*tezkeere*) and took new ones [...].

IR: Who was your guarantor (*kefiş*) in *Ziştovi* in order to take new documents?

D: We just changed our documents without showing a guarantor.

IR: These friends of yours when did they go to Bucharest and for what reason?

D: Two of them are tailors and about the other two I don't know their profession and I don't know why they came here; I did not understand the reason.

[...]

IR: Did any people send you letters from *Turnovi* or did you send any letters to them?

D: No.

[...]

IR: Did anybody from *Turnovi* or from another place did send you a letter about this issue or did you write to anybody?

D: No.

Dozens of similar dialogues can be found throughout the respective interrogations. The councils appeared thus less interested in the demands or motives which triggered the non-Muslims to participate in the seditions of the 1860s, and more in the ways people connected to each other. First priority of the authorities was thus to understand the extent to which similar ideas had been spread among the population, and to detect and bloc foreign support or internal networks. In addition, the fact that people travelled over long distances, exchanged letters, photographs and pamphlets must have posed a threat to the authorities as this tendency contradicted with the increased forms of governmentality and state control over the individual which developed during the same century. State priorities of individual taxation, military conscription, and generally a

higher control over the individual were thus more difficult to employ over a mobilized (both physically and politically) population. And vice-versa similar trials like the ones described in the present chapter convey networks of individuals spanning over the whole Balkans, with information travelling in unprecedented ways via these networks.

The Role of the Bulgarian Diaspora

The Bulgarian diaspora played a crucial role in the organization of the 1860s uprisings. Rakovski moved in 1862 from Serbia to the Principalities, and Wallachia henceforth became the major centre of Bulgarian revolutionary activity. Conditions were extremely favourable there. Many Bulgarians lived in Bucharest and the Danube port cities, with ready access to their countrymen across the river. The Romanian government was also extremely lenient in its treatment of the conspirators and lax in enforcing measures to control them.³¹⁸ Overall, Ottoman Bulgarians increasingly nurtured the idea and the expectation that “help from outside” would decisively support their mobilization and play a crucial role in the realization of their plans.

The 1862 uprising around *Turnovi* had mobilized also the Bulgarian diaspora on the other side of the Danube. Donço the son of Yovan, originally from *Turnovi*, had been living for some years in Bucharest. He was caught near his hometown, with an inciting text in his hands, written in Bulgarian and bearing no signature - a text which the authorities coined *uygunsuzluk*.³¹⁹ During his trial he admitted that he and another four

³¹⁸ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans. Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 345.

³¹⁹ The text says: “As it is known to every compatriot of ours, that *God gave Bulgaria an opportunity to be free with the biggest easiness*, that’s why we felt that our motherland needs help and we gathered around thirty people, and we have decided to give our lives in order to help the beloved motherland, and we hope that with God’s will, when we start we will gather a group (*družhina*, meaning armed group) with big numbers. That’s why we come to your Excellency and we plead you to agree with our agreement, and to help us with whatever amount of money is necessary so that we get prepared and take the road to Serbia. Your servants.” (I thank Andreas Lyberatos for the translation of the text, italics are mine.) Donço stated that, while he was able to read Bulgarian, he hadn’t managed to read this text and that only now he understood

men from *Tirnovi*,³²⁰ who had all been living in Bucharest for some years, had gathered and written the aforementioned paper. Their aim had been to persuade thirty people from Bucharest to sign the text, and then gather some money from the local notables (*çorbacılar*) and hire some soldiers (*aylıkli asker*) and go to Serbia. Soon though they abandoned their plans, unsure about whether they would be able to fulfill them, and started their common journey to *Tirnovi*, apparently to return to their homes, but actually, as came out during the interrogation of Donço and Yovanço, in order to meet with the assembled Christians from *Tirnovi*.

To note, Donço and Yovanço were denying any connection to the Christians gathered in the mountains, and the authorities played a trick on them in order to find out their intentions: Two gendarmeries changed their clothes and entered the jail, pretending to be inmates who had been returning from the transport of bread to the Bulgars in the mountains.³²¹ In jail they approached Donço, who confided in them, stating that he and his companions had come from Bucharest because they had heard and read that Christians were gathering in the mountains, and they were planning to join them (*Balkan'da hıristiyan var imiş deyü Bükreş'te işittik* and at another point *Ulah gazetesinde dahi balkanda çok kalabalık hıristiyan var deyü yazmış idi... Balkan hıristiyanı tabrik etmek ve onlar ile birleşüp...*). He had also added that he expected Serbia to enter war with Islam within one month, and that then they would, united with the Christians, walk against the Muslims (*bizler dahi cümle-i hıristiyan ile beraber islamın üzerine kalkacağız* and, at another point, *İslamlar ile bir büyük kavga edecek idik*). Indeed, their hopes had been built on Serbia, as the

how bad its content was (*Bu sözler fenadır ben dahi şimdi anladım yani içinde iyi lakırdılar yoktur fakat benim gözüm kör imiş görmedim bilmem*).

³²⁰ Yovanco the son of Naydek from *Loşça*, Ustuyan (from *Leskofça*, his actual name was Nikola son of Şişil), both tailors, Bonko from *Travna* and Nikola from *İslimiye*.

³²¹ The gendarmeries, Arif and Ahmed, were Albanian ones, but probably were speaking Bulgarian so well, that they managed to convince Donço that they were his compatriots.

expected hope from Wallachia or Russia had not come. Concerning the pamphlet in his hands he told them that it was unimportant (*onda dahi bir şey yoktu*), and that his father would bring five guarantors and take him out of the jail. When Donço was later faced in court with these statements of him, he argued that he had just made them in order to pass time (*dedim idi fakat canımın sıkıntudan söyledim geceyi geçirmek için*).

Apart from this Bucharest group, the Russian citizen Yovan Panof the son of Mihail, originally from *İslimiye*, stated in court that he had been sent by Rakofski in order to gather some Christians to be ready when Serbia would start war with the Ottoman Empire. All in all, while there had indeed existed some ties with Belgrad and Bucharest, as was mentioned by most defendants during their interrogations, their expectations, as we saw, varied from some hundreds to thousands who would come and join the sedition. These numbers were mostly exaggerated by the instigators of the sedition, who were using them in order to persuade other Christians that support was great, and the success of the planned sedition guaranteed.

CHAPTER 4: ACTORS REFUTING THE STATE: Greek Nationalists Tried in the Local Councils for Sedition (*Fesat*)

First Local Uprisings in 1854 in the Provinces of *Yanya*, *Manastır* and *Selanik*

The present chapter constitutes a follow-up on Chapter Three, analysing seditious activities manifest in the *Tanzimat*-southern Balkans which bore a strong allegiance to claims of Greek nationalism. I will describe the different cases separately and comment on differences and similarities in the concluding section. Greek nationalism during the early *Tanzimat*, as it evolves out of Ottoman archives, took the form both of local uprisings, among which the ones of 1854 were the most widespread, as well as of nationalist clubs or associations, which focused on educating, or at least influencing, the Greek-Orthodox flock.

In the present section I will focus on the uprisings of 1854 in Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia, that is, in the Ottoman provinces of *Yanya*, *Manastır* and *Selanik*. These uprisings carry a special importance in Greek-Ottoman relations during the nineteenth century. To be sure, since its foundation in 1830, the Greek Kingdom posed a continuous and unspoken threat to the Ottoman Empire. The archives of the Ottoman bureaucracy are full of documents speculating about the possible interference of Greece in Ottoman affairs and Greeks' inciting of the Ottoman Christian population against the sovereign. On 20 January 1840, a decree was issued including information that a secret Greek association (*cemaat-i hafiyeye*), founded by the Greek government and holding the name "Muhib-i İman (The Faith's Friend)," was preparing to stir up a sedition (*fitne ikazına*) in Albania and the vicinity of *Selanik* and *Livadiye*. According to two related letters, one from the Greek and one from the English ambassador, the people organizing

this sedition had been arrested (*erbab-ı fesadın ekserisi tutulmuş olduğundan*). While there was no need for anxiety (*endişe*), the decree nevertheless ordered that the necessary warnings (*tenbihat-ı muktezıye*) would be sent to Albania, *Rumeli* and *Selanik*.³²²

On other hand, the uprisings of 1854 constituted the first big revolutionary wave of Greek-Orthodox Ottomans since the Greek Independence War of 1821.³²³ The outburst of the Crimean war, as well as symbolic references to the four hundred years of the “Turkish yoke” (1454-1854), have been underlined by existing literature as the basic reasons behind the uprisings.³²⁴ The latter comprised a series of local uprisings in Ottoman territory organized by Greek chieftains entering for this reason Ottoman territory from the Greek Kingdom with the considerable amount of some thousands of men. The organizers of these upheavals were Greeks or son of Greek warlords who had participated in the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829) and were now looking for new opportunities to stir up the Christian populations living in the Ottoman territories north of the volatile Greek-Ottoman border stretching from *Narda* to *Golos*. The newly-established Greek Kingdom had tried -mostly in vain- through issuing various decrees to combat, pacify or integrate bandits and irregular military forces into its new military

³²² BOA, LMTZ.(01) 1 2 (20 January 1840). The file contains in Ottoman translation a letter (*ilamname*) by the Greek Consul pertaining to this issue, which was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Empire. While information had been spread that the association’s goal was to arouse a sedition (*bir fitne ve fitret ikaz ve tabrik etmekten ibaret*) in Albania, *Livadiye*, and *Selanik*, and the Ottoman government had taken the necessary measures to stop the seditious thoughts of such an association (*cemaat-ı müttehemenin efkar-ı mefsedetengizîn men ...*), the Greek Consul assured that these were madly inventions (*işbu tasniat-ı mecnunanenin asarı aleyhinde bundan ammeyi kamilen temin edebiliyoruz*).

³²³ Stefanos Papadopoulos, “Βασικά χαρακτηριστικά των απελευθερωτικών αγώνων των Ελλήνων της Μακεδονίας από τη μεγάλη ελληνική επανάσταση του 1821 ως την απελευθέρωσή της (Basic characteristics of the liberating struggles of the Greeks of Macedonia from the great greek revolution of 1821 until its liberation)”, *Makedonika*, 27 (1989-90), p. 20.

³²⁴ Stefanos Papadopoulos, *Οι επαναστάσεις του 1854 και 1878 στην Μακεδονία (The revolutions of 1854 and 1878 in Macedonia)*, Thessaloniki: Etaireia Makedonikon Spoudon, 1970, p. 32.

formations.³²⁵ Indeed, the main organizers of the uprisings we will follow in the rest of this chapter were either sons of fighters during the Greek War,³²⁶ like Leonidas Voulgaris -son of Anastasios Voulgaris-, or themselves former fighters during the same war, like Dimitrios Karatasos. Lastly, the secret support of some members of the Greek government has also been underlined in literature, which, nevertheless, quickly faded away.³²⁷

It is important to note that conventional literature in Greek has represented these uprisings as mass mobilizations, attracting the unanimous support of all Christians residing in the revolting Ottoman districts.³²⁸ The final failure of the endeavours has been attributed solely to factors like the lack of coordination among the uprisings or their crash by the Ottoman forces. Similarly, popular history has been widely attracted to the uprisings of 1854, and has drawn a similar picture. Most of the local administrations of the same places in contemporary Greece, which had participated in the revolts, are depicting the uprisings of 1854 in their contemporary websites and imbuing them with a strong nationalist character.³²⁹ On the contrary, the depiction below will show that local

³²⁵ Gerassimos Karabelias, "From National Heroes to National Villains" in *Subalterns and Social Protest. History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), New York: SOAS/Routledge Studies on the Middle East, 2008, p. 270.

³²⁶ Many of the former warlords seemed to have been in poor situation after the end of the war and the establishment of the Greek Kingdom, as they were not getting any help or pension from the latter. See BOA, LMVL. (01) 9 243 (13 March 1854).

³²⁷ Giannis Tozis, "Αμερικανικά και αγγλικά πληροφορία περί της επανάστασης του 1854 εν Μακεδονία (American and English information concerning the revolution of 1854 in Macedonia)", *Makedonika* 3 (1953-55), p. 144. Papadopoulos, *Οι επαναστάσεις του 1854 και 1878 στην Μακεδονία (The revolutions of 1854 and 1878 in Macedonia)*, p. 15. However, after some internal strifes in the Greek government on the issue, as well pressure exerted by the English and the French, the Greeks had to call back all their support to the uprisings. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³²⁸ Papadopoulos, "Βασικά χαρακτηριστικά των απελευθερωτικών αγώνων των Ελλήνων της Μακεδονίας από τη μεγάλη ελληνική επανάσταση του 1821 ως την απελευθέρωσή της (Basic characteristics of the liberating struggles of the Greeks of Macedonia from the great greek revolution of 1821 until its liberation)", p. 21.

³²⁹ <http://radovizi-artas.blogspot.gr/2011/09/1854-1866-1878.html>, <http://anolehonia.blogspot.gr/2013/03/1854-3.html>, <http://astrohori.5forum.net/t26-topic>, <http://arxiokallari.blogspot.gr/2013/03/17-1854.html>, <http://www.mesenikolas.gr/web/index.php?>, http://gefiri.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=186:ta-epanastatika-kinimata-tou

reaction to the uprisings was far more mixed than straightforward, and that the participants coming from Greece were not only fighters motivated by Greek nationalist feelings.

Coming now to the concrete events, Dimitrios Karatasos (1798-1861)³³⁰ violated the Ottoman territory at the peninsula of Chalkidiki south of *Selanik* in April 1854, having under his command thirteen ships of Greek captains and among three and four thousand men (coined likewise bandits and Greek soldiers in the Ottoman documents).³³¹ While few of the locals initially welcomed Karatasos' forces (some of them reportedly carrying Russian flags), Karatasos proceeded further north. He was finally crushed at the village of Agios Nikolaos and its bay, by Ottoman forces which had arrived on ship and from sea, after the local Greek-Orthodox bishop had informed the province governor of *Selanik*. Hundreds of the bandits were reported to have been killed, the rest fleeing to the mountains. Simultaneously to Karatasos' revolt, in March 1854 Dimitris Grivas, Nikolas Zervas, Tsovolas and Kostas Yannis, and many more, together with a force of some hundreds of men (coined by the Ottomans as Greek/cursed bandits, *eşkiya-ı yunaniye/menhuse*, or Greek soldiers (*Yunan asker*)), violated (*bit-tecaviüz*) the Greek-Ottoman border, attacking several villages and then proceeding further north.

Tsovolas succeeded in seizing some townships (*nahiye*) around *Narda*, Grivas proceeded further north to the *Yanya* province, while Zervas and Yorgakis seized two

1854-kai-o-theodoros-ziakas&catid=29&Itemid=327, <http://www.makryrachi.gr>, <http://www.tetrakomo-kapsala.gr>. (Accessed on 15 April 2016).

³³⁰ Similar to his father, he had been a follower of the idea of the Greek-Serbian alliance, aiming at the ending of the Ottoman rule. Karatasos died in 1861 in Belgrad, where he was trying to foster Greek-Serbian relationships (see also below the section about the *gazino*).

³³¹ BOA, I.DH. 301 19014 (3 May 1854), I.DH. 299 18910 (23 May 1854), I.MVL. 310 12874 (11 July 1854). See also BOA, HR.MKT 101 56 (20 February 1855), HR.MKT. 101 32 (27 June 1856), HR.MKT. 147 51 (10 June 1856), MVL. 276 58 (23 May 1854),

townships from the province of *Yanya*.³³² Along the border, the Greek bandits had seized and occupied (*zabt ve istila*) fifteen villages around *Agrafa* and thirteen around *Dömeke*, inciting their local populations and forcing them to obey them (*abalisini kendilere tabiiyet ettirmiş*). Muslims villages were attacked and terrified (*dehşete düşmüş*), plundered and burned down; often whole families moved to other places upon news arriving that bandits were approaching.³³³ Particularly, the governor of *Tırhala* reported that the bandits were plundering and burning Muslim villages (*ihrak ve garet*), seizing their animals and belongings (*gasp*), torturing the ones who had not been able to flee (*emva-ı işkençe, azab ile zülm etmek*) and taking them as captives.³³⁴

Agrafa and *Meçova* themselves were also reported to have been seized by the bandits, while their Christian populations likewise conformed to them (*ifsad-ı eşkiyaya aldanıp bunlar dahi tabiiyet etmekte buldukları, dogyan ile*).³³⁵ Especially the Christian population of *Meçova* was described as inclined and desirous (*meyl ve rağbetleri*) towards the bandits; the village of *Meçova* itself was attached with special importance due to its geographically central position, the hold of which offered direct access to and enabled the inciting of the Christians of three major provinces of the southern Balkans: *Selanik*, *Yanya* and *Manastır*.³³⁶

Furthermore, one month later, in April 1854, documents sent from *Golos* notified that the bandits had burned ten Muslim villages in the town's vicinity, plundering them

³³² BOA, LMVL. (01) 11 261 (23 April 1854).

³³³ BOA, LMVL. (01) 9 242 (23 March 1854).

³³⁴ BOA, LMVL. (01) 10 257 (12 April 1854). For the record, the bandits were not the only ones dispersing fear and destruction in these territories. A Sultan's decree issued on 13 March 1854 complained about the behaviour of the irregular soldiers (*başbozruk*), whose "terrible actions" had surpassed any precedence (*ber tarafta cesaret ettikleri hareket-i feciye artık asmış taşmış*), plundering every place they were passing through. BOA, LMVL. 10 257 (12 April 1854).

³³⁵ BOA, LMVL. (01) 9 242 (23 March 1854).

³³⁶ BOA, LMVL. (01) 11 261 (23 April 1854).

and seizing their animals. Likewise, many Christian villages had been seized and their animals had been taken away; the town of *Golos* itself had been under siege by more than thousand Greek bandits (in other documents three thousand were mentioned), while five hundred Christians had followed them. Following a two-hour-fight between the bandits and the Ottoman forces (the latter being accompanied by some members of the local council, and one hundred of the town's locals), the Ottomans finally succeeded in breaking the siege. According to the report of a Division General (*ferik*) who had arrived in *Golos* (Volos), the bandits were receiving help from the other side, that is, from Greece (*taraf-ı ahirden muavenet olunmakta idiği*), based from the type of their guns, the printed documents the ones who were arrested were found to have been carrying with them, as well as the statements of the captives themselves.³³⁷

Unlike the case of the Bulgarian uprisings in the end of the 1860s, we have not been able to unearth trials of participants in the Greek uprisings of 1854 -except the trial of Hasan (see below). Similar trials though must exist in the archives, as they were mentioned in other documents of the bureaucracy. We can thus only indirectly comment on the participation factor in these uprisings, based, for example, on the pamphlets disseminated to local populations in 1854 or the reaction of the local Ottoman populations and especially of the notables: Who was then participating in these revolts from the Greek territories? Which Greek and Ottoman subjects took up arms and followed a strong chieftain in organizing revolts on Ottoman territory in 1854? Were the Ottoman locals welcoming the Greek chieftains?

The interrogation of Hasan the son of Tahir, a thirty-year old Muslim Albanian butcher and shepherd and a participant in the Karatasos uprising, shows that the invading groups from Greece were far from homogenous religiously and ethnically, and

³³⁷ BOA, LMVL. (01) 10 257 (12 April 1854).

their motives were often simply to secure a monthly payment, that is, they were mercenaries. According to Hasan's statements in front of the *Selanik* council, the group which had followed Karatasos from Greece composed of Greeks from Mora, as well as Vlachs and Bulgarians -their majority speaking the Bulgarian language-, and, lastly, of two Muslim Albanians. Particularly, fifty of them were originally from the Mora Peninsula, while the remainder were Bulgars and Vlachs from various places of Ottoman Rumelia, most of them speaking Bulgarian (*Bulgarca laf ederlerdi*).

Most of these men were receiving a monthly wage of forty-five drachmas (*45 dirhemi aylık ile beni de asker yazdı*). Voulgaris, who planned a similar endeavour in 1867 (described below), had violated the Ottoman territory from Greece with a group of men consisting of a mixture of current and former military officers as well as soldiers, but also farmers, artisans and workers. Particularly, the participation of thousands of men from Greece in these military endeavours was also an indication of the dire situation prevailing in the Greek Kingdom. Indeed, many Greeks were willing to be employed as a mercenary for a monthly payment.

Asked about his motivation, Hasan stated in court that Karataso had inspired his men, telling them that all twenty thousand inhabitants of Chalkidiki's villages would join them, and that they would become a big force.³³⁸ Moreover, Hasan admitted to have participated in an uprising (*harekat-ı isyaniye*).³³⁹ When Karataso and his men had arrived in Sikia on a big ship, they had been welcomed at the harbour by twenty people, telling them "Now is the time!" (the same had been stated in a letter they had sent to Karatasos in advance), following which they went to their homes, brought their weapons and joined

³³⁸ "Çamo Karataşo bizde gayret verdi bütün yirmi bin kişisi bizim ile beraberdir ve biz geçtiğimizle bütün köyler bizim ile beraber olup cümlemiz birlik olacağız diyerek bize gayret verdi onun için geçtik." BOA, IMVL. 310 12874 (11 July 1854).

³³⁹ BOA, IMVL. 310 12874 (11 July 1854).

them. Until Karatasos' forces had arrived in Agios Nikolas around three hundred of the local Christians had followed them, while food and shelter were splendidly provided to them through every village they were passing through. Hasan had deserted, together with two other men, Karatasos' forces, when they were informed that a major force of between two and three thousand Ottoman soldiers had arrived. He had witnessed how, similarly to them, also the Christian villagers were dispersing when the news about the Ottomans' coming had spread, while also others among the soldiers got afraid and started deserting in small groups (*askerde bir soğutluk geldi her gün üçer beşer firar ederler di*). Hasan was soon caught by the gendarmeries, when he entered a village.

On the other hand, apart from the interrogation protocols, documents which can provide us a clue about the intentions of the groups invading the Ottoman Empire from the Greek Kingdom's territories in the spring of 1854 are the pamphlets and newspapers seized by the Ottoman authorities from arrested bandits, as well as the letters sent by the chieftains in order to rouse local Ottoman Christians. Such a pamphlet found on the bandits was the one published regularly by Zisis Sotiriou and printed in Athens and entitled "*Ο Έλληρ του Ολύμπου* (The Greek of Olympus)". To note, Zisis Sotiriou had been also a chieftain of the 1821 Independence War, originally from *Serfice* in the province of *Manastir*. In its issue of January 1854, his pamphlet incited its audience that "the time had come to take upon arms." Particularly, the Turks had to be directly fought with weapons, and not with newspapers and maps of the Danube region, implying a possible help coming from Russia -a reference which was attacking the intellectuals residing in the Greek Kingdom.³⁴⁰ The situation in Greece was too tough, to wait any

³⁴⁰ Something similar was stated in a newspaper also found on the bandits. It was the newspaper "Zefiros," printed in Athens on 11 January 1854 with an article signed by the "shepherds of Thessalia." The article was mocking the poet Panagiotis Soutsos, who was living in Athens and writing inciting Greek nationalist texts. He and his family were accused of living in luxury, while calling on others to fight for Greek independence. BOA, I.MTZ. (01) 9 243 (13 March 1854).

longer: The writer's friends were apparently urging him "Now is the time for a radical solution, bread in Athens is expensive, we are dying of hunger, lead us to the Olympus Mountain!"³⁴¹

In addition, the writer refuted the new era of the *Tanzimat* and the promises it entailed. He argued thus that the heralding of a new decree being issued in the empire, which would officially recognize the equality (*ισονομία και ισοπολιτεία*) between Muslims and Christians, was useless: the pamphlet's writer would recognize only "the restoration of the Greek Empire," with Istanbul as its capital. The big powers were being reminded that equality between Muslims and non-Muslims was not feasible, as it constituted a breach of the Koran.

Pertaining now to letters sent by the chieftains, they mostly declared the initiation of a holy war, but, in other cases, uttered a more conciliatory discourse addressed to both Ottoman Christians and Muslims. To begin with, Karatasos had corresponded with the locals of *Poliroz* (Poligiros) further north in Chalkidiki, threatening them to join him, otherwise they would be fought against. On 10 April 1854, he had sent a letter to the notables of Poligiros, informing them that for the "support of religion and the recovery of liberty of the homeland" he had come to the homeland to fight a "holy war." He would arrive in *Poliroz* within two days having on his side the notables of several other villages and was calling on its residents to take up arms and prepare to join them. Refusing to join him would be regarded as "betrayal of the homeland" and would be punished accordingly.³⁴²

In a similar vein, the groups of Grivas and the others wrote many handwritten letters to the notables of various districts they were about to invade. Grivas, writing on

³⁴¹ BOA, LMVL. (01) 9 243 (13 March 1854).

³⁴² BOA, LDH. 301 19014 (3 May 1854).

behalf of the Field Marshall of Epirus (*Στραταρχείο Ηπείρου*), sent letters on 2 March 1854 from *Meçova* to the notables of nearby *Malakas* near *Trbala*, stating that they had taken upon arms against the “tyrants of our religion and (*γένος*),” in order to liberate their co-ethnics and co-religionists from the Turkish yoke. Furthermore, he was urging them to do the same and prepare one hundred fifty accommodation facilities for his forces, who would arrive there soon.³⁴³ In another letter of him written on 19 March and addressed to the residents of the villages Strouza, Palteno, Krizades and other, he was urging them to take upon arms and kill every Turk who would make his appearance in their villages.³⁴⁴ If they would not follow his orders, they would “regret it.”

On the other hand, in another such declaration, signed on behalf of the Military Commission of Evrytania (*Στρατιωτική Επιτροπή Ευρυτανίας*, the latter coining the area around *Agrafa*) by Antonis Mantouvalos, Karasoulis and two others, all villagers in the vicinity, Christian and Muslims, were addressed, while it was demonstrated that the commission was fighting for the “liberation of the yoke” and for the equality between all nations inhabiting Greek territory (coining Ottoman territory thereby as an all-time Greek territory). In case these nations would obey the commission, they would be able to enjoy security, their rights to honour and property.³⁴⁵

A similar letter was being sent by the same Military Commission on 23 February 1854 to the village of Fanari south of *Kardiça* (Karditsa), calling on its notables (*bey*), dervishes and Muslim teachers (*boca*). They were informed that the “Greek nation” (*ελληνικό έθνος*) had started a rebellion, in order for all the residents of the Greek territories to be free, be it Christians, Turks, Jews or Armenians. Were the latter to obey

³⁴³ BOA, LMVL. (01) 9 243 (13 March 1854).

³⁴⁴ BOA, LMTZ. (01) 11 261 (23 April 1854).

³⁴⁵ BOA, LMVL. (01) 9 242 (23 March 1854).

the bandits, they would enjoy free practice of religion (*aveξiθpησxeia*), otherwise they would be fought with weapons.³⁴⁶ Three days before (on 20 February 1854) the group of Ziakas had sent a notice likewise to the local landowners and notables (*ağa, bey*) of *Kardiça*, signed by himself, Kokorikos, Oikonomidis, Papayanopoulos and others, urging them to unite with them “like brothers” in order to overthrow the tyrannical power of the Sultan, which oppressed both Turks and Christians, and to unanimously form a new government on behalf of both Turks and Christians, which would “treat us all like its children.”³⁴⁷ If they would follow the bandits, they would retain their properties and their estates (*ciftlik*).

Finally, regarding the locals’ reactions, while the populations of *Meçova* and part of the population of *Golos* were reported in the documents to have shown support to the bandits coming from Greece, the residents of other villages sent letters to the Ottoman governors begging them to actually “save them” from the Greek bandits. Regarding the former cases of *Golos* and *Meçova* the archives offer splendid information on some tax issues which had afflicted the respective sub-districts in 1848 and 1852.³⁴⁸ These tax disagreements, which would afford too much space to be dealt with here in detail, occurred between the local populations and part of their own Christian notables (*kocabası*) and regarded amounts of money owed by the local population to the notables. It could very much be the case that existing tax-issues and social discontent could have resulted in a higher willingness of locals to ally with the invading Greek bands.

On the other hand, on 13 May 1854, for example, the villagers of Sellades and Komboti south of *Narda*, wrote a petition to Fuat *efendi* stating that the Greek bandits

³⁴⁶ BOA, I.MVL. (01) 9 242 (23 March 1854).

³⁴⁷ BOA, I.MVL. (01) 9 243 (13 March 1854).

³⁴⁸ For *Golos* see BOA, I.MVL. 153 4365 (31 March 1849), A.DVN.MHM. 5 A 99 (22 July 1848), for *Meçova* see BOA, I.MVL. 234 8191 (9 April 1852).

were keeping them by force (*oi Έλληνες μας κρατούν με βία*) on Greek territory and that they wished to return to their villages.³⁴⁹ In the beginning of March of the same year the residents of *Malakas* near *Meçova* wrote a letter to a “bey efendi hazreteleri,” informing him that a letter from Griva had arrived to their village. Nevertheless, they assured that they were “loyal subjects of the Empire” (*πιστοί ραγιάδες*) and that they did not know how to react to this letter.³⁵⁰

In 4 March 1854 Muslim and non-Muslim notables from the district of Trikala (*Tirhala kazası*) signed a common document, stating that while they had been witnesses of the order and safety (*asayiş ve emniyet*), they were now experiencing the provocations and preparations (*tabrikat ve tedarikat*) of the Greek side, as well as some activities on the side of the *reaya*; if something bigger would happen, the Muslim people (*ehl-i İslam*), as well as the respectable ones among the Christians (*ehl-i irş-i reayanın*) would not be able to find a safe place to hide.³⁵¹ In a similar writing sent few days later (13 March) from the same city, this time signed mainly by the Muslim notables and the learned men (*ulema*) and very few non-Muslims, the sedition (*fesad*) and the rebellion (*fitne*) were paralleled to a fire, which was becoming bigger and bigger and was spreading to all the townships (*nahiye*) of Trikala, for the extinction of which the number of the existing dispatched Ottoman soldiers were not enough (*kafî*).

On the other hand, other documents demonstrated “regret” on the part of the population who had followed the Greek bandits. On 26 March 1854, a document from the governor of *Rumelia* reported that the *reaya* of *Meçovo*, similar to the Christian notables (*kocabası*) of other villages, had begged for and taken refugee to the Ottoman authorities

³⁴⁹ BOA, LMTZ. (01) 12 284 (21 June 1854).

³⁵⁰ BOA, LMTZ. (01) 10 252 (5 April 1854).

³⁵¹ BOA, LMVL. (01) 9 242 (23 March 1854).

(*istiman ve dehalet*), and had requested for protection and their religion (*istida-ı rey ve iman*), as well as for the preservation of the order.³⁵²

Similarly, the notables and the people who had followed Karatasos soon regretted their endeavour and sent a letter on 9 May 1854 to the governor of *Selanik*. In this long letter (approved by the metropolitan of *Ksenderiye*, Ignatios) filled with expressions of tearful regret, the notables (*kocabaşı*) and the people of four villages promised to remain “humble subjects” of the Empire (*ταπεινοί ραγιάδες*), asked for forgiveness for having followed the threats of the “Greek bandits” and were promising from now onwards to be most dedicated to their government. In the respective decree, it was ordered that the undersigned Christians be pardoned (*hakklarında afv ve merhamet*) on condition that they would not follow bandits again and that they would inform the authorities, in case such bandits would visit again their villages.

A Follow-Up Uprising in 1866 Organized by Leonidas Voulgaris

Following 1854, the next major upheaval between the Ottoman Empire and the Greek Kingdom was the expedition of Voulgaris. Captain Leonidas Voulgaris, son of Anastasios Voulgaris who had fought in the Greek Independence War, was tried with twenty nine of his men at the local court of *Selanik* and later under a special commission in Istanbul in the years 1866 and 1867.³⁵³ According to a writing of the governor of

³⁵² BOA, I.MTZ. (01) 10 257 (12 April 1854).

³⁵³ BOA, LMMS. 34 1388 (24 February 1867). According to the statements of Voulgaris in the *Selanik* court, also some fellow members of the organization (see below) were preparing to invade some other Ottoman territories during the same time, but he did not know what the outcome of their endeavours had been. He named the following ones: Dimitri Kote to *Siroz*, Petro Valahya Kostanti Karatabak to *Selanik* and *Vodine* and *Vardar*, Vasil Deli Susre? to *Megarovo* near *Manastir*, Vasil Koti to the mountains around *Katrin* and *Todori Zake* to *Kranya*. For Voulgaris case see also: BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 355 88 (15 May 1866), A.MKT.MHM. 357 28 (30 May 1866), HR. SYS. 1725 9 (28 May 1863), HR. TO. 4 66 (2 May 1866), I.DH. 549 38195 (15 May 1866), I.MTZ. (01) 14 425 (27 May 1866), MVL. 967 61 (6 March 1867), A.MKT.MHM. 366 25 (31 October 1866). The Ottoman ambassador in Athens noticed that Voulgaris was also in alignment with the revolutionary society in Italy. On 10 April Garibaldi had written a letter to the

Selanik, some of the Consuls had uttered in an unofficial way that they wished for the trial to take place in Istanbul.³⁵⁴ The official accusation he was faced with was that he had entered Ottoman territory at the second peninsula of Chalkidiki south of *Selanik* (*Ksenderiye*), together with thirty one men, all armed, aiming at organizing a sedition and an uprising among the Christian populations inhabiting the area. Voulgaris and his men were arrested after having been wandering around for about a month, albeit before actually realizing their plan. This had been only one of similar endeavours of Voulgaris: A few of the locals north of the lake of *Langaşa* (*Lagkadas*) testified in court that Voulgaris had come again three years before with similar plans in his mind. Another defendant who had followed Voulgaris from Greece claimed that the latter had attempted a similar uprising near *Yanya*, for which he had spent 100.000 drachmas, while this time he had spent 10.000. According to the same testimony, the money was provided to him by a Russian woman, named Madam Mavromichali.

In court, then, Voulgaris stated to be acting as member of a secret Greek association, called “Holy Struggle” (*Ιερός Αγών*, translated in Ottoman as “*say-ı mukaddes*”³⁵⁵), the president of which was the Greek Ministry of Navy, Kostantinos Kanaris. The association was operating in secrecy and without neither the knowledge nor the approval of the Greek government. He himself had been sent as the association’s representative in order to investigate under what conditions their coreligionists (*dindışlarımız*) were residing in the Ottoman Empire, the degree to which the edict of

Greek newspapers, encouraging the Greeks to fight for their freedom (*istihsal-ı serbesti*), which Voulgaris had shown to his people in order to encourage them.

³⁵⁴ BOA, I.DH. 549 38195 (15 May 1866).

³⁵⁵ According to Voulgaris, the organization was also printing a newspaper with the same name, both in Greek and French language, publishing all kinds of complaints they were receiving in form of reports from the subjects of the Ottoman Empire, their majority being negative. BOA, I.MMS. 34 1388 (24 February 1867).

1856 had been put into practice, and the reasons for which the Christians were charged with so heavy taxes. Was he to find out that the Christians were indeed encountering oppression (*zulüm, taaddi*) and were therefore in a condition of dissatisfaction (*boşnutsuzluk*), he would organize a sedition (*fesad*) and an uprising (*ihtilal, beyet-i ihtilaliye, beyet-i isyaniye*) against the state.

Thirty-one men had followed Voulgaris from Athens, most of them Greek subjects,³⁵⁶ but also some Ottomans, who had migrated to Greece.³⁵⁷ From their short testimonies in court we deduct that most of them had been informed about Voulgaris' plans right from the beginning and had entered the Empire in order to organize a sedition. Some of them mentioned having been paid by Voulgaris a monthly wage (of eighty *drachmas*, others of four *Macar altın*). According to Voulgaris' statements, apparently more than 5.000 more men were waiting in Greece under the command of the secret organization, in order to follow them after their first moves would have achieved success.

Voulgaris's perspective on his actual experiences on ground and the information he had gathered by talking to more than one hundred Christians in the area from

³⁵⁶ The Greeks Nikola the son of Yani Haçopulo (also member of the same association, as well as public servant in the Greek Ministry of Finance), Zoyi? the son of Dimitri Zoidi (sergeant of the army and brother-in-law of a former Minister of Interior), Andon the son of Kozma Vlagas (student of the military school), Yoanis Papayanopulo the son of Anasto (former sergeant), Yorgi the son of Zoze (retired sergeant from the fire brigades), Manol the son of Zapranos (artisan and member of the fire brigades in Athens), Nikola the son of Yorgi Yatros (former corporal in the Greek army and later gendarme), Yoanis the son of Hristo Davaris (tax-collector around Athens, afterwards a farmer), Kosta the son of Anastasio (former corporal in the Greek army, afterwards an artisan), Todorı the son of Todorı Bosnakis (a sergeant in the telegraph section in Athens), Teofilos the son of Yanaki Kandiyas (worker), the farmers Yorgi the son of Dimitri and Leonidas the son of Panayot Papayorgi, the artisans Apostol the son of Nikola, Argiri the son of Yanko, Yani the son of Dimitri, Yorgi the son of Dimitri Rosos and Panayot the son of Hurmuzis, the cook of Voulgaris Yorgi the son of Manos and his servant Teodoros the son of Yorgi. BOA, I.MMS. 34 1388 (24 February 1867).

³⁵⁷ Kostanti the son of Hristo Tzavala (sergeant in the Greek army, later an artisan), Kosta the son of Atanas (soldier), Lambro the son of Yorgi (had become Greek subject, was working as a rural guard), Dimitri the son of Hristo (gendarme in Greece and servant of Voulgaris), Pılas? the son of Haralambo (foot-messenger for a captain in the Greek army), Yani the son of Lambri (worker), captain Yorgaki the son of Yani, Kosta the son of Atanas (soldier), İlya the son of Angeli (shepherd and servant). BOA, I.MMS. 34 1388 (24 February 1867).

Chalkidiki up to the lake of *Langaşa* have been documented in his interrogation in *Selanik* and in Istanbul, in a seventeen-pages-long memorandum (*lahiya*) he submitted to the Ottoman authorities, as well as in an informative letter he had tried to send to the association's leader Kanaris while being in jail, and which was seized by the authorities. All three documents agreed in their main points and differed only in the details he was providing: Overall, the picture Voulgaris portrayed was an overly positive one, aiming probably to flatter the Ottoman authorities, but may be indicating also the unwillingness of locals to participate in new warlike endeavours which may beget them new problems with the Ottoman authorities, similar to the ones in 1854; the Christians indeed chose to put all possible blame not on the central government in Istanbul, but on minor officials and on their own elites and notables.

Particularly, the one hundred Christians, among them villagers, shepherds, traders and landowners Voulgaris had talked to, had stated that they were not experiencing oppression and troubles (*meşakkat*), that they were enjoying the privileges of the 1856 decree in the best way (*ahsen*) -while even the regulations not yet in full implementation were being in the process of becoming so-, and that they were living in a comfortable situation (*rahat halde, daire-i istirahat*). Interestingly, they focused mainly on issues of justice and taxation: Specifically, members of all communities were represented in the local courts; the taxes were high, but, indeed, allotted equally on Muslims and non-Muslims; members of all communities enjoyed the right to sue somebody in court, to buy and sell immovable property, to practice their religion (proselytism being forbidden), and to be responsible for public security, by carrying their own guns (while a non-Muslim had even the right to disarm a Muslim, in case the latter carried a gun without the necessary permission). Negative elements, on the other hand, constituted the fact that a court's decision could not be objected, as well as that detainments of defendants were taking place without the issue of a regular warrant.

Some oppression was stemming from “minor officials (*küçük memurlar*),” like the gendarmeries (*zabtiye*) and tax collectors, but these were, according to Voulgaris, “private complaints,” similar to what was happening in the whole Europe. On the contrary, the central government was not tolerating such kinds of bad behaviour exerted by minor officials and was demonstrating eagerness in applying the principles of equality (*müsavat*) to all people (*cem-i abaliye*). Witnessing with his own eyes how Ottomans (meaning Muslims here) were working with the plough exactly like the Christians were doing, Voulgaris stated that he realized he had to think more “maturely” about the Empire’s situation.

To Voulgaris’ dismay, the Christians he had talked to had complained about their own, non-Muslim elites, and their Christian religious officials (*kocabaşı ve çorbacı ve despotları tarafından*). The former, the notables, were elected by their own Christian people, albeit, and contrary to the practice followed in other countries, in an open voting system. Taking into account that these same notables were authorized by the Ottoman authorities to allocate the bigger amount of taxes to households, Christian people were not feeling free to vote for the community leader of their preference: the latter namely were punishing the ones who had not voted for them by allocating more taxes to them.

On the other hand, Christian religious officials were overtaxing their flock, while the latter could not even be sure whether the money they were paying ended up in the treasury of the Patriarchate or not; were they to avoid paying their taxes to the Church, the priests often excluded them from the Holy Communion in order to punish them. In addition to their right to extract taxes, religious officials enjoyed many more privileges by the Ottoman authorities, like being members of the local councils and courts, leading, according to Voulgaris, to many transgressions. The latter pleaded in his statements for the limitation of the priests to their spiritual powers. They should be, Voulgaris pleaded,

the example of self-denial, and not, as they were, of corruption, and of the education of the Christians, and not their extinction.

Despite his flatteringly positive assessment, Voulgaris warned his investigators from jumping into conclusions: He was not trying to flatter them (*müdabene etmek*). Even this tranquil state of the Ottoman Empire's Christians was not able to satisfy him; in his own words: "Even if [the Christians] were full with gold, my heart would still not be pleased, my heart wants to conquer all places in which Christians inhabit, and in fact also Istanbul," adding that, likewise, the Ottomans may wish to conquer Athens.³⁵⁸ It was simply not obvious to him why "Greek territory should be under occupation," while "his wish was that his breed (*Γένος*) was superior." When one of the interrogators responded that, following this logic, many more nations would appear with similar demands, nations with prior demands than the Greeks on the same territories, Voulgaris answered that "they [the Ottomans] took them from us, so they had to give them back to us" and that "they have the best part of our territories." Voulgaris would be satisfied when the Christians would no longer be *reaya* (*ραιιάδες*), that is, when they would be governed by Christians.

Despite the uttering of his territorial demands, Voulgaris was, indeed, feeling some uneasiness by the improvement of the Empire's general situation during the *Tanzimat*, and its following the path towards the "great civilization." He stated to be impressed by the excellent treatment he had received by the Ottoman officials, especially by Macedonia's governor (*Selanik valisi*), Akif *paşa*. This good treatment was, in Voulgaris' own words "a kind of revenge of the Ottoman authorities," or "a punishment harder than death." Voulgaris finished by saying that what he had hoped for had been, indeed, a

³⁵⁸ BOA, LMMS. 34 1388 (24.2.1867): "belki bunları altın ile doldurmuş olsalar bile benim gönülüm yine razı olmayıp bütün dındaşım bulunan hıristiyanların mahallerini ve adeta gönülüm İstanbulu dahi zıbt etmek ister nitekim Osmanlılar Atina'yi almak ümid ve emel edinebilirler."

bad thing (*kötü bir şey olup, büyük bir cinayet*), that the Ottoman state had, legally, the right to execute him; but he also added that, were the state to pardon him, he would never again try to organize a sedition (*ifsad ve ihtilal*) on Ottoman territories, unless war would take place between the Ottoman Empire and the Greek Kingdom, in which case he would participate in the Greek army.

A Greek Club in *Manastır* in 1860

Apart from local uprisings organized from outside, nationalist mobilization in the Ottoman Balkans during the nineteenth century manifested itself also through local clubs and associations with a cultural character. Indeed, in the vibrant urban centre of *Manastır*, which was gaining administrative and military importance in the course of the nineteenth century,³⁵⁹ a Greek club was founded in the late 1850s,³⁶⁰ namely the *gazino*. The city's population had risen from 6.000 in 1807 to between 25.000 and 30.000 in the 1840s.³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ In 1836, *Manastır* replaced *Sofya* as the capital of the *Rumeli* province; in 1841 it became the seat of the Imperial Army's Third Division, see Andreas Birken, *Die Provinzen des osmanischen Reiches (The provinces of the Ottoman Empire)*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1976, pp. 52, 71.

³⁶⁰ Tsallis, a descendant of a *gazino* member, determined 1852 as the club's foundation date, but the club's members reported in their interrogations 1858 as the foundation date. Probably Tsallis was wrong on the issue of the foundation date, as also Geortsis, one of the *gazinists*, wrote in a personal letter to a journalist in Athens that the *gazino* had been established in the beginning of 1858 (BOA, LMVL. 441 19597 (11 January 1861): This is the main file comprising the *gazino*-case and the one referred to if not otherwise indicated). Tsallis, furthermore, speculated that the name *gazino*, used generally for the Christian coffeehouses, was chosen in order not to arouse the suspicions of the Ottoman authorities. Pantelis Tsallis, *To δοξασμένο Μοναστήρι (Glorified Monastir)*, Thessaloniki: Typois Odys. Theodoridou, 1932, p. 17.

³⁶¹ While the city counted 6000 souls in 1807, its population rose to 13,200 inhabitants in 1840, see Ursinus, *Regionale Reformen am Vorabend der Tanzimat (Local reforms on the eve of the Tanzimat)*, p. 146. Lory estimated that the city's population in the 1840's decade added up to between 25,000 and 30,000, see Bernard Lory, *La ville balkanissime Bitola, 1800-1918 (Bitola, A Balkan city par excellence, 1800-1918)*, Istanbul: Isis, 2011, p. 105. The Ottoman census of 1831 pointed to a total population of 33,141 souls, albeit for the whole district (*kaza*) of *Manastır*, see Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. 109. Likewise, the city's register of profit taxes, drafted in 1844, referred to 23,340 souls, see Safet Alimoski, "Temettüat defterlerine göre *Manastır* merkez kazasının sosyo-ekonomik durumu (The socio-economic situation of the central district of *Manastır* according to the tax registers)", MA thesis, Marmara University, 2005, p. 10. More detailed information exists for the end of the century, see Anastasios K. Iordanoglou, "Οθωμανικές Επετηρίδες

The Orthodox Christians were forming a slight majority, themselves consisting mainly of Vlachs³⁶² and Bulgarians,³⁶³ all members of the *Rum milletî*. In actual life though such designations were far from clear-cut as ethnic affiliation was almost meaningless and multilingualism the rule.³⁶⁴

Officially the *gazino* was counting around one hundred and sixty members. It was a three-room place located in the town's market, where one could find several books and newspapers coming from various European and Ottoman cities.³⁶⁵ The *gazinists*, all men in their late twenties, constituted a melting pot of Vlach merchants, Grecoman (Greek-socialized Slavophone) teachers, both educated in Athens and in the Greek schools of *Manastir*, as well as supporters of Giuseppe Garibaldi,³⁶⁶ who had migrated to *Manastir*

(σαλναμέ) του βιλαετιού Μοναστηρίου (Ottoman yearbooks of the Manastir province)", *Makedonika*, 29 (1993-1994), pp. 310-311.

³⁶² Vlachs (in Ottoman *Ulah*) constitute a Balkan ethnic group speaking various Romance languages, see Traian Stoianovich, "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant", *Journal of Economic History*, 20 (1960), pp. 234-313. Vasilis Gounaris and Asteris Koukourdis, "Από την Πίνδο ως την Ροδόπη: Αναζητώντας τις εγκαταστάσεις και την ταυτότητα των Βλάχων (From Pindos to Rhodope: Looking for the settlements and the identity of the Vlachs)", *Istor*, 10 (1997), pp. 91-137. They arrived in *Manastir* only at the end of the eighteenth century following the destruction of *Moschopolis* (today's Voskopojë) and other flourishing Vlach towns in the area of Mountain Grammos in 1769, see Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, "Bitola", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, Brill Online, 2014.

³⁶³ Bulgarians of *Manastir* and its surrounding villages experienced an increased urbanization after the middle of the 19th century, aiming to avoid both worsening economic conditions in the countryside and the pressure exerted by both Greeks and Bulgarians on Slav peasant communities. Basil Gounaris, "From Peasants into Urbanites, from Village into Nation: Ottoman Monastir in the Early Twentieth Century", *European History Quarterly*, XXXI no. 4 (2001), p. 47.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

³⁶⁵ Vasil Mancev, a Bulgarian teacher active in the area, stated in his memoirs that the *gazino* had eighty Greek newspapers and periodicals and one French one, see Lory, *La ville balkanissime Bitola, 1800-1918* (*Bitola, A Balkan city par excellence, 1800-1918*), p. 245.

³⁶⁶ Georgios Tousimis, "L'orientation idéologique garibaldienne de la jeunesse de Monastir en 1860. L'activité de leur club et sa fermeture véhémente par le Grand-Vizir Kibrisli (The Garibaldian ideological orientation of the youth of Monastir in 1860. The activity of the club and its violent closure by the Great Vizir Kibrisli)", *Études Balkaniques*, 3-4 (1992), p. 39. The Greek press of *Manastir* often praised the "miracle of Garibaldi" and called for a simultaneous revolution in Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly, along with the Ionian Islands following the example of the Italian *Risorgimento*, see *Ibid.*, p. 41. The "Greek Garibaldians" remained active even after the *gazino*'s closure in autumn 1860, see Antonis Liakos, *Η Ιταλική ενοποίηση και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα (The Italian unification and the Megali Idea)*, Athens: Themelio, 1985, pp. 157-159. Lastly, Garibaldi was much despised by the Ottoman authorities, see BOA, I.HR. 333 21420 (18 July 1862), HR. MKT. 376 45 (5 May 1861).

from the Ionian Islands.³⁶⁷ Apart from its official members, the *gazino* was a meeting point also for other townsmen, as some of the town's guild members stated later in court to have visited the *gazino* just to "drink a coffee."³⁶⁸

The *gazino*'s backbone nevertheless, the teachers and the local merchants, constituted early examples of the "new urban Hellenic elites," that is, of Ottoman individuals who had studied in Athens, and then returned to their hometown where they exercised their profession as teachers, lawyers or medical doctors. They brought their community in a dialogue with different *loci*, both in geographical and in cultural terms.³⁶⁹ Ideologically they were close to the aspirations of Greek nationalism. The *gazinists* had been especially influenced not only by the ideas of Garibaldi, but also by Dimitris Karatasos, a chieftain of the Greek War of Independence. Karatasos, whom some of the *gazinists* had met during their stay in Athens, had instigated a local uprising in Chalkidiki

³⁶⁷ Solely the names of the ones arrested for the *gazino*-trial are delivered to us: The warden of the *gazino*, Miltiadis Liveratos, and the founder of the *gazino*, Stamatis Papyris -who was often mentioned in the interrogations, but not arrested, as he had already left the town (Both were English citizens originally from the island of Kefalonia); Minas Bistas and Nikolas Ziouzios, both Vlach merchants from the nearby village of *Megarovo*; the schoolmasters Kostantinos Geortsis, Konstantinos Papanau and his brother Sotirios Vosniakou, who were all mentioned by Kuzman Shapkarev, an important Bulgarian intellectual of the nineteenth century, as Grecomans. Further arrests included the head of the fez-sellers' (*fezçi*) guild, Georgios Tsakas (named also Georgios Fistsis, arrested by mistake, instead of Georgios Tsallis, a merchant and one of the administrators of the *gazino*), the merchant Naum Diskoultas and the tailor Dimitris Papatheocharis. For different versions of their surnames, compare Kuzman Sapkarev, *За възрождането на българщината в Македония (About the revival of Bulgarianness in Macedonia)*, Sofia: Balgarski Pisatel, 1984, pp. 110-111, the newspaper *Αιών*, (Century, newspaper issued in Athens), correspondence from Thessaloniki on 28 September 1860, published on 12 October 1860, and Tsallis, *Το δοξασμένο Μοναστήρι (Glorified Monastir)*, p. 19.

³⁶⁸ The tailor Dimitris for example said: "*Ben gittiğimde kabve içer otururdum sair orada bulunanlar dahi gazete ve kitap okurlardı. [...] ben de okumak bilmediğim için alıp okumazdım.*"

³⁶⁹ Kechriotis, "The Greeks of Izmir at the End of the Empire: A non-Muslim Ottoman Community between Autonomy and Patriotism", p. 64. Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία, 19^{ος} αι.-1919, Οι ελληνορθόδοξες κοινότητες (Asia Minor, 19th c.-1919, The Greek-Orthodox communities)*, pp. 307-308.

south of *Selanik* in 1854, as described earlier.³⁷⁰ Furthermore, he had been an advocate of Greek-Serbian alliance, which he actively promoted until his death in Belgrade in 1861.³⁷¹

What complicated the picture was that -apart from their nationalist aspirations- *gazi*nists also resembled Greek-Orthodox literati in other corners of the Empire, like the Cappadocians, who tried to distinguish themselves through propagating key concepts of the Western vocabulary of civilization like “progress,” “education,” “literacy,” “civilization,” “respectability.” In that sense, they adopted in general lines the Western discourse of modernization and its concepts of binary oppositions like civilization-barbarity, modernity-tradition.³⁷² Such ideas were not only reflecting their educational background but were also meant to provide them with some powerful means of distinction in the ongoing intra-*millet* fight between the clergy and newly emerging lay elites. Indeed, in all three major millets there arose by mid-century, or even earlier, strong protests against the existing order. The protests were voiced by bourgeois laymen, usually by artisans who were members of the various *esnafs*, or trade guilds, and by some of the more enlightened professional men.³⁷³

In the specific locality of *Manastır* the *gazi*nists were despised by the local Christian notables and the Orthodox metropolitan, Venediktos, who disgraced them, as is shown

³⁷⁰ Lory, *La ville balkanissime Bitola, 1800-1918 (Bitola, A Balkan city par excellence, 1800-1918)*, p. 246. For more information on Karatasos see also next section of this chapter.

³⁷¹ Georgios Chionidis, “Σχεδιάσμα περί του Γέροντος-Καρατάσου και της οικογενείας του (A sketch of old father-Karatasos and his family)”, *Makedonika*, 9 (1969), pp. 295-316. Constantinos Papoulidis, “Quelques éléments nouveaux concernant les plans insurrectionnels de Tsami Caratasso sur la délivrance des peuples balkaniques en 1860 (Some New Elements Concerning the Insurrectionary Plans of Tsami Caratasso on the Emancipation of Balkan Peoples)” in *Greek-Serbian Cooperation 1830-1908. Collection of Reports from the 2nd Greek-Serbian Symposium, 1980*, Radovan Samardzic (ed.), Belgrad: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art, 1982, pp. 107-109.

³⁷² Stefo Benlisoy, “Education in the Turcophone Orthodox Communities of Anatolia during the Nineteenth Century”, PhD Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2010, p. 421.

³⁷³ Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 120.

below, as “rebels.” Similarly, despite their affiliation to Greek nationalism, the consul of the Greek Kingdom in *Manastır*, Gerasimos Valianos, described in his memoirs his distance to the *gazino*, arguing that it was under the influence of elements contrary to the Greek Kingdom’s official policy.³⁷⁴ On the other hand, the *gazinists* had developed some influence and political power over the city’s artisans and guilds. Indeed, while the Greek club had been operating for a few years, it was only when its members achieved to politically mobilize the town’s guilds around the issue of an inter-communal murder that the Ottoman authorities intervened. The dynamic dissent -through a document coined *protesto*, signed by a considerable number of the town’s guild heads and submitted to the Grand Vizier, who was visiting the city, in person- demonstrated by the *gazinists* highly alarmed the authorities and led to the arrest and trial of nine men, *gazinists* as well as artisans.

While the broader context is too broad in order to be depicted here in detail,³⁷⁵ we suffice to say that when Grand Vizier Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin *paşa* arrived in *Manastır* in September 1860, during his Balkan inspection-tour, he found an atmosphere of increased social friction in the town.³⁷⁶ Both the inter-communal murder, as well as a simultaneously ongoing inter-communal tax dispute, had remained unresolved. This general unrest provided fertile ground for the *gazino* members to politically mobilize, as we will see in short, segments of the local Christian population against the Grand Vizier. Even more important, the Christians’ official head, metropolitan Venediktos, had been

³⁷⁴ Tousimis, “L’ orientation idéologique garibaldienne de la jeunesse de Monastir en 1860. L’ activité de leur club et sa fermeture véhémente par le Grand-Vizir Kıbrıslı (The Garibaldian ideological orientation of the youth of Monastir in 1860. The activity of the club and its violent closure by the Great Vizir Kıbrıslı)”, p. 39.

³⁷⁵ For further details, see Anna Vakali, “Nationalism, Justice and Taxation in an Ottoman Urban Context during the *Tanzimat*: The *Gazino*-Club in *Manastır*”, *Turkish Historical Review*, 7, 2 (2016), pp. 194-223.

³⁷⁶ For a description of this inspection tour, see Yonca Köksal, Davut Erkan, *Sadrazam Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Paşa’nın Rumeli Teftişi (The Vizier Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Pasha’s inspection tour in Rumeli)*, İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007, pp. 19-27.

long despised by his own population, leaving thus even more space to the *gazino* members to fill in the role of the community's representation.

Venediktos is known from existing literature as a greedy and mean community leader.³⁷⁷ Petitions unearthed in the Ottoman archives speak for his violent behaviour against individuals, intimidation of the people who were willing to testify against him,³⁷⁸ as well as terrorization of sixty-three villages, forcing them to write a *boşnudname* - document declaring satisfaction- in favour of him addressed to the Ottoman authorities.³⁷⁹ While the latter were being apprised of the situation, Venediktos kept on insisting that the complaints stemmed from a personal grudge against him.³⁸⁰

In 1860, Venediktos had his own reasons for despising the *gazino* and denouncing its members to the Grand Vizier. Not only was he critical of its separatist inclinations,³⁸¹ but its members had also co-authored some of the petitions against him.³⁸² Being moreover deeply in need of diverting attention from the complaints culminating against him, he accused the *gazino* members of drinking and generally exhibiting unruly and immoral behaviour, when he welcomed the Grand Vizier, together with other of the

³⁷⁷ Evangelos Kofos, *Ο αντάρτης επίσκοπος Κίτρος Νικόλαος (The rebellious bishop of Kitros Nikolaos)*, Athens, Giannitsa: Dodoni, 1992, pp. 176-177. Venediktos was considered as one of the city's richest men, with a yearly income of 200,000 piasters.

³⁷⁸ BOA, HR.MKT. 307 91 (1 October 1859), A.MKT.UM. 343 43 (6 February 1859)

³⁷⁹ BOA, HR.MKT. 267 41 (1 December 1858), HR.MKT. 265 36 (18 November 1858).

³⁸⁰ BOA, HR.MKT. 297 49 (23 July 1859), HR.MKT. 289 82 (28 May 1859), (BOA, HR.MKT. 307 5 (26 September 1859).

³⁸¹ Tousimis, 'L' orientation idéologique garibaldienne de la jeunesse de Monastir en 1860. L'activité de leur club et sa fermeture véhémente par le Grand-Vizir Kibrisli (The Garibaldian ideological orientation of the youth of Monastir in 1860. The activity of the club and its violent closure by the Great Vezir Kibrisli)', p. 42.

³⁸² Tsallis had been one of them, see BOA, HR.MKT. 307 91 (1 October 1859), also *Αιών*, 12 October 1860.

town's notables, in Pirlepe, a near-by town.³⁸³ Furthermore, his attempt of creating tension between the *gazino* members and the Grand Vizier was documented also by the former during their interrogations (see below), who testified that it was the metropolitan who had initially incited the city's Christian population against the Vizier, telling them that the latter would finally order Tasko's execution -the non-Muslim young boy accused of having killed a Muslim boy in the intercommunal murder troubling the city- when visiting their town.³⁸⁴ It seems that Venediktos had aimed at creating a social unrest, and then point to the *gazino* members as its instigators.

Hearing that the Grand Vizier would order the final execution of Tasko, the city's guild-heads met in the town's Church of Saint-Dimitrios, and decided to submit a relevant document coined "protesto" (*διαμαρτυρία*)³⁸⁵ to the Grand Vizier.³⁸⁶ A traditional petition pertaining to the same issue had been submitted some months earlier, but did not produce any effect.³⁸⁷ So, they had decided to give in a *protesto* this time, drafted with the help of the *gazino* members, and sealed by twenty guild-heads.³⁸⁸ It is difficult to say

³⁸³ Kofos, *Ο αντάρτης επίσκοπος Κίτρος Νικόλαος (The rebellious bishop of Kitros Nikolaos)*, p. 177, and *Αιών*, 12 October 1860.

³⁸⁴ See interrogation of Mina Biste (Venediktos [...] sent a message that they would slaughter Tasko tomorrow or the day after) and the final report (*mazbata*) in BOA, I.MVL. 441 19597 (11 January 1861), as well as *Αιών*, 12 October 1860.

³⁸⁵ The word *protesto* was not a widely used on in Ottoman political discourse, definitely not in the 1860s. It appears in 1229 documents in the Ottoman archives held in Istanbul (information retrieved on 5 August 2014), with the overwhelming majority of them dating from the early twentieth century. These documents mainly concern foreigners residing in the empire or matters pertaining to international relations. In addition, a *protesto* could be a legal document necessary to uphold claims on debts in the business world, see Mafalda Ade, *Picknick mit den Paschas: Aleppo und die levantinische Handelsfirma Fratelli Poche (1853-1880) (Picnic with the Paschas: Aleppo and the levantin trading firm Fratelli Poche (1853-1880))*, Beirut und Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2013, p. 260.

³⁸⁶ It declared that the "Christian people of Vitolia" were protesting after hearing rumours that Tasko was going to receive the capital punishment. It stated that the young Turkish man, whom Tasko had killed, had tried to kill Tasko first, and that the consequent trial of Tasko had taken place secretly and in violation of his rights.

³⁸⁷ This was testified by Geortsis. The English consul Calvert enclosed this petition (in French), see FO 78/1531, pp. 351-355.

³⁸⁸ Considering that the city was reported to have sixty-nine Muslim and Christian guilds (forty-one Christian, nineteen Muslim, nine Jewish) in the middle of thenineteenth century, this is a considerable

who incited whom when drafting the *protesto*, as later in their interrogations the *gazino* members accused the guild heads and vice versa.³⁸⁹

Following the submission of the *protesto*, nine Christians, mainly *gazino* members but also some guild members, were arrested. Their *millet* headmen, that is, more than twenty Christian notables, declared that they did not wish to be involved in this case and accused Mina and the others of being involved in many dangerous activities in the *gazino* (*asayış-i memleket aleyhine enva-i mefasid ile meşgul bulunduklarını*).³⁹⁰ The tension levels in the city had been raised. The Austrian consul noted the tension, manifest among others in the arson on 1 October of a tobacco shop owned by a Turk (sic), which was attributed to the Christians and interpreted as the signal of a coming rebellion.³⁹¹

In the following section I will make use of the *gazino* members' *istintakname* (interrogation protocols) during their trial, but first dwell upon their writings and speeches, which were found by the Ottoman authorities when raiding the *gazino*. We will thus have the opportunity to compare the mindset of the *gazino* members, as presented in their own documents, with the discourses they uttered in front of the Ottoman court and authorities.

portion, see Apostolos Vakalopoulos, "Πολιτική, κοινωνική και οικονομική δομή του πασαλικίου Μοναστηρίου στα μέσα του 19^{ου} αιώνα (Political, economic and social structure of the Monastir province in the middle of the nineteenth century)", *Makedonika* (1981), p. 194. The English consul Calvert, on the other hand, asserted that the petition was signed by "all the Christian corporations," FO 78/1531, p. 278.

³⁸⁹ The *gazino* members related later in their interrogations that there had been much debate over the submission of a *protesto* instead of a petition. Geortsis, who had produced the first draft of the *gazino*, argued that he had written it just by being deceived by the words of the others, while another defendant added that the *protesto*'s final text had been written according to the wording of the guilds (*kayıdın yazıştı esnafın ifadesidir*). Calvert argues that when the people had been summoned in the Church to debate the petition, some *gazino* members appeared and "unfortunately contrived to turn the tide of popular feeling, which it has been shown had taken a dignified course, into the rash extremity of a Protest." And, he continues, "despite the refusal of some of the guild members to sign the Protest, the violent declamations of these self-styled Radicals bore down all opposition." FO 78/1531, pp. 349-9.

³⁹⁰ Police report on the *gazino* case, see BOA, I.MVL. 441 19597 (11 January 1861).

³⁹¹ *Македонија през погледа на австрійските консули 1851-1877/8. 3 т. (Macedonia through the eyes of the Austrian consulate, 1851-1877/8, 3 vol.)*, Sofia: Macedonian Scientific Institute, 1994-2001, p. 117.

The *gazino* members claimed in their texts³⁹² to stand for the dynamic segments of *Manastr*, namely “the city’s educated and artistic youth”;³⁹³ they represented thus the pioneering forces of society. Furthermore, they perceived themselves as part of a larger community, the Christians of the Eastern denomination, whom they equated with the Greeks (*Έλληνες*).³⁹⁴ Indeed, religion and ethnicity, Orthodox Christianity and Greekness, were both integral parts of their self-definition: Geortsis addressed in his speech an ethnicity (*εθνότητα*), bearing Alexander the Great as its grand symbol,³⁹⁵ while, at another point, he equated the people (*λαός*) with God, as both were forbearing and fair-minded.³⁹⁶

Parallel to the self-assertive character of such a self-determination, the *gazinists* were eager to preserve social cohesion, by advocating more abstract ideals such as society (*κοινωνία*) and the beloved homeland (*πατριδοφιλή πατρίδα*). The former was envisioned as a solid whole (*εν όλον συμπαγές*), the members of which were bound through rights and obligations. Equally, there were repeated references to a common interest (*περί του κοινού καλού*), to which everybody should contribute. In all, humans were repeatedly being described as social beings, which could reach happiness and thrive only when they cared for a wider whole.³⁹⁷

³⁹² All following excerpts stem from Greek documents seized by the Ottoman authorities in the *gazino*, which can be found in the main file of the *gazino* case (BOA, I.MVL. 441 19597 (11 January 1861)). Particularly, the documents cited here are a letter of Geortsis to A. Goudas -a journalist residing in Athens- written in October 1858, a lengthy speech of Geortsis delivered in the *gazino* on the closing day of the Greek schools of *Manastr* before summer holidays -in which he stated that, in total, there were seven Greek schools operating in the town, visited by between 600 and 800 pupils-, as well as a speech of Nakos (teacher at the Greek schools) given in the rooms of the *gazino*, on the anniversary of the latter’s establishment on 1 January 1859.

³⁹³ Geortsis’s letter; at another point, it says “[...] the youth, which is striving for knowledge and development.”

³⁹⁴ Geortsis’s letter.

³⁹⁵ Speech of Geortsis.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, adding “[...] because the personal interest is innate in the general one [...].”

More affectively loaded was the quest for an abstract and idealized homeland (*πατρίδα*), which infiltrated all aspects of life³⁹⁸ and was depicted, moreover, as having been suffering³⁹⁹ and threatened.⁴⁰⁰ Everybody should live up to the expectations of the *πατρίδα*⁴⁰¹ and ought to sacrifice his or her personal interest for its well-being,⁴⁰² even one's own life.⁴⁰³ This abstract ideal of the homeland was rarely rendered concrete, when, for example, it was given the name Macedonia,⁴⁰⁴ when the Greek schools' students were called the "children of Macedonia"⁴⁰⁵ or, in one single case, when Greece was merely hinted at as "every effort to parting it [*πατρίδα*] from its whole (implying the Greek Kingdom) should be fought." Lastly, for the time being even the three-room-*gazino* was depicted as the temporary embodiment of this homeland.⁴⁰⁶

Be it intentional or not, the generic character of society and homeland in the *gazino* members' narratives enabled them to remain silent on many issues one would be expecting to encounter in such documents. Indeed, absent from these narratives were references directly to the Greek Kingdom (founded in 1832), the recent Greek War of Independence (1821-1829), or the Ottoman Empire the *gazino* members were currently

³⁹⁸ Speech of Geortsis, "It is in the homeland that one finds his father, his mother, his children, his relatives, his friends· it is in her that one finds his memories, his desires, his religion, his hopes."

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, "[...] relieve [the homeland] from long suffering [...]" and "[...] the thirsty youth of our unfortunate homeland [...]."

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, "The land, which our fathers passed on to us, after having shed many tears for its salvation; the land which devious and infamous people are dreaming of grabbing from us [...]."

⁴⁰¹ Speech of Nakos.

⁴⁰² Speech of Geortsis.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, "[...] because it is our own, it is our property, this land is Macedonia [...]."

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ Speech of Nakos, "The [club] proceeds towards its destination [...], to be the homeland, its drive, its expression."

living in. Neither do we encounter references to concrete political plans; an era of salvation occurred merely as an abstract expectation, an era in which the Christian, the “true civilization” would prevail.⁴⁰⁷ The *πατρίδα* would live its rebirth.⁴⁰⁸ In addition, no concrete “others” were addressed as enemies, apart from the current situation of lethargy, the murk of illiteracy and the yoke of barbarity.⁴⁰⁹ Indeed, what had to be fought against was the relaxation of the religious and patriotic morals and the damaging luxury, an idea, significantly, imported from abroad.⁴¹⁰ If a concrete “enemy” was stated, then the Bulgarians’ rising demands were being implied; such demands, interpreted as attempts to partition, would be blocked.⁴¹¹

Next to these silences though, there was one concrete issue, which recurred in the ideas of the *gazino* members, as it constituted the basis of every social progress: education.⁴¹² Schools were described as “holy shrines”⁴¹³ which, next to the teachings of the Bible, constituted the main destination of the humans. Students were even depicted as angels.⁴¹⁴ Education comprised ancient Greek history and philosophers, religious indoctrination, as well as subjects such as geography, geometry, mathematics and writing. Overall, mental progress and education rendered the nineteenth century a “demanding

⁴⁰⁷ Speech of Geortsis.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, “[...] to the modest and praiseworthy struggle of the homeland’s renaissance.”

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, “[...] the corruption of the morals, the imported Goddess of the fake civilization, that is, the disastrous luxury, the danger of the slackening of the religious sentiment and the patriotic morale.”

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, and “[...] that the schools are the real and firm basis of the human being’s infinite happiness and greatness [...]”

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

one.”⁴¹⁵ Next to education, morality based on the teachings of the Bible was fundamental for a society’s prosperity.⁴¹⁶

The generic character of the *gazinists*’ ideas, as demonstrated in their writings, together with the silences and omissions of some obvious subjects like the Greek Kingdom, provided them with the necessary space in order negotiate and adjust their ideas in front of the Ottoman court. In addition, the *Tanzimat* itself, with its prevailing civilizationist discourses, offered the *gazinists* the necessary terrain in order to present their own ideas related to morality and education as identical to the *Tanzimat* discourses - and thus harmless to the state.⁴¹⁷ Indeed, they repeatedly explained that their intentions had been to spread education (*tahsil, tahsil-i malumat, marif, malumatı tezayüd, ilim, okumak için, alim, ulum, havadisat-ı aleme vakıf olmak*), to imbue their fellow townsmen with morality (*herkese iyilik etmek, iyiliğe teşvik, iyi adam olmak, birbirimize hüsn muamele icra edüp, yekdiğerimize muavenet etmek*), cultural advance (*medeniyete ileri varmak, terbiye(li), edeb*), and to keep up with modernity (*usul-u cedid üzere abalinin terbiye olunmasını emel [...]*). Overall, their goal had been to provide good services to the state (*devletimize vevatanımıza hüsn hizmet etmek, ehl-i irz olmak, benim bildiğim vatan muhabbettir*); every talk concerning the state, state officials, or religious matters (*devletçe ve mezhepçe ve memuriyet ve hiç bir kimse için*) had been prohibited by

⁴¹⁵ Speech of Geortsis, “Are [the schools] living up to the expectations of the century we are living in? [...] our century is a demanding one [...]” and, “[...] according to the progressive tendencies of the current century [...]” and “Therefore, the farmer, as well as the woodsman, and the shepherd, and the miller, they are all electrified by the progress of our century.” Similarly, Nakos stated: “Thereby, through [the club’s] foundation, a new era dawns for the homeland, an era of mental progress.”

⁴¹⁶ “[...] that the basis of the happiness of every society is morality, [...] based on the principles of the Christian philosophy, that is, on the principles of the Bible.”, speech of Nakos. For the emphasis on a moral agenda on behalf of educational projects of the 19th century, see Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 35-41.

⁴¹⁷ Doğan Gürpınar, *Ottoman/Turkish Visions of the Nation, 1860-1950*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 165.

the *gazino* regulations;⁴¹⁸ Bulgarian teachers, who had come to the city and the *gazino* to propagate Bulgarian separatist ideas (demanding, among others, clergy in their own language) had been expelled. Indeed, the *gazino* was addressing the Empire's anxieties, rendering itself guarantor of social discipline and intra-*millet* peaceful coexistence.⁴¹⁹

Particularly, Mina argued that they had founded the *gazino* for the city's elderly people, who did not enjoy the chance of attending the schools, providing them with newspapers and books and the opportunity to be informed about the world's news. Moreover, "bad people (*fena adamlar*)," who had previously been wandering around in coffeehouses and taverns, had mutated after their visits to the *gazino* into "people of honour (*ehl-i ırz*)." To note, rendering the *gazino* a school enabled the defendants to justify a certain nationalist rhetoric in its realms, which usage, as the Ottoman authorities underlined in their own minutes on the *gazino* case, was proper (*caiz olabiliyor*) only in schools and churches, but not publicly among people.

Negotiating their ideas in court occasionally reached for the *gazino* members the degree of camouflaging and even distorting their initial ideas. This became even more apparent in the case of the term *πατριδα*, which was now equated with the Ottoman Empire. For example, when Mina was asked about an abstract from Nako's speech, in which the *gazino*'s members were urged to acquire knowledge in order to live up to the expectations of the homeland (*vatan*), the former answered that knowledge would help them to "be good people (*iyi adam*) [...] and pay good service to our state and homeland," implying here the Ottoman Empire. In addition, the terms Greece and

⁴¹⁸ The defendants were thereby conforming to the state's anxieties about the coffeehouses being places of public immorality and subversive political discourse, Kılıt, "The Struggle over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman Istanbul, 1780-1845", pp. 58, 64.

⁴¹⁹ The *Rum millet*i comprised all of the empire's Greek-Orthodox subjects, regardless of what language they spoke (be it Greek, Slavic languages, Albanian, etc.). Its administration was dominated by the Greek-speaking clergy. Starting in the 1850s, however, the Slavic populations of the southern Balkans increasingly started asking for clergy and schools in their own language.

Greeks, with the help of some verbal tricks, were disconnected from the contemporary Kingdom of Greece.

Particularly, Geortsis, in one of his letters, had stated that the *gazinists* were the town's "Christians of the eastern nomination, that is, the Greeks (*Έλληνες*)." The Athenian journalist, with whom he had correspondence, had answered that it was the "duty of the Greeks living [in Greece]" to help the expatriates in the "not liberated Greece (*τοις κατά τη μη Ελευθέραν Ελλάδα ομογενείς*)." For the Ottoman authorities, there existed a clear distinction between the term *Rum* (the Greek-Orthodox subjects of the Empire, comprising of speakers of various languages, Greeks -*Έλληνες*-, Bulgarians and so on) and the *Yunanlılar* (*Έλληνες*, citizens of the Greek Kingdom); any connection between the two terms could sound rather seditious to the interrogators. So, when Geortsis was asked to comment on these abstracts, his main concern was to disconnect the word *Έλληνες* from Greece (*ben yazmış olduğum mektubumda Yunan lafzini kullanmadım*). He thus stated that he had used the word *Έλληνες* (*Elinoz*) as a term generally referring to all Rum subjects of the Empire, especially in order to underline that they, the Bulgarian *gazinists*, were not part of the *Slav millet*.⁴²⁰

This is a striking passage regarding the disputed identities in the province. It is impossible to know what exactly the word *Έλληνες* meant for Geortsis. Judging from his writings existing in the case's file, he was indeed conceiving his co-religionists as members of a greater, Greek civilization dating back to ancient Greece. On the other hand, in court he pointed to a more limited meaning, one that would be more favourable to the Ottoman authorities: he was coining all *Rums* as Greeks, and therefore opposing to Bulgarian, separatist tendencies within the *Rum millet*. In addition, Geortsis referred at

⁴²⁰ "Bulgar bulunduğumuzdan Eslav milletine dahil olmadığımızı beyan etmek için umumen Rumlara verilen Elinoz ismiyle kendimizi tesviye etmiştim." Similar to that, Papanauum, the only defendant asked about his *millet* during the interrogations, answered that he was Bulgarian (*Bulgarım*).

this relatively early period (1860) to a “Bulgarian *millet*” (which was officially established only in 1870); this speaks for both already existing social ruptures along the Greek and Bulgarian identities, as well as for a looser usage of the word “millet” in everyday language, coining not only different ethnoreligious groups but also ethnic sub-groups. To note, also Minas stated towards the end of this interrogation that the main reason for opening the *gazino* had been to oppose the rising Bulgarian separatist tendencies.

For the record, in various occasions the defendants resorted to more clichéd strategies, expected ones within a courtroom, such as being gullible and naive, submissive, or tuning in to answers expected from them. Similarly, when asked about the writings around a painting of Alexander the Great seized from the *gazino* -writings which urged the people to fight against their current enemies,⁴²¹ Minas tersely answered that he did not know who was meant as the current enemies. Geortsis, on his part, admitted that these words had meant to stir up the Empire’s Christian population, but maintained that Minas and he had restored these writings for fun (*eğence tarıkıyla*), and inadvertently had left it at the *gazino* (*gaflik edip*), enabling thus everybody to see it. Indeed, while the interrogators were repeatedly underlining the seriousness of the defendants’ offenses, the latter ones tended to belittle their actions by coining them bad-badness (*fena, fenalık*), mistake and minor offense (*bata ve kabahat*), or just blunder done for the purpose of entertainment.

⁴²¹ “I opened and cut the old knot and warded off your old enemies, now you should cut your new enemies and ward them off.”

Nationalist Printing in Bulgarian and Greek Language under Trial

In this section I am going to discuss printing of nationalist material, both in Greek and in Bulgarian language, and the trials of their publishers or sellers. While in the previous sections I have referred to printed material being disseminated among members of secret committees or people preparing an uprising, in the remaining of this chapter I will focus on the people producing this material, that is, local printers or bookstore owners. In fact, as we will see, in order to be able to operate their printing houses these people had to follow certain strategies towards the state.

To begin with, nationalist printing or disseminating nationalist printed material was forbidden in the Ottoman Empire. In 1854, for example, a decree was issued about a nationalist, eleven-page-long pamphlet, printed in 1853 on the Aegean island of Syros. It had been brought to *Selanik*, with the aim, according to the Ottoman authorities, of “inciting the minds of the non-Muslims subjects (*tabrik-i ezhan-ı reaya*).”⁴²² However, the governor of *Selanik* assured in his report that the city’s non-Muslims were not paying attention to such publications, since they were enjoying unprecedented privileges and complete safety and comfort (*mazhar oldukları imtiyazat ve kemal-ı emniyet ve istirahat*). The Sultan’s final decree nevertheless stipulated that the dissemination of similar publications should be banned (*bu makule evrakın adem-i neşrine dikkat olunmak üzere*).

Printers and booksellers thus were following, as we will see, a similar strategy of argumentation in their petitions and interrogations, in order to secure their licenses and the working of their shops: they maintained to print or sell only books destined “for schools and churches,” as well as nothing relative to politics. In 1849 Azidorid? Eskilci?

⁴²² BOA, LMTZ. (01) 9 227 (11 February 1854).

asked for permission to publish a Greek newspaper, which would publish things pertaining only to “some stories and anecdotes about literature,” and “things from sciences and education, things about technology and industry,” and it would abstain from things purely political (*sırf politika olan mevaddan kullıyen ictinab ediip*), and only “for variety and from time to time” it would publish some harmless and amusing (“*zararsız and eğlencelî*”) news. In addition, it would never publish things related to the central government (*ne divana ve ne maslahata asla dokunmayacak*).⁴²³ In 1856 Kostantin asked for permission to print a newspaper in Istanbul, on account that when just and sound thoughts (*efkar-ı adile ve saibe*) were being published everybody was being shown the way of “civilization and education” (*tarik-i medeniyet ve terbiyete dahil*), otherwise ignorance (*cebalet ve nadan*) prevailed. His newspaper would publish the abundant regulations, which were ordered about the *Rum milleti* and so, naturally, it would prohibit inciting and sedition (*tabriki ve fesadatin men ve ifasına çare olmak*).⁴²⁴

Similarly, Nikolas Vaglamalis -the third Christian printer of *Selanik* (after Garbolas and Kiriakos, see below)- in his petition in 1866 to the state for opening a printing house in the town underlined that his printing house would print “solely books which would be read by students in the schools and churches (*yalnız mekteplerde ve kiliselerde sıbyanın kıraatına mahsus kitap*).”⁴²⁵ The provincial council of *Selanik* stipulated

⁴²³ BOA, I.HR. 51 2422 (12 March 1849). The relevant decree was being published on 12 March 1849, giving permission to the newspaper on account that it would be inspected by the officials. The petition came probably from the capital, as no other document, of a provincial council or a provincial governor, was included in the file.

⁴²⁴ BOA, MVL. 170 7 (20 December 1855). The same petition can be found in BOA, MVL. 173 10 (20 April 1856).

⁴²⁵ BOA, I.MVL. 546 24520 (9 January 1866). For Vaglamalis, see also Charalampos K. Papastathis, “Τα πρώτα ελληνικά τυπογραφεία της Θεσσαλονίκης (The First Greek Printing-Offices in Thessaloniki)”, *Makedonika*, Η', Thessaloniki, (1968), pp. 253-254. Panagiotis Kokkas, “Η οικογένεια Γιαρμπολά και η πρώτη ελληνική εφημερίδα της Θεσσαλονίκης (The Garbolas Family and the First Greek Newspaper of Thessaloniki)”, *Makedonika*, 21, Thessaloniki, (1981), p. 231. See also BOA, I.MVL. 546 24520 (9 January 1866).

that the books that Vaglamalis wanted to print had been inspected and he himself had proven to be a subject of the Ottoman Empire (and not a foreigner). The council proposed the granting of permission to Vaglamalis, on the condition that he would be bound to a guarantee (*kefalete rabi*). It was also stated that the books did not include elements harmful to the sovereign and the state (*mülkçe ve devletçe muzır şey tab olunmamak*). The final decree approved the opening of the printing house of Vaglamalis on the conditions mentioned above. Finally, few years later Nikola Mihal, resident of *Selanik*, was granted permission to open a printing house (*matbaa*) on the same conditions, that is, that the books and pamphlets would be only for educational purposes and that he would be bound to a guarantee.⁴²⁶

Similar to their petitions, the relevant interrogations of printers revealed a similar pattern. While printed books were often being coined as bad, and causing the sedition of peoples' minds (*muşır, ifsad-ı ezhan*), printers were usually pardoned and left free, if they guaranteed that their books were “just for schools.” Kiriakos Darzilovitis (Darzilovets),⁴²⁷ a Greek-educated Slavophone from a village outside *Vodina* (today's Edessa) northwest of *Selanik*, opened a printing house and bookstore in *Selanik* in October 1850, after having lived and studied in Athens since the mid-1840s. Taking over the necessary equipment from Miltiadis Garbolas,⁴²⁸ a Vlach who had opened the town's first Christian

⁴²⁶ BOA, MF.MKT. 1 3 (7 May 1872).

⁴²⁷ These are his surnames respectively in Greek (Δαρζιλοβίτης) and Bulgarian (Дарзилевич) language. I chose the Greek version in this article's title, as with this he signed his interrogation document and his petition to the governor (see below). BOA, I.MVL. 204 6505 (24 March 1851), A.MKT.NZD. 31 40 (3 April 1851), A.MKT.MVL. 41 8 (31 March 1851).

⁴²⁸ Miltiadis belonged to the famous Vlach family Garbolas, originally from the Mount Olympus near *Katrin* (Katerini), who had formed a dynasty of printers and bookstore holders. His father Konstantinos resided in Vienna, and moved to Athens in 1838, where he founded a printing house and a bookstore. He operated his store until 1842. Papastathis, “Τα πρώτα ελληνικά τυπογραφεία της Θεσσαλονίκης (The First Greek Printing-Offices in Thessaloniki)”, p. 240. Kokkas, “Η οικογένεια Γιαρπολά και η πρώτη ελληνική εφημερίδα της Θεσσαλονίκης (The Garbolas Family and the First Greek Newspaper of Thessaloniki)”, p. 231.

printing house approximately a year earlier, Kiriakos opened his own bookstore and printing office on *Sultaniye* Street.⁴²⁹ Only few months after arriving in *Selanik*, in February 1851, Kiriakos was tried by the provincial council of *Selanik* (*Selanik eyaleti meclisi*).⁴³⁰ The accusation Kiriakos faced was twofold: firstly, it comprised his acquisition of a Greek passport⁴³¹ during his student years in Athens immediately before coming to *Selanik*. Secondly, he was accused of having opened his store without obtaining the necessary license beforehand and of printing and selling improper and seditious books, which could “corrupt the minds of the people.”⁴³² The acquisition of the passport was defined as a (minor) offence (*kebabat, töhmet*) in the Ottoman documents.⁴³³ Yet, his unlicensed shop and its printing activities were classified as more threatening, as they

⁴²⁹ Papastathis, “Τα πρώτα ελληνικά τυπογραφεία της Θεσσαλονίκης (The First Greek Printing-Offices in Thessaloniki)”, p. 245. Papastathis erroneously dates the foundation of Kiriakos’s store to 1852.

⁴³⁰ Kiriakos was tried alone, but according to what stated later during his interrogation, he operated his store together with eight partners, six of whom were merchants. During his testimony, he revealed some of their names: Kostanti Dinke (his brother), Nikola Ispala (known as Nikolaos Psaltis, who had also been a partner of Garbolas), Dimitri Tzortzi in Trieste, and Karbola and Kostanti Varvat in Athens. BOA, I.MVL. 204 6505 (24 March 1851).

⁴³¹ The passport was included in the case’s file; it was issued in September 1850 and was valid for six months. Beyond indicating nationality, the passport was a slip of paper which should grant Kiriakos a free passage from Athens to *Selanik*. To note, Ottoman Christians’ visits to the Kingdom of Greece in order to receive a Greek passport and their return to the Ottoman Empire constituted an issue of contention between Greece and the Ottoman Empire starting from the 1830s. According to Greek law, a precondition for issuing a Greek passport in such cases was a three-year long residence on Greek territory. The Ottoman authorities recognized as Greeks only those who had migrated between 1830 and 1837, had sold their property before their departure, and had stayed for at least three years in Greek territory. Georgios Georgis, *Η πρώτη μακροχρόνια ελληνοτουρκική διένεξη (The first longstanding Greek-Turkish Dispute: the issue of nationality, 1830-1869)*, Athens: Kastaniotis, 1996, pp. 157, 217.

⁴³² The books were described variously as *mülke muzır kitaplar* (books harmful to the state) during the interrogations, as *tağyir-i efkar-ı nasa sebep olacak kitaplar* (books that will cause the change of the thoughts of the people) and *uygunsuz kitaplar* (improper books) in the report (*tahrirat*) of the governor of *Selanik*, and as *ifsad-ı ezhan-ı ahaliye mucib bir takım kitaplar* (several books giving rise to subversion in the minds of the people) in the official report (*mazbata*) of the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vela-ı Ahkam-ı Adliye*) and in the Sultan’s decree (*irade*).

⁴³³ BOA, I.MVL. 204 6505 (24 March 1851), see respective writing of the governor of *Selanik* on 25 February 1851.

were against the order (*mugayir-i nizam ba'zı hareket*) and could incite sedition or disorder (*fesat-amiz şeyler*).⁴³⁴

The books' exact titles and content were not specified during Kiriakos's interrogation and in the accompanying Ottoman documents; rather, we encounter merely the reference to "books harmful to the state" (*mülke müzır kitaplar*). One may thus only speculate on the content of Kiriakos's books by looking at the titles of the books he printed after his trial and after having received respective warnings. In fact, the titles of these books are known to us from other sources. Between 1852 and 1860, Kiriakos printed twelve books in Greek language and one book in Slavic translation, though printed with Greek letters, a known practice at that time. The Greek books were books for the Greek schools of the town with topics ranging from French language to ethics, arithmetic, physics and geography. Other printed books had a focus on Christian theology with a special emphasis on religious services, the New Testament and canonical references. There were also books of general knowledge on medical advices, as well as on the history of the creation of the world.⁴³⁵ Finally, the Slavic book was the "Konikovo Gospel" (*Konikovsko Evangelie*), the oldest known major text reflecting the area's living Slavic dialects. It consisted of a Gospel lectionary for Sunday services in Slavic translation, printed in Greek letters with corrections by Pavel Božigropski from the village of Konikovo and issued in 1852.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ BOA, I.MVL. 204 6505 (24 March 1851).

⁴³⁵ To name just three examples (all printed in Greek language), *Geography of Elementary Subjects (to be Used in the Elementary Schools)* (1855), Dimitrios N. Davaris, *Christian Manual with Short Explanation* (1858), S. Samartzidis, *Practicing Medicine Without a Doctor* (1853). For a full list of the books printed by Kiriakos, see Papastathis, "Τα πρώτα ελληνικά τυπογραφεία της Θεσσαλονίκης (The First Greek Printing-Offices in Thessaloniki)", pp. 245-248.

⁴³⁶ In fact, Kiriakos printed only four pages, comprising a title page and four Gospel readings in Slavic translation, of an original bilingual (Greek-Slavic) manuscript of the Konikovo Gospel, which was found in 2003 by researchers from the University of Helsinki in the library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa and has been dated back to the late 18th or early 19th century. See <http://www.helsinki.fi/~jslindst/268/> (retrieved in September 2015).

In all, following his trial in 1851 Kiriakos continued his printing activity, but this time by focusing, like other printers did, on books related mainly to education and religion. In his letter to Rakovski in October 1860, Kiriakos stated that he used to print in his printing house “all the Greek books used in the schools.”⁴³⁷ Pertaining to the books which had cost him his arrest in 1850, we can assume that their content must have been related to inciting claims of Greek nationalism and / or were destined for a wider public exceeding the boundaries of schools and churches.

Back to his trial in 1851, Kiriakos was subjected to several questions regarding his acquisition of a Greek passport and the activities of his printing house. Pertaining to Greek passports, only the former Ottoman subjects who had changed to the Greek citizenship before 1837 were accepted as Greek subjects by the Ottoman authorities in accordance with the Protocol of London signed in July 1837.⁴³⁸ In his defence, Kiriakos, without making any reference to the legal framework, stated in court that upon his return to the Ottoman Empire, many friends and officials had offered him to return to the status of being an Ottoman subject (*tebaiyet*). However, he said, he was not in a rush (expressed also by his use of the word *bakalım*, “let’s see”): first, he wanted to wait and see whether he would be accepted as a foreign subject and then, if it suited his interests (*işime gelir ise*), he would consider again becoming an Ottoman subject.⁴³⁹ In addition, Kiriakos claimed that, although he had no license for his shop, he had come to the Ottoman Empire to work according to the established law and order of the Empire as

⁴³⁷ Nikola Traikov (ed.), *Arhive G.S. Rakovski. Vol. 2. Letters to Rakovski (1841-1860)*, Sofya: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1957, p. 621.

⁴³⁸ Georgis, *Η πρώτη μακροχρόνια ελληνοτουρκική διένεξη (The first longstanding Greek-Turkish dispute: the issue of nationality, 1830-1869)*, pp. 219, 221, 227. The author cites a report of the Greek consul in Istanbul (dated November 1848), in which the latter mentioned that the Ottoman authorities were imprisoning many holders of Greek passports, demanding that they pay the tax levied from non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, the *reaya* (*απαίτησιν χαρατζοχαρτίου ως ριγάδας*). None of this, however, was mentioned during Kiriakos’s trial.

⁴³⁹ BOA, LMVL. 204 6505 (24 March 1851): “Eğer teba’u-i ecnebiyelere ruhsat olmaz ise o vakit işime gelir ise olurum [teba’u-i devlet-i aliye].”

well as “our own law (*kendi kanunumuz ile beraber*).” This latter law he stated to be the law of the Greek state (*benim kanunum Yunan devleti kanunudur*). Otherwise, Kiriakos continued, had he not followed Greek law, he would have suffered a loss, given the fact that in the Greek Kingdom everybody was printing without a license. This had been the case, according to Kiriakos, especially after the declaration of the Greek Constitution (*konstitisyon-u Yunan*) in 1843.

It the same line, he stated that the Greek Constitution was valid for Greeks (*Yunanlar*, meaning here the citizens of the Greek Kingdom) even when they travelled and came under the jurisdiction of other governments.⁴⁴⁰ In sum, Kiriakos did not base the (re)acquisition of a certain citizenship on specific bureaucratic procedures and legal prerequisites, but rather on his own willingness and convenience. Furthermore, he felt confident enough to plea for the applicability of Greek law in his individual case, because of his status “as a Greek.” All these arguments speak to a high degree of fluidity in the passage from one citizenship to another, at least in the beginning of the *Tanzimat* and in the setting of *Selanik*.

As for his books, Kiriakos testified during his interrogation that he had been advised by the authorities to show them any book he was about to print. Nevertheless, Kiriakos argued that he had not followed the orders, as the “warning had not been in written form (*tabiriren*),” and the books he printed were “harmless (*zararsız*).” In addition, following these first warnings his printing was left undisturbed. So, he had not seen any reason to apply to the Ottoman authorities.⁴⁴¹ Asked specifically about one “improper” book that he had brought from Greece, Kiriakos maintained that he had sold only some copies of it, and then, after having being warned, had stopped doing so. The

⁴⁴⁰ BOA, LMVL. 204 6505 (24 March 1851). In Kiriakos’s words: “*Yunanlar hükümet-i ahara dahi gittiklerinde [konstitisyon-u Yunan] haklarında cari olur.*”

⁴⁴¹ Kiriakos referred to the local authorities both as *hükümet* and as *meclis*.

interrogators referred also to another book, which Kiriakos had picked up from the customs, and which had led to his arrest. Apart from these books seized by the government, Kiriakos continued, there had been eight to ten other books, which he had piled up in a corner of his store, again after having received respective warnings.

Following his trial (and his subsequent acquittal), Kiriakos continued printing books through 1860, when his printing house was completely shut down, leaving him only with his bookstore.⁴⁴² The reason for the closure was Kiriakos's support for the Bulgarians of the city of *Avrethisar* (Kilkis) after they demanded the appointment of their own, Bulgarian bishop, Parthenios. The details of the incident have been elaborated on elsewhere.⁴⁴³ Suffice to say is that this time, in 1860, the closure of his bookstore had been orchestrated by the metropolitans of *Selanik*, Neofitos, and of *Vodina*, Nikodimos (1859-1870), together with the provincial governor of *Selanik*.

More than ten years after Kiriakos's trial, similar trials of bookstore holders took place in *Manastir* and *Ziştovi*. The Bulgarian teacher Todor, the son of Todor Hrolov?, for example, was tried at the local council of *Ziştovi* in 1863 for picking up some seditious books from the customs. In his testimony, Todor argued that his supplier from Odessa had informed him that they were "books for children to read."⁴⁴⁴ Some months later, Tome, his brother Petro, as well as Anastas Makri were tried in the council of *Manastir* for selling books that were said to incite the minds of the people. In parallel to Todor's claims, they argued that their books were only for the education of the Christian students

⁴⁴² Kiriakos described the incident in a letter to Rakovski on October 1860, stating that it had taken place six months before, Traikov (ed.), *Arhive G.S. Rakovski. Vol. 2. Letters to Rakovski (1841-1860)*, p. 621.

⁴⁴³ Anna Vakali, "A Christian Printer on Trial in the Tanzimat Council of Selanik, Early 1850s: Kiriakos Darzilovitis and his Seditious Books", *Cibanniima*, I/2, December 2015, pp. 23-38.

⁴⁴⁴ BOA, MVL. 949 49 (25 April 1864).

(*millet-i heristiyanın sıbyanlarına talim olunmak üzere*) and that no book among them pertained to freedom (*serbestiye müteallik*).⁴⁴⁵

Particularly, Todor, originally from the village of *Leskofça* near *Turnovi*, had been working as a teacher in *Ziştovi* for the last sixteen years. He was tried on 1 December 1863 for carrying some seditious (*mazarrathı ve fesadlı lakırdılar*) books. In fact, he was arrested when he was picking up some dozens (he mentioned 600!) of books from the customs, sent to him from Odessa from the teacher Pavli Klinici(?) (other litigants name as sender Vasil Raşobof from the same town), also originally from *Leskofça*. Pavli was also the publisher of these books.

Todor stated during his interrogation that he had no time to look at the books, as they had been immediately confiscated. Pavli nevertheless had written him that they were “good books for the children to read” (*çocuklar için okunacak iyi bir takım kitap*). On the other hand, he also stated that similar books sent before had been just stored in the school, as they were too difficult for the pupils to read. He underlined that he had not been aware of the bad content (*fena*) of the books and asked the council to burn these if they were really harmful (*yaksınlar fena şey ise ben istemem*).

The interrogators focused especially on three books written by Rakofski, whom they characterized as an especially dangerous person (*müfsid-i meshur, fena bir kimse, pek fesadçı*). Todor argued that these books had been property of the school in which he was teaching and that they had been sent on behalf of some notables of the Bulgarian *millet* in *Ibrail* as a present, together with some other books related to religion and ethnicity (*ayin ve mezhebe dair*). Todor maintained that he did not know the content of the books, and also that they were not being read by anyone in the schools, as the people preferred to

⁴⁴⁵ BOA, MVL. 967 61 (13 July 1864).

read books related to “Eastern, religious services and religion” (*şarkıya ve ayin ve mezhebe dair*).

When the interrogators insisted that he must have known about Rakofski and his books, Todor reacted defensively saying that he was a simple servant (*hiżmetkar bir adamım*), being preoccupied with his work.⁴⁴⁶ In addition, the ones responsible for the book had been the school’s administrators, and not himself. The latter, a grocer and a salt-seller (*bakkaal ve tuzcu*), similarly to Todor argued in court that they were not aware of the books. The parents had been responsible for obtaining the books for their children-pupils, and the books had been brought by Todor (about whom, anyway, they guaranteed that he was a “person of honour” (*ehl-i ırz*)). They as administrators were only carrying out the school’s finances and were not responsible for checking the content of the books. The notables (*çorbacılar*) were responsible for making warning about such kind of books.

In the same year as Todor, Tome and Petro,⁴⁴⁷ sons of Restov, originally from the village *Tirnova* outside of *Manastır*, as well as Anastas Makri from *Manastır*, were accused of selling books and pamphlets in the town of *Manastır* which were inciting the minds of the people and had political content (*efkar-ı ve ezhan-ı tabrik eder ve politikaya dokunur*). Next to their books also some rifle stones had been found. All these men were tried by the local investigative council (*meclis-i tahkik*) of *Manastır*.

More than about the exact content of the books, the interrogators asked questions related to who supplied the books, who ordered them, who was being curious about reading them etc. Tome argued that he had been selling books since 1847, also in

⁴⁴⁶ “Çok çok kimse ile konuştuğum yoktur sabah iskolaya akşam evime gidiş bütün gün çocukları okutmak ve yazı yazdırmak ile uğraşyorum” and later “dersim ile meşgulüm.” BOA, MVL. 949 49 (25 April 1864).

⁴⁴⁷ Specifically about Petro it was specified in his testimony how many languages he spoke (Greek, Bulgarian, Albanian, Arumanian, and a bit Turkish). One could guess that the specific mentioning of all these languages may indicate a rarity, and therefore had to be extra mentioned.

fairs in *Siroz* and *Pirlepe*, while his brother had gone as far as *Yanya* for the same purpose. He was bringing his books from several towns, mainly from Athens, but also from *Izmir* and *Selanik*. Darzilo (most probably Darzilovitis) had been sending him newspapers from *Selanik* but in the last eight months he had stopped as Tome had told him that he was not interested in finding clients for him. Before ordering his books, Tome was consulting the school teachers, and sometimes also the church trustees. When asked specifically about the teachers' names, he named Kostanti Dimadi, and Kosti, and Aspas, and Naum Papas Kostanti. As for the issue of what people preferred to read, Tome argued that the people were asking more for books about religion (*mezhebe dair*), and for books with stories (*tevarih ve hikayati müştemel*).

Specifically, about the books found in his bookstore, one of them had been printed two years before in Eftanisa (Ionian Islands), was written by Yovanof Zambalinov in Bulgarian and carried the title "Tragodia." Tome argued that the book was given to him by the brothers Miladinov (Dimitri and Konstantin), the teachers who later went to Russia (or by Sakelaryo from Athens?). When asked about books pertaining to freedom (*serbestiye müteallik*), he maintained that he was not selling such books, that he was just selling books about folk songs printed in Greece, which were being bought by school pupils and artisans (*esnaf*). The pamphlets were comprising of folk songs, and related to "affection, drunkenness" (*mahabbete, sarboşluğa*) and other elements of folklore (*lirar ve aşığıa yani kalınç ve tüfenk ve sair alat-ı harbiye dair şeyleri kullanmak ile ? ve seçaata dair*). Lastly, Tome was interrogated about some pamphlets with inciting character and related to Greek nationalism.⁴⁴⁸ He answered that they were sent among other books without his

⁴⁴⁸ These were: The Uprising of the People (*H εζέγερση των λαών*), The widening of the borders (*H αύξησης των ορίων*), letters of the fighters during the Greek War of Independence, The Father of the Olymp (*Ο πάππος του Ολύμπου*).

knowledge, from Athens, that he knew that they contained bad things, and thus kept them at home in a box, and that he hid them out of bewilderment (*şaşkenliğimden*).

Anastas Makri, on the other hand, stated that he had been selling books since 1842, and that he had studied in one of the Greek schools of the town.⁴⁴⁹ Anastas argued that he had spent a short period in Vienna, during which he had learned “that the government was not allowing the reading of books with bad content,”⁴⁵⁰ so he was not accepting or returned back any books with bad content that arrived.

His books were, similarly to the others, destined for the schools and entailed advices about rites in the Church.⁴⁵¹ When asked about a pamphlet, which he had burned, and the content of which was urging the people to fights against the tyrants, Anastas was quite direct: He couldn't say who was meant as the tyrants, as he “was feeding himself thanks to the Ottoman state” (*devlet-i aliye sayesinde karnım doymakta olduğu halde söyleyemem*).

Conclusion: Was Nationalism Popular during the *Tanzimat*?

This chapter attempted to view the rise of Greek and Bulgarian nationalism around and in the Ottoman Empire during the first decades of the *Tanzimat* from the viewpoint of more ordinary non-Muslims (and thus their degree of allegiance or not to the empire). While newer findings of relevant literature have underlined the multiple

⁴⁴⁹ Anastas argued that he was reading books in Rumca but not in Ellinika. (*Harf-ı elinika olan kitapları okur isem de layıkıyla anlayamam çünkü mahsusen elinika tahsilim yoktur fakat yukarıda tahsil ettiğimi beyan ettiğim lisanda (rumca) olan kitapları okur anlar isemde ne kadar kitap götürür isemde cümlesini okumam yalnız satmasını sayı ederim.*) BOA, MVL. 967 61 (13 July 1864).

⁴⁵⁰ “Hatta ben Viyana taraflarında bir müddetçik eğlendiğimden o makule fena ibareli kitapların mütalla ettirilmesine hükümet tarafından ruhsat olmadığımı bilirim.” BOA, MVL. 967 61 (13 July 1864).

⁴⁵¹ “Mekteplerde tahsil olunacak ulume lazım olan kitaplar ile kiliselerde nush ve pend-i ayini müteallik olan kitaplar.” BOA, MVL. 967 61 (13 July 1864).

allegiances of non-Muslim middle classes, up to the point of fostering their own versions of a common Ottoman identity (*Osmanlılık*),⁴⁵² the voices of more ordinary non-Muslims have been more difficult to be recovered. The court proceedings have been identified as especially helpful in this respect, as (even when mediated through the interrogators) they let us “hear” how ordinary people commented on and chose to present their actions.

The rich archival material presented in the last two chapters provides us with a series of valuable findings concerning the relation of ordinary Ottoman subjects with the Ottoman authorities, as well as with spreading nationalist ideologies in the Balkans. To begin with, Ottomans of all classes demonstrated a great eloquence and ability to talk in length in front of the newly established local councils. In this peculiar temporal coincidence, they were interrogated by the newly founded local courts, and not by the *sharia* courts. In fact, they seemed to have treated the former more like fora, and less like official authorities; their frankness and usage of an unofficial language in the framework of the local courts is, indeed, often bewildering.

Local people who were themselves propagating some form of nationalist ideas - mostly a slight minority-, that is, teachers, like in the case of the *gazino* in *Manastır*, or local printers printing and more often selling books and newspapers in Greek and Bulgarian language, tended to justify their activities in front of the local courts as something confined to “schools and churches”, that is, to their main *millet* institutions, with no further political underpinnings or intentions. Thus, in court they used to transform the nationalist discourse evident in their writings -like in the case of the *gazinists*- into a civilizationist discourse of aiming at the general progress of the society, at ideals such as education and morality, congruent with the *Tanzimat* discourse. Similarly,

⁴⁵² Kechriotis, “Atina’da Kapadokyalı, İzmir’de Atinalı, İstanbul’da mebus: Pavlos Karolidis’in farklı kişilik ve aidiyetleri (In Athens a Cappadocian, in Izmir an Athenian, in Istanbul a Parliamentarian: The Various Personalities and State of Belongings of Pavlos Karolidis)”, pp. 28-35.

they were eager to assure the Ottoman authorities that their activities were not aiming or touching upon official politics, neither intending to influence them. On the other hand, while some forms of nationalist ideas were, indeed, supported on behalf of these people, it is difficult to really assess the degree to which they were imagining and aiming at an overthrow of Ottoman rule.

For more ordinary Ottomans, like artisans, their participation in local uprisings holding a nationalist character and being instigated in the 1850s and 1860s was imbued, based on their testimonies, with a variety of meanings. To be sure, all local uprisings dealt with in Chapter Three and Four, that is, the Bulgarian uprising of 1862, and especially the ones of 1867 and 1868, the Greek uprisings north of the Ottoman-Greek border in 1854, and the expedition of Voulgaris in 1868, all had been mobilizations inspired or even organized from abroad. Their leaders, organized in Greek, Serbian or Rumanian soil arrived with dozens or even hundreds of men in Ottoman territory in multiple times during the 1850s and '60s. The latter were mostly jobless persons, even men in desperate situation, convinced to participate either as mercenaries, for a specific amount of monthly payment, or because of promises made to them about going to the mountains, doing banditry or taking money from wealthy Ottomans. Remarkably, these were not homogenous groups, but consisted of people, like in the Greek case, who spoke various languages (Bulgarian and Vlach being even more predominant than Greek), and, less often, did not even belong to the same religion, like in the case of Hasan in the Karatasos uprising. Thus, often it was not the ethno-religious homogeneity and belonging that bound these fighters together, but, rather, their need to secure their living.

As for the local Ottomans, it is true that these uprisings did not stir up wide support; in fact, reactions were mixed and it would be a simplification to argue both that

locals were not interested in “imported nationalism”⁴⁵³ or that the uprisings had stirred up great support.⁴⁵⁴ On the one hand, we have seen how many residents of *Turnovi* in 1862 or many villages north of the Greek-Ottoman border in 1854 were rejecting to participate in Bulgarian and Greek uprisings and were, indeed, asking through petitions for the suppression of the bandits and the protection of the Sultan. In addition, the Ottoman Christians Leonidas Vougaris had talked with, had demonstrated their satisfied state within the Ottoman Empire and the ongoing reforms and were in no way willing to participate in any uprising against it.

On the other hand, to begin with, some Bulgarian artisans were willing to support these uprisings and invested their actions with various meanings in front of the court. In fact, they seemed not to be interested in big nationalist narratives, but more in daily issues bothering their lives: during their interrogations they referred to goals like getting a booty, combating banditry, protesting against the new tax regime, fighting the Ottoman and their own communal and religious authorities, migrating to another place, but also, sometimes, to bigger plans, like building their own government, gaining freedom or bringing a king to Bulgaria -while it is impossible to determine what these may have meant concretely for a simple artisan of the nineteenth century. It is important to stress here that especially Bulgarians depicted their enemies in both ethnoreligious and class terms, as they were targeting also their own rich notables or the local metropolitans; Greek discourses, on the other hand, do not demonstrate this social class character. Finally, only gradually did they “learn” to homogenize their discourses around a common scope, that is, the “liberation of Bulgaria”, as show their testimonies in 1862, 1867 and

⁴⁵³ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868”, p. 394.

⁴⁵⁴ Apostolos Vakalopoulos, “Η επανάσταση του 1854 και οι συνέπειες του Κριμαϊκού πολέμου στο μακεδονικό χώρο, 1853-1856 (The revolution of 1854 and the consequences of the Crimean war on the Macedonian space, 1853-1856)” in *Νεότερη Ιστορία της Μακεδονίας, 1830-1912 (Modern history of Macedonia, 1830-1912)*, Thessaloniki: Stamoulis, 2010.

1868. This corroborates the thesis of Chatterjee in “The Nation and its Fragments”, where he presents the nation as a cultural field, in the context of which political conflicts take place regarding the meaning attributed to the collective.⁴⁵⁵

Apart from their abstract goals, equally important were the concrete and novel forms of mobilization demonstrated by Bulgar and Greek proto-nationalists. Bulgarians artisans were willing to build wide networks around the Danube river, exchange letters, photographs, newspapers and pamphlets. In a time of vast social changes within the Empire, this connectivity and tendency to bind each other through, for example, the Committee’s oath may indicate the quest for a new, binding identity. Greek artisans in *Manastir*, on the other hand, were willing to follow the local nationalists, the gazinists, and to confront the Ottoman authorities in totally new and radical ways, that is, through a document called *protesto*, and not the traditional way of petitioning. Indeed, the *protesto* was replacing the usual discourse of the “loyal subjects of the Sultan” asking for something, with a discourse of the “people” demanding, literally, from the Grand Vizier the release of a fellower Christian subject who had been imprisoned in connection to an inter-communal murder.

Moreover, while the spread of nationalist ideology has been depicted as a top-down process, during which educated elites imbued the new ideology to the uneducated and unaware masses, in the cases presented here the opposite was often the case. Indeed, nationalism and modern statehood -so the old argument goes- are original European creations, copied or transferred to the Ottoman area at a later phase. This transfer is carried out necessarily by elite “mediums”, i.e. state reformers or social and intellectual elites being in a position to acquaint themselves with the European spirit, its creations

⁴⁵⁵ Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories*, pp. 3-14.

and achievements.⁴⁵⁶ On the contrary, based on the cases presented here, Ottoman local notables and the official religious authorities often fought the new ideas, which had managed to mobilize the people. As we have seen, the notables of *İslimiye*, *Kazanlık* and *Zağra-i Atık* south of *Tirnovi* sent documents to the Sultan following the Bulgarian uprisings of 1868, in which they were thanking him for repulsing the bandits. The notables of *Manastır* in 1860 accused the town's Greek nationalists, the *gazinists*, as rebels, and people who were harming the social order. In the case of the Karatasos uprising in Chalkidiki in 1854, the local notables submitted a petition of tearful regret to the governor of *Selanik*, following the crush of the uprising; particularly, they were regretting their participation in the uprising, and promised to be "loyal subjects" thereafter. In the same year, the Muslim and non-Muslim notables of *Tirhala* had submitted a common petition asking from the centre to repulse the Greek bandits who were organizing local uprisings in Thessaly.

Similarly, the metropolitan of *Manastır* had fought against the *gazinists* and was actually the person who had denounced them to the Grand Vizier who happened to be visiting the city. Also, in the case of the Bulgar priest pop-Mito, it had been the metropolitan of *Berkeofça* who had denounced him to the Ottoman authorities for the inciting documents he had been carrying with him, and, moreover, had organized an incident, during which pop-Mito was trapped and arrested by the Ottoman authorities. In all these cases, nationalist mobilization was not something organized from the top, but rather followed by the lower masses, like artisans or village priests, who were then fought by their own communal and religious elites and denounced to the Ottoman authorities.

⁴⁵⁶ Andreas Lyberatos, "Through Nation and State. Reform and Nationalism 'from Below' in the Late Ottoman Balkans. Introduction", *Turkish Historical Review*, 7, 2 (2016), p. 122.

Overall, the findings of these two chapters portray a rather blurred picture of reactions of ordinary Ottomans to spreading nationalisms during the first decades of the *Tanzimat*. Thus, they remind us that large-scale and top-down approaches to nationalism, which do not take into account concrete local contexts, fall short of explaining what nationalism meant for ordinary people, what expectations it arose among people, the reasons for which it became popular among some of them, as well as the ways in which nationalist mobilizations managed to organize ordinary people against their own local elites, and not vice-versa. In a nutshell, I argue that nationalism during the first decades of the *Tanzimat* had infiltrated to some, for sure limited, degree the residents of local societies in the Balkan provinces; nevertheless, by “nationalism” one should not think of a solid set of ideas, but rather a signifier of blurred and different ideas and expectations connected to some forms of change.

CHAPTER 5: ACTORS CHALLENGING THE STATE: Bandits (*Eşkiya*)

Tried in the Local Councils

Bandits, Theft and Nationalism

Browsing through the various kinds of trials of penal cases adjudicated by the *Tanzimat* local councils, one is struck by the abundance of trials dealing with bandits, and, moreover, -compared to other trials- by the extremely long interrogation protocols attached to these files. Indeed, dealing with banditry appears as one of the Ottoman Empire's main anxieties and priorities during the nineteenth century. Compared to the various versions of nationalist sedition described in the previous chapter, banditry posed a much bigger threat, at least during the first decades of the *Tanzimat*: A *Tuna*-province-wide survey of organized brigandage carried out in the summer of 1866 listed Bulgarian nationalist organizations only as secondary concerns. "The biggest current challenge," the report continued, "is a band of over sixty-three ethnic Greeks that is active at the southwestern fringes of the *vilayet* in the region of Blagoevgrad."⁴⁵⁷

As will be illustrated in the following paragraphs, the analysis of the phenomenon of banditry has been subjected to some simplification, as it has been attributed to either romantic qualities of a "Robin Hood," or nationalist motivations of a genuine "independence-fighter" fighting, in our case, against the Ottomans. In the present chapter I will attempt to disentangle Ottoman banditry from such simplifications, and let the bandits "speak for themselves," through their testimonies in court. Similar to the cases of sedition analyzed in the previous chapter, the picture that will evolve is a much

⁴⁵⁷ Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868", p. 388.

more blurred one, but therefore, one closer to the actual reality of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. This “self-representation” of bandits through their own words becomes the more important the more we think about the usual sources which have been used in order to understand banditry: A comparison of Robin Hood and Jaime el Barbudo, who lived in southwestern Spain at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, has shown that most times bandits’ narratives were literary narratives, texts which, moreover, used these narratives as “vehicles for the expression of political ideas and the nature of those ideas varied depending on audience and context.”⁴⁵⁸ Moreover, in the case of the Middle East and North Africa, the figure of the bandit has been investigated more deeply in literature than in scholarship, for example in the novels of the Turkish author, Yashar Kemal.⁴⁵⁹

But let us first elaborate on the ways in which banditry has most times been depicted in literature. Hobsbawm was the first to theorize the image of the “social bandit,” that is, of a young male who distributed wealth, by stealing from the wealthy ones and giving to the needy ones. In this sense, social bandits were peasant outlaws whom the state and the lord regarded as criminals, but who remained within peasant society, and were considered by their peoples as champion, heroes, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to be admired, helped and supported. This type of bandit seemed to occur in all types of human society which lie between the evolutionary phase of tribal and kinship organization, and modern capitalist and industrial society, albeit including the phases of disintegrating kinship society and transition to agrarian capitalism.⁴⁶⁰ On the other hand, “modernization,” that

⁴⁵⁸ Ben Dodds, “Jaime el Barbudo and Robin Hood: Bandit Narratives in Comparative Perspective”, *Social History, Social History*, 36 4 (2011) , p. 476.

⁴⁵⁹ Cronin, “Introduction”, p. 17.

⁴⁶⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1969, p. 18.

is to say the combination of economic development, efficient communications and public administration, deprives any kind of banditry, including the social one, of the conditions under which it flourishes.⁴⁶¹

The characteristics of the “social bandit” were that he was killing only when in defence and avoided violence. This “Robin Hood” subject was trying to bring social justice, not by a general change, but by “righting the wrongs.”⁴⁶² Such actors were activists and not ideologists or prophets from whom novel visions of social and political organization were expected.⁴⁶³ As such, Hobsbawm defined banditry as a pre-political phenomenon, which appeared before the poor had acquired political consciousness or practiced effective forms of agitation.⁴⁶⁴

The second image that has restricted our perception of bandits, especially in the context of Balkan historiography, is the one of a proto-nationalist fighter against the “Turkish yoke.” In this framework, bandits have been portrayed as peasants who abandoned their land in order to fight against injustice employed by the Ottoman

⁴⁶¹ Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 19.

⁴⁶² According to Hobsbawm, the image of the noble robber is reflected in nine points: First, the noble robber begins his career of outlawry not by crime, but as the victim of injustice, or through being persecuted by the authorities for some act which they, but not the custom of his people, consider as criminal. Second, “he rights wrongs.” Third, he “takes from the rich to give to the poor.” Fourth, he “never kills but in self-defense or just revenge.” Fifth, if he survives, he returns to his people as an honourable citizen and member of the community. Indeed, he never actually leaves the community. Sixth, he is admired, helped and supported by his people. Seventh, he dies invariably and only through treason, since no decent member of the community would help the authorities against him. Eighth, he is -at least in theory- invisible and invulnerable. Ninth, he is not the enemy of the king or emperor, who is the fount of justice, but only of the local gentry, clergy or other oppressors. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 70-71, 76. Next to the “social bandit,” the notion with which Hobsbawm has mainly been associated, he included in his typology also the “avenger” and the “haiduks”; the former was characterized by violence, battles and raids; to be terrifying and pitiless was more important to this bandit than to be friend of the poor. The latter, the “haiduks,” were a “military strata sprung from the free peasantry,” according to Hobsbawm “the highest form of primitive banditry, the one which comes closest to being a permanent and conscious focus of peasant insurrection.” Haiduk banditry was therefore in every respect a more serious, a more ambitious, permanent and institutionalized challenge to official authority than the scattering or Robin Hoods or other robber rebels which emerged from any normal peasant or society.

Muslim elite. Particularly, in the course of the nineteenth century they developed into a real “anti-Turkish and anti-feudal movement.”⁴⁶⁵ Newer research, nevertheless, has shown that things were far more complicated than these simplistic interpretations were envisioning. Milen Petrov, for example, who has focused on the *Tuna* province in the 1860s, maintained that “Organized crime in the Danube province in the 1860s was widespread and not confined to any single ethnic or religious group. It most commonly took the shape of highway brigandage. Although the figure of the brigand (Turkish *haydud*, Bulgarian *khaidutin*) has been the subject of much idealization in Balkan historiography and has been posthumously endowed with Robin-Hoodian and proto-nationalist qualities, in reality brigandage in the region was thoroughly opportunistic and ideology-free. Other than a robust disregard for established authority (this characteristic was, incidentally, shared by Muslim and non-Muslim *hayduds*), brigands had no specific agenda. No ethnic, religious, or social group in the *vilayet* was immune from the danger of becoming a victim of organized crime.”⁴⁶⁶ Petrov provides several examples of, also, mixed ethno-religious bands operating in the *Tuna* province. In another example, further south, in the Greek Kingdom, many bandits had taken place in the Greek Independence War between 1821 and 1829; after the foundation of the Greek Kingdom though they mutated again into simple bandits, complaining about having been utilized by the politicians for their own purposes and been forgotten afterwards.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁵ Fikret Adanir, “Heiduckentum und osmanische Herrschaft (Banditry and Ottoman rule)”, *Südostforschungen*, XLI (1982), pp. 44-5. Ioannis Vasdravellis, “Οι πολεμικοί άνδρες της Μακεδονίας κατά την προεπαναστατικήν περίοδον. Αρματολοί, κλέφτες και πειραταί (The warriors of Macedonia during the pre-revolutionary era: Militia, bandits and pirates)”, *Makedonika*, 7 (1967), p. 73.

⁴⁶⁶ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868”, pp. 383-384.

⁴⁶⁷ Riki van Boeschoten, “Κλεφταρματολοί, ληστές και κοινωνική ληστεία (Militia, bandits and social banditry)”, *Mnimon*, 13 (1991), p. 19.

Banditry in the nineteenth-century Balkans thus emerged as a complex and entangled phenomenon of Ottoman society. Bandits had various motives and fostered a complicated relationship with both the local populations from which they originated from, as well as with the officials. Karen Barkey opened the relevant discussion in Ottoman historiography more than twenty years ago, by arguing that bandits and bureaucrats were involved in ambiguous entanglements, while the early modern Ottoman state alleviated the threat of large-scale rebellion by negotiating with bandits and co-opting them into its bureaucracy. This was largely, she argued, because bandits were primarily concerned with their promotion within the conventional structures of the state as opposed to building dangerous allegiances with peasants and elites that could threaten or overturn these structures.⁴⁶⁸

Similarly, Tolga Esmer has commented on the eighteenth century that “banditry brought large groups of diverse Ottoman subjects and officials together in a shared culture of violence that was central to Ottoman strategies of governance.”⁴⁶⁹ On the example of Kara Feyzi, a powerful irregular soldier and bandit leader, Esmer depicts a “successful, trans-regional organized crime network that pillaged Ottoman Rumeli from 1793 to 1823.”⁴⁷⁰ Muslim irregulars in time of peace were often a source of banditry. Moreover, Kara Feyzi recruited and coerced common Muslims and Christians⁴⁷¹ into

⁴⁶⁸ Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, pp. x, 10-11.

⁴⁶⁹ Tolga U. Esmer, “Economics of Violence, Banditry and Governance in the Ottoman Empire around 1800”, *Past and Present*, 224 (August 2014), p. 168.

⁴⁷⁰ Tolga U. Esmer, “The Precarious Intimacy of Honour in Late Ottoman Accounts of Para-militarism and Banditry”, *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 18 (2014), p. 2.

⁴⁷¹ For instance, one of the most influential early Bulgarian authors, Petko R. Slaveykov (1866-1912), points out how brave Christian warriors, whom he calls *kabadayı* (Turkish for rude “thugs” or violent men who simultaneously enjoy prestige), distinguished themselves as personal bodyguards to men such as Kara Feyzi, and were leaders of their own mercenary divisions during an age in which Christians were barred from participating in the imperial army. Esmer, “Economics of Violence, Banditry and Governance in the Ottoman Empire around 1800”, p. 178.

joining his network, as well as some of the most eminent imperial officials who hailed not only from Rumeli or Istanbul but also from far away regions across the Empire into joining his plundering confederacy.⁴⁷² Kara Feyzi's intervention in imperial politics prompts us to think of the Ottoman state as a dynamic, constantly moving constellation of power foci involving a variety of agencies: at times the sultan and at times others moved into a more central position, but relationships were almost always triangular rather than of a two-way character.⁴⁷³ Moreover, Esmer underlines that there was more to banditry than material gains; a complex "economy of violence" entailed exchanges of resources, prestige, symbolic capital and promotion.⁴⁷⁴

In a similar vein, Fulya Özkan has shown how bandits along the Trabzon-Bayezid road in the second half of the nineteenth century were part of bigger networks among the Ottoman Northeast, northern Iran and Russian Caucasia. The robbers had a certain place to stay through almost every village they passed; yet, this local support their received did not render them "social robbers." On the contrary, they were patronized by the local notables of northern Iranian provinces such as Maku, Ovacık and Khoy.⁴⁷⁵ Finally, Greek folksongs, a source widely used to understand banditry, also position the bandits somewhere between the rulers and the ruled.⁴⁷⁶ While bandits were depended on

⁴⁷² Esmer, "The Precarious Intimacy of Honor in Late Ottoman Accounts of Para-militarism and Banditry", p. 8.

⁴⁷³ Esmer, "Economics of Violence, Banditry and Governance in the Ottoman Empire around 1800", p. 188.

⁴⁷⁴ Esmer, *Ibid.*, p. 164. For a similar example of a bandit's network some decades earlier in western Anatolia, see M. Yaşar Ertaş, "XVIII. Yüzyılda bir Osmanlı eşkiyası: Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa (An Ottoman bandit in the 18th century: Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa)" in *Uluslararası Denizli ve Çevresi Tarih ve Kültür Sempozyumu, Bildiriler I (International symposium of the history and culture of Denizli and its surroundings)*, Denizli: Pamukkale Üniversitesi Tarih Bölümü, 2007, pp. 399-411. Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa had built a large network staffed mainly with Muslim irregulars following their employment by the state.

⁴⁷⁵ Fulya Özkan, "A Road in Rebellion, a History on the Move: The Social History of the Trabzon-Bayezid Road and the Formation of the Modern State in the Late Ottoman Period", PhD Thesis, Binghamton University, 2012, pp. 388-389.

⁴⁷⁶ Van Boeschoten, "Κλεφταρχματολοι, ληστές και κοινωνική ληστεία (Militia, bandits and social banditry)", p. 13. In the newly founded Greek Kingdom of the mid-nineteenth-century bandits were entangled in the

the local peasants and stock-farmers for provisions, the relationship with them was one marked by trust and distrust. In case the bandits asked for too much, the folksongs recognized the right to the people to betray or even kill a bandit.⁴⁷⁷ On the other hand, facing the same enemies, mainly the local notables (in different levels of dependency), brought these two segments somewhat closer in a complex symbiosis.⁴⁷⁸

Defending Banditry in Court

The 20-year-old Bulgar⁴⁷⁹ shepherd Yanko the son of Istavro from the district of *Menlik* (who was working at the farm estate of Osman *bey*) testified in the local council of *Selanik* in March 1858 that he had resorted to banditry because of “a woman’s issue (*bir kız sebebine*).” He had desired a woman, but her relatives were not consenting to their marriage and had attempted to kill him. Thus, he had joined the group of the bandit Danço (described by all the litigants of this penal case as *Kanlı Danço*, that is, the bloody one), and after two months of the bandit Donço, in order merely to, as Yanko himself stated, “find bread (*ekmek için gezerdik*).” Nevertheless, the men of Danço, including

political networks residing in Athens. Research has followed their paths even up until the Greek civil war between 1946 and 1949 and their recruitment in the communist or anti-communist forces, with big regional differentiations. Vaggelis Tzoukas, “Η κοινωνική ληστεία και η παράδοση ανταρσίας. Ληστές και αντάρτες στη δεκαετία 1940-1950 (Social banditry and the tradition of revolt. Bandits and rebels between 1940 and 1950)” in *Μνήμη Στάθη Δαμιανάκου (In memory of Stathis Damianakos)*, Chr. Dermentzopoulos, V. Nitsiakos (ed.), Athens: Plethron, 2007, pp. 148-9.

⁴⁷⁷ Van Boeschoten, “Κλεφταρματολοί, ληστές και κοινωνική ληστεία (Militia, bandits and social banditry)”, p. 16.

⁴⁷⁸ Van Boeschoten interestingly remarks that a radical peasants’ movement in Greece (especially in its northern part) appeared only after the suppression of banditry during the interwar period. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁷⁹ Yanko was explicitly asked about his religion and creed (*millet* and *mezhep*, -IR (interrogators): *Ne millet ve mezheptensin?*, -Y: *Bulgar*). BOA, MVL 893 1 (6 November 1858) Yorgi, also an accomplice of Danço interrogated in the same file, was asked the same question in a different way (*Bulgar mısın Rum musun?*), and answered the same as Yanko: “*Bulgarm*.” The importance of these dialogues lies in their demonstration that, even before the official stipulation of a Bulgarian *millet* in 1860, the distinction between *Rums* and *Bulgars* -based on lingual aspects- seemed to have carried an importance at least for some Ottoman Christians in the Balkans.

Yanko, had also kidnapped (*bir esir*) a Christian boy and asked for a considerable amount of money for his release.⁴⁸⁰

Indeed, bandits interrogated in the *Tanzimat* councils presented rather mundane reasons when trying to explain their resorting to banditry; interfamilial fighting, money owed to local notables, or disputes with other villagers were often pointed to as the decisive factors which had urged the bandit to leave his village and place of birth and unite with other bandits in the mountains. During the summer of 1860 Bank(?) Kosta the son of Mitro Pazos, from a village in the district of *Menlik*, explained to the council of *Siroz* that the reason for his personal resorting to banditry had been the fact that he owed a good amount of money -three hundred *guruş*- to one of his village's non-Muslim notables (*kocabası*). While Kosta left his village, and returned to it after a while, his debt had actually doubled in the meantime and the *kocabası* had seized Kosta's land, as the latter had not been able to pay the loan back to him.⁴⁸¹ Following these developments, Kosta finally resorted to banditry, together with a dozen of Christians, the names of whom he revealed to the *Siroz* council.

Having commenced with his activities as a bandit, one of the first actions of Kosta and his partners was to return to the former's village, seize the *kocabası*, carry him outside the village and rob him of all the money he was carrying with him. Further targets of Kosta's group were rich people residing in the vicinity (he mentioned a Salih *ağa*, Osman *efendi*, Hacı Yovan, Ibrahim *ağa*),⁴⁸² as well as a carriage of the Ottoman post.

⁴⁸⁰ While they were asking for 5000 *guruş*, his father had brought only 800. When he achieved to bring the whole sum, his son had already escaped from the bandits, so the father refused to give them the demanded money. Other thefts committed by the same group comprised seizing 300 *guruş* from a farm, while Yanko stated that Danço had taken also money from several non-Muslim notables (*kocabasılardan*) in the district of *Petriç*.

⁴⁸¹ BOA, LMVL. 452 20191 (25 August 1861).

⁴⁸² From Hacı Yovan they took 9000 *guruş*, from Salih *ağa* 7500 *guruş*, from Ibrahim *ağa* 1400 *guruş*. Next to money, they also took ammunition, weapons etc. from these people. BOA, LMVL. 452 20191 (25 August 1861). I particularly mention the amounts which Kostas and his partners had been stealing because they were especially high; compare, for example, with the yearly average occupational income in *Selanik*, which

On the other hand, a partner of Bank Kosta,⁴⁸³ Aso(?) Niko, stated in court that he had followed Kosta because of the permanent fighting with his wife, with whom he had been married since a very young age. Ilya the son of Ustuyan, while denying having participated in Kosta's group, admitted that he had left his village because of quarrels he had with his wife, and as the latter was about to divorce him. Another partner, Yorgi the son of Ustuyan, stated as a reason for his activities as a bandit in Kosta's group that some of his fellow villagers had sent their animals on his fields, rendering it impossible for him to continue with his agricultural occupation.

Nevertheless, when interrogated in *Selanik* following his interrogation in *Siroz*, Kosta changed his testimony.⁴⁸⁴ This was not an unusual practice, as defendants often used to change their statements, the higher the authority they were faced with was in the administrative hierarchy. This time, in *Selanik*, Bank(?) Kosta argued that his job had been being a "beggar" (*dilencilik*) and totally denied the statements he had done in *Siroz*. Moreover, he insisted on his current testimony, pleading willing to endure whatever punishment he had to, would the opposite of his statement be proven ("böyle değilse o vakit cezama razı olurum"). Similar to Kosta, Yorgi and Yovan, as well as the tailor Usunko the son of Ustuyko, who all had admitted their deeds in *Siroz*, denied them later in *Selanik*. Ilya stated this time that they had taken his wife away from him and given her to somebody else, because he was a poor man (*fukara*). Both he and Alkis denied their deeds, like they had done in *Siroz*. Moreover, Ilya stated that he had wrongly been

was 218 piastres (*guruş*). Akyalçın Kaya, "Living off others' aid: The socioeconomic structure of Salonica's Jews in the mid-nineteenth Century", p. 339.

⁴⁸³ All of the accomplices of Kosta who testified in court stated to be farmers, except of the tailor Usunko the son of Ustuyko. Their names were Aso(?) Niko, Yovan Ustuyan, Yorgi the son of Ustuyan, Alkis Ranolu(?) and Ilya the son of Ustuyan. BOA, IMVL. 452 20191 (25 August 1861).

⁴⁸⁴ For a similar tactic, see BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858); the cases of this file are described below in more detail.

accused (*iftira*) of being a bandit (*hırsız*), because his divorced wife was a relative of his village's *kocabaşı*, and the latter had simply fabricated such an accusation.

Similar to Bank(?) Kosta in *Selanik*, the 25-year-old Bulgar Donço the son of Ustubi?, originally from the district of *Menlik* and a farmer at the estate of Aziz *bey*, named his poverty as the main reason for his resorting to banditry.⁴⁸⁵ In fact, he had been involved in banditry for the last three-and-a-half years. While Donço's friend Toşo had urged the former to join him in his banditry activities with another four Christian men,⁴⁸⁶ Donço stated in the council of *Selanik* in March 1858 that he had joined the others because of being "naked" ("*ben de çıplak idim gittim*"). Particularly, Donço named numerous other jobs he had been occupied with before his resorting to banditry, like shepherd, servant in an inn and herdsman. Nevertheless, together with the group of Toşo, they had dared to some not so modest robberies: They had robbed a non-Muslim notable (*çorbacı*) of the *Cuma* district named Faço Yovan of 4000 *guruş*,⁴⁸⁷ took 1700 *guruş* from some Vlach farms, as well as 12,000 *akçe* -particularly, 24 *kese*, while one *kese* amounted to around 500 *guruş* at the period- from other similar farms. After two years in which he had done all these robberies, Donço continued with his activity as a bandit together with other men, this time in the districts of *Samakova* and *Köstendil*; there they took 1000 *guruş* from each of seven different farms of Vlachs, and returned to the district of *Menlik*, where they were caught. In fact, they surrendered to a bigger group of villagers and gendarmerie. Donço had 4300 *guruş* on him when he was caught.

On the other hand, joining a bandit group appeared sometimes also as the only solution for a man after having previously committed a crime, for example a murder. The

⁴⁸⁵ BOA, I.MVL. 426 18704 (6 January 1860).

⁴⁸⁶ The men were all Christians from the district of *Menlik*. BOA, I.MVL. 426 18704 (6 January 1860).

⁴⁸⁷ The money was divided among the group, whereas the leader received the most; 2250 *guruş* was divided to the five members, and the leader, Toşo, received the rest.

farmer Yanaki the son of Todorı, currently living in *Poliroz*, was interrogated at the council of *Selanik* in May 1858 for killing a farm manager (*subaşı*), named Yusuf *ağa*, of a nearby farm, as well as a soldier (*seğban*) who happened to be visiting Yusuf *ağa* on the same day. Yanaki, together with his friend Alexandri, had murdered with an axe Yusuf and his guest and later admitted his crime to his brother Mihalaki, who testified against him in court.⁴⁸⁸ Following the murder they had also stolen the rifle and some belongings of Yusuf.

A whole neighbouring village testified that the axe found on Yusuf's head belonged to Yanaki, while some of the estate's farmers (*reaya*) had seen Yanaki entering the house of Yusuf with an axe. The reason for the murder was, according to Mihalaki, that the manager was "chasing (*kovalarmış*) and not leaving in peace (*rahat bırakmamış*)" his brother and Alexandri, while some of the estate's women who had seen Yanaki and Alexandri's exiting the house of Yusuf had witnessed the two men saying: "Yusuf planned to kill us, we killed him first." After committing the crime, Yanaki joined the band of *kapudan* Yorgaki and participated in his banditry activities for about three months. During these months, they raided some notables (*çorbacıları*) in *Poliroz* and demanded money from them.

Apart from these, more or less mundane, justifications of banditry in the framework of a court on behalf of the bandits themselves, in other penal cases non-Muslim bandits employed their position as a socially less secured group in order to justify their actions. The forty-one-year-old *kapudan* Yorgi Karbuluke(?) the son of Tanas, who was tried in the court of *Selanik* in August 1861 for banditry, argued several times in court that his status as a non-Muslim in the Ottoman Empire had been the main reason

⁴⁸⁸ BOA, MVL. 910 71 (18 February 1860).

which had compelled him to resort to banditry.⁴⁸⁹ Yorgi described in his testimony his impressive journey over a wide geography in order to “search for his destiny” (“*kismet aramağa gittim*”). He had been on the road from a very young age, stating that all his life could be summarized in his gun (“*benim evim ve malım tüfenktedir*”).

Particularly, having travelled to *Trablusgarb* in 1839 with Ali Kota,⁴⁹⁰ and from there four years later to *İskenderiye*, Yorgi then, with the help of the Greek consul of the latter city (named Rizos), received a Greek passport which enabled him to travel to Athens. From Athens, he proceeded to the Greek border with the Ottoman Kingdom, and from there he headed, together with other men, further north up to the vicinity of *Selanik* through the districts of *Dömeke*, *Kardiçe*, *Tırhala*, *Kalabaka*, *Koçana*, *Alasonya*, *Katrin*, *Vardar* and *Komeniçe*. From the statements of Yorgi in court it became rather obvious that he and his men were doing banditry for reasons of subsistence, as often they had to stay hungry for days. Yorgi and his men being followed by Ottoman soldiers (*nefer-i am*) and involved in several gun-fighting with the latter, they finally surrendered. In addition, during the numerous fighting, one soldier was killed, as well as one of Yorgi’s accomplices, named Paskal, while further two were wounded. The killing of a soldier played an important role, as we will follow in Chapter 6, during the imposition of the punishment on Yorgi: Despite having stolen unimportant things in comparison to the sums stolen by Kosta mentioned above, Yorgi would receive the capital punishment, while Kosta would be sentenced to lifelong hard labour.

Particularly, Yorgi stated that in *İskenderiye* he had been wandering around with another six Albanian men, until the latter achieved to be employed as guards (*kevas*) to

⁴⁸⁹ BOA, LMVL. 465 21020 (22 November 1861).

⁴⁹⁰ Later during his interrogation, Yorgi admitted that he had done banditry also in the years prior to 1839. He had wandered around with *kapudan* Tsaka near *Kranya* for three years, while for a short time he had worked next to *kapudan* Sotir Istrato who had been a guard near *Agrafa*, albeit was not doing banditry.

Sayid Pasha; despite desiring the same job, Yorgi did not achieve it, as, in his own words, he was a Christian (“*ben dahi istedim ise de biristiyan olduğumdan kabul etmediler*”). Following that he went for two years to Athens, where, again, Yorgi did not achieve to be employed in a job. He then left Athens with another friend in order to proceed to *Yanya* in the Ottoman Empire and “surrender to somebody for the sake of a job” (*rey vermek*).⁴⁹¹ Before entering the Empire’s territories though, Yorgi met with a dozen of people (all Christians, some originally from the Greek Kingdom, some from the Ottoman Empire, among them also Albanians and Vlachs), who convinced him to enter the Empire to do banditry and, if possible, “*rey vermek*.” The exact passage from Yorgi’s testimony is rather striking for how he self-fashioned himself in the court:

Y: (?)’de otururken bunlar bana dedi sen Osman toprağına böyle silahlı girersen seni tutarlar silahlarını alırlar fakat hırsızlık ederek hep beraber gidelim birlerinde rey verelim belki bize bir ekmeğe de verirler çünkü paramız yok idi ve bir efendinin yanına gitssek hizmet etmeğe reaya olduğumuzdan kabul etmez idi ve dinlencilik dahi edelim ayıp idi başka bir iş dahi (?) gelmez idi mecbur olduk hırsızlığa çıkmağa ister istemez.⁴⁹²

Later in his testimony, Yorgi was asked again about the reasons of his resorting to banditry, followed by another striking dialogue with the interrogators illustrated below. In the meanwhile, he had mentioned that prior than going to *Trablusgard* he had actually worked for two Muslim masters (Nureddin *bey*, Seftan? *ağa*) near *Alasonya*. In addition, he also mentioned that a certain Hüsnü *ağa* in *Yanya* had told him that that he would help him whenever he was in trouble. Both statements thus were casting doubt on Yorgi’s

⁴⁹¹ The expression actually exists as in “*rey almak*,” meaning “to receive a promise of personal security on surrender”; by “*rey vermek*,” an expression which I could not locate in the dictionaries but which I quite often encountered while reading the interrogations of bandits, I assume that Gorgi meant something similar to “surrender to sb. for the sake of a job.” At a later point in his interrogation, Yorgi explained that “*Bir adam rey verdiği vakitte elbette bir parça ekmeğe verilecek bir memuriyet verirler idi*.” The expression was widespread, as it appeared also in other relevant interrogations of bandits, see BOA, I.MVL. 426 10874 (6 January 1860), MVL. 910 71 (18 February 1860), MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858).

⁴⁹² BOA, I.MVL. 465 21020 (22 November 1861).

assertion that his non-Muslim status was prohibitive for him in order to work for a Muslim master.

IR: Niçin böyle eşkiyalık sıfat ile gidüp rezâlet edecek idinizi kendi ırzınız ile ve pasaportunuz ile doğrudan doğruya Hüsnü ağaya gidüp kapılanmak murad ederdiğiniz kabul etmez mi idi?

Y: Çünkü ben silahlarımı bırakup da reaya gibi çıkaydım bana ekmek vermezdi ve çünkü ben eğer ki reaya gibi çıkmış olaydım benden vergi ve bedel-i askeriyeyi arayacaklar idi halbuki bende bir para olmadığından bu sebepten ister istemez sıfatı-ı eşkiyalık ile çıktım biz çıktık niyetimiz rey vermek idi aldandık böyle eşkiyalığa çıktık.⁴⁹³

In this second testimony, Yorgi underlined his non-Muslim status more in connection with the taxes related to it, rather than with it excluding the possibility of the employment to a Muslim master. Having spent all his life on the road, with his gun constituting his only property, Yorgi would have been unable to settle in a place and pay the taxes demanded by the state, both the usual taxes inflicted upon all Ottoman subjects and the military exemption tax which, starting with the *Tanzimat*, was demanded from the non-Muslim Ottoman subjects.

However, ethno-religious divisions were utilized also by Muslim litigants, albeit with different intentions. To note, the big majority of Muslim bandits stated in court to be army deserters. As stated by Hobsbawm, ex-servicemen like deserters “are natural material for banditry.”⁴⁹⁴ Despite though their status as army deserters, they often achieved to be employed as gendarmeries (*zabtiye*) following their desertion of the army, usually after having provided a guarantor (*kefil*) who could vouch for them (see also next section). Abdullah the son of Hüseyin from the *Gelemerye* district, was interrogated in May 1852 in the council of *Selanik* for banditry. He stated that he had been an army deserter, and that even before that he had been working at a farm estate under the name Ahmet

⁴⁹³ BOA, LMVL. 465 21020 (22 November 1861).

⁴⁹⁴ Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 34.

(*ismimi tebdil ettim*), in order to avoid military conscription.⁴⁹⁵ Later he had worked as a gendarmerie for Veli İbrahim *çavuş* at the *Lankaşa* district.⁴⁹⁶ Finally, he was arrested with the accusation that he had stolen some gold from a bride during a wedding. Afterwards, though, he managed to escape prison and proceeded to banditry for another one-and-a-half year, together with Salih. They were merely trying to feed themselves, wandering from farm to farm.

In another telling example, the shepherd Alaman(?) the son of Derviş fom *Debre-i Zir*, tried for banditry, explained in court how the army deserter Molla İbrahim from *Selanik* (see below) had sent him a message proposing to go together to *Selanik* to become gendarmeries: “*Selanikli Molla İbrahim asker firarısı olduğundan bir hayli müddet Debre’de oturmuş ve muahharan Selanik’te zabtiyelik etmek üzere birlikte gitmekliği bana haber gönderdi.*”⁴⁹⁷ Ramazan the son of Tahir, who was similarly accused of following the bandits of Molla İbrahim, particularly a certain Emin Bayraktar, stated in court that he did not know that the latter had been a famous bandit (*eşkiya-ı meşhur*) -otherwise Ramazan would certainly not have followed him. Emin Bayraktar had told him only that he was gathering some men to go to *Selanik* to do *bölükbaşlık* (sergeant police).

Ethno-religious divisions were being utilized by Muslim bandits, among others, in an attempt to diminish the importance of testimonies of non-Muslim witnesses made against them. The thirty-year-old farmer Hüseyin (nicknamed Pehlivan, married and with children) the son of Mehmed, from the *İstarve* district, was tried at the council of *Selanik*

⁴⁹⁵ BOA, LMVL. 264 10019 (14 February 1853).

⁴⁹⁶ “*İbrahim çavuş ol tarichte Lankaşa nahiyesinin eşkiyasını girift etmek üzere memur idi beni dabi yanına zabtiye neferi aldı.*” BOA, LMVL. 264 10019 (14 February 1853).

⁴⁹⁷ BOA, MVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857). The interrogators repeated this sentence when interrogating other members of the band of Molla İbrahim, namely Şahin and Malıç: “*Molla İbrahim Debre’liler’e söylemişki sizî devlet-i aliye cebren redif alacaktır gelin birlikte gidelim redifliğinden kurtulursunuz.*”

in February 1859 for having robbed a *reaya*, Mito, and his friend Likur,⁴⁹⁸ as well as a priest.⁴⁹⁹ Similar to Abdullah described above, Hüseyin had deserted the army (*fırar ettim*) in *Vidin* (after having served for four years!) and from there travelled to various places stretching from *Edirne* to *Pravišta* in the sub-province of *Drama*, where, as Hüseyin himself testified, he worked (*zabtiye oldum*) for the gendarmerie (country police sergeant, *kapı bölükbaşı*) Şemseddin *ağa* after showing a *kefil* (namely, the coffee-shop owner İbrahim *ağa*). After having worked for a year for Şemseddin *ağa*, Hüseyin worked next to Osman *çavuş* for another two months. During the interrogation though it came out that in the meantime, when changing from one master to the other, Hüseyin had also committed the aforementioned robberies of non-Muslims.

In court, Hüseyin denied recognizing “the non-Muslims” who were testifying against him. When the interrogators asked him how he had known then that they were “non-Muslims,” Hüseyin referred to their appearance; the following interesting dialogue took place between Hüseyin and the interrogators in the court of *Selanik*:

H: *Tanımam ben bu reayayı.*

[...]

H: *Görmedim başka kere.*

IR: [...] *Bunun reaya olduğunu nereden bildin mademki görmedin de?*

H: *Reaya mıdır yahudi midir müslüman mıdır ben bu adamı tanımam.*

IR: *Canım iyi ya biz de sana işte onu soruyoruz ya reaya olduğunu neden tanıdın?*

H: *Kürkünden⁵⁰⁰ öyle benzer.⁵⁰¹*

⁴⁹⁸ Particularly, he took their animals and their money, 1070 *guruş*, and belongings amounting up to 7000 *guruş*. BOA, MVL. 910 71 (18 February 1860).

⁴⁹⁹ BOA, MVL. 910 71 (18 February 1860).

⁵⁰⁰ The word referred to here is written in a peculiar form in the original interrogation protocol (کُورکُونْدِن), open to various readings: In case the word was meant, indeed, as “kürk” (coat), the fifth letter of the version “from his coat (*kürkünden*)” should actually be a “ي.” Other possibilities could be “görgü” (manners), which would mean “from his manners,” but in which case the right version of the word should be “görgüsünden.” I thank Gregory Key (Binghamton University) for his comments on the grammar of this word. In either case, the scribe must have done a mistake in the writing of this word.

⁵⁰¹ BOA, MVL. 910 71 (18 February 1860)

Diminishing the importance of non-Muslim witnesses took even more open forms in other penal cases of bandits. At the end of 1857 and the beginning of 1858, a group of Muslim bandits (Rüstem, Salih, Süleyman, Mehmed) were interrogated in *Selanik* for having kidnapped three years before a Christian child in the district of *Avrethisar* and asked money from his father. Rüstem argued that Mehmed had proposed the deed by informing him that the Christian youngster Atanas's father, named Tano *kehya*, was very rich and, moreover, a rebellious (*ası*) non-Muslim.⁵⁰² While the crime had taken place some years ago, the council provided for the stolen money to be given back to Tano (see Chapter Six). Rüstem, conforming to a common tactic, changed his testimony from the council of *Avrethisar* to the council of *Selanik*, admitting his deeds in the first one and denying them in the second one.

When the interrogators in *Selanik* reminded Rüstem that the *reaya* (the non-Muslims, that is, Tano, as well as Hristo, who had transported the money from Tano to the bandits) were willing to testify again against him, Rüstem answered: "They are non-Muslims, they have no pity for Islam!"⁵⁰³ Nevertheless, the council members of *Selanik* claimed that, as the non-Muslims had testified, and the testimonies of Rüstem in *Avrethisar* were documented, it was unimportant whether or not he would admit his deed (*hırsızlığına hiç şüphe kalmadı senin bakkında lazım olan mazbatayı yapacağız sen istersen ikrar eyle istersen inkar eyle ona hacet kalmadı*). Later they brought also Hristo to the court, the shepherd who had transported the money, whom Rüstem also denied having seen before: "Ne görmüşsüm *gavuru* (and later: *Ne parayı almışım bu gavurun elinden ne görmüşsüm işte cevabım budur*) ne para almışım kim ne kadar para verdi *gavuru* buraya *kız günü götürdü.*" *Gavur* was a rather vulgar term

⁵⁰² BOA, LMVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858): "Burada bir Tano *kehya* vardır şöyle zenginidir böyle zenginidir ben ondan peynir alırdım hırsızlara verirdim dedi ben balkana çıkıp hırsızlık etmemiştim sonra çocuğunu alırsız dedi şöyle *ası reayadır* dedi." They received 4000 *guruş* in order to return the child to his father.

⁵⁰³ "Onlar *reayadır İslam'a acımaşlar.*" BOA, LMVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858).

for “non-Muslim”; Rüstem, by using this term, attempted to diminish Hristo’s statement, and moreover implied that only the cause of bribery (*kim ne kadar para verdi*) could have brought Hristo to testify against him in court. However, the council members, posing several times the same questions to Rüstem, finally confronted the latter with their verdict: “*Sen haydud sıfatına girmişsin ve haydudsun ve haydutluk cezasını göreceksin ne malın var ise satılacak bu adamın hakkı verilecek bu kadar vakittir sorarız harıl harıl inkar eylersin.*” Ebru Aykut Türker mentions in her dissertation a similar case from the *Prizren* district of *Üsküp* in 1858, which “clearly shows how a murderer’s defense denying his crime at the court by rejecting the non-Muslim eye-witnesses’ testimonies against him failed to be useful before the *nizamiye* courts and demonstrated the meaning of the new legal system to all subjects of the Empire.”⁵⁰⁴

In another example, Osman *efendi* the son of Halil, who owned a farm (*çiftlik*), resorted to banditry for a few days together with a Deli Ahmet and two Albanians, Mustafa and Sadık, in the vicinity of *Lankeza*. He was interrogated in *Selanik* in April 1860.⁵⁰⁵ Interestingly enough, Osman argued in court that he had been an army deserter (“*asker kaçağı idim*”) and that this constituted the actual reason for his arrest. Nevertheless, as was proven in court, he and his men had intimidated some non-Muslim villagers (*reayalar, köylüler*), from whom they had received 4500 *guruş*. The money was brought to Osman by two non-Muslim notables (*kocabaşı*), Tanaş and Yovan, who brought it to his home. Osman stated in court that the Christians had brought the money out of fear (*korkudan*) and that his partners had urged him to take the money from them, as the latter were begging for this (“*niçin almazsın bu reayalar kendileri yalvarır*”). In another incident, Osman *efendi* had gone to a village and taken 4640 *guruş*. The villagers who had

⁵⁰⁴ Quoted from Aykut Türker, “Alternative Claims on Justice and Law: Rural Arson and Poison Murder in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire”, p. 177.

⁵⁰⁵ BOA, MVL. 930 3 (28 November 1861).

been robbed informed the other (Muslim and non-Muslim) residents, but as they stated, these were afraid of catching Osman *efendi* (*tutmağa korkalar idi*).

Another two non-Muslims testified that Osman *efendi* had stopped them on their way to fishing and had taken by force their purses (*keşe*). Osman *efendi* himself denied the latter charges; when pressured by the interrogators that these *reaya* would come to court and confront him with their testimony, Osman *efendi* stated that he would accept only the testimonies of two Muslims ("İki kişi İslam gelir söyleler ise cezama razıyım"). Osman was thus referring to the provisions of *sharia* law (according to which only testimonies of Muslims were valid), stating thereby his desire for the application of this latter law even in the framework of the newly-founded local courts, which were, nevertheless, operating under new Penal Codes.

Lastly, Ramazan the son of Ramazan from a village of the district *Debre-i Zir* was interrogated in the spring of 1857 for being part of a bigger network of bandits with *Selanikli* Molla Ibrahim as the leader, referred to also in former examples of this section.⁵⁰⁶ Excerpts from his long interrogation demonstrate the importance of locality when dealing with ethno-religious divisions and the awareness of the local councils of these local dynamics. To begin with, Ramazan argued in court that he was not a member of Ibrahim's group, but only accidentally was arrested with them in an inn. When asked why then he had been armed at the time of his arrest, Ramazan argued that in his homeplace carrying a gun functioned as an evidence of a man's honour,⁵⁰⁷ and that he had not known that doing so was illegal.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁶ BOA, LMVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857).

⁵⁰⁷ "Bizim memleketimizde bir adamın belinde silah olmadığı halde ol adamın itibarı yoktur ve ona selam daba vermezler." BOA, LMVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857).

⁵⁰⁸ "İ: Senin memleketinde olan işbu adet fena bir şeydir lakin sen memleketinde gidecek değildin başka memleket gidecek idin silahları niçin aldın? -R: Biz silahların yasak olduğunu bilmez idik onun için aldım." BOA, LMVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857).

Furthermore, Ramazan asked from the council to find a gendarmerie from his hometown, who would be willing to testify against him, saying that he had stolen things and proceeded to harmful acts as a bandit. When the interrogators replied that he may not have caused harm in his homeplace, giving the fact that everybody was armed there (and that, in general, its residents did not use to report crimes to the authorities),⁵⁰⁹ but may have done so in other places, Ramazan argued that even in his homeplace there were more than 1000 Bulgarian households (implying that the latter were unarmed), and that he could have harmed them in any case, had his intentions been bad:

R: *Benim fena niyetim olaydı Debre'de dahi bin haneden ziyade Bulgar vardır onlara fenalık ederim lakin fena niyetim olmadığından Pirlepe'ye gitmek üzere çıkmış idim ve lisan bilmediğimden daha ileriye gidemezdim.*⁵¹⁰

Nevertheless, the interrogators argued that the Bulgarian residents were not in the position to denounce Ramazan. Although they were the only ones among the residents of *Debre* who may have, indeed, reported Ramazan to the authorities, the council members assumed that they would not have done so out of fear. The ensuing dialogue between Ramazan and the council members is worth to be quoted in length:

-I: *Debre'de bu makule fenalıkları söyleyecek bir takım Bulgar çobanlarıdır onlar dahi gelip söylemiş olsalar muabharan Fesi(?) denilen akrabalarımız gidip onları öldürür ve gunagun fenalık ederler bunlar dahi hayflarından gelip söylemezler.* -R: *Debre'de pek çok fitne adam vardır her nasıl fenalık olur ise olsun gelip söylerler hususıyla bu sırada Debre'de bir adam bir Bulgarın bir koyununu sirkat etmiş olsa derhal şikayet eder ve sarıklarından yerine iki koyun tahsil ederler.*

-I: *Nereye gidip de şikayet eder?* -R: *Müdire gelip de şikayet ederler lakin öyle fena adamlardan bazılarının köyleri isyanda olduklarından o makule adamlara müdir bir şey yapamaz idi bazılarını adam gönderip tutar idi.*

-I: *Müdir haydudu tutmuş olsa bile o hayduda ne yapabiliyor?* -R: *Müdir haydudu tuttuğu vakit davacının matlubunu tahsil eder haliverir haydudu tutamadığı halde akrabalarından birini pazarda tutup hapse ilka eyler ve haydud akrabasını kurtarmak üzere davacının matlub eylediği akçıyı verir ve akrabasını mahpesten kurtarır.*

-I: *Velev haydud ölmüş velev başka töhmetle müteellim(?) bulunmuş Debre'de gibi yerde Bulgarlar tarafından şikayet vukubulup da haydud veyahud akrabası tarafından davacının matlub eylediği şeyleri tahsil edip de saliverdiği halde sonra gidip o Bulgara ne yapar?* -R: *Ervelden yani üç*

⁵⁰⁹ "Debre'de bir adam ne veçhle felanlık etmiş olsa gelip söylemezler hususıyla Debre'de adam oldukları vakitte dahi hükümete şikayet etmezler [...]" BOA, I.MVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857).

⁵¹⁰ BOA, I.MVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857).

dört sene evvel böyle şikayet vukubulduğu halde haydud olsun ve gerek akrabası olsun hapisten kurtulduğu gibi o davacının malını alır ve hanesini yakar ve mısır tarlalarını bozarlar idi lakin üç dört seneden beri böyle şeylerin vukuu yoktur.

-I: *Bu hal al-an Debre'de bakidir niçin üç dört seneden beri vukuu yoktur diyorsun? -R:*

Söylediğim gibi üç dört sene evvel vukunu bilirim lakin sonraları işitmedim.

-I: *Sen işitmedin lakin bu güne kadar böyle fenalıklar olmakta olduğunu işittikmekteyiz. -R:*

Böyle fenalıklar mücedded Debre'de olmaz diyemem vuku melbuzdur lakin benim haberim yoktur.

-I: *Sen diyorsunki Debre'den bir adam gelir dava eder ise cezama razıyım halbuki bu*

fenalıklar baki olduğu halde senin yapmış olduğun fenalığı kim cesaret edebiliyor de geliip dava eder? -

R: Şimdiki halde korkmazlar ve davaya gelirler hatta beni buraya götürdükleri vakit haydud gürubundan Debre'de Tafe(?) namında bir adam olduğundan davacıları Tafe(?) tutulmuş diyerek bir ay dava buraya gelmişler ise de ben istedikleri Tafe(?) olmadığımı anladıkları gibi yine Debre'ye avdet etmişler.⁵¹¹

In sum, while Ramazan argued in the year 1857 that in the contemporary context (“şimdiki halde”, “bu sırada”), by which he most probably referred to the degree of 1856, Bulgarian residents of *Debre* would no longer be afraid to denounce him to the authorities, had he done any wrongdoing, the council members confronted him with the reality that little had changed; in the specific locality of *Debre* denouncing a (Muslim) bandit was still unthinkable, given the retaliation measures that would be taken against the claimant who would bring the case to the court.

Relations with Authorities

Ottoman bandits operated in manifold relations both with the local populations of the various territories and with the official authorities who were in charge of chasing the bandits. Indeed, recent literature on banditry has put less emphasis on the “horizontal ties” linking bandits to peasant society than on the “vertical ties” linking bandits to the political and socio-economic elites.⁵¹² As we have followed in the previous

⁵¹¹ BOA, LMVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857).

⁵¹² Dodds, “Jaime el Barbudo and Robin Hood bandits narratives in comparative perspective”, p. 465.

section, Muslim bandits, most times being army deserters, were often changing sides from being a bandit to working for, or becoming themselves, a police sergeant and vice versa. In addition, the present section will illustrate how the actual gendarmerie was often operating more in a relationship of mutual gains with the bandits, than in the role of chasing them. Operating in a “shared economy,” the *bölükbaşlar* often preferred to receive part of the gains of the bandits and leave them in peace than arresting them and presenting them in front of a local council. As Hobsbawm has noted, “In really bandit-infested areas campaigns against banditry are so often carried out by special forces brought in from the outside. Local merchants make their own arrangements to safeguard their businesses against constant disruption. Even the locally stationed soldiery and police may merely prefer to keep crime -by tacit or overt agreement with the bandits- below the threshold which will attract the attention of the capital [city].”⁵¹³

Donço stated in the court of *Selanik* that the *bölükbaşı* Hüseyin the son of Arif, in charge of the district of *Menlik*, had asked him for 5000 *guruş* when he caught him, in order not to bring him (“*seni götürmeyim*”) to the authorities.⁵¹⁴ Needless to say, Hüseyin himself, who was interrogated only shortly, negated this accusation; according to Hüseyin, there was no money on the bandits when he caught them, as they had left it to other people residing in the surroundings.⁵¹⁵ Generally, according to Donço, the *bölükbaşı* was taking money also from others in order not to arrest them (“*başkalarından bölükbaşlar para tutmaya kulak vermez*”). In fact, according to the same defendant, *bölükbaşs* were mostly contributing to the proliferation of banditry rather than to its prevention

⁵¹³ Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 90.

⁵¹⁴ BOA, MVL. 910 71 (18 February 1860), “*bölükbaşı dedi bana beş bin guruş ver seni götürmeyeyim beşbin guruş verdim İstamat'ta var idi üç bin guruş o da verdi bölükbaşya.*”

⁵¹⁵ BOA, MVL. 910 71 (18 February 1860), “*Haşa böyle şey kabul etmem ben padişah aylığı alırım ancak böyle fenalıkta tutmak için yedi kaça abalisiyle ispat ederim böyle şeyi kabul etmeyeceğimi.*”

("bölükbaşı ne zaman çıktı bölükbaşı bursuz daba çoğaldı"). According to what he had heard from another bandit, named Yorgi, Donço argued that *bölükbaşı* Hüseyin had stated that he did not want bandits to give in, but rather to continue doing banditry and give him some shares ("Hüseyin bölükbaşı rey verenleri istemez gezsinler kazansınlar bana da versinler deyü müsaade edermiş"). Donço himself had similarly informed Hüseyin that he intended to "give in," but the latter objected this decision and said that he should continue doing banditry. Nevertheless, Donço argued, before the *bölükbaşı* Hüseyin there had been another gendarmerie, an Albanian *ağa*, who was not after the money and was harsh on the bandits, without providing them the least protection.

Similar accusations against Hüseyin were made by the farmer Yorgi the son of Istantko,⁵¹⁶ from the district of *Menlik*, an accomplice of Danço, who testified likewise in court (in another file⁵¹⁷) that *bölükbaşı* Hüseyin *ağa* the son of Arif prevented him from abandoning banditry and sent him a message via others that he wanted a share of the money he would collect. After leaving the band of Danço and before joining the band of Donço, Yorgi tried once more to return to "normal life," but again the *bölükbaşı* did not allow him to ("reyalar haber yolladılar geleyim diye bölükbaşı bırakmadı"). Yorgi also testified that this *bölükbaşı*, who had been operating there for the last six or seven years, was working with fifty bandits, and taking half of whatever they were stealing.⁵¹⁸ Particularly, Yorgi named during this interrogation at least thirty names of bandits who had told him that the *bölükbaşı* Hüseyin was taking part of their money (or sometimes also other objects, or their guns and rifles).

⁵¹⁶ Yorgi testified that he had resorted to banditry because of a fight he had with a *gavur* over his wife.

⁵¹⁷ BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858).

⁵¹⁸ "bölükbaşı çıkarmış elli kişi bursuz ne alırlarsa yarısını alırdı..." BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858).

To note, money was not the only thing *bölükbaşı* Hüseyin was accused of demanding. The thirty-year-old farmer Atanas the son of Istavro from the *Menlik* district (who argued in court that he had been a bandit but had been not doing banditry for the last five to six years) accused Hüseyin that he was constantly sending his representative (*vekil*) to his house for spending the night. In fact, one day, the representative even attempted to take Atanas's sister and bring it to Hüseyin ("oynatmak için istedi"). But Atanas resisted and threatened the *vekil* that he would go next morning to the *meclis*,⁵¹⁹ and argued in court that this threat had been the actual reason for which he had been arrested ("bundan bana garaz etti").

As we learn from the interrogators though, Hüseyin, on his part, accused Atanas for having abducted a girl ("bir kız kaldırmışın"). When actually the former was interrogated, he denied all accusations of Atanas, and stated that Atanas had been guiding bandits (*kelavuz*);⁵²⁰ he was also providing the bandits in the *Menlik* district with guns and ammunition. The testimonies of Hüseyin were corroborated by the testimonies of two Muslims, Ömer and Numan. In Chapter Six, dealing with the punishments inflicted in all the above-described legal cases, we will further follow what happened to Hüseyin and the other litigants implicated in this case; in fact, despite the numerous accusations, Hüseyin was freed of all charges.

⁵¹⁹ "Ben yarın seninle meclise gideceğim bu işi anlatırım dedim sonra bunlar zabtıyeler ile beylerinde laf ettiler bu reaya yarın gidecek bizden şikayet edecek beyhude bizî utandırır ondan evvel biz bunu tutalım demişler sonra beni tuttular." BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858).

⁵²⁰ Furthermore, Hüseyin described many cruel acts of the same bandits, which they committed after Atanas had left the group, like killing and tearing apart the bodies of some persons, as well as sexually harassing a woman. BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858).

On the other hand, bandits were often “used” in the disputes between official authorities and local notables. In one such telling case⁵²¹ Muslim Albanian bandits⁵²² appeared to have prepared a trap (*pusu*) to a convoy of state officials who were travelling from *Manastır* to *Kesriye*, including Salihbeyzade Şahin from the *Kesriye* district, the chief judge of the *Manastır* province (*molla*) Hacı Hayrullah *efendi*, the former director of the financial administration of the province (*defterdar*) Esad *efendi*, one of the latter’s men, Mehmed *ağa*, the scribe of the finances (*maliye rüfekaşından katib*) İsmail *efendi*, as well as some other officials. Şahin *bey* was travelling with the officials to *Kesriye* in order to investigate (*li-ecl tahkik*) a legal case -concerning a piece of land (*arazı davasıyla*)- the former had with some of the city’s notables (*beyler*).⁵²³

The bandits’ band, comprising the famous Alizot from the *Kolonye* district of the province of *Manastır* (*meşahir eşkiyadan*, according to a litigant responsible for most crimes at that time: “*her ne fenalık olsa Alizot için söyleler idi*”), as well as a Çolak İspiro, Kostarik, Anastas (and more than hundred of others, the names of whom were not mentioned in detail -*yüzden mütecevuz avenesikle*-), started shooting at the convoy while it was on its way to *Kesriye*; during the shooting Mehmed *ağa*, being at the front of the convoy, was killed on the spot, while the other officials were seized, brought to the mountains, robbed and afterwards set free. Following that, all the officials returned to *Manastır*.

⁵²¹ BOA, LMVL. 382 16735 (19 November 1857).

⁵²² For the abundance (and its reasons) of Muslim Albanian bandits in the Ottoman Empire, see Frederick F. Anscombe, “Albanians and the ‘Mountain Bandits’” in *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830*, Frederick Anscombe (ed.), Princeton, US: Markus Wiener Publishers, p. 88.

⁵²³ The city of *Kesriye* seemed to have been in some turmoil during that time, described by the local council of *Manastır* in the *mezbata* of this case. The tax-contractor (*mültezim*) of the *Kesriye* lake Selim the son of Hasan had been murdered by Yanuşoğlu Arslan, a man in the service of the city’s notables (*beyler*); in addition, the uncle of the here-mentioned Şahin *bey*, namely a Şakir *bey*, had been the tax-contractor of the taxes of *Kesriye* (*rüsumat*), but had been tricked by the people, who had hidden their sheep before his arrival and counting. The pictured situation was further complicated by the accusation that, actually, the city’s *müdür*, Behlül, had informed the people beforehand to hide their sheep.

From the interrogations in *Manastır* of the brother of Alizot, named Hadis (Alizot himself was killed in an ensuing fighting between the bandits and the gendarmerie), and of Nuri the son of Frankil(?) and Rüstem the son of Nuri -all farmers from the same district as Alizot-, as well as of some Christians from the *Kesriye* district (the informant - *muhbir*- Ispiroi the son of Grozdan, the Christians Istoyan, Nedelko and Lazor the son of Grozdan), it was revealed that some masters from *Kesriye* (“*Kesriye beyleri tarafından sevk olunarak...*”) had actually paid the bandits for organizing the trap and the ensuing fighting, prior to the convoy’s arrival in *Kesriye*. The Muslim litigants referred mainly to related rumours they had heard about the incident in the market,⁵²⁴ while the Christians had heard the shooting and had then rushed immediately to the crime scene. Nevertheless, the council of *Manastır* stated in its *mazbata* that the involvement of the *Kesriye* notables could not be verified, and that the bandits must have acted on their own initiative (*bayduklar tarafından vukubulmuş şey olmasıyla*).

Relations with Local Populations

The narratives of the bandits in courts demonstrate that their relations with local populations were not straightforward. Dilo the son of Nako described how, while operating near *Dömeke*, his group asked for bread from a shepherd, who afterwards went to the mountain-pass-guard (*derbent ağa*)⁵²⁵ and reported them, leading to the arrest of his

⁵²⁴ “...alemin tevatiirüne göre *Kesriye beylerinin sevkıyla memuran-i mümaileybi müterassid olarak pusu ittihaz etmişler idi.*” BOA, I.MVL. 382 16735 (19 November 1857).

⁵²⁵ The same defendant described a similar event, in which a shepherd (from whom they had asked bread) informed the Vlach mountain-pass-guard. When the bandits got informed about the shepherd’s action, they caught him, asking from the guard for weapons in order to release him. BOA, I.MVL. 465 21020 (22 November 1861).

group.⁵²⁶ Dilo's group's leader, Yorgi *kapudan*, described in his testimonies similar incidents, when entering the Ottoman territory near *Dömeke*, where they took flour from some millers in order to make breads and had two lambs being slaughtered for them. After their departure, the millers notified the captain of the local police forces (*bölükbaşı*), resulting in soldiers being sent after them (the same incident was repeated near *Kalabaka*).⁵²⁷ Later, in the vicinity of *Kardiçe* they took two lambs, flour and bread from a shepherd, who later informed the local authorities -something similar happened also near the village *Kokkinoplo* at the *Alanboz* mountain.

To note, Yorgi mentioned also other instances in which locals helped them out with provisions, without informing the authorities afterwards. Yorgi did not mention any payment for the animals or any other stuff they had taken. Nevertheless, in one incident, when he and his men had stopped a Jewish man with two horses loaded with products and a small amount of money, Yorgi got angry at one of his accomplices who stole the money from the Jew, marking his behaviour as "disgraceful (*ayıp*)."

While Yorgi provided an example for doing banditry for reasons of subsistence, we witnessed above other examples of bandits, who were repeatedly stealing greater amounts of money from people. In these cases, bandits needed the locals not only for provisions, but also in order to hide the money they had acquired. Donço stated in court that he had given 3500 *guruş* to the notables (*çorbacı*) Yovan and Ustuyko of the village *Velos*(?) in the district of *Menlik*. At the same time, these notables were providing support

⁵²⁶ BOA, LMVL. 465 21020 (22 November 1861).

⁵²⁷ BOA, LMVL. 465 21020 (22 November 1861). For a similar informing the authorities of the presence of bandits and their taking of bread on behalf of local shepherds, see BOA, LDH. 787 63954 (18 July 1879). In this file Yorgi Nikola, who was doing banditry near *Zagor* with other Christians, stated that sometimes group of villagers were even actively chasing them because of their banditry activities.

("yataklık") to Donço. He also stated that the *çorbacılar* were informing him when the gendarmeries were around, so that he could protect himself.⁵²⁸

Generally, though, Donço admitted that in some places locals were supporting them, in others they were informing the authorities.⁵²⁹ Later in his interrogation, he argued that there were numerous people who were providing them with bread ("bir değil bin var, istersen yaz yaz bak ne zaman tükenir."). The bandits were not giving payment for the bread, as, according to Donço, this was the "law of the mountain" ("orada balkan buyurur orada para mı olur ekmek orada parasız olur."). Towards the end of his interrogation, Donço admitted also that they had killed the *kocabaşı* Mitro, albeit he had not taken any money from him; his killing had been an order of somebody.

Mustafa Moco the son of Hüseyin, a known bandit (*cümle-i alem bilir*) in the district of *Avrethisar* was tried in *Selanik* in 1862 not only for having stolen things, but also for having kidnapped two Christians from a village of his district. Indeed, kidnapping locals and asking for a ransom from their relatives was another form of threat bandits posed for the locals. To begin with, Mustafa Moco had often asked for bread, tobacco and snuff from the *kocabaşı* Tano from a village of his district. The latter testified in court, together with other Christians from surrounding villages who were regularly providing bread to Mustafa.⁵³⁰

In addition, Mustafa Moco had kidnapped (*kaldırdı*) two Christians from a village of his district, the shepherds Arabacıoğlu Korke and Miloğlu Mitro; previously he had kidnapped from the same village a certain Çakmakçıoğlu Kole. Mito testified how Mustafa

⁵²⁸ BOA, I.MVL. 426 18704 (6 January 1860).

⁵²⁹ "bazı yerde saklar bazı yerde bölükbaşya haber verir..." BOA, I.MVL. 426 18704 (6 January 1860).

⁵³⁰ BOA, MVL. 946 39 (12 May 1862).

Moco and his men⁵³¹ (whom they called bandits, *eşkiya*, *hırsızlar*) seized them after they had gathered their sheep and had sat to dinner. Mustafa asked for 20,000 *guruş* and four silver belts (*dört gümüşlü kuşak*) in order to release them and forced the two people wandering for a week with him in the mountains. When their fellow village men (*oğlanların babaları*) brought the money, Mustafa released the two shepherds. In fact, they provided the bandits with 10,000 *guruş*, one silver belt, as well as six pairs of shoes (*çarık*), half an okka (*keçme*) snuff and one okka tobacco.

Mustafa nevertheless denied numerous times all the accusations in court, arguing that he had worked as a gendarmerie (*zabtiye hizmetinde*) for two years in the district of *Nevrokop* and that he had never before seen the *reaya* who were testifying against him. In fact, the *reaya* were called to recognize Mustafa and one of his accomplices from a group of many men, which they successfully did. Mustafa on the other hand argued that he had been an army deserter of the reserve section (*redif firarı*) many years ago, and that he had stayed in his village and worked as a gendarmerie for the last two years. While apart from the involved *reaya*, also a farm guard (*subaşı*) named Mustafa bin Ali (who had been involved in the transfer of money to Mustafa Moco) testified against the latter, the case remained unresolved, as we will see in Chapter Six.

Lastly, the threat of kidnapping and blackmailing was expressed also through metaphors of the human body. The twenty-year-old Dimo the son of Dimitri from *Poliroz* testified in court how, together with Alexandri and Teohari -among other deeds- they had kidnapped the child of Papakonomou; when his father sent less money (2000 *guruş*) than they had demanded for, the bandits cut part of the ear of the child and sent it to his father in order to pressure him to send all of the requested amount of money.⁵³²

⁵³¹ Their names of some of them were: Ali, Yazıcı, Salih, Hasan, Pehlivan, Ismail.

⁵³² BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858).

Conclusion: Fighters With(-out) a Cause?

Through their own narratives presented in Ottoman courts, bandits of the nineteenth-century in the southern Balkans turn up as a complex social phenomenon, which does not fit into existent representations and explanations. The complexity of the phenomenon lies in the fact that social roles seemed to have been very fluid and distinctive lines between ordinary people, bandits and gendarmerie cannot easily be drawn -if, at all. Indeed, if we had to draw a schematic depiction of social actors in the Ottoman Empire, in which each circle would represent another social actor(s), bandits could be represented only in the shared spaces of intersected circles. In addition, contrary to existing interpretations, according to their own testimonies in court, they were serving neither social nor nationalist causes in their fights. On the contrary, closely embedded in the social context in which they were living in, bandits were commencing with and continuing banditry out of reasons closely linked to this social context.

Particularly, bandits were not investing banditry in front of the Ottoman courts with a social dimension or functionality in order to lend a higher purpose to their activities. None of the bandits presented in this chapter explained his activities as part of a project to care for the poor or redistribute any amount of wealth. Neither did any of the bandits demonstrate a certain political consciousness, despite literature having heavily charged the phenomenon of banditry with a political dimension. On the contrary, Ottoman bandits in the southern Balkans were rather preoccupied with everyday problems, and with the struggle of making ends meet. Banditry was presented in a fluid context, as one (and a widespread one) of the possibilities which enabled people making a living and could be followed by, or be between, different other jobs, ranging up to the possibility of being a gendarmerie -for the Muslim subjects-, that is, a state official.

All bandits seem to have shared a common agricultural background, stating in court that they had been farmers (*çiftçi*). Family problems, quarrels with one's wife, money lent to fellow villagers or notables, problems in carrying through with one's agricultural occupation, fleeing after having committed a crime, and, finally, deserting the Ottoman army were mentioned as the main reasons which had urged Ottoman men to resort to banditry. Going to the mountains ("*dağa çıkmak*") for some years or months emerged as a widespread solution in order to avoid struggling with a daily problem and feed oneself at least for a period of a time. More than that, bandits often did not just cater for their daily needs but stole high amounts of money from various victims.

While being in the mountains, bandits preserved complex relationships with both locals and authorities. Locals sometimes chased them, and sometimes fed them and supported them, as this had been "the law of the mountain". Much more complex was the relationship to official authorities. Local gendarmeries often did encourage bandits to continue with their activities, as long as they would share their booties with them. Equally important, the Muslim bandits themselves, often army deserters, could easily switch positions from being a bandit to be a gendarmerie. All involved actors seemed to have participated, in one way or another, in this division of local economies, while the divisions between "state officials" and "people," between what was considered as "legal" and "illegal," were rather permeable and negotiable. As Cronin has reminded us of, one should avoid "any romanticization of the subaltern, incorporating a discussion of the ways in which the excluded might not only resist but sometimes manipulate, negotiate and collude with the authorities, even to the extent of acting as agents of political or social repression."⁵³³

⁵³³ Cronin, "Introduction", p. 3.

Overall, the findings of the present chapter call for a “deheroization” of bandits within the context of nineteenth-century Ottoman Balkans. Rather than defenders of any social or national masterplan concerning smaller or bigger changes within Ottoman society, bandits were part and parcel of Ottoman local societies and governance, building multiple networks between farmers, locals, notables and state officials, all of them profiting in one way or another from banditry. Regarding the nature of Ottoman governance during the centralizing reforms of the nineteenth century, the abundance of banditry, evident in the hundreds of bandits’ trials existing in the Ottoman archives, can be seen as an indicator of how little control the sovereign was able to exert over the provinces and the whereabouts of its subjects.

CHAPTER SIX: THE STATE'S ANSWER TO MOBILIZATION FROM BELOW

A. Dealing with Nationalist Sedition (*Fesat*)

During the *Tanzimat* the Ottoman sovereign was split between different priorities and obligations when dealing with the trials of nationalist seditions. While the Sultan had promised to render the Empire's non-Muslims equal and satisfied subjects of the Empire with the stipulations of the *Tanzimat*, the emergence of new forms of nationalist mobilization on behalf of the latter during the nineteenth century (as described in Chapters Three and Four) brought about new dilemmas: Which kind of (light or hard) punishment would impede further radicalization of similar mobilizations? Furthermore, which kind of treatment would prevent non-Muslim subjects from migrating to one of the newly founded neighbouring Balkan countries?⁵³⁴ Indeed, on the one hand, the *Tanzimat* had recognized equal rights to the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire, and, furthermore, consolidated the *millet*-structures, by stipulating regulations regarding the institutional structure of each *millet* community.⁵³⁵ On the other hand, following the establishment of a separate Greek state in 1829 and Serbia's gaining an autonomous

⁵³⁴ There are several indications in the Ottoman archives that migration along the volatile border between the Ottoman Empire and the Greek Kingdom was taking place regularly during the nineteenth century, see for example the incident in which some Christians migrated from *Tirbala* to Greece in the 1840s and 1850s, BOA, I.MVL. 51 975 (16 July 1843), I.MVL. 99 2116 (24 June 1847), I.MVL. 197 6110 (8 May 1852), or, vice versa, the flight of some Greek soldiers from the Greek Kingdom to *Manastr* in order to avoid military service, BOA, MVL. 1029 44 (30 July 1857), HR.MKT. (28 June 1859).

⁵³⁵ Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία, 19^{ος} αι.-1919, Οι ελληνορθόδοξες κοινότητες* (*Asia Minor, 19th c.-1919, The Greek-Orthodox communities*), pp. 325-331.

status, the Ottoman bureaucracy hold the opinion that the non-Muslim communities residing in the Empire carried a “potential” of dividing the society.⁵³⁶

During the first decades of the *Tanzimat* the solution Ottoman rulers favoured in this respect proposed the toleration of nationalist discourses solely within the ingrained Ottoman institutions of church and schools⁵³⁷ (*bu iki mekana mahsus kelimat*),⁵³⁸ any relevant activity taking place outside these two institutions was defined (not only, but mainly) as sedition (*fesat*) and was tried in the newly founded local *Tanzimat* councils as a serious crime. Yet, as we will follow in this chapter, the punishment of similar activities was not straightforward: Sultanic magnanimity, petitions asking for forgiveness, or the consideration by the central authorities in Istanbul of factors such as foreign observation and the weight of public opinion often influenced the final verdicts and led to diminished or no punishment at all.

The Province's Share: Administration of Justice by the Local Councils

Local councils founded from the beginning of the *Tanzimat*⁵³⁹ played a decisive role in the Empire's tackling nationalist seditions. They were responsible for trying any

⁵³⁶ Selçuk Akşin Somel, “Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913) (The concept of Ottomanism at the time of Ottoman reform (1839-1913))” in *Cumhuriyet'e Devreden Düşünce Mirası: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi (The legacy of ideas conveyed to the Republic: The accumulation of the Tanzimat and the constitutional period)*, Tanıl Bora, Murat Gültekinil (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim, 2009, p. 91.

⁵³⁷ For the attitude of the Ottoman authorities towards Greek schools on Ottoman territory during the *Tanzimat*, that is, an involvement marked by “controlled toleration”, see Benlisoy, “Education in the Turcophone Orthodox Communities of Anatolia during the Nineteenth Century”, pp. 42-48.

⁵³⁸ During the examination of the members of the *gazino*, a Greek club in *Manastır* (see Chapter Three), the interrogators argued that expressions like “following Jesus example, who shed his blood for the common good” and “living up to the expectations of the motherland” and “long live the *gazino*, long live the mothercountry” were acceptable only in schools and churches, see BOA, I.MVL. 441 19597 (11 January 1861): “Mekteplerde ve kiliselerde işbu varaka ile beyan etmiş olduğunuz şeylerin söylenmesi caiz olabiliyor ise böyle halk ve abalı arasında bu iki mekana mahsus olan kelimatı kullanmak tecviz olunur şey olmayacağıni sizler de biliyorken [...]”

⁵³⁹ For the official regulations concerning these local councils, as well as actual establishments in various Balkan provinces, see Chapter 1.

member or participant in a similar sedition and sending the file of the trial (including the interrogation protocols and the council's summary of the events) to Istanbul for the issue of the final decree.⁵⁴⁰ Particularly, the councils were assigned the responsibility of carrying out the interrogation of the defendants and then summarizing in their *maẓbatas* (reports) the incidents concerning the specific crime and the testimonies of the defendants.

Finally, the local councils had also the jurisdiction to define in the same *maẓbatas* their decision (*hükem*) about whether the defendant under trial was guilty or not. Nevertheless, they were not entitled, at least in bigger crimes like the ones dealt with in this chapter, to determine the respective punishment of the defendants.

Indeed, the exact definition of the punishment which should be inflicted on the defendant(s) had to be determined by the Supreme Court in Istanbul ("... *hükemîn karşılığı olan ceza verme (saptanma, tabdid) yoktur. Bu da Meclis-i Vala'ya aitti.*"⁵⁴¹), and ratified by the Sultan through a decree (*irade*).⁵⁴² Following the Province Regulations of the province of *Tuna* issued in 1864, while crimes for which a punishment up to imprisonment was foreseen could be dealt with solely at the local level, bigger crimes, which could be

⁵⁴⁰ It is reminded at this point that a "typical" file of a penal case sent from a province to Istanbul included the interrogation protocols of all litigants, the council's summary report of the case (*maẓbata*) and the governor's report (*tabirât*). In homicide cases, which were tried both in the *sharia* courts and the local councils, also the kadi's judicial decree (*ilam*) was included in the file. Finally, often material related to the case, like suspicious documents found in the hands of the litigants, can also be found in the respective archives.

⁵⁴¹ Bingöl, *Tanzîmat devrinde Osmanlı'da yargı reformu-Nizamiyye mahkemeleri'nin kuruluşu ve işleyişi 1840-1876 (Ottoman judicial reform during the Tanzîmat-The foundation and functioning of the Ottoman Nizamiyye courts 1840-1876)*, p. 71.

⁵⁴² Specifically, the regulations of 1849 stipulated that in the case of severe crimes, like murder, banditry or money forging, the case's file should be sent to Istanbul for the final decree to be issued; minor offenses, like theft or injuring somebody could be handled at the local level, with the respective file being sent to the governor in order to enforce the punishment. The investigative councils (*meclis-i tabkîk*) founded in 1854 were charged with defining the result of a trial and the punishment of the defendant in the cases regarding smaller crimes. Again, bigger crimes had to be treated differently: They had to be delegated to the Big Councils, which would decide about the defendant's innocence or not, and then delegate the case to Istanbul for the assignment, if necessary, of the punishment. Bingöl, *Tanzîmat devrinde Osmanlı'da yargı reformu-Nizamiyye mahkemeleri'nin kuruluşu ve işleyişi 1840-1876 (Ottoman judicial reform during the Tanzîmat-The foundation and functioning of the Ottoman Nizamiyye courts 1840-1876)*, pp. 79-80.

punished with capital punishment or forced labour had to be sent to Istanbul for the issue of the final verdict (*irade*).⁵⁴³ Lastly, with the regulations of 1867 and the official establishment of the *nizamiyye mahkemeleri*, again bigger crimes had to be tried by the local councils, following which the interrogation protocols together with the council's decision about the innocence or not of the defendant had to be sent to the centre for the final verdict to be released.⁵⁴⁴

However, before further elaborating on the documents and the decisions produced on behalf of the local councils, let us first elaborate briefly on the composition of the councils which were deciding about the fate of the defendants. The members of a local council can be inferred either from the seals appended to the end of the interrogation protocol -although sometimes this practice was not followed, and the seals were missing from the interrogations- or from the seals appended to the council report - where they were always stamped. Nevertheless, in certain files of penal cases concerning nationalist seditions sent from the provinces to the centre the council report (*meclis mazbatası*) was missing. In these cases, either the defendants had been sent to Istanbul in order to be tried in the capital -due to the politically sensitive nature of the trials-, or the trial had taken place in the province, yet the respective *mazbata* was not included in the file (or not composed at all).

In the case of the *gazino* club, for example, the nine defendants were transported to Istanbul and were tried there. In the final report of a special commission convened for this case it was stated that some form of short interrogation had taken place in *Manastır* (the protocols of which nevertheless cannot be found in the respective file), but that the

⁵⁴³ Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlı'da yargı reformu-Nizamiyye mahkemeleri'nin kuruluşu ve işleyişi 1840-1876 (Ottoman judicial reform during the Tanzimat-The foundation and functioning of the Ottoman Nizamiyye courts 1840-1876)*, p. 164.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

city's local notables (including the non-Muslim ones) had asked for the defendants' removal from *Manastır*, at least for a certain time, and their transport to Istanbul.⁵⁴⁵ Similarly, Voulgaris and his accomplices were also transferred to Istanbul in order to be tried there. Voulgaris had been tried also in *Selanik* before, and the interrogation, yet unsealed, was included in the respective file, but no accompanying council report was drafted.⁵⁴⁶

Likewise, in trials like the one of *Selanik*'s Christian printer Kiriakos Darzilovitis, which took place solely in *Selanik*, again no accompanying council report exists, and his interrogation was not sealed.⁵⁴⁷ Something similar was valid for the trial of Hasan from the Karatasos uprising (1854), again in *Selanik*; once more no council report exists in the file, but this time the interrogation protocol was sealed with thirteen seals, among which one Christian, belonging to the city's metropolitan.⁵⁴⁸

In sum, contrary to what we will observe below with regard to similar trials tried in the *Tuna* province, the council of *Selanik* (adjudicating, for example, the cases of Kiriakos, Hasan and Voulgaris and his accomplices) avoided both sealing the interrogation protocols it composed (except in Hasan's case), and, more importantly, writing its own report summarizing the events. (Nevertheless, the latter was still being done by the *vali* -at least in Kiriakos's and Hasan's case-, who simply summarized the events and then forwarded the file to the centre.) Regarding the seals, even in the one

⁵⁴⁵ BOA, LMVL. 441 19597 (11 January 1861).

⁵⁴⁶ BOA, LMMS. 34 1388 (25 February 1867).

⁵⁴⁷ BOA, LMVL. 204 6505 (25 March 1851).

⁵⁴⁸ BOA, LMVL. 310 12874 (13 July 1854). To note, in all the cases mentioned above -including the cases in which the trials were taking place at the local level- the defendants would afterwards be sent to Istanbul for the issue of the final decree and the inflicting of the punishment.

case where they were appended, we notice that only the religious highest authority, the metropolitan, was present from among the non-Muslims.

The absence of the *mazbata* in the files of such trials bearing a politically sensitive nature may indicate that *Selanik*'s council avoided taking an active stance with respect to the innocence or guiltiness of the defendants. This tendency becomes especially striking when compared with the practices followed during the trials of other kind of crimes, like murders or banditry, on behalf of the same council of *Selanik*. As can be extracted from the Appendices, the council of *Selanik* demonstrated a constant presence of non-Muslim members since the 1840s when trying penal cases related, for example, to homicide, theft, or banditry. The related *mazbatas* in the latter cases were written by thirteen members, among whom three non-Muslims, and summarized the situation related to the crime.⁵⁴⁹ More importantly, in homicide cases, as has been illustrated in Chapter One, the council of *Selanik* appeared not only to have tried the cases but also played an active role as an intermediary between the litigants, often persuading the relatives of the victim to opt for money-compensation (*diyet*) rather than retaliatory measures in the form of the death penalty of the culprit (*kıyas*).⁵⁵⁰

However, the example of *Selanik* regarding the absence of council reports in the case of trials of nationalist seditions was not typical for other places. Pertaining to the *Tuna* province, nationalist seditions' files always provided the seals of the members interrogating the suspects, as well as the councils' reports summarizing the events. We

⁵⁴⁹ BOA, LMVL. 143 3997 (15 June 1849), LMVL. 146 4087 (13 July 1849), LMVL. 146 4102 (17 July 1849).

⁵⁵⁰ BOA, LMVL. 146 4102 (17 July 1849): In the case of the Jew Mison killed in *Selanik* by Yusuf, although his heirs, that is, his mother and his wife, were insisting on the killing of Yusuf, after they meet again in framework of the local court they reached a compromise to receive a *diyet* of 4.000 *guruş* (*verese-i mersume ile katil-i merhum meclis-i acizanemize celb ve muvacebe olunduklarında verese-i mersume dava kıyasdan katil-i merhum Yusuf ile ba tavassut muslibun ikrar 4.000 guruş bedel üzerene baada-s-sulh ve-l-kabul bedel-i sulh olan mebliğ-i...*). In addition, Yusuf was also charged with five years of forced labour on behalf of the local council.

are thus able both to keep track of who was participating in the interrogations and the drafting of the reports, as well as (based on the latter) to observe how local councils presented to the centre seditions taking place in their vicinities. Following the sedition starting at the monastery near *Leskofça*, a commission (*komisyon*) of the sub-province *Turnovi* carried out interrogations on several days of July and August 1862. During the interrogations, the commission consisted either of ten, nine or seven members, while in all these cases the numbers of the non-Muslim subjects remained constant and entailed four non-Muslim notables,⁵⁵¹ plus a representative of the metropolitan (*vekil-i metropolit*). Similarly, the sub-province's council (*meclis-i liva-i Turnovi*) convened several times in the same months in order to summarize the situation in the form of a *mazbata* addressed to the centre. On these dates the membership was constantly consisting of twelve members (once of thirteen), two of them being non-Muslims⁵⁵² (the metropolitan not being among them).⁵⁵³

Following the sedition of 1867, the defendants were tried in the *Tuna* province's centre, that is, in *Ruşçuk*. The interrogations took place in June and July 1867 on behalf of a council whose membership constantly changed. While most times it consisted of nine members, among whom four were non-Muslims,⁵⁵⁴ we find also following memberships: six members, among whom two or three non-Muslims; five members,

⁵⁵¹ Their names were: Yorgi ? Arnavud, İstamati ? and two unreadable ones. The names of the Muslim members were: Tahsin Hüseyin, Ali Fazil, Es-Seyyid Mehmed, Mehmed Sabri, ?.

⁵⁵² Their names were (non-Muslims): Yorgi ? Arnavud, Yorgi Nedov; and of the Muslims: Tahsin Hüseyin, (once: Mehmed Sabri), Mustafa İzzet, Es-Seyyid Mustafa, Ali Mustafa, Mehmed Hakkı, İbrahim Hürşid, ?, Mehmed Katib, Ahmed Derviş Es-Seyyid, Ali Fazil. See also Appendix 2.

⁵⁵³ BOA, I.MVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862), I.MVL. 474 21489 (7 October 1862).

⁵⁵⁴ BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867), I.MVL. 581 26070 (14 November 1867). The names of the non-Muslims were the following: Hacı Tanas Hacı Petkov, Yorgi Nedov, Todor Marko. The fourth seal, which appeared occasionally, was the (Armenian) name Karabet. After a while, the Armenian name was substituted by a seal with the inscription "Tanil" (Danil, Daniel?). The names of the Muslims were: Mehmed Cenab, Süleyman Rüşdi, Mehmed Nuri, Mehmed Es-Seyyid, Ahmed Edib. For the other constellations see Appendix 2 of this chapter.

among whom two non-Muslims; seven members, among whom four non-Muslims, and eight members, among whom three (or sometimes even four) non-Muslim members.

The council's members did not just seal the interrogations of a particular day (as was done in *Tirnovi* for example), but every single interrogation separately, even if the latter consisted of just a paragraph or some sentences. The council's *mazbatas* (particularly, of the crime council of the *Tuna* province, "*meclis-i cinayet-i vilayet-i Tuna*") on the sedition of 1867 were written on 26 June and 18 July, and sealed by eight members, among whom three were non-Muslim members.⁵⁵⁵

In *Ruşçuk* took place also the interrogations of the 1868 sedition, namely on 18, 20 and 27 August. This time the interrogations were carried through by the crime council of the *Tuna* province counting seven members (the Muslims being familiar to us from the sedition of 1867 -Mehmed Cenab, Süleyman ? Es-Seyyid, Ahmed Edib, Hüseyin ?- and the non-Muslims counting three members, that is, Anastas Taşko, Panayot Docev and Yakov Muzi?). The final report was written on 27 August by the same council (crime council), albeit with a slightly different constellation.⁵⁵⁶

In the case of pop-Mito, the interrogation of Dimitri Angeli and five others involved in the case took place in the district council of *Lom* (*meclis-i deavi-i kaza-ı Lom*) in the end of June and beginning of July 1868. The local council of *Lom* consisted of six members, among whom one was non-Muslim.⁵⁵⁷ Pop Mito (later Dimitri Angeli and some other defendants were added) was interrogated at the same time in the sub-province council of *Vidin*, which consisted of eight members, among whom two non-

⁵⁵⁵ The members were: Faik Mustafa, ?, Mehmed Nuri Es-Seyyid, Rifat Mehmed Es-Seyyid, Hüseyin ?. The non-Muslims ones were: Anastas ?, Yakov Muzi? and one unreadable.

⁵⁵⁶ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 1 (9 October 1868). The non-Muslims were the same ones as in the interrogations, the Muslim ones were the following: Faik Mustafa, Mehmed Cenab, Mehmed Nuri, ?, Hüseyin ?.

⁵⁵⁷ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 2 (11 March 1869): Ali Ibrahim, ?, Hafız ?, Osman Fehmi, ?, ? (non-Muslim).

Muslims.⁵⁵⁸ Pop Mito and Dimitri were also interrogated in the province's centre, *Ruşuk*, by a four member-council, with three non-Muslims participating.⁵⁵⁹ In this penal case regarding the seditious network around pop-Mito both the crime council of *Vidin* and of the province centre *Ruşuk* did compose their own *mazbatas*; the documents were sealed, in both cases, by eight members.⁵⁶⁰

Overall, contrary to the example of *Selanik*, we can observe that in the *Tuna* province -in its centre, *Ruşuk*, in the sub-provinces *Turnovi* and *Vidin* and in the district of *Lom*- the local councils were both writing their *mazbatas* and sending them to Istanbul, as well as judging their cases with the required number of non-Muslim members. Even more, the Province Regulations of 1864, which were firstly established in the *Tuna* province, were more or less followed. Both the new names of the councils had been adopted (*meclis-i deavi*, *meclis-i cinayet*), as well as the required number of their members and their distribution among Muslims and non-Muslims. So, for example, the crime council (*meclis-i cinayet*) of *Ruşuk* demonstrated the constellation of two state-appointed members plus three Muslim and three non-Muslim notables.⁵⁶¹

What surprises though is that during the interrogations, the councils interrogating the suspects in various places of the *Tuna* province opted for a high (sometimes even a

⁵⁵⁸ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 2 (11 March 1869): Tahsin Hüseyin, ? Mahsud, Ahmed, Ahmed Şükri, Remzi; the seals of the two non-Muslims were inscribed with initials and thus difficult to decipher. The last seal is missing, and it is difficult to say whether it was a Muslim or non-Muslim.

⁵⁵⁹ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 2 (11 March 1869). The names are known to us from the previous trials: Hüseyin ?, Anastaş Taşko, Panayot Docev, Yakov Muzi?.

⁵⁶⁰ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 2 (11 March 1869). The council of *Vidin* composed of: Tahsin Hüseyin, ? Mahsud, Ahmed, Ahmed Şükri, Remzi; the seals of the two non-Muslims were inscribed with initials, while the last member is difficult to identify. The council of *Tuna* composed of: Faik Mustafa Es-Seyyid, Mehmed Cenab, Mehmed Nuri Es-Seyyid, Ismail effendi (absent), Hüseyin ?, and the non-Muslims: Anastaş Taşko, Panayot Docev, Yakov Muzi?.

⁵⁶¹ Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlı'da yargı reformu-Nizamiyye mahkemeleri'nin kuruluşu ve işleyişi 1840-1876 (Ottoman judicial reform during the Tanzimat-The foundation and functioning of the Ottoman Nizamiyye courts 1840-1876)*, p. 158.

majority) presence of non-Muslims. One could speculate as to whether this was mere coincidence, or a necessity connected, among other reasons, with the language spoken during the interrogations: Ottoman Bulgarians must have been interrogated more often than not in their mother-tongue, so that the presence of many non-Muslims notables during the interrogations facilitated and controlled the right translation of the dialogues into Ottoman Turkish. Be that as it may, taking into consideration that the *mazbatas* were drafted based on what had been said during the interrogations, the fact that the interrogations were often executed by a council with a non-Muslim majority signalled a high degree of confidence in these specific notables.

In terms of content, the *mazbatas* produced by the local councils adopted the usual bureaucratic jargon, which we will follow in the next section as depicted in the reports of the Supreme Council (*Meclis-i Vala*) and the final Sultanic decrees. Thus, they were coining the penal cases related to nationalist seditions *fesad* (*ika-ı fesad*) and their participants a mob and a seditious group (*ayak takımından, takım-i fesede*). The council of *Turnovi*, for example, stated on 11 August 1862 that the Bulgarians of the city had gone up to the mountains with the intention to organize a sedition (*ika-ı fesat*), as well as to do banditry (*geçit-ü güzar*).⁵⁶² The crime council of *Tuna*, in its report from 26 June 1867, stated that some bandits (*eşkiya fırkalarından*), with the help of some seditious men (*ehl-i fesat, cemiyet-i fesadiye*) from the Wallachian side, had entered Bulgaria in order to proceed to activities of banditry and sedition (*işbu fesad ve şekavet maddesi için, haydutluk etmek için*).⁵⁶³ Furthermore, secret associations (*cemiyet-i hafîye*) had been organized in various cities near the borders. In another report drafted some days later, the defendants were accused of inciting Bulgaria (*Bulgaristanı ifsad etmek için*) and of doing banditry (*haydutluk ve hırsızlık*

⁵⁶² BOA, LMVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862).

⁵⁶³ BOA, LMVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

icin). Others were accused for participating in a seditious committee (*cemiyet-i fesadiye dahil olmak*), others for transferring documents and others for having taken the oath for a sedition.⁵⁶⁴

One year later, the same council of *Tuna* wrote a report on 27 August related to the incidents of 1868, in which the defendants were not only accused of sedition, but also of uprising (*ibtihal*).⁵⁶⁵ In addition, they were accused of aiming at establishing a new government (*hükümet-i cedide*) in the mountains, of tearing down the telegraph pillars and of firing at the gendarmeries. Each of them had acted as an agent (*mübaşir*) of war, murder, sedition and uprising. Pertaining to pop-Mito's case, the council of *Vidin* drafted a report on 17 August, stating that the documents found on Mito entailed some phrases which were violating the internal security (*emniyet-i dahiliyesini*) of the Empire. The council of *Tuna* labelled the documents exchanged between Mito and the others involved in the case as seditious (*fesat-amiş*) and harmful (*evrak-ı muzıre*). Mito was accused of being a member of the secret committee in Walachia.⁵⁶⁶

Before going to the concrete punishments proposed on behalf of local councils in cases of nationalists' trials, I would like to open a parenthesis here in order to add that a similar bureaucratic jargon like the one just described was being followed by the local councils when they were carrying through another one of their functions, namely summarizing the local situation in cases of nationalist uprisings and dispatching their reports to the centre. This was for example the case in the uprisings of 1854, described in Chapter Three. The non-Muslim members were sometimes present in the drafting of

⁵⁶⁴ BOA, LMVL. 581 26070 (14 November 1867).

⁵⁶⁵ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 1 (9 October 1868).

⁵⁶⁶ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869).

such *mazbatas*, often also not.⁵⁶⁷ In any case, the language employed in these reports was one very much echoing the imperial anxieties of the centre. Most times, after the description of an urgent and grave situation, the reports were asking the dispatch of further soldiers in order to be able to put down the uprising. Thus, similar also to the *mazbatas* we saw in the previous section from the *Tuna* councils, the incidents were generally depicted as one more incident of sedition (*fesat*) emanating -this time- from Greek-organized groups, the severity of the situation was being underlined and further military aid was being asked for. Particularly, the report written by the council of *Manastır* stated that Greek committees (*Yunan eteryaları*) had demonstrated since old times (*öteden beri*) their bad intentions (*sui niyetleri*) and seditious thoughts (*efkar-ı faside*) towards the Empire, while the council of *Tırhala* stated that the Greeks (*Yunanlıların*) had since old times staged seditious moves against the Empire; this time though the efforts had become more intense (*takviye verüüp*) and several bandits' chiefs had transgressed the borders and embarked on various seditious acts (*enva-ı fitne ve fesada iptidar, fesad-ı azım*).

The council of *Manastır* similarly reported that the Greek bandits had invaded (*tevaciüz*) several places -near *Tırhala*, *Narda*, *Agrafa*, *Dömeke*- with the aim to “incite (*tabrik*) the Empire's Christians” and to set on various seditions (*enva-ı fesad ve fitneye iptidar, bir fesad-ı azıme icadına ictisarlari*). According to the council of *Yanya*, *Grivas*, *Tzavelas*, *Zervas* and others had seized and conquered (*zabt ve teshir*) certain districts (around *Narda*, *Yanya*, *Korendos*), had incited (*tabrik*) their populations and had forced the non-Muslims of these districts to obey them (*kendilerine tabiiyet ettirdiği*). In addition, the non-Muslims of certain villages (like *Naslıç*, *Meçova*) had followed the bandits (*kendilerine bend ettikleri*) and united with them (*reayanın ittifaqları zahir olduğu*).

⁵⁶⁷ See for *Selaniç*, BOA, I.DH. 301 19014 (2 May 1854), reports on 20 and 23 April, I.MTZ. (01) 10 252 (5 April 1854), I.MTZ. (01) 11 270 (11 May 1854), report on 5 May. See for *Manastır* BOA, I.MVL. 396 17231 (16 June 1858), HR.MKT. 332 50 (30 April 1860). For *Yanya* see BOA, I.MTZ. (01) 10 246 (26 March 1854), I.MTZ. 11 261 (23 April 1854). For *Tırhala* see BOA, I.MTZ. 9 242 (23 March 1854).

Similarly, the council of *Tırhala* reported that the bandits had taken many villages (*zabt ve istila*) in the district of *Agrafa*, and just one day before they had attacked (*bücum*) a Muslim village on the border. Furthermore, the bandits had closed the roads and thus the communication to *Meçova*, and also the roads between *Tırhala* and *Yanya*. All the non-Muslims of the Empire were following the bandits, while the Muslim families of some villages were asking for permission to remove their families to *Fener* and *Yenişehir*.

All reports concluded with the request of further soldiers to be sent. In order to convince the centre about the severity of the situation, possible future threats were depicted: The council of *Selanik* stated that the issue would increasingly gain importance (*gittikçe madde kesb-i ehemmiyet edeceğinden*); The council of *Yanya* argued that the sedition (*fesat*) was becoming day by day more severe (*iştidad bulmakta*) and that the events may evolve into a big sedition (*bir gaile-i cesimeye davet edeceğinden*) and spill over to the whole of Rumelia (*sirayet edeceği*). It was also argued that with the existing number of soldiers the protection of the subjects of *Yanya* (*ahali-i kasaba mal ve canlarından emniyetleri kalmayacağı*), as well as the restoration of the order (*istihsal-i iade-i asayiş mümkün olmayacağı*), were not possible. The non-Muslims had rose up (*isyan etmiş olduklarından*).

The pleading for further military aid acquired sometimes even dramatic tones, like when the councils of *Selanik* literally begged for soldiers to be sent (*lütfen ve merhameten, lütfen ve ihsanen*). The council of *Tırhala* likewise pleaded for the coming aid, stating that its members were bewildered about how to act (*ne işleyeceğimizi ve ne tedabir edeceklerimizi şaşırıp hayrette kalmış olduğumuz*) and the situation was becoming graver hour by hour (*bu keyfiyet saat be saat cesamet-i kesb eylemesi*, in a similar report of the previous day *pek büyük bir fenalığı netice vereceği aşikar olarak*).

Finally, smaller councils, like the ones of the districts *Kesriye* (9 March), *Nasliç* (8, 9, 10 March),⁵⁶⁸ *Golos* (3 April 1854) and *Kranya* (12 March),⁵⁶⁹ were sending reports with similar demands. *Kesriye* and *Nasliç* were asking urgently (*acilen*) for more ammunitions (*fışenk ve kurşun*), as the seditious situation could spill over to this district. Particularly, *Nasliç* was asking for 2000 soldiers to be sent within three to five days, while the non-Muslims should be disarmed. The bandits were coined cruel (*insafsız ve abkamsız*). The council of *Kranya*, terrified by the news of the fall of *Meçova* (which had been transmitted by the latter's administrator, who had fled to *Kranya*), which was only seven hours away, was asking for the protection (*vikaye*) of the Sultan. Even more so, considering, as was underlined, that the majority of the district were Christians. Lastly, *Golos* informed that the bandits had burned ten Muslims villages, and taken many Christian villages and seized their animals. When attacking *Golos* itself, they had succeeded in taking to their side around three hundred non-Muslims, while a two-hours fight ensued between the bandits and the soldiers, to whom also some of the locals had sided. While the details of the fight follow, the council concluded with expressing thankfulness to the Sultan for achieving the rescuing (*istiblas*) of the city.

Concerning the proposal of punishments on behalf of the local councils, while the council of *Tirnovi* did not interfere in this respect, the council of the province's centre, *Ruşukë*, contrary to official stipulations as described above, proposed punishments in the cases of 1867 and 1868. Particularly, in the case of *Tirnovi* the council's reports stated simply that it forwarded the interrogation protocols to the centre, and that the respective punishment should be determined by a Sultan's degree.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁸ BOA, I.MTZ. 9 242 (23 Mach 1854).

⁵⁶⁹ BOA, I.MTZ. 9 242 (23 Mach 1854), I.MTZ. 10 257 (12 April 1854).

⁵⁷⁰ "...icra-ı icabı rey ve irade-i sami-i vekaletpenahilerine menut ve müteveffik bulunmuştur." BOA, I.MVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862).

Similarly, the *kaimmakam* of *Tirnovi* summarized the situation in his own report.⁵⁷¹ On the contrary, in the seditions of 1867 and 1868 the crime council of *Ruşçuk* was, in addition to summarizing the events, proceeding to suggest the most suitable punishment for the defendants in its *mazbatas* sent to the centre. In its report of 26 June 1867, it concluded that thirty one people had been interrogated and found guilty; among them four (the scribe Kostaki, Trayfo from *Manastır*, Yordan Kirkinçe?, Yakindobcioğlu Nikolai) in the first degree, and they were imprisoned until their final punishment would be defined. The other twenty-seven ones should be sent to the castle of *Diyarbakır* (or another castle being proposed by the final decree) for periods which should be specified according to the Penal Code and the degree of their involvement in the events.⁵⁷²

In the second *mazbata*, drafted on 18 July, the crime council of *Ruşçuk* drew the conclusion that, on the one hand, seventeen men had been judged for various crimes (like participation in a seditious group (*cemiyet-i fesadiye*), transporting of documents, taking the oath for the sedition), but that the degree of their crimes had not been sufficient in order to define a certain punishment. Indeed, the time they had spent in jail was seen as satisfactory and they should be released. On the other hand, from among further eight men who had been arrested, one should be sentenced to death, one to forced labour, another two would be sent to Istanbul in order to receive their punishment, while the two priests should be exiled to *Aynaroz* and the two teachers to other places.⁵⁷³ It was stated that this had been the decision of the local council (*meclis-i mezkurde karar verilmiş*).

Following the sedition of 1868 the crime council of *Ruşçuk* concluded in its report that ten people had been arrested and brought to the town, where they had been

⁵⁷¹ BOA, LMVL. 474 21489 (7 October 1862).

⁵⁷² BOA, LMVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867).

⁵⁷³ BOA, LMVL. 581 26070 (14 November 1867).

interrogated and among whom (according to articles fifty-five to fifty-seven of the Penal Codes) Nikola, Hristo, Vasil and Maris (their crimes being more severe) should be sentenced to death punishment,⁵⁷⁴ while Maris, Angel, Uzunyovan, Todor and Donço should be sentenced for lifelong and Sava for fifteen years forced labour somewhere in Anatolia or the Arab provinces.⁵⁷⁵ In both cases, that is, in 1867 and 1868, the province's governor forwarded the file to the centre by adding a summary of his own. In 1867, for example, the governor was Midhat *paşa*, who drafted two reports, both on 21 July. In them he was further specifying the punishments.⁵⁷⁶

As of the *mağbatas* regarding pop-Mito's case, while the one composed in *Vidin* merely summarized the events, the one in *Ruşnuk* proposed that according to article sixty-three Mito should be found guilty in the first instance and Dimitri in the second, while the Porte (*bab-i aliyeden istişan*) should determine their exact punishments. As for the rest, Mico Kamis and Ustuyan had raised some suspicions, and together with Beşvorke, Daniel and Pozin they all should be kept under supervision (*taht-ı nezaret*).⁵⁷⁷

Overall, while the local councils were established throughout the Balkan provinces, they were not functioning everywhere in the same way. Local dynamics seemed to have played a decisive role in the way local councils adjudicated penal cases pertaining to *fesat*. In the case of *Manastır* and *Selanik* the local bureaucracy and the notables choose either to send the defendants of nationalist seditions' trials to Istanbul to

⁵⁷⁴ The exact wording in the final report being: "*mecalis-i muvakkate talimatına tenfiken hemen idam cezasıyla icra-ı mücazaları.*" BOA, I.MTZ. (04) 4 103 1 (9 October 1868).

⁵⁷⁵ BOA, I.MTZ. (04) 4 103 1 (9 October 1868).

⁵⁷⁶ In his document in file BOA, I.MVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867), for example, concerning the four defendants who had committed crimes of the first degree, Midhat Pasha advised that two of them (that is, Yordan and Nikolai), who had provided important information during their interrogations and had not participated themselves in the sedition with actions (*bişşat ve bilfiil*), should be punished with hard labour instead of execution. As for the remaining twenty-seven defendants, they were sent to Istanbul in order to receive the punishments of forced labour or imprisonment.

⁵⁷⁷ BOA, I.MTZ. (04) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869).

be tried there, or tried them in their local councils, but did not describe their own point of view on a case in a respective *mazbata*. In the *Tuna* province, on the other hand, the local councils were acting as courts, trying the cases and summarizing the proceedings in a document. The administrative language and legal terminology used in order to describe the cases, coining them mostly a *fesat*, provides evidence for the fact that at least in these trials these local councils were adopting the central bureaucracy's language and viewpoint. Lastly, we observe that the crime council of *Ruşçuk* was confident enough even to exceed its jurisdiction and propose also punishments for the culprits; there seemed to be little problem in the councils assuming more than their usual powers, as we did not encounter a writing of the centre asking from the councils to not interfere in the infliction of punishments. In the case of *Tuna*, this may be related to the powerful presence of Midhat *paşa* in the province and the fact that the Province Regulations were firstly established by him in this province in 1864. The proposals for punishments of the defendants made by the councils were, for the most part, adopted by the Supreme Court (see below), except of the proposals for death punishments, which were mostly commuted into lifelong forced labour.

Lastly, what the non-Muslims sitting in these courts thought about these specific trials is difficult to be extracted, as the final *mazbatas* were sealed by all members, and we do not know how the agreement upon the final text was being reached. Specific research on the non-Muslim notables mentioned above could yield fruitful results in this direction. To be sure, part of them belonged to the old propertied elite, and thus must have favoured the current status-quo and despised nationalist seditions with wider political implications. Saraçoğlu, who has conducted relevant research on the administrative council of *Vidin*, concentrates especially on two men, Maruf Ağazade Ahmed Bey and Sevastaki İvanov Gunzovyanov, who probably appear also in the *Vidin*

council that wrote the report on Pop-Mito's case in 1868. Both were descendants of former *gospodars* (local landholders) families.⁵⁷⁸

On the other hand, the picture is further complicated by the fact that many Bulgarian revolutionary notables -that is, members of the local committees on Ottoman territory- served also as members of the local councils established during the *Tanzimat*. Several such cases are known especially for the decade of 1870s: Consider, for example, the trial of Vasil Levsky, the leader of the Bulgarian revolutionary organization in the early 1870s, captured after the robbery of a large sum of money from an Ottoman postal carriage, known as the Arabakonak robbery. The trial took place in *Sofya*, the centre of the sub-province where the robbery was committed. One member of the commission which investigated the case of Levsky and the other captives was Hadzhi Mano Stoyanov, an influential Bulgarian tradesman from *Sofya*, who at the time was a member of the commercial court and was later elected as a member of the regional mixed court. However, he has been remembered as a supporter of various patriotic initiatives and according to some sources, he also joined the revolutionary committee.⁵⁷⁹

Several months later a certain Kosta (Koshta, Kosthi) Chorbadzhi (Kosta Todev, also called Simitchiev) was tried, together with others, in the town of *Hasköy* for being one of the town's revolutionary committee's members. During the previous year though he had served as a member of both the administrative council and the province's general assembly, and even, according to some memoirs, had served as one of the interrogators during a trial concerning other revolutionary members. However, after he was shown to

⁵⁷⁸ Saraçoğlu, "Resilient Notables: Looking at the Transformation of the Ottoman Empire from the Local Level", p. 274. As can be seen in Appendix 2, in the council of *Vidin* was sitting a certain Ahmet Bey. While we cannot be sure whether he is the same person as the one Saraçoğlu mentioned, the non-Muslim seal on the other hand, bearing the inscription C.I.F., must most probably be Sevastaki Ivanov Gunzovyanov mentioned by the same author.

⁵⁷⁹ Vezenkov, "In the Service of the Sultan, in the Service of the Revolution: Local Bulgarian Notables in the 1870s", pp. 136.

be also involved in the case, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in *Diyarbekir*.⁵⁸⁰ In sum, the non-Muslim notables offer a fruitful ground of study concerning various and overlapping allegiances in the turbulent times of the *Tanzimat*, as has been also elaborated in Chapter 2.

The Centre's Share: The Supreme Council (*Meclis-i Vâla*) and the Sultan's Response

Based on the files sent from the provinces, the Supreme Court and afterwards the Sultan himself were forming their own opinion about the penal cases and issuing the corresponding verdict. One has to stress at this point that the file sent from the province was the only information the central authorities had on a legal case. The local realities were thus transmitted to them through the mediation of the local councils. In this section, we are going to follow the discourses employed on behalf of the authorities in Istanbul, mainly by the Supreme Court and the Sultan, in their relevant documents dealing with nationalist seditions taking place in various Balkan provinces; the ideological underpinnings these discourses convey about the centre's image of revolting people; and, finally, the punishments the defendants received (or not) by the final verdicts (*irade*) of the Sultan.

The main legal category used by the authorities in the Empire's centre in order to describe seditious activities with a nationalist character was *fesat* (sedition) and its derivatives (*fesadın icrasına başlamak*, *ifsada iptidar etmek*, *ifsad-ı ezhan-ı ahali*, *fasid efkarlar*, *mefsadet*, *mefasid*, *müfsid*). While other terms were also used interchangeably, let us elaborate

⁵⁸⁰ Vezenkov, "In the Service of the Sultan, in the Service of the Revolution: Local Bulgarian Notables in the 1870s", p. 137.

shortly on the term *fesat*, that is, on a centuries-old and time-tried formula. A term of political and legal terminology, *fesat* had been used throughout the Ottoman Empire's history in order to label incidents of dissent and, moreover, sedition, namely, any kind of external or internal threat to the Ottoman sovereign, any disruption of the public order. Originating from the Arabic verb *fasada*, the original meaning of the word *fesat* coined any kind of corruption and -in the Quran- of disruption of God's order.⁵⁸¹ Turkish, Persian, and Arabic annals often employed this word to connote "rebel," one whose very act of revolt was perceived as evil depravity, and the deed of a disrupter who aimed at the destruction of the cosmic universal in its worldly expression. The original, pre-19th century implication was that such depraved persons acted in Satan's belief, and represented the view that Satan was spreading its tyranny everywhere in the world in the deeds of these depraved ruffians.⁵⁸²

Fesat in Ottoman parlance seems a more generic, in relation to *fitne*, term for disloyalty and disobedience; *fitne* seems to carry the connotation of overturning social and political order. *İsyan*, on the other hand, is more generic still, denoting rebellion in general, perhaps more widespread than *fesat*. Often Ottoman sources use all three almost interchangeably.⁵⁸³ Most known is the expression *ehl-i fesat* (people of corruption,

⁵⁸¹ The Arabic verb *fasada* (فسد) means "to become bad or rotten, to be or become corrupt," while the word *fesad* itself means "depravity, degeneracy, decomposition, corruption." Hans Wehr, *Arabisches Wörterbuch* (Arabic Lexicon), Librairie du Liban, 1976. In addition, the word *fesat* brings us also to the Quran's understanding of corruption. In the holy book of the Islam corruption can be of two kinds, the first being related to the altering of the script, so that its content is being distorted; the second meaning is the one comprising reprehensible actions, which destroy God's order. Corruption in the framework of the Quran is an outcome of men's freedom of action, which is given by God. Consequently, the concept of *fesat* is spanning the meaning of corruption to comprise the violation of the social order. Markus Koller, *Bosnien an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Gewalt (1747-1798)* (*Bosnia at the threshold of modern times. A cultural history of violence (1747-1798)*), München: Oldenbourg, 2004, p. 86.

⁵⁸² James E. Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire, Prelude to Collapse 1839-1878*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000, p. 184.

⁵⁸³ Jane Hathaway, "Introduction" in *Mutiny and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire*, Jane Hathaway (ed.), Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2002, p. 3.

anybody who destabilized social peace and posed a threat to political and epistemic authorities): used widely in the Ottoman registers for denigrating not certain communities, but certain actions, the term *ehl-i fesat* could potentially include any subject of the Sultan, including but not limited to high ranking pashas, governors, qadis, Gypsies, prostitutes etc., depending on their actions.⁵⁸⁴ Passed on to the modern Turkish Republic, the contemporary meaning of *fesat* has been narrowed to define corruption taking place during open biddings for public projects (most common in the expression “*ihaleye fesat çıkarmak*,” meaning to rig an auction),⁵⁸⁵ and thus relates solely with state finances.⁵⁸⁶

Back in the *Tanzimat*, disruptions of the public order were defined in Ottoman bureaucratic and legal documents with a variety of terms, among which *fesat* and *isyan* designated the most serious threats. At the bottom of the pyramid came the term *uygunsuz* or *uygunsuzluk* (unsuitability, unseemliness, impropriety, bad behaviour), which was the most general term used for any kind of disruption.⁵⁸⁷ Open sedition and riot, on

⁵⁸⁴ Faika Çelik, “Community in Motion?: Gypsies in Ottoman Imperial State Policy, Public Morality and at the Sharia Court of Üsküdar (1530s -1585s)”, Phd Thesis, Montreal, McGill University, 2013, pp. 98-99, 184.

⁵⁸⁵ In the article seventy-six of the Turkish Constitution of 1982 it is being foreseen that Turkish citizens, who, among other crimes, have been involved in *fesat* during official biddings and buying-sellings, are not eligible for running as candidates for the parliament (https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/anayasa/anayasa_2011.pdf, p. 15, retrieved on 2 November 2015). In the article 235 of the Turkish Penal Code of 2004, in the section referring to “Crimes pertaining to economy, industry and trade,” it is being stipulated that the persons who are rigging a public auction are punished with imprisonment for between three and seven years (<http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5237.pdf>, p. 60, retrieved on 2 November 2015).

⁵⁸⁶ The Ottoman implications of the term, on the other hand, related to threats posed to the public order have been replaced by terms such as *tabrik* (incitement, see *kin ve düşmanlığa tabrik veya aşışılama*, article 216 of the Penal Code, punished with imprisonment from one to three years), disjoining the state (*ülkebütünlüğünü bozmak*, article 302, punished with life sentence in solitary confinement), to which, since the 1990s, the notion of *terör*, that is, of “any action directed against the qualities of the Republic, the social order, the state and the nation’s integrity” has been added. For more detail, see the “Law for the struggle against terrorism” (*terörle mücadele kanunu*), which was issued on 12 April 1991, http://www.istanbulbarosu.org.tr/Document.asp?DocumentIndex=cmuk/mev_3713.htm (Retrieved on 2 November 2015).

⁵⁸⁷ Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über die osmanische Reformpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert* (*Things of order. A comparative study of Ottoman politics of reforms during the 19th century*), p. 241.

the other hand, were described, in milder cases, with the word *gaile* (anxiety, trouble, worry, *lmd.* period of disturbance, war) and could go to the extremes of *fesad* (malice, depravity, intrigue, duplicity, mischief, sedition, disorder) -often represented also as *fitne*, a term not easy to be distinguished from *fesad*- and *isyan* (rioting, rebellion, insurrection, riot, revolt), as well as *ibtilal* (disruption of the usual order). *Fesad* and *isyan* clearly implied that there were instigators and culprits who had caused the breakdown of the public order.⁵⁸⁸

In the reports, thus, of the central Ottoman authorities, nationalist seditions taking place in the Balkan provinces were coined with the legal terminology signalling the highest threat to the state, that is *fesat* and more rarely *isyan* and *ibtilal*. Next to *fesat* though, many other terms were used interchangeably, like provocation (*tabrike*), harmful (*muzır, mazarratlı*), disobeying the law (*ihlal*), badness (*fenalık*), impropriety (*uygunsuzluk*) and big offense (*büyük töhmet, büyük kabahat*), as well as others.⁵⁸⁹ Documents, like the ones found in the hands of pop Mito, were mostly coined seditious ones (*evrak-ı muzıra*).⁵⁹⁰ The result of a sedition was generally characterized as the violation of the public order of the dominion (*ihlal-ı asayiş-i memleket*) and the violent perturbing and inciting (*tahdiş, tağyir, ifsad, tabrike*) of the peoples' minds and thoughts.

Particularly, Kiriakos Darzilovitis was accused in the reports of the central authorities of printing books that were corrupting peoples' minds (*ifsad-ı ezhan-ı abaliye*

⁵⁸⁸ Maurus Reinkowski, "The State's Security and the Subject's Prosperity. Notions of Order in Ottoman Bureaucratic Correspondence (19th Century)" in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, Hakan T. Karateke, Maurus Reinkowski (ed.), Leiden: Brill, 2005, p. 203, as well as Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über die osmanische Reformpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert (Things of order. A comparative study of Ottoman politics of reforms during the 19th century)*, p. 242.

⁵⁸⁹ According to the Penal Code of 1858, penal offenses were of three degrees: *cinayet* (crime), *cünha* (serious offense), *kabahat* (offense), Bingöl, *Tanzimat devrinde Osmanlı'da yargı reformu - nizamiyye mahkemeleri'nin kuruluşu ve işleyişi 1840-1876*, p. 91.

⁵⁹⁰ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 2 (11 Mart 1869).

mucib bir takım kitaplar).⁵⁹¹ The *gazino* members were accused in 1861 of having set up a *fesat*, of having caused the violent perturbing of the minds and thoughts of Christians (*ahali hristiyanın tabdiş-i ezhan-ı sıralarında, tağyir-i ezhan ve efkarı*) and of breaking the public order of the dominion (*ihlal-ı asayiş-i memleket*).⁵⁹² Some years later, Voulgaris was accused of having entered the Ottoman territories, together with his accomplices, with the aim to incite the minds and thoughts of the Christians living in the Empire (*memalik-i devlet-i aliyede olan hristiyan abalının tabrik-i ezhan-ı ve efkarı*).⁵⁹³ The Greek bandits invading Ottoman territory in 1854 and causing local uprisings were likewise indicted for inciting the Christians (*hristiyan abalının tabriki*).⁵⁹⁴

The Supreme Court's reports and the final decrees (*irade*) on the *Tirnovi* sedition stated that the Bulgarians rabbles (*ayak takımından*) gathered (*ictima, teksir-i cemiyet*) in the monastery of *Leskofça* with the intention to attack (*üzerine hareket etmek*) *Gabrova* and with other seditious thoughts (*efkar-ı faside, dahil-i daire-i fesad*). The four men who had come from Bucharest had come with the intention to incite a sedition (*ika-ı fesat, niyet-i muzıra*). Five of the other men were accused of joining an armed group (*müsellaben dahil-i cemiyet olarak*).⁵⁹⁵

The incidents of 1867 were described by the central authorities as the work of the organization in Bucharest, which aimed at inciting the Bulgarians (*Bulgaristan abalisini saltanat-ı seniye aleyhine tabrik etmek*) and proceeding to acts of banditry and other shameful acts (*hayuduluk yolunda gasb-ı emval ve eşya ve sair guna ifal-ı fazıhası*), even murder (*katl-ı nüfusa*

⁵⁹¹ BOA, LMVL. 204 6505 (25 March 1851).

⁵⁹² BOA, LMVL. 441 19597 (11 January 1861), A.MKT.UM. 450 83 (24 January 1861).

⁵⁹³ BOA, LMMS. 34 1388 (25 February 1867).

⁵⁹⁴ BOA, LMTZ. 9 242 (23 March 1854), LMTZ. (01) 11 261 (23 April 1854).

⁵⁹⁵ BOA, LMVL. 477 21592 (18 November 1862), LMVL. 474 21489 (7 October 1862).

cüret etmiş). Their plan had also entailed fighting with all Muslims (*muharebe*). The local branches like the one in *Ziştovi* had managed to incite some locals to an uprising (*bazı kesanı isyana tabrik ve işra*) and to offer provisions and ammunition to the group of Tute and thus facilitate (*teshil*) his organization.⁵⁹⁶

Following the sedition of 1868, the Supreme Council stated that a committee had been established on the Wallachian side aiming at organizing a sedition and an uprising against the imperial authorities in Bulgaria (*Bulgaristan'da hükümet aleyhine fesad ve ihtilal çıkarmak için*). As members of this organization a certain group of men had invaded Bulgaria.⁵⁹⁷ Similarly, in the sedition around *Lom*, the same organization abroad was being mentioned; pop Mito was accused of disseminating seditious documents (*evrak-ı muzıra, fesadiye*) of this organization. Dimitri Angeli was accused of carrying harmful (*muızır*) documents with suspicious content (*ıştibah-ı dai*) related to the same organization. Due to carrying these documents both were accused of infringing (*ihlal*) the Empire's internal security (*emniyet*).⁵⁹⁸

Except of the generic term of *fesat*, what was perceived as an even greater threat than sedition were the occasions of open revolts (*ihtilal, isyan*). The Muslim Hasan, for example, who had participated in the Karatasos uprising, was accused of actively revolting against the Empire (*devlet-i aliye aleyhine bilfiil izhar-ı hareket-i isyanıyeye mücaheret etmiş olduğu*). Thus, the degree of his crime was of the most evil nature (*derece-i töhmet ve şekaveti en büyük seyyiattan olarak, seyyiat-i azîmeden*).⁵⁹⁹ He had done so even more despite being a Muslim and an Albanian (*zaten İslamdan ve Arnavud taifesinden olduğu halde mahıye ile*

⁵⁹⁶ BOA, LMVL. 578 25929 (22 September 1867), I.MVL. 581 26070 (14 November 1867).

⁵⁹⁷ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 1 (9 October 1868).

⁵⁹⁸ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 2 (11 March 1869).

⁵⁹⁹ BOA, LMVL. 310 12874 (13 July 1854).

öte tarafa asker yazılıp). In another decree, issued after the request of the *Selanik* council for sending more troops to Chalkidiki, the bandits of Karatasos were accused of having dared to demonstrate deceitfulness (*habaset*). The sending of troops should contribute to get rid of these “suspected dangers” (*mahazır-i mütevehbime*).⁶⁰⁰ Similarly, Voulgaris was accused of organizing a revolting armed committee against the Empire (*ve ifsad-ı devlet-i aliye aleyhinde bir beyet-i müsellabe-i isyaniye teşkil etmek garaz ve maksadıyla*). His group’s aim was to rescue the Christians, who apparently were under captivity in the Ottoman Empire (*güya tabt-ı esarete olan*).⁶⁰¹ Likewise, the governor of *Yanya* accused in his writing Voulgaris of having entered the Empire’s territories with the aim of organizing a revolt (*ihtilal çıkarmak üzere*).⁶⁰²

Beyond the legal terminology employed by the central authorities in order to determine nationalist activity as a crime, understanding the meanings with which they invested such activity is not an easy task. The standardized and repetitive usage of legal terms such as “*fesad*,” “*tabrik*,” or “*tabdiş-i ezhan*” reveals little about the exact content of such ideas, and especially the ways Ottoman authorities viewed them. To be sure, applying such a centuries-old term in order to label nationalist activity signalled on behalf of the Ottoman authorities that -at least during the first decades of the *Tanzimat*- they did not (or did not want to) perceive it as a novel form of mobilization, one posing novel or unprecedented demands or one that could not be tackled with the known means of statecraft.⁶⁰³ Indeed, in Ottoman bureaucratic correspondence nationalist activity is often

⁶⁰⁰ BOA, LMVL. 301 19014 (2 May 1854).

⁶⁰¹ BOA, LMMS. 34 1388 (25 February 1867).

⁶⁰² BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 357 28 (30 May 1866).

⁶⁰³ “It is impossible to know to what extent this refusal to recognize the concept of nationality was deliberate policy or simply the result of the traditional view that religious dividing lines were the real ones.” Davison Roderic, “Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response” in *Nationalism in a*

accompanied by the expression “*öteden beri*” (since old times), signalling that the present threat had been there since ever.⁶⁰⁴ In addition, as shown in Chapter Three, the interrogators more often than not did not openly address the mindset behind inciting nationalist activity, but rather focused on its power to mobilize and connect people.

Furthermore, the degradation and criminalization of nationalist activity as *fesat* can be understood in the framework of the empire’s rulers more general claim over monopolizing political activity. In the course of the nineteenth century all conspiracies were designated as sedition (*fesat, fitne*), which underlined the monopoly the Ottoman government claimed over all political activity that went beyond politicizing in the coffee-houses. Generally, the political intention of the various plotters was played down and they were treated as mere criminals.⁶⁰⁵ Consequently, such persons’ demands should not be listened to or taken serious.

Moreover, starting from the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829), nationalist uprisings were merely regarded conspiracies of foreign powers. Pertaining to the Greek uprising, while the Ottoman administrators believed in a Russian conspiracy behind the insurgency, they regarded the Greeks as mere bandits and easily suppressible if the Muslims united against them.⁶⁰⁶ So, the infamous reductionist Ottoman attitude, providing an “unbearable comfort” to the Sublime Porte by laying all responsibility for massacres at the doors of foreign governments, found its first expression during the

Non-National State: Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, William W. Haddad, William Ochsenwald (ed.), Ohio State University Press, 1986, p. 51.

⁶⁰⁴ BOA, LMTZ. 9 242 (23 Mach 1854).

⁶⁰⁵ Florian Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire. Conspiracies and Political Cultures*, SOAS/Routledge, 2011, p. 86.

⁶⁰⁶ Huseyin Sukru Ilicak, “A Radical Rethinking of the Ottoman Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821-1826”, Phd Thesis, Harvard University, 2011, p. 170.

Greek Revolution.”⁶⁰⁷ Despite the Russian court’s distancing from the revolt, the Sultan claimed “had [the Russians] not promised to help and interfere, the Greeks could not have dared [to revolt].”⁶⁰⁸ Thus, perhaps because the Ottomans were so convinced that Russia was the “real culprit,” they did not understand Greek nationalist aspirations.⁶⁰⁹ And vice-versa, because the Ottomans did not quite grasp what nationalism was, they could only look for causes and reasons that were familiar -namely, Russian meddling in Ottoman matters, a reality or a perception with a long history and a long lifespan.⁶¹⁰

Similarly, the *raison d'être* of the *gazino* had been, according to the Supreme Court’s reports, to spread the harmful ideas of Greece (*Yunanistan’ın efkar-ı muşziresini*) and to fight for the motherland’s freedom (*kurtarılması, serbestlik*). Voulgaris, on the other hand, was accused of nurturing the desire of materializing the *Megali Idea* (*fikir-i azım*), an idea, as was explained, entailing the conquering of the Ottoman Empire (*manası memalik-i osmaniyeinin zabtından ibaret bulunan*). He was also member of the association *Ieros Agon* (*sayı mukaddes namında cemiyet*), which was assisting similar endeavours and operated under the presidency of the Greek minister of navy, Kanaris. Bulgarians organizing the first seditions during the 1860s were accused, as we saw in the previous section, as members of the “seditious committee” headquartered in Bucharest.

In some cases, the particular character of these “seditious ideas” invading “the minds of the people” was more explicitly stated. Such explanations pointed to fears regarding the dissemination of ideas that would divide the people, whereby the latter were ideally imagined as a coherent social whole, on the one hand, and, on the other, as

⁶⁰⁷ Ilicak, “A Radical Rethinking of the Ottoman Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821-1826”, pp. 185-6.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-9.

naïve and good-willed people. Indeed, the speeches held in the *gazino* were characterized as being against the regulations of the state as they were “dividing the people (*memleketçe bilaf-ı kaide ve harik-i ade*).” Particularly, in these texts people were urged to sacrifice their personal interests (*menfaat-ı zatiyeden feragat*) and to shed their blood for the common / confessional good (*menfaat-ı ami için, menfaat-ı milliye için*).⁶¹¹ The tension is obvious: While the *Tanzimat* corroborated the organization of non-Muslims around newly-founded communal institutions of their *millet*, the latter should not become the cause of a wider political organization, leading to somebody “shedding his blood” for this cause.

In addition, such ideas as just described were “invading”, “perturbing” or “inciting” the minds of the people. The image is quite vivid here: Nationalist ideas were something external, evil and capable of tarnishing the minds of the people. As Deringil has noted, for the Ottoman bureaucracy “the people as a whole were always good, they were occasionally led astray by certain malicious and perfidious elements but were potentially always capable of loyalty...”⁶¹² Ordinary people were thus presented as imperial subjects whose minds could easily be diverted to the wrong direction. Rather than being mature individuals, they were depicted as gullible and naïve people, whose thoughts and actions could easily be influenced. During the *Tanzimat* thus, while the Ottoman subject was equipped with rights evoking the status of a citizen, the bureaucracy’s attitude continued to bear strong paternalistic features towards their own subjects.

Lastly, while *fesat* was employed in order to define a wide range of different degrees of sedition, it was clear that actions which entailed revolutionary activity were

⁶¹¹ The phrase originated from Nako’s speech on the anniversary of the *gazino*, where he urged the people to make sacrifices for the homeland, like Jesus had shed his own blood for the sake of everybody’s salvation.

⁶¹² Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*, London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1998, p. 40.

conceived as especially threatening. Milen Petrov, who has worked on the province of *Tuna* in the 1860s, notes that “one element of the reformers’ modernist discourse in the Danube province was a boilerplate Metternichian rejection of revolutionary activity of any kind, coupled with an equally standard conservative discourse of gradual change towards progress under the aegis of an enlightened reformist elite. The provincial newspaper relentlessly extolled the twin virtues of ‘calm and tranquillity.’”⁶¹³ As will be shown later in the next section concerning the legal punishments, while seditious crimes which did not contain concrete action could possibly, under circumstances, receive the *afv* (pardoning), this was never the case in seditions including an armed uprising.

In the remaining of the section I will focus on the concrete punishments inflicted by the centre on the *fesatçılar* of the *Tanzimat*. To begin with, the penal codes of 1840, 1851 and 1858, according to which the local councils were adjudicating their cases, foresaw increasingly harsher punishments for nationalist activity. Depending on the severity of the deed, culprits could be punished with three to fifteen-year or lifelong-forced labour up to the capital punishment.⁶¹⁴ As we will follow in the next pages though,

⁶¹³ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of the Danube, 1864-1868”, p. 324.

⁶¹⁴ Cases of *fesat* were increasingly punished harsher according to the new Penal Codes issued during the *Tanzimat* in 1840, 1851 and 1858. The first two of them foresaw similar punishments for the culprits committing *fesat*: Distinguishing between a sedition committed merely with words (*sözle, kaşkercici tarzda sözler*) and one resulting in concrete actions (*fülle, anarşi ve isyana davet etmek*) directed against the state, the law and the regulations (*Devlet-i Aliyye’ye, kanun ve nizamlara karşı*), the former received a punishment of one to five years of hard labour and penal servitude (*pranga*), while the second the capital punishment. Only the mercy of the Sultan could change this punishment into life-long hard labour (*keirek*), and only if the crime committed by the defendant would be of the degree of serious offense (*cinha*) and not crime (*cinayet*), see Ahmed Lütfi, *Osmanlı Adalet Düzeni (The Ottoman order of justice)*, İstanbul: Marifet Yayınları, 1997, pp. 116-7, 132-3. The Penal Code of 1858 further clarified and specified the respective crimes and punishments: In articles fifty-five and fifty-six (of Book I, chapter II: “Offences Against the Internal Security of the Ottoman Empire”) persons who incited the subjects of the Ottoman Empire to take up arms against the Imperial Government, or against each other, were punished with death. If the inciting described in the above articles (in the Ottoman version: *fesadlar* and *cinayetler*) had been done by a group of men (art. fifty-seven), the leader would receive the capital punishment, while the other members of the band, according to the degree of their guilt, would receive hard labour either for life, or for from three to fifteen years. In case no open action had been occurred, but a conspiracy (in the Ottoman text: *ittifak-ı hafî*) with the intent to commit one of the crimes described in the former articles, article fifty-eight foresaw exile for life (in the Ottoman text: *kalebend*, that is, state prisoner) if the conspiracy had been followed by an overt act, incarceration for from three to fifteen years (in the Ottoman text: *muvakkaten kalebend*, temporary state prisoner) if the conspiracy had not resolved in an overt act but action had been planned, and one to three years of imprisonment if only a proposal for a conspiracy had been made. Finally, article sixty-three

the degree of punishment depended on the defence (e.g. the admission of guiltiness and detail description of the events), and could be alleviated, for example, when submitting a petition calling for forgiveness, and stating the re-confirmation of loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and subjecthood. Similarly, Mahmud II and Ottoman administrators had seen only one solution to the Greek insurgency beginning in 1821: a forced peace, for which the Greeks of the insurgent provinces were to accept Ottoman subjecthood (*raiyet*). Accepting the latter would be carried out by Greeks' conceding to take poll-tax tickets (*cizye kağıdı*), followed by making a deed of obedience (*sened*) and registering the deed at the local court. The Greeks' status was to be placed back into its existing legal infrastructure within Islamic laws and Ottoman customs through a bureaucratic process linking the Greek individual to the empire.⁶¹⁵

The punishments of the protagonists of the seditions sketched out in Chapter Three and Four were not uniform, as they rested often also on extrajudicial circumstances as portrayed below. In the respective Sultanic orders we can track down acquittals, pardoning, as well as punishments reaching to forced labour or imprisonment (mostly of fifteen years or lifelong) and, seldom, the death penalty. As can be seen in Appendix 3, a case needed between one to three months from the time the report of the local council was written until the case was being seen by the Supreme Court. After being

stipulated that persons who facilitate bands with the aforementioned aims by giving them ammunition, weapons, provisions or intelligence shall be punished with hard labour for from three to fifteen years. Article sixty-four stipulated that no punishment should be inflicted on persons having committed the crimes mentioned in article sixty-three, but had withdrew at the first warning of the authorities. Article sixty-five stipulated the same provision as article sixty-four for the ones who would give information to the authorities concerning their accomplices. *The Imperial Ottoman Penal Code 1858, translated from the French text*, London: William Clowes and Sons, 1888, pp. 24-26. For a comparison with relevant legislation in main European countries, see Karl Härter, "Legal Responses to Violent Political Crimes in 19th Century Central Europe" in *Vom Majestätsverbrechen zum Terrorismus. Politische Kriminalität, Recht, Justiz und Polizei zwischen Früher Neuzeit und 20. Jahrhundert (From lese majesty to terrorism. Political crime, law, justice and police between early modern period to the 20th century)*, Karl Härter, Beatrice de Graaf (ed.), Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2012, pp. 161-178.

⁶¹⁵ Ilicak, "A Radical Rethinking of the Ottoman Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821-1826", p. 167.

seen by the Supreme Court, it took on average another ten days in order for the final decree to be issued.

Particularly, the printer Darzilovitis, the *gazino*-members, as well as Voulgaris were all acquitted, pardoned, or (in the case of three *gazino*-members) received lighter punishments than the foreseen ones. In the case of Darzilovitis the local council, as we saw, had not sent a *mazbata*. Kiriakos's placidity, which he had demonstrated in the local court as depicted in Chapter Three, mutated only one day later, when he addressed a petition of forgiveness to the city's governor Yakub *paşa*. In this petition, written in Greek by Kiriakos and then translated into Ottoman, Kiriakos appealed for forgiveness for having obtained the citizenship of another country. Admitting that he had committed a sin (*αμάρτημα*), he claimed that he had acted out of ignorance of the Ottoman laws. He stated that from now on he wished to live as an honourable citizen (*πολίτης*) of his mother county (*πατρίδα*), that is, the Ottoman Empire, and promised never again to act against the laws of the empire, of which he would remain a loyal subject.⁶¹⁶

Though Kiriakos had expressed himself in the local council of *Selanik* in a more informal way, he was aware of the fact that, in order to achieve a favourable decision in his legal case, he had to address a higher authority, using a standardized and submissive terminology. Indeed, similar to other cases found in the archives, the submission of a petition of regret which was always addressed to the province's governor or even the Sultan himself after having committed any kind of "sedition," was a necessary means of restoring the unspoken contract between the sovereign and his refined subjects.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁶ BOA, LMVL. 204 6505 (25 March 1851): "Επιθυμώ να ζήσω εις την πατρίδα μου ως έντιμος πολίτης", "... της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας, της οποίας πάντοτε θέλω μείνει πιστός υπήκοος καθώς και πρώτον."

⁶¹⁷ Similar petitions written by non-Muslim Ottoman subjects after having committed sedition (*fesat*) and thus betrayed the Ottoman sovereign can be found, to name just one example, in the case of local notables who had allied with bandits coming from the Greek Kingdom (See also Chapter 4). Often these local notables petitioned within few weeks the Ottoman authorities asking for forgiveness and promising to remain loyal subjects of the Empire, See LMVL. 310 12874 (13 July 1854). In addition, "In the 1830s, the content of the Ayvalık petitions was highly formalized in a submissive style, [...] through which the petition functioned as a statement of submission to sultanic rule. Drafters of such petitions, among others,

During the early *Tanzimat*, then, the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and its subjects rested on the employment of a vocabulary marked by submission and magnanimity, as it was known from earlier practices.

Kyriakos's petition succeeded its goal.⁶¹⁸ Despite his seditious books, the imperial decree (*irade*) pardoned him (*afi*) in an act meant to demonstrate imperial mercy (*merhamet-i seniye*). The decree recognized the regret Kiriakos had demonstrated in his petition (*nedam ve pişman*) and the fact that he had returned (*reca*) to his original citizenship (*tebaiyet-i asliyyesine*) as before (*kama kana*). In addition, a condition of Kiriakos's pardoning was that he would remain under life-long surveillance in *Selanik*, that his seditious books would be confiscated and burned, and that he would never again act against the "sublime consent" (*mza-i ali*).⁶¹⁹

A decade later, in 1861, some of the *gazinists* were acquitted, and four of them received a reduced punishment when compared with the stipulations of the Penal Code foreseen for the crime they were convicted of. Indeed, while being sentenced according to article fifty-eight of the 1858 Penal Code (which foresaw three to five years of imprisonment for conspiracies against the state not resulting in an overt act and one to

humbly recognized their mistakes and stated that thereafter they would refrain from 'meaningless passions' and lead a 'peaceful life.'" Evthymios Papataxiarchis, "Reconfiguring the Ottoman Political Imagination: Petitioning and Print Culture in the Early Tanzimat" in *Political Initiatives "From the Bottom Up" in the Ottoman Empire, Halcyon Days in Crete VII. A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 9-11 January 2009*, Antonis Anastasopoulos (ed.), Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2012, pp. 188, 190.

⁶¹⁸ To note, the Penal Code of 1840 valid in Kiriakos's case lacked a specific clause about illegal printing offices and books. Particularly, in the penal code of 1840 (Chapter 2, Article 1) and 1851 (Chapter 1, Article 5) there existed the notion of 'saying words which provoke somebody into actions against the Ottoman Empire and law and order', an act being punished with hard labour for from one to five years. Lütfi, *Osmanlı Adalet Düzeni (The Ottoman order of justice)*, pp. 117, 132. Only in the Penal Code of 1858 (Chapter 13) we find clauses about opening a printing office without a license (article 137) and about printing, in authorized printing offices, items injurious to the Ottoman Empire. These offenses were punished with respective fines of fifty and ten to fifty gold mecdiyes (mecdkiye: a silver coin of 20 piasters) respectively. *The Imperial Ottoman Penal Code 1858, translated from the French text*, p. 61.

⁶¹⁹ BOA, LMVL. 204 6505 (25 March 1851).

three years for a single proposition of conspiracy),⁶²⁰ the *gazino* members, following article forty seven of the Penal Code (which foresaw the Sultan's "magnanimity" and the reduction of punishments) received milder penalties.⁶²¹ Their deeds had been of the sort referred to in article fifty-eight, but the degree of their sedition had not been determined.⁶²²

Particularly, five of the nine defendants were acquitted and sent back to their hometown, after receiving a guarantee and being placed under the supervision of the local authorities. Their actions had been characterized merely as improper (*uygunsuz ve yolsuz*), and their imprisonment up to that point was regarded as sufficient. The English citizen, Miltiadis, was handed over to the English consul, on the condition that he would not return to *Manastir*.⁶²³ Ziouzios, Bistas, Geortsis and Papanaum were sentenced to exile to Kastamonu at the Black Sea coast, the first three for two years, and Papanaum for just one year.⁶²⁴ Afterwards, they would be allowed to return to their hometown,

⁶²⁰ *The Imperial Ottoman Penal Code 1858, translated from the French text*, p. 25.

⁶²¹ BOA, I.MVL. 441 19597 (11 January 1861). For the punishments administered to the defendants, see also BOA, A.MKT.NZD. 340 39 (24 January 1861), A.MKT.UM. 450 83 (24 January 1861).

⁶²² "bir madde-i mahsusa-ı fesadiyeye karar verilmiş derecesine vasil olamamış [...]"

⁶²³ BOA, A.MKT.NZD. 336 61 (25 December 1860).

⁶²⁴ To note, despite receiving lighter punishments, there are indications in the archives that the health of some of the prisoners was not good (BOA, A.MKT.NZD. 337 98 (4 January 1861), about four of the prisoners being ill, A.MKT.NZD. 335 97 (21 December 1860), about Yorgi (probably Tsaka) being also ill. The report of the Supreme Court stated that Geortsis was ill for a period in jail). Tsallis states that three of the defendants (namely Bistas, Ziouzios and Diskoultas) died in prison due to hardships (Tsallis, *To doξασμένο Μοναστήρι (Glorified Monastir)*, p. 20). The same is claimed in Tilemachos Aggelou, *Μεγάροβον και Τύρνοβον (Megarovo and Tirnovo)*, Thessaloniki: 1954, reproduced in the internet: http://vlahofonoi.blogspot.com.tr/2014/02/blog-post_5.html. Lory, on the other hand, holds that Bistas either turned back to *Manastir* (according to Mancev), or died in exile (according to Tousimis), but that Ziouzios died, indeed, in prison. (Lory, *La ville balkanissime Bitola, 1800-1918 (Bitola, a Balkan city par excellence, 1800-1918)*, p. 251.) All these versions though remain to be confirmed by relevant archival sources still to be unearthed. At the moment, we have only a petition, written on 7 May 1862 by ten inhabitants of *Manastir* asking for the transport of Ziouzios from his exile in Kastamonu to Istanbul, as he was in "bad health" (*fena balde basta*) and needed a proper treatment. (BOA, MVL. 392 33 (4 June 1862)). In all, new findings on the health and treatment of the nine defendants in *Istanbul* could amplify whether the rhetoric of "magnanimity" expressed through lighter punishments was in actual contradiction to the treatment of the *gazinists* by the Ottoman authorities.

where they would be placed under three-year supervision.⁶²⁵ This punishment was proposed by the Supreme Court and ratified by the Sultan's *irade*. Pertaining to the *gazîno* itself, the final decree foresaw that its administrators should change and the space itself should receive permission to be opened as a normal shop (*esnaf dukkanı*). The report of the Supreme Court stated that in such times (*böyle bir asırda*) similar “places of sciences and literature” would never be opposed by the Sultan, as they were considered necessary for the prosperity (*saadet-i hale müstelzim olan*) of every millet. Nevertheless, a respective permission should be taken beforehand.

Similarly, in the case of Voulgaris, the Supreme Court ordered that according to article fifty-five to fifty-eight Voulgaris and Hacıpoulo were guilty in the first degree, while their accomplices in the second and third degree. Nevertheless, as there was no exact punishment corresponding to their deeds, the article fifty-eight would be applied and they should all receive life-long exile (*nefy-i ebed*), to places that were indicated on an extra paper (among them *Kütahya, Edirne, Mardin* and others). Despite this proposal though, the final decree issued by the Sultan pardoned (*mazhar-ı af-ı ali*) Voulgaris and all others involved in the case and ordered that they should be sent back to their homeplaces. The reason was both that their sedition had not been materialized (*fiile çıkmayıp*), and so the proposed punishment would be against current conduct, as well as that their being pardoned would produce a positive effect, especially abroad (*her tarafca ve haricen hüsn tesiri mucib olacağı*).⁶²⁶

⁶²⁵ Papanoum and Geortsis served as teachers of the town's Greek community during their exile in Kastamonu, Tsallis, *To doξασmévo Monastíri (Glorified Monastir)*, p. 20. According to an English report dating from 1868, Geortsis went to Roumania following his exile. The same report stated that in a letter to Parlichev from 1868, Geortsis claimed he had taken part in a raid of a Bulgarian group of insurgents in the *Tuna* province against the Turks the previous year, and had killed a dozen of them, see *Брѣманску документи за историјата на Македонија, том IV (1857-1885) (British historical documents on Macedonia, Vol. IV (1857-1885))*, pp. 218-9: *Charles Calvert to Lord Stanley, Monastir 21.12.1868, no. 28.*

⁶²⁶ BOA, LMMS. 34 1388 (25 February 1867).

The death penalty was a punishment which was generally being avoided, including cases in which it was actually foreseen by the Penal Code. The Albanian Hasan, who had participated in the uprising of Karatasos, for example, was sentenced to lifelong forced labour: His crime (*derece-i töhmet ve şekavel*) was classified as among the most evil ones (*seyyiattan*), and the Supreme Court proposed either his punishment with death (*idam, mahalinde alenen kurşuna tutularak*), or the commuting of his punishment to lifelong forced labour, as the Penal Code permitted in similar cases. It was explicitly stated that the final decision should be taken by the Sultan, who, with a decree issued some days later, decided to punish Hasan with lifelong forced labour. In all, in both cases of Voulgaris and the one of Hasan, we see that the final decree decided for a decisively lighter punishment (or no punishment at all) than the one which had been proposed by the Supreme Court.

Similarly, in the *Turnovi* sedition, five people of the ones arrested (that is, Kenkisoğlu Nikola the son of Petri, the priest of *Gabrova* Dimitri the son of Ilya, the Russian citizen Yovan Panof originally from *Islimiye*, and the *Berkeofça* monks Iosif and Teodos) were actually sentenced to death (*salb, hanging*) by the Supreme Court, after three of them, the religious officials, would have been stripped off their religious title. Nevertheless, the final decree concluded that this punishment would have been a heavy one (*idam cezasının icrası ağır düşüp*) and would open the way to “talk and gossiping,”⁶²⁷ so their punishment was commuted to lifelong imprisonment (*müebbeden kalebend*).⁶²⁸ Panof, the Russian citizen, would be handed over to the Russian embassy in Istanbul. Furthermore, fifteen of the defendants were accused of having participated in a sedition

⁶²⁷“...şu aralık kıl ve kahyadahi davet edeceğinden..”I.MVL. 474 21489 (7 October 1862).

⁶²⁸ According to the final decree, most of the actual instigators of this fire (*asl reisleri*), for whom the Penal Code foresaw the capital punishment, had not been caught. Had this been the case, they would have been tried also for murder, as they had killed the gendarmerie and his helper.

and a group of bandits (*cemiyet-i şekaveî*) after the incitement of their leaders (*muharriklerin tergîb ve teşvîkiyle*), aiming to incite the Empire's subjects to rise against the state or each other. They were punished according to the article fifty-seven of the Penal Code, and received fifteen years of forced labour in the imperial dockyards starting from the date of their imprisonment. The other eight people from *Turnovi*, according to article sixty-four, as they had come to the council and admitted their deeds, would be put under supervision in their neighbourhoods on behalf of the police (*zaptiye nezareti*) for fifteen years. Two members of the Bucharest-connection, Donço and Yovaço, received fifteen years of state prison in *Diyarbakir*.

The people from *Gabrova*, who had heard about the sedition, but had not informed the authorities, were punished according to the article sixty-five of the Penal Code, each of them from the time of his imprisonment to five years of imprisonment in *Diyarbakir*. Pop Dobre received ten years of forced labour in the Imperial Dockyards, starting from the date of his imprisonment, according to article sixty-three, for providing ammunition to a group of bandits. Dimo, because of his old age, and the furrier Donço, because of having regretted his actions and escaped, would be placed for fifteen years under the supervision of the police (*zaptiye nezareti*) in their neighbourhood.

The defendants of the 1867 sedition were tried according to the articles fifty-five to fifty-eight and sixty-three of the Penal Code. Two of the group's leaders were sentenced to death, while another two would have to serve lifelong forced labour. Another twenty-seven would serve forced labour for periods indicated in Appendix Three.⁶²⁹ Further seventeen were released, and other eight were receiving punishments as

⁶²⁹ Something similar was decided for the famous "Arabakonak" trial, the trial of Levsky (see also Chapter 3) and 68 accomplices, captured after the robbery of a large sum of money from an Ottoman postal carriage. Levsky and another leader were sentenced to death, the rest were sent to forced labour (some for lifelong period, some for certain years) to *Diyarbakir*. I thank Martina Baleva for this information. Similar trials taking place in other Balkan provinces, like for example near the borders to Serbia, also demonstrate similar punishments: Five years of imprisonment in *Diyarbakir* for importing weapons from Serbia (BOA, I.MVL. 493 22328 (1 January 1864)), exile to *Kütahya* for entering the Ottoman territories with the intention of inciting the people (I.HR. 182 10124 (25 February 1861)), lifelong exile to *Amasya* for the

indicated in Appendix Three. Something similar was valid for the defendants of 1868: the leaders had to serve lifelong forced labour, the others fifteen years of the same punishment. Lastly, pop Mito had also to serve fifteen years of forced labour in *Akka*, while Dimitri Angeli had to serve the same punishment, albeit for ten years.

Finally, pertaining to the cases of the holders of a bookstore in *Ziştovi* and *Manastr*, in both cases no final decree was included in the files -for reasons unknown. In the case of Todor in *Ziştovi* also no council report exists in the file.⁶³⁰ The governor of *Silistre* though proposed in his writing to set Todor, as well as all other litigants, free, as all were “people of honour” (*ehl-i irş*), and no bad actions of them had been detected. The statements of Todor that he did not know how the books of Rakofski had arrived to the schools were, similarly, rendered credible. Anastas, Tome and Petro were accused of holding seditious books in their homes and stores. Nevertheless, as they had not tried to sell them to people, but had just hidden them in their places, the investigative council of *Manastr* proposed to set them free, on condition that they would remain under the supervision of the authorities and show to the latter any book they would sell hereafter. Similarly, any suspicious books, pamphlet or letter that would come into their hands had to be shown immediately to the authorities. These proposals were corroborated by a writing from the provincial governor.⁶³¹

To note, punishing the culprits was not the only measure taken by the authorities. In a report of his in June 1867, Midhat *paşa* was explaining that, in order to avoid a general tension between Muslims and non-Muslims of the province, respective

leader and five years of imprisonment in *Ergani* for the accomplices for importing weapons from Serbia and intending to incite the Christians (I.MVL. 459 20664 (30 December 1861)).

⁶³⁰ BOA, MVL. 979 49 (25 April 1864). Two documents of this file were indicated to be “under restoration,” so there exists the possibility that one of them might be the council report.

⁶³¹ BOA, MVL. 967 61 (13 July 1864).

pamphlets had been distributed to the people and officials sent to the villages to explain to people the relevant dangers (*mabaẓır ve muhataratı*).⁶³² While he reassured that no general conflict had started, in two isolated cases Muslims or Gypsies had beaten a Christian, following which the former had been sent immediately to *Ruşuké*. In another incident, a gendarmerie man had gone to a village and raped a Bulgarian woman, while, when her angry husband appeared, the gendarmerie man killed both of them. Following this incident, the gendarmerie had been punished with death. On the other hand, rumours (*saiia*) had been spread between the Muslims that the Christians would kill them, and many of the former were preparing their weapons. In addition, especially following the 1868 uprising the authorities took many additional measures for coping with the situation in northern Bulgarian territories. The Ottoman files of the respective period contain detailed maps of the region, military instructions and new regulations (*taburların niẓamnamesi*) concerning especially the military forces of the region.⁶³³

In all, trials like the ones just described indicate the limits of non-Muslims' political mobilization during the first decades of the *Tanzimat*. While the community structures of non-Muslims were further institutionalized during the *Tanzimat*, non-Muslims were not allowed to use elements of their identity in order to make political claims, which envisioned another governing power. Ottoman authorities tried to balance between securing the rights of non-Muslims to church services, communal institutions including schools, equality before the law, and between watching that these same rights did not evolve into a separate mobilization and political claiming.

I maintain that the dilemma is most openly depicted in the case of the punishments inflicted in trials of nationalist seditions. The Sultan, holding the power of

⁶³² BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 387 A 1 (7 July 1867).

⁶³³ BOA, LMTZ. (04) 4 103 (17 September 1868).

issuing the final decrees on these cases, opted more often than not for a lighter punishment than the one foreseen by the Penal Code, as well as than the one proposed by the Supreme Court. To be sure, studying the records of these trials bear certain limitations, as part of “behind-the-scene” negotiations, like using the acquaintance with high officials in Istanbul, cannot be extracted from the documents, and they can merely be assumed.

To sum up, capital punishments were rare, forced labour was the hardest punishment inflicted, and acquittals as well as pardoning are often encountered in the documents. On the one hand, through decisions like the latter the Sultan could foster, abroad as well as within the Empire, the image of the benevolent ruler, who is not harsh on his subjects, even when they committed *fesat*. Equally important, these decrees portray a Sultan-subject relationship which is strongly marked by paternalistic traits: At the time of the recognition of liberal rights (of life, property and honour) for every subject of the Empire, the Sultan could “forgive” his subjects when they “realized” their mistakes and asked for forgiveness, as well “reconfirmed” their loyalty to the sovereign.

B. Dealing with Banditry (*Eşkiya*)

The crime of banditry was characterized by less complications, in comparison to sedition, when it came to its punishment. From the perspective of the local councils and the central authorities in Istanbul, in the framework of the *Tanzimat* reforms, as well as of a higher degree of centralization and governance on behalf of the state, banditry had to be eradicated and bandits had to be punished accordingly, either with hard labour or even with the capital punishment. Nevertheless, while in the case of seditions we saw trials often being transferred “to the centre,” in the case of bandits we will follow how trials often remained “in the province.” Indeed, the lack of the Supreme Court’s report,

as well as of the final decree, in many cases described here, as well as in a further sample of cases which has not been described here in detail, makes us ponder about the course of the trial: Was the decree never issued, or is it kept in other parts of the archives? The latter question will lead us to a fruitful consideration about council-centre relations.

The Province's Share: Administration of Justice by the Local Councils

Ottoman bandits during the *Tanzimat*, similar to what we have followed in the case of seditions, were tried in the newly-founded local councils. The files, very similar to the ones of seditions (*fesat*), including the interrogation protocols, as well as the council's and the governor's summarizing report, were sent to Istanbul for the issuing of the Supreme Council's opinion, as well as of the final decree of the Sultan. Similar to what we have noticed before though, officially the local councils were only entitled to decide whether the defendant(s) were guilty or not, but not to opine about the exact punishment the latter should receive, were they to be accepted as guilty. We will return to the documents (*mazbata*) and the discourses produced by the local councils regarding the trials of bandits in a minute, but let us first comment on the staff of the local councils.

The bandit trials dealt with in Chapter Five took place in the councils of *Selanik* and *Manastir*. Contrary to what we have observed in the sedition trials, the councils of both cities were not shunning neither from holding the trials of bandits nor from composing the relevant *mazbatas* and delivering these to the centre. None of the trials thus tracked down in Chapter Five had to be transferred to the centre, for reasons of political sensitivity, as was the case, for example, with the *gazino*-trial in *Manastir*. In addition, while in the sedition trials we have seen how, especially in the case of *Selanik*, the council preferred not to send a *mazbata* pertaining to the case to Istanbul (and when it did so, only the metropolitan was present), in banditry cases this was not the case.

Selanik's big council (*meclis-i kebir*) or provisional councils of the same city, as well as the councils in *Manastır*, dealing with the interrogations of bandits, did always sent their summary to the centre. While they did not seal the interrogations, they appended their seals to the *maẓbatas*, providing us thus with the names of the members sitting in the council meetings.

In the case of *Selanik*, we observe (see also Appendix 2) that, with the exception of one trial, provisional councils (*muvakkat*) were carrying out the bandits' trials. Solely one trial had been tried by the city's big council, with the participation of twelve members, among whom were the metropolitan Ieronimos and the non-Muslims Zarkavi and Gadalya.⁶³⁴ All other bandit cases adjudicated in *Selanik* were tried by the town's provisional councils, counting from six, seven to nine or ten members. The Muslim members of these provisional councils were Mehmet Asim, Hakkı, Davud Fedai, Hayrı Hakkı, Mehmet Izzet, Hüseyin Hasan, Nadiri Tevfik, Rıza Mehmed, Enver, Hilmi Hüseyin, Namık İbrahim, Osman Tevfik, Hüseyin Hüsni. The non-Muslims were Hacıyorgi İstekli?, Ovadiya, Dimitri Blaci, Zarkavi, Tanas Bladi, İstefan Vetati, Behor Saltiel and some other Jewish seals, which have been impossible to decipher. In the case of *Manastır*, we have followed two cases being tried, also, by its provisional councils, one consisting of twelve members (among whom three non-Muslims, the metropolitan, a Greek notable and a Jewish one), and another council consisting of eight members, many of its seals though have been too difficult to decipher.

Similar to what has been observed in the cases of nationalist seditions tried in *Ruşuk*, the provisional councils in *Selanik* often demonstrated a non-Muslim majority, in constellations such as four non-Muslims out of seven or four out of six; otherwise the

⁶³⁴ BOA, LMVL. 264 10019 (14 February 1853). The members were: Sıddık Yusuf, Mehmed Vahid, Nureddin İshak, Feyzullah, Numan Tayyib, Ahmed, three absent ones and the non-Muslim members mentioned in the main text.

constellations two out of ten and four out of nine can be observed. Adding to the observations we had made pertaining to penal cases of sedition, we can further corroborate the observation that an occasional (but not infrequent) majority of non-Muslims in the temporary councils judging various penal cases in various Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century was far from an unusual practice. I argue here that this is a vital and highly neglected point of nineteenth-century Ottoman history. Judging penal cases as vital as nationalist sedition and banditry, two of the main threats posed to the Empire's internal security, by councils with a non-Muslim majority, carrying out interrogations and providing the necessary information to the centre, based on which the Sultan would publish the final decrees, showed a high degree of trust, at least to the non-Muslim notables sitting in the local councils.

In terms of content now, similar to the cases of sedition, in the banditry cases local councils were following the bureaucratic jargon documented also in the documents of the *Meclis-i Vala* and the Sultan's decrees. Furthermore, what is interesting is that most times they were, contrary to the regulations, not only deciding on the innocence or not of the defendants but were also proposing the most suitable punishment in case the latter were found guilty. As we will see, the punishments of bandits, consisting mainly of forced labour for from three to fifteen years and, in not a few cases, of the death punishment, were being followed to the letter by the Supreme Council and the final decrees issued by the Sultan; only in one case, the capital punishment decided on behalf of *Selanik*'s councils was mutated into lifelong hard labour by the Supreme Court in Istanbul.

Particularly, Abdullah and Salih were accused by the council of *Selanik* on 27 May 1852 for having deserted the army (*kura-ı şeriyede kura meclisine gelmediklerinden*), for walking around (*ötede beride serseri geşt ü gezar*), for demanding money from some Muslim and Christian villagers and burning their belongings in case the latter did not respond and,

finally, for having killed (*katil ve idam*) a priest and his two helpers in a farm. While the defendants admitted the thefts, but not the murders, the council ruled that, as their capital punishment may not agree with the final decree (*tevafuk etmediği surette*), the two men should be banished and being sent to forced labour by being also forbidden from returning to their homeplaces.⁶³⁵

On 9 September 1857, the council of *Manastır* this time ruled that six of the group of bandits (*eşkiya güruhundan, haydud, eşkiya*) around Molla Ibrahim (himself and another five bandits having being killed during the fighting with soldiers) had proceeded to banditry (*şekavet, gestü güzar*), had taken provisions from an inn without paying (*tediye*) for them and had killed one gendarmerie and two soldiers during the fight with them. Among the arrested ones, Ramazan the son of Tahir and Abdurrahman the son of Tahir had only this time proceeded to banditry and had followed the group after having being deceived; consequently, they should be sentenced to fifteen years of *pranga* (the heaviest form of hard labour). On the other hand, the rest of them, including Alaman and Şahin had died in the hospital, while being under interrogation. The other Ramazan (the son of Ramazan), and Maliç the son of Davud, and Tako the son of Ali should be sentenced to capital punishment (*icra-ı siyasetleri*).⁶³⁶ In this case, the killing of soldiers apart from the undertaking of banditry was the decisive factor which earned the bandits a life sentence.

The same council, of *Manastır*, decided twenty days later that in the case of the raid of the convoy of officials travelling from the town to *Kesriye*, based on the interrogations and the investigation (*tabkikat*) on the matter, the action must had been planned by the bandits themselves, without the inciting of other persons (*hiç bir tarafın teşvik ve terğibi olmayup haydudlar tarafından vukubulmuş şey olmasıyla*); the testimonies claiming

⁶³⁵ BOA, LMVL. 264 10019 (14 February 1853).

⁶³⁶ BOA, MVL. 383 16761 (28 October 1857).

otherwise had been based on animosity (*busumetten*). Consequently, the related witnesses who had been in prison for some months should be released (*tabliye*).⁶³⁷

On 25 October 1858, the council of *Selanik* ruled that from the bandits that had participated in the activities of the group of Donço, Yorgi the son of Istanko, who, like many others, had accused the *bölükbaşı* Hüseyin of having prevented him from returning to normal life, was sentenced to the “highest of the forced labour-punishment” (*kiirek cezasının en ağır derecesiyile*). It had been proven that Yorgi had also before done banditry (*sabikalı*), while the testimony of the *bölükbaşı* that the accusations against him were a product of animosity (*garaz*) against him, as he had been the one who had arrested the bandits, had been rendered trustable. Yanko, who had not been given the girl he had loved and had therefore gone to the mountains, was sentenced on the same day as Yorgi with the same sentence. He had done banditry (*geştü güzar*), had kidnapped a child, and committed many more thefts.⁶³⁸

On the same day, Rüstem, Mehmed, Selim and Süleyman were convicted by the council of *Selanik* of having done the shameful act (*fazihâ*) of kidnapping a Christian child, and generally of wandering around (*geştü güzar*). They should also be sentenced to the highest of the forced labour punishment. The money they had taken should be returned to the father of the Christian child, namely Tano *kehya*, from the properties of the defendants.⁶³⁹

One year later, on 6 October 1859, Donço himself was described by the same council of *Selanik* as a famous bandit (*meşahir-i eşkiyadan*), accused of banditry (*haydudluk*), as well as of having committed many rude (*kebaca*) and criminal (*cinayat*) actions, and of a

⁶³⁷ BOA, LMVL. 382 16735 (19 November 1857).

⁶³⁸ BOA, MVL. 893 1 (6 November 1858).

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

plot (*suikast*) against the property, life and honour of the people. His capital punishment was proposed as the most suitable punishment, given the fact that it had been proven that he was a bandit (*baydud gürubundan*), and that he had committed numerous (*mücedded*) crimes.⁶⁴⁰

In the 1860s, the rulings of the council were quite similar. On 18 February 1860, the council of *Selanik* composed a *mazbata* accusing Yanaki of having assisted Alexandri in the murder of the farmer keeper Yusuf and a soldier, as well as of resorting to the bandit group of Yorgaki following the murder and proceeding to banditry (*tarik-i şekavet, geştü güzar*). It was proposed that Yanaki (his partner Alexandri had fled to *Mora*) would be sentenced to fifteen years of hard labour, as he had actually merely assisted Alexandri in the murder.⁶⁴¹

On 22 April 1861, the council of *Selanik* characterized Bank(?) Kosta as a “famous bandit” (*meşahir-i eşkiyadan*). He was accused of banditry (*şekavet*), as well as of exercising oppression and cruelty (*zulüm*) and causing losses (*hasar*) to various people and needy (*fukaraya*) ones, as well as of stealing things from many people (*şunun bunun mal ve eşyasını ahz ve gasp*). Finally, he and his partners’ deeds had led to a plot (*suikast*) against the property, life and honour of the people. While Kosta and his partners were denying their deeds, the council members of *Selanik* had acquired the interrogation protocols and the *mazbata* from their former interrogations in *Avrethisar*, which were proving their guilt. Kosta should therefore be punished with the capital punishment, while his partners, as they had not been present in all of his activities, should receive five years of hard labour

⁶⁴⁰ BOA, LMVL. 426 18704 (6 January 1860).

⁶⁴¹ BOA, MVL. 910 71 (18 February 1860).

(Alkis, among them, would receive three years). All the belongings of the bandits would be sold in order to compensate their victims.⁶⁴²

Some months later, in September 1861, Yorgi Karbuluke(?) was accused by the council of *Selanik* of having entered the Ottoman territories with the intention of walking around (*geştü güzâr*) and doing banditry (*haydutluk, şekavet, tarik-i şekavet, kat-ı tarik, eşkiya*). Moreover, *kapudan* Yorgi had rendered banditry a habit (*itiyad*), and although it had not been identified whether he had killed a soldier or not during the fighting with the army, he should therefore be punished with the capital punishment. His partner Dilo, on the other hand, should receive ten years of hard labour.⁶⁴³

On 28 March and 18 November (the second document followed after some clarifications were being asked from Istanbul) 1861 the council of *Selanik* accused Osman *efendi* the son of Halil of deserting the army (*fırar*), wandering around (*geştü güzâr*), frightening (*ihafe*) the Christians of the *Lankaza* district, and collecting from various Christians 4600 *guruş*; the latter had also testified in court. Nevertheless, Osman had replied that he had received only a small amount of the stolen money (500), while the rest had been taken by his partners. The council ruled that as Osman *efendi* had not a previous criminal record (*sabıkası olmayup*), and was merely (*yalmız*) an army deserter, who had been forced to walk around and do banditry (*kendisini ihtifa suratıyla mecburen bazı mahalelerde geştü gezâr eylemiş anlaşılmış olduğundan*), he should be sentenced to three years of forced labour, while the victims should be reimbursed.⁶⁴⁴

Finally, on 10 March 1862 the bandits (*sakiz*) Mustafa and his partners were accused of having kidnapped Mitro and Korki and having asked for a considerable

⁶⁴² BOA, LMVL. 452 20191 (25 August 1861).

⁶⁴³ BOA, LMVL. 465 21020 (22 November 1861).

⁶⁴⁴ BOA, MVL. 930 3 (28 November 1861).

amount of money (20,000 *gurus*) for their release. While Mustafa denied the crime, the abducted Christians recognized him in court among other men, although his clothes had been changed (*kiyafet-i tebdil*). Moreover, Mustafa and his group had asked for bread from several other Christians. Overall, Mustafa had been into banditry (*tarik-i şekavette*) for six years; however, as he had not dared to commit any murder (*bir katl-ı nefse cüret etmiş takımdan olmayanlara*), he should be punished with ten years of forced labour.⁶⁴⁵

In all, local councils were trying bandits, and even proposing to the centre what they perceived as the suitable punishment. As for the way punishments were selected and defined, it seemed that councils were differentiating between the first-time-bandit (*sabikasız olmayup*) and the bandits which had transformed banditry into a habit (*ötede beride, sabikalı, meşhur, itiyad*); and, on the other hand, between the bandits who had stolen goods and the bandits who had, additionally, killed people during the endeavours. The first-time-bandit, as well as the one who had not killed a human being, be it local or authorities being after them, were the ones more likely to receive a shorter punishment, that is, from three to ten years of forced labour. On the contrary, habitual banditry, as well as killing a person during banditry activities, resulted in a culprit's capital punishment. Accusations against local gendarmeries, which were secretly supporting bandits and their activities, were not taken serious by the councils; at least in the case of *bölükbaşı* Hüseyin, accusations against him were dismissed and he was let free.

Lastly, important is also to note here the function of witnesses in the aforementioned trials. Lack of witnesses, as well as denial (*inkar*) by the defendants of an act, led to acquittal. Abdullah and Salih for example, despite having been accused of having killed a priest and two helpers, were charged only with punishments related to their banditry activities; they had denied the act, and no witnesses had been found to

⁶⁴⁵ BOA, MVL. 946 39 (12 May 1862).

confirm that they had, indeed, done the killing. On the other hand, while Mustafa, who had kidnapped two Christians, denied his deed in court, the testimony of the latter two, as well as of other persons involved in the case (the ones who had transferred the bailout money) constituted enough evidence to sentence him to ten years of forced labour.

The Centre's Share: The Supreme Council (*Meclis-i Vâla*) and the Sultan's Verdicts

In the following section, we are going to deal with the discourses and understandings employed by the centre regarding the crime of banditry, as well as with the punishments inflicted on bandits, based on the files sent by the local councils. We will also try to elaborate on the reasons for which almost in half of the banditry cases dealt with here the final decree was missing from the respective file, and we do not know therefore what the final punishment inflicted on the culprits was.⁶⁴⁶

To begin with, as we see in the *mazbatas* of the local councils and the final decrees, there was a rather big repertoire of words coining brigands in the mid-nineteenth century Ottoman Balkans. Ottoman archives dealing directly with brigandage during the early *Tanzimat* (1840-1860s) reveal the usage of multiple words such as *şakî-ekîya* (singular and plural, stemming from Arabic, brigand, robber), *şekavet* (villainy, brigandage), *haydud* (bandit, brigand), *geştü güzar* (a walking or riding about), *hırsızlık* (stealing), *uygunsuzluk* (impropriety, bad behavior), *fenalık* (badness, evil), *gezme* (move about, stroll), *kat-ı tarık* (highway robbery), *kapudan* or *baş* (head of a group of brigands), *yataklık etmek* or *cebhane vermek* (provide support or ammunition to brigands), *dağa*

⁶⁴⁶ Beyond the cases dealt with here, a much bigger sample taken at the archive in Istanbul, of around fifty banditry cases, showed a similar pattern concerning the existence of the final decree; again, around half of them do not possess a final decree.

kaldırmak (to seize and take to the mountains), and also first references to the nineteenth century discourse of the universal rule of law such as *can, mal ve namusa suikast* (criminal attempts against one's life, property, or honor). Thus, there actually was a multiplicity of words which referred to the same phenomenon. Nevertheless, the multiplicity of words did not seem to have caused confusion in the Ottoman bureaucratic writings; the need for exact definitions seems thus to be a later one, and maybe a more modern one, in the sense of the need to clearly define and describe social phenomena. In addition, apart from naming the phenomenon, the bureaucratic documents, at least the ones included in the penal cases, do not entail references to the harm caused by the bandits' acts to the social order (*ihlal-i asayiş*) or the repercussions on the people; banditry was a much more old and known phenomenon in comparison to the nationalist seditions of the nineteenth century described above and there was less need to explain its social implications.

Beyond its mere description though, how did Ottoman bureaucrats understand banditry? For sure, it was not a novel phenomenon of the nineteenth century, and the central authorities were eager in not presenting it as such. Petrov, who has studied the Danube region during the 1860s, described banditry as an endemic threat present in official discourses. The discourse which was used accepted the existence of organized crimes as a "very ancient thing" that could never be completely eradicated, try the authorities as they might. "But," Petrov continues, "in acknowledging the endemic nature of brigandage, the government's discourse also trivialized it -since it was a "habitual" phenomenon, brigandage could hardly be a major threat to the existence of the empire."⁶⁴⁷

Yet, Ottoman archives often pointed to an increase of bandits having occurred during the *Tanzimat*. Esrar *efendi*, for example, the assistant of the archives' keeper of the

⁶⁴⁷ Petrov, "Tanzimat for the countryside: Midhat Pasa and the vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868", p. 390.

Supreme Court (*Meclis-i Vâla evrak müdürü muavini Esrar Efendi*), who was sent in 1853 to *Rumeli* to inspect the situation pertaining to banditry, noticed an increase (*çoğalmas*) of bandits in the province of *Selanik*. Moreover, more than thousand people had been murdered in the same province, without the murderers having been identified.⁶⁴⁸ As *Esrar efendi* concluded, the harms (*ser ve mazarratları*) of the bandits were spoiling the comfortable and restful situation (*refah-ı hal ve aramiş-i hallerini*) of ordinary men, who were living in tranquillity (*vedi olan*) in the territories of the Ottoman Empire.

What then, according to *Esrar efendi*, was the main problem concerning banditry? Indeed, as we observed also in one of the trials described in Chapter Five, he underlined the close links between the bandits and the gendarmerie (*bölükbaşı*). Many bandits had managed to be employed as sergeants (*birisine dehalet etmek, asakir-i muvazzafe çavuşluğunda istihdam*), through the means of bribery (*irtikap*). Milen Petrov described similarly that soldiers “turning to the road of brigandage” was a fairly common occurrence.⁶⁴⁹ The Grand Vizier Kıbrıslı Mehmed Emin *paşa* made similar remarks during his Balkan inspection tour in 1860: In a decree sent to the governor of *Silistre* -while underlining that banditry need not be explained in detail (*tarife hacet olmadığı halde*)- the Grand Vizier stated that the gendarmerie was often being bribed by the bandits.⁶⁵⁰

In the rest of his report, *Esrar efendi* named many examples of mischiefs, in which bandit and gendarmerie were “one and the same person,” that is, the official responsible for arresting bandits was actually the bandit who had committed the crime. To name just two examples, the *zabtiye çavuşu* Sinan of the district of *Demirhisar* had killed four of the men of two important merchants, an English and a Greek one, and stolen all the money

⁶⁴⁸ BOA, I.MVL. 285 11256 (11 September 1853).

⁶⁴⁹ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the countryside: Midhat Pasa and the vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868”, p. 386.

⁶⁵⁰ Yonca Köksal, Davut Erkan, *Sadrazam Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Paşa'nın Rumeli Teftişi (The Vizier Kıbrıslı Mehmed Emin Pasha's inspection tour in Rumeli)*, İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007, p. 68.

he had found on them; when he understood that he would be caught, he managed to escape. In another case, the bandit Kara Mustafaoğlu Ömer and his numerous men, who had been active around *Doyran* and *Usturumca* in the *Selanik* province, surrendered to the authorities and were employed as gendarmeries, as they had no property and no other way of making ends meet.⁶⁵¹ In the light of these and numerous other cases named by Esrar *efendi*, his urgent plea was, finally, to change the incapable gendarmeries (*ıye yaramayan zabit ve neferat*) with honest men fit for the job (*müstakim adamlar*). In addition, as he stated, it had already been communicated to the governor of *Selanik* that some of the families supporting the bandits should be forced to migrate to Anatolia.⁶⁵² Overall, what can be inferred from the report of Esrar *efendi* is a great difficulty on behalf of the imperial centre when dealing with banditry: The lines dividing bandits from gendarmeries were rather permeable, and the centre was not able to offer the bandits who were surrendering any other job except the one of gendarmerie.

Punishing the bandits in court was one of the ways of deterring them. According to official stipulations bandits were punished with some years of forced labour (ranging for from three to fifteen years), or with capital punishment, in case they were habitual bandits, or had caused harm or killed a person during their banditry time.⁶⁵³ As can be

⁶⁵¹ BOA, LMVL. 285 11256 (11 September 1853).

⁶⁵² BOA, LMVL. 285 11256 (11 September 1853).

⁶⁵³ According to the Penal Code of 1840 (Chapter 11, article one to three) the ones who had committed brigandage (*keutta-t tark*), if they had not killed a person, but had only robbed somebody (*adam soymak fazihasma cesaret*), they would receive seven years of forced labour. In case there was the suspicion that they had killed somebody, they should receive ten years of forced labour. In case they had, indeed, killed a person, they would receive the capital punishment. Ten years later, the Penal Code of 1851, stipulated the same premises (part 1, article nine). Lütfi, *Osmanlı Adalet Düzeni (The Ottoman order of justice)*, pp. 126, 132. Nevertheless, the Penal Code of 1858 (articles sixty-two to sixty-three) foresaw that bandits (that is, the ones who “invade or pillage the domains, properties or revenues belonging to the State, or the immovable property belonging to any community of persons, or to resist the forces of the State acting against the persons responsible for such crimes as aforesaid”) would be punished with from three to fifteen years of forced labour (while the head of a bandits’ group should be punished with death). The same was valid for people offering protection to bandits. In addition, bandits who had been habitual ones, who had tortured their victims or had killed somebody, should be punished with death. *The Imperial Ottoman Penal Code 1858, translated from the French text*, pp. 26-7.

inferred from Appendix 3, the Supreme Court and the final decrees mostly confirmed the proposals for punishments of the bandits made on behalf of the local councils. Only in one case, we observe that the Supreme Court changed the decision of the council of *Selanik*, which had proposed the death penalty for Bank(?) Kosta; the Supreme Council argued on 9 September 1861 that the latter had not killed somebody, neither caused harm (*ışkence ve ezijet*) to somebody, and, furthermore, had surrendered to the official authorities (*hükumete gelip iltica eylesi*). As observed also above in the case of sedition, the centre was avoiding inflicting the capital punishment, and often did not conform to the proposals of the local councils in case the latter had proposed the capital punishment for a certain culprit. On the other hand, the centre confirmed the death penalty of Yorgi, who had also killed a soldier during a fight; indeed, having killed a person during banditry activities would lead most times to the death penalty being inflicted on the culprit.

In general terms, though, the centre corroborated the proposals of the local councils and sentenced the bandits to hard labour for durations ranging for from three to five, fifteen or often lifelong hard labour. What strikes our attention though is that, in half of the cases, the related documents drafted by the Supreme Court and the Sultan relating a bandit's case are missing from the respective file. As this tendency occurred systematically, it leads us to think that the communication between councils and centre was different in these penal cases. One could ponder about the reasons for the missing final decrees: Are they still to find under other archives kept in the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul (a question which could not be answered on behalf of the persons in charge at the archive)? Can it be that the councils, eager to deal with bandits -and the plight of banditry in general- promptly, quickly and efficiently, proceeded to inflicting their own punishments, without waiting for the answer of the centre? Ebru Aykut has shown that the example of Ömer *paşa* in Baghdad, who hanged three bandits in Süleymaniye to be a deterrent example, but without following the necessary procedures, was not unique;

many governors dealt promptly with bandits, only to later be themselves dismissed from office for not having respected the principals of law which had been in force since the promulgation of the *Tanzimat*.⁶⁵⁴ In fact, as can be inferred from Appendix 3, it needed among two to five months for the final decree to be issued concerning a certain legal case. But then, again, why are these files found in the central archives in Istanbul?

While it is impossible to provide a straightforward answer to these questions, it is important to note that the archives themselves, their structure, and especially the differences between them can provide us with important clues concerning different implementations and different priorities when dealing with various penal cases during the *Tanzimat*. For sure, the communication between province and centre was different in the case of nationalist seditions and in the case of banditry cases, although we do not know still what these differences exactly meant.

Finally, in comparison to the cases of sedition, we do not encounter cases of acquittal, pardoning, lightening the punishment or of petitions written by the bandits in order to ask for forgiveness and achieve a lighter punishment. The punishment of bandits was much more straightforward: The centre was not impaired by factors such as the foreign opinion, the gaze of foreign countries and the possible protection that these could provide to the defendants, or the danger of the suspects migrating to a neighbouring state. Freed from such considerations, in the case of banditry thus the sovereign was only interested in diminishing banditry, by inflicting the punishments foreseen by the new Penal Codes.

⁶⁵⁴ Aykut, "Alternative Claims on Justice and Law: Rural Arson and Poison Murder in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire", p. 69.

Conclusion

During the *Tanzimat*, as has been underlined above, the Ottoman Empire's main aim had been the centralization of the state, the increase of the collected taxes, and a higher degree of governmentality amidst imperial anxieties related to the interference of foreign powers in Ottoman affairs and to the competing nationalisms vying for the allegiance of the Empire's non-Muslims. The state's tendency to a higher centralization made itself evident also in the legal sphere, as severe penal cases judged by the local councils had to be sent to the centre for the issue of the final decree. Nevertheless, as we observed in this chapter the Ottoman Empire of the first decades of the *Tanzimat* was far from an almighty one.

On the one hand, it was highly dependent on the local councils. Only based on its *mazbatas*, as well as the interrogations protocols, could the centre judge a certain penal case. In most cases, though, it repeated in its documentation the jargon followed by the provincial authorities, as well as the punishments proposed by the same authorities - despite the latter not being officially authorized to propose a punishment. In addition, the provinces were judging the cases often in a provisional council (*muvakkat meclisi*), the composition of which varied greatly, was mostly composed of local notables (and not state-appointed officials), and often showed a majority of non-Muslims in relation to Muslim members. The centre seemed to have little control over these local varieties, and had to accept the file of the penal case as it was arriving from the province.

In addition, the centre remained in negotiation with its subjects and did not always minutely impose the foreseen punishments of the Penal Codes. Especially in the case of nationalist seditions, relations between subjects and the Sultan remained highly paternalistic. The bureaucratic documents reveal how the centre viewed nationalist ideas

as a potential corruption of the minds of simple people, which were, moreover, threatening their tranquil and safe state within the Empire. As for the punishment of the respective culprits, a petition asking for forgiveness and promising to remain a “loyal subject of the Empire” could repair the broken relationship between the subject that had committed sedition and the Sultan and earn the defendant his pardoning on behalf of the Sultan. Moreover, the fear of foreign scrutiny, protection provided by foreign powers to Ottoman non-Muslims, or even the existent migration of non-Muslims to newly founded neighbouring states in the Balkans, obliged the Sultan to often pardon his subjects’ nationalist endeavours, on account that they would not repeat them again.

Where does the Ottoman experience with political crime (of a nationalist nature) stand within the larger discussions of how political crime was treated in European countries during the nineteenth century? Most educated people in European countries produced between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries a gradual agreement that political, social, and religious ideas and institutions do not possess absolute value, and that therefore opposing this or that idea or institution should not be construed as gravely threatening to society or the body politic.⁶⁵⁵ By the mid-nineteenth century, a rapid succession of short-lived governments, in France in particular, had reinforced the idea of political institutions as relative and of political offenders as more “disquieted of mind than corrupt.”⁶⁵⁶ Over the next decades, a movement for penal reform diminished the punishments applicable to political crimes, though a person could still be executed and despoiled of his property merely for plotting to harm the emperor.⁶⁵⁷ Several factors combined by the 1890s, however, -most spectacular among which being the rise of

⁶⁵⁵ Jonathan Daly, “Political Crime in Late Imperial Russia”, *The Journal of Modern History*, 74 (March 2002), p. 63.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

anarchism, but also the acute labour conflicts, aggressive nationalism and tense international competition- to undermine the general agreement about the special treatment supposedly deserved by political offenders. The leaders and populations of European countries felt less secure than they had earlier in the century and therefore less generous towards perceived threats to the state, be they internal or external.⁶⁵⁸ On their part, the Ottoman authorities, were showing a similarly relatively lenient behaviour towards nationalists during the first decades of the *Tanzimat*. While their considerations, as has been shown, were more of a practical nature when acting so, it would be a fruitful area of further research to investigate both the interactions between Western and Ottoman attitudes towards political crime, as well as the changes of Ottoman behaviour in that matter in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The crime of banditry, on the other hand, appears as a greatly local phenomenon, over which the centre had more limited power. Aware of the fact that gendarmerie and bandits were often working together, or even that the same persons were changing roles between being a gendarmerie and a bandit, the centre could do little; it had too little personell with which to staff its security forces, while, on the other hand, it could provide no alternative job opportunities to bandits, even when the latter were willing to surrender. Punishing the bandits with some years of forced labour was the more common tactic of the state when dealing with penal cases of banditry. Moreover, the absence of the final decrees in many of the banditry cases makes us remain sceptical about the communication of centre and province in banditry cases, as well as think that it might have been the case that the provinces were acting more independently pertaining to the punishment particularly of banditry cases.

⁶⁵⁸ Daly, "Political Crime in Late Imperial Russia", p. 67.

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to investigate the agency of various, more or less, subordinate Ottoman subjects -belonging to various ethnoreligious and social groups-, including peasants, all kinds of artisans, local teachers and printers, and elaborate on the multiple forms of interactions between these groups and the Ottoman state. The temporal focus thereby was on the *Tanzimat*, a set of centralizing reforms undertaken by the Ottoman bureaucracy between 1839 and 1878, reforms which embodied manifold intentions on behalf of the sovereign, ranging -to name only some of them- from different forms of centralization and decentralization, to the recognition of universal rights for all subjects (Muslims and non-Muslims) while retaining the *millet*-system. The spatial focus of the thesis was on the southern Balkans, covering the provinces of *Selanik*, *Tuna*, *Manastir* and *Yanya*, guided by an effort to overcome the fragmentation of the study of the Ottoman Balkans by focusing only on one province.

The institution of the local councils (*meclis*), founded in the framework of the *Tanzimat* reforms in various Ottoman provinces and entrusted with both administrative and legal (penal) duties and functions, was used as a showcase, an institution in which interaction between subordinate groups and Ottoman officials was direct. From all the crimes adjudicated by these local courts, the ones of nationalist sedition (*fesat*) and banditry (*eşkiya*) were chosen as the focus of this thesis, as they convey manifold implications concerning state-subject relationships. The interrogation protocols (*istintakname*) produced in the framework of these councils were evaluated as a rich, still undiscovered, archival source for Ottoman history; thanks to them, it is the first time that we can read direct quotes of what subordinates have said in court. Finally, the agency of these groups was studied not as an isolated factor, but within the dynamics of

their relationship to local notables sitting in the local councils, as well as to the state. In short, while the focus was mainly on the agency of simple people, the dynamics of the triangle state-local notables (councils)-subordinate groups were also being explored.

Overall, it is argued that during the *Tanzimat*, the relationship between both state and province, and between state and people became more intense and direct, but not marked by a centralized or all-powerful sovereign. Indeed, next to increased control - compared to the pre-*Tanzimat* era- the sovereign achieved over the judicial processes in the provinces and over its subjects, simultaneously, the former had to deal with several local varieties of these processes, with the increased roles assumed by the local councils, and, more importantly, with an increasingly mobilized local population which had to be appeased. In a nutshell, the *Tanzimat* state of the 1840s to the 1860s was, still, a bargaining state.

Particularly, while the sovereign established the *meclis* as a further way to increase its communication with and its influence on the province, it seemed to have little influence on the different ways in which the *meclis* was operating in different places. As we saw, the *meclis* which was carrying out the interrogation processes in various penal cases often was simply an ad-hoc temporary *meclis* (*meclis-i muvakkat*), with varying numbers of state officials and local notables participating in it. As can be inferred from the tables at Appendix One and Two at the end of this thesis, no pattern can be detected regarding the members of these temporary councils, as well as the numbers of state appointed members vs. local notables or of Muslim vs. non-Muslim local notables. The *meclis* thereby appeared as a flexible institution, which was convening with members whose numbers and functions (state-appointed vs. local notables) varied. Sometimes these temporary councils equalled to juries, with almost the entirety of the members not being officials. To my relative surprise, I detected throughout the thesis that non-Muslims could even outnumber Muslims in these courts, even when judging such

sensitive penal cases as a nationalist sedition. Thus, despite official regulations regarding membership, the actual implementation of the *meclis* -at least the ones dealing with penal cases- on the local level produced a much more flexible and varied picture.

Moreover, there were also other factors which speak for the flexibility and the local variety of the *meclis*, as well as the little control of the state over this institution. To begin with, despite not being entitled to do so from the relevant regulations (*nizamname*), which foresaw that the local councils could only decide about the innocence or not of the culprit, the local councils often proposed also which punishment should be inflicted on the defendants whom they had tried. As we saw from the files entailing writings of the *Meclis-i Vala* and the Sultan based on the reports of a penal case coming from the province (see also Appendix Three), the sovereign most times adopted the proposals of punishments made by the provincial councils, albeit often specified them furthermore.

On the other hand, to complicate things furthermore, we saw that while the councils of the *Tuna* province were operating in the way just described, the councils of *Selanik* and *Manastir* chose to send files of nationalist seditions to the centre to be judged there, or avoided to write their own council report summarizing the events even when they had carried out the interrogation part. In addition, in banditry cases we often missed the final decree of the Sultan in the respective files, which could speak for a tendency of the local authorities to deal with this crime on a local level, by-passing thereby the approximately (see Appendix Three) three to four-month-period which a final decree needed to be issued. In sum, each penal case seemed to have been treated differently in different localities, speaking for a high degree of pluralism in the legal process. While aiming at the centralization and the homogenization also of the legal processes taking place in the provinces, the state had, in the end, little to say pertaining to how the penal cases were actually being adjudicated on ground.

Moreover, limited seemed the power of the centre not only over the way local councils convened and operated in different local settings, but also over the concrete persons sitting in these courts, both the appointed bureaucrats and the elected local notables. On the one hand, while petitions from the provinces poured into the centre, informing it about the corrupt activities of the council members -ranging from changing, in lieu of money, the lists of the people who would be sent to the army, taking bribery from a city's artisans, or collaborating with bandits-, the state seemed unwilling to confront such cases and undertake action. Only when the petitions acquired a massive character, like in the case of Hacı Tayyip in *Selanik*, against whom a petition uniting all the important men and representatives of the town's inhabitants, Muslims and non-Muslims, was signed and sent to Istanbul, did the state proceed to the dismissal of such officials from office.

Nevertheless, in other cases of *Selanik's* council members, who were accused of corruption but did not unite a big number of people against them, corrupt activities went unnoticed. Thus, the *Tanzimat* state, which had issued the first Penal Code in 1840 with special emphasis on the protection of the subjects' well-being by combating corrupt officials, was unable to fulfil this task regarding provincial bureaucrats sitting in the local councils, whom it needed for the administration of the provinces. Furthermore, next to ignoring their corrupt activities, the state even granted local notables with imperial, "decorative" titles, in an effort to appease them and win their loyalty. Titles like "rikab kapıcıbaşı," "ıstabl-ı amire aza" or "kapıcıbaşılık," which did not connote a specific function other than belonging to the extended circle of the palace, were granted to local notables, in exchange, as was stated in the Ottoman documents, to their services and loyalty. Overall, the state seemed to have difficulties in imposing its centralizing reforms, as, simultaneously, it had been in need of local power holders in order to govern the provinces.

However, the latter point, that is, the need of the state to bargain with local notables even throughout the nineteenth century, has been already testified by some researches. In this thesis, I bring this argument a step further, arguing that this was not the case only with local notables, but, in some cases, also with ordinary subjects, with whom the state was willing to negotiate, bargain and step back in trials as sensitive as the ones pertaining to nationalist seditions. In the case of banditry penal cases, on the other hand, while the sovereign did enforce harsher punishments when trying a bandit, it seemed unable to break the close ties between gendarmeries and simple bandits, as stated both in the interrogations of the bandits as well as in the report of Eşref *efendi* presented in Chapter Six.

Particularly, towards nationalists (or persons employing such a discourse with whatever motives) of the mid-nineteenth century the state employed more a paternalistic discourse of “naïve subjects who had been infiltrated by bad ideas,” and did not always punish them, being rather eager to win back their loyalty. In the reports of both the local councils as well as of the *Meclis-i Vâla*, and in the final decrees issued by the Sultan, nationalism was something being allowed within the confines of “churches and schools.” Any manifestation outside these imperial institutions was coined as *fesat* (sedition), a term used during the *Tanzimat* in order to describe mischief and sedition threatening the internal order of the state. Nevertheless, people supporting such ideas in court were rather treated as gullible subjects, whose minds had been infiltrated and perturbed by dangerous ideas (*tabdiş-i ezhan*), but who, despite this, could be put back on the right track.

Consequently, as can be deducted from the table in Appendix Three at the end of this thesis, receiving a pardon or a lessened punishment in a penal case having to do with nationalist sedition was not a rare case. The printer of *Selanik* Kiriakos Darzilovitis, as

well as the printers of *Manastır* Tome and Petro and the printer of *Ziştovi* Todor,⁶⁵⁹ or the chieftain Leonidas Voulgaris -originally from the Greek Kingdom- who had been wandering at the Chalkidiki peninsula south of *Selanik* in 1866, questioning Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire about their condition and eager to organize a sedition among them, were all left free after having been interrogated in the local courts of the respective provinces. Different reasons stood behind these acquittals: Darzilovitis managed to achieve his pardoning after having submitted a petition of forgiveness to the local governor, formulated in a standardized language, in which he promised to be a “loyal subject” from the present on. Voulgaris similarly promised in court not to commit again a similar attempt of organizing a sedition on Ottoman territory. The printers Todor, Tome and Petro assured that the books they had been printing were solely for the schools of their cities and destined for the education of the pupils. In all these cases, the state chose to fix its relationship with these subjects by letting them free, on account that they would not repeat their “mistakes.”

Next to being pardoned, there was the option of receiving a lighter punishment: The members of the Greek *gazino* club operating in *Manastır* in the late 1850s, whose nationalist writings had been found in the rooms of the clubs, had even managed to mobilize the city’s artisans around an intercommunal murder having taken place in the city’s market among a Christian and a Muslim youngster, leading to the submission of a *protesto*-document to the Grand Vizier visiting the city and demanding the release of the Christian boy from prison. Nevertheless, although their testimonies were not rendered believable in official Ottoman writings, the sovereign inflicted a lighter punishment than

⁶⁵⁹ While I have interpreted the lack of the final decess in the case of banditry as a sign that this crime might have been dealt with more promptly and directly in the provinces, in the case of printing, based also on the decess of the state pertaining to various petitions of printers to open their own stores and which were always granted permission, I am more inclined to believe that the proposals of the local councils were being followed and printing was, in the first decades of the *Tanzimat*, left rather free.

the one foreseen by the Penal Code of 1858 on the members of the *gazino*. This time the defendants had not asked for being pardoned, neither had they tried to state their loyalty to the Ottoman state. However, in a similar tendency with the one just described, the state opted for a higher punishment, probably in order to avoid further radicalization on behalf of the defendants. Overall, if we consider that this was a time during which the state sought to centralize and standardize the legal process, we can observe that still extrajudicial means such as a petition, or considerations like the loyalty of the subjects played often a bigger role than the strict application of law itself.

On the other hand, in the case not of nationalist printing or disseminating nationalist ideas, but of actual uprisings posing, among others, a nationalist discourse, the state was less lenient: In the case of the Albanian Hasan, who had participated in the Karatasos uprising, or of the Bulgarian uprisings of 1862, 1867 and 1868, the state imposed punishments of some years or of lifelong hard labour, modifying nevertheless proposals of capital punishments made by the local councils into lifelong hard labour. Indeed, despite the Penal Code of 1858 foreseeing the capital punishment in cases of uprisings against the Ottoman Empire, the sovereign was reluctant to employ this punishment, conforming to the civilizational discourses prevalent at the time. Further research into the increasing Bulgarian uprisings from the 1870s and afterwards could provide useful insights into whether such considerations continued to inform Ottoman policy.

Finally, pertaining to banditry cases, which were being received as a much bigger threat than nationalist activity in the mid-nineteenth century, the sovereign did not chose to pardon its subjects, but rather to convict them to some years or lifelong hard labour. Again, the proposals of local councils for inflicting the capital punishment were usually changed into lifelong hard labour, except in the case of bandits who had committed also murders, as well as of bandits who had “habitually” (*sabikalı, meşhur*) done banditry. But,

again, also in the case of banditry the state seemed to be compelled to some form of negotiation: In almost half of the cases presented in this thesis, but also in a further sample of cases collected in the archives, the final decree of the Sultan is missing, demonstrating that the cases may have been dealt with in the provinces. Moreover, the report of Eşref *efendi*, drafted about the phenomenon of banditry in the province of *Selanik*, demonstrated how overwhelmed the state had been by the increase of banditry during the *Tanzimat*, as well as the close cooperation of gendarmeries and bandits, which rendered it impossible to combat banditry from its roots. On the other hand, the local council of *Selanik* did not choose to punish or dismiss from office the sergeant (*bölükbaşı*) Hüseyin, although numerous bandits in court had stated his corrupt activities, having compelled bandits to continue their activities and share their booties with them.

Until now I have described the state's bargaining intentions towards both the province and the people. But what about the latter, the actual subject of this thesis? What can be inferred from reading hundreds of pages of their interrogation protocols, and following their discourses, their strategies of evading, distorting, or their moments of "truth"? When first encountered with the interrogation protocols, I was amazed by their length. The state had indeed a great interest in recording peoples' thoughts, and the latter, on their part, had not resorted to short and laconic answers, but to lengthy descriptions (true or false ones). The dialogues did not seem to be predominantly loaded with fear or uneasiness on behalf of the defendants; indeed, a further point of consideration, open to future research, would be to what extent the defendants viewed the *meclis* as a court, like the sharia courts, or more like a forum-like institution, in the framework of which they could express their thoughts more unofficially.

It would be impossible to summarize all these narratives under a single argument, which would represent the peoples' stance on either the government, the *Tanzimat*, the councils or just their crime motives. To be sure, the people we encountered speaking in

the court throughout this thesis, demonstrated a series of reactions to the Ottoman state. "There were a plethora of experiences scattered throughout the Ottoman frontiers that neither reflect other events, happenings, and experiences taking place at the same time (often even within the same geographic space), nor permit absorption in the teleology of Modernity."⁶⁶⁰ In other words, "the current nationalist historiography in the Balkans consciously reinforces a myth of sociocultural cohesion that was really formed only in the period after the 1912-1913 wars, not before them."⁶⁶¹

Specifically, the trials of nationalist sedition dealt with in this thesis offered a more nuanced view on Balkan nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire during the first decades of the *Tanzimat* than the one provided until today. The study of nationalism within the Ottoman Empire has rather remained stuck between explanations -by now outdated- viewing nationalist allegiance as the demonstration of some true, atavistic feelings, and between more class-oriented approaches, which have seen nationalism mostly as an expression of other, class-conflicts taking place in society. Both have depicted people as rather passive receivers, either of ideology passed on to them by educated teachers and intellectuals, or, in the second case, of a top-down imposed nationalism aimed to mask the existence of class conflicts. On the contrary, the artisans, printers and teachers "listened to" in the framework of this thesis, demonstrated that nationalist ideas, even to a small extent, were spreading among ordinary people and empowering them with various forms of political mobilization during the mid-nineteenth century.

This was not a top-down imposed process, but rather an employment of some forms of nationalist ideas, mixed with various expectations (ranging from -according to

⁶⁶⁰ Blumi, *Foundations of Modernity. Human Agency and the Imperial State*, p. 13.

⁶⁶¹ Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans. Alternative Balkan Modernities*, p. 178.

the testimonies of the participants themselves- making money, to combating banditry, protesting against the new tax regime of the *Tanzimat*, fighting their own local notables, to migrating to another place, or “conquering” (*zabt, istila*) some territory and founding a government (*hükümet*), in order to mobilize, create networks over wider geographies, exchange pamphlets, letters and newspapers, confront the Ottoman authorities in novel ways (like by submitting a novel document called *protesto* to the Grand Vizier visiting *Manastır*), or create new, “imagined” communities by taking an oath of allegiance (like in the case of the Bulgarian committee members). In sum, while nationalist ideas were being uttered in court, they were mixed with a series of other expectations connected to the daily life of the participants. Equally important to the ideas themselves seemed to have been the power of new forms of networking among people facilitated by these ideas.

Moreover, this was a mobilization often engendering the reaction and opposition of other fellow people and especially local notables, like in the case of the *Turnovi* uprising of 1862, which was opposed by petitions of the notables of *İslimiye, Kazanlık* and *Zağra-ı Atik*, asking the Ottoman officials to repulse “these bandits,” or the case of the gazinists themselves, who had been accused by the local notables of *Manastır* as rebels. Religious officials were fighting local expressions of both Greek and Bulgarian nationalisms, like in the case of the Bulgarian pop-Mito who was denounced by the metropolitan of *Berkeofça*, or of the gazinists, who had been caught on advice of the metropolitan of *Manastır*. In all of these cases, rather than an elite-phenomenon, nationalist expression (or the mobilization associated with it) was originating from local teachers, and mainly artisans, who were indicted by their own co-religionists to the Ottoman authorities. The political underpinnings of this mobilization had been interpreted by these co-religionists rather as an omen of the instability of their own position.

Nevertheless, the people mobilizing around some forms of nationalism were still a small minority given the whole population. The latter, and mainly the peasants, were

represented in this thesis through the trials of bandits. In the latter case, any interpretation, as has been done until today in literature, to invest banditry with nationalist motives, or attributes of social fighters stealing from the rich and disseminating wealth to the poor, prove hollow when reading the testimonies of bandits themselves in the local courts of the *Tanzimat*.

In court, bandits claimed to be struggling mainly with mundane aspects of their life. Muslims bandits were most times escaping the army, wandering around by doing banditry and occasionally being employed as a gendarmerie. Both them and non-Muslim bandits named their poverty, problems with their agricultural activities, loans owned to local notables or inter-familial friction as the main reasons for resorting to banditry. Nevertheless, even bandits who had attributed their activities to extreme poverty, often claimed then in court to have stolen big amounts of money during their banditry activities. Non-Muslim bandits, on the other hand, often demonstrated their status of being a non-Muslim, and thus not finding a job next to Muslim master, as the main reason of being a bandit. However, also they later contradicted their sayings, as, for example, the bandit Yorgi Karabuluke tried in *Selanik*, who then stated in court other job opportunities he had encountered, including the ones proposed to him by Muslim masters. Overall, banditry evolves out of the Ottoman documents as a widespread phenomenon, in which locals, the gendarmerie, as well as local notables were all involved and profiting from, making it thus difficult for the state to intervene.

To sum up, this thesis aimed at providing a synthetic view of mid-nineteenth century social history of the Ottoman Balkans, by focusing on the voices and attitudes of several subordinate groups inhabiting various provinces of the Balkans, and combining them with interactions taking place in the triangle subordinate-local councils / local notables-state. By using different kinds of Ottoman archives, such as interrogation protocols (*istintakname*), council reports (*mazbata*) and Sultanic decrees (*irade*), I was able

to highlight different aspects of this triangle, and thus demonstrate how subject-state relationships developed throughout the dynamic time of the *Tanzimat* reforms. The extensive use of the *istintakname* provided a vivid picture of the voices of several local inhabitants, including local artisans, teachers, printers and peasants, voices whose absence has often been lamented in Ottomanist historiography.

To conclude, I argue that rendering the plurality of these voices visible compels us to another history writing than the one we have been used to. Voices which do not fill in into linear narratives such as nationalism or modernization and evade the possibility of easy-to-make generalizations force today's historian to create more complex understandings and explanations. Nevertheless, all these voices can be boiled down to the argument of negotiation presented at the beginning of this introduction. Indeed, all defendants appeared eager to demonstrate in length, negotiate, distort or adjust their ideas within the court rooms of the *Tanzimat* councils. "Nationalists" did not vehemently support their ideas or evoke their rights within the *Tanzimat*, but rather adjusted their ideas and often claimed loyalty to the Ottoman state, and to its allowing nationalism solely within "churchs and schools." Bandits, equally, did not support a higher cause for their actions, but underlined daily issues, and often their mere poverty, as the main cause of their activities. And the state, the Ottoman sovereign, rather than a fierce maker of the *Tanzimat* Penal Codes, chose to be often lenient on nationalists, prioritizing their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. Where, on the other hand, it wanted to be fiercer, like in the case of bandits, it often was not able, for reasons stated above.

As no similar studies, either on nationalist sedition or on banditry during the *Tanzimat*, and, especially, in the framework of the local councils founded during the reform period, exist, my findings can not be easily compared with other researches. This was, in a sense, an introductory study to these subjects; further research could be directed towards the direction of analysing a bigger quantity of similar trials and especially of

expanding the spatial focus over all Balkan provinces. Exploring, for example, how the state's punishing tendencies changed after the 1860s, or how discourses of subordinate subjects differentiated in time or space would be exciting venues in this direction.

Appendix 1 (to Chapter 2): List of Members of the Local Councils of *Selanik* (Entailing the Call Numbers of Documents from BOA and Detailed Representation of Members and Followed by Explanations)

| Document from BOA with Call Number | Members of the Councils of <i>Selanik</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| I.MVL. 97 2071, 28.9.1846, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Bende müşir-i eyalet-i Selanik Abduhu Yakub | Bende Yusuf Siddık an mir-i miran aza Yusuf Siddık azizi mazharı tevfik ola Yâ Rab | El-abdü'd-da'i an mevali naib-i Selanik Es-Seyyid İbrahim Edhem | Bende Ahmed Raşid müdür-i mal Selanik Bende el Ahmed Raşid | Bende Mehmed Ataullah an mevali aza Abduhu Mehmed Ataullah ve mâ tevfikihi illa billah | Bende Yusuf Refik an ser bevvin aza Yusuf Refik azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende Mehmed Şefik an ser bevvin aza ? | Bende Ahmed Tevfik an ser bevvin aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende Numan Tayyib an müderris aza Es-Seyyid Numan Tayyib | El-abdü'd-da'i an müderris müfti-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Hüseyin Zühdü | Bende metropolid-i Selanik Bende Ieronim os metropolid-i Selanik hâlâ | Bende İsteryo vekil-i Rumiy an İsteryo Yorgi | Bende Yako vekil-i Yahudiy an Yako veled-i Avram Fransez |
| I.MVL. 89 1821, 28.12.1846, murder | Bende müşir-i eyalet-i Selanik Abduhu Yakub | Bende Yusuf Siddık an mir-i miran aza Yusuf Siddık azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | El-abdü'd-da'i an mevali hakim-i Selanik Es-Seyyid İbrahim Edhem | Bende müdür-i mal Selanik Es-Seyyid Ahmed Şakir | Bende Mehmed Ataullah an mevali aza Abduhu Mehmed Ataullah ve mâ tevfikihi illa billah | Bende Yusuf Refik an ser bevvin aza Yusuf Refik azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende Mehmed Şefik an ser bevvin aza ? | Bende Ahmed Tevfik an ser bevvin aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende Numan Tayyib an müderris aza Es-Seyyid Numan Tayyib | El-abdü'd-da'i an müderris müfti-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Hüseyin Zühdü | Bende metropolid-i Selanik Bende Ieronim os metropolid-i Selanik hâlâ | Bende İsteryo vekil-i Rumiy an İsteryo Yorgi | Bende vekil-i Yahudiy an Salomo ? bar (son of)? veled-i ? |

| Document from BOA with Call Number | List of Members of the Councils of <i>Selanik</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| I.MVL. 113 2655, 3.5.1847, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Mustafa Hıfzı | Bende an mir-i miran aza Yusuf Sıdık azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | El-abdü'd-da'i hâkimü'ş-şer' Selanik Es-Seyyid Ali | Bende müdir-i mal Selanik Es-Seyyid Ahmed Şakir | Bende an mevali aza Abduhu Mehmed Ataullah ve mâ tevfikihi illa billah | Bende an ser bevvin aza Yusuf Refik azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende an ser bevvin aza <i>Dersaadet' de idüğü</i> | Bende an ser bevvin aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende an müderris aza Es-Seyyid Numan Tayyib | El-abdü'd-da'ian müderris müfti-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Ahmed Zühdü | Bende metropolid-i Selanik Bende Ieronim os metropolid-i Selanik hâlâ | Bende vekil-i millet-i Rumiy an İşteryo Yorgi | Bende vekil-i millet-i Yahudiy an Yako veled-i Avram Fransez |
| I.MVL. 143 3997,8.5.1849, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Bekir Sami | Bende an mir-i miran aza Yusuf Sıdık azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende rütbe-i saniye müdir-i mal-ı Selanik Es-Seyyid Ali Namik | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Mehmed Said | Bende an müderris müfti-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Hüseyin Zühdü | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire müdir-i ziraat Şerif Mustafa Faik | Bende an mevali aza Abduhu Mehmed Ataullah ve mâ tevfikihi illa billah | Bende an ser bevvin aza Yusuf Refik azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende an müderris in aza Es-Seyyid Numan Tayyib | Bende metropolid-i Selanik Bende Ieronim os metropolid-i Selanik hâlâ | Bende vekil-i millet-i Rumiy an Gavril Zarkavi | Bende vekil-i millet-i Yahudiy an Yako veled-i Avram |
| I.MVL. 146 4102, 29.5.1849, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik es-Seyyid Bekir Sami Es-Seyyid Bekir Sami | Bende an mir-i miran aza Yusuf Sıdık azizi mazharı tevfik | Bende rütbe-i saniye müdir-i mal-ı Selanik Es-Seyyid Ali Namik | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Mehmed Said | Bende an müderris müfti-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Hüseyin | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire müdir-i ziraat Şerif Mustafa Faik | Bende an mevali aza Abduhu Mehmed Ataullah ve mâ | Bende an müderris aza - | Bende an müderris aza Es-Seyyid Numan Tayyib | Bende metropolid-i Selanik Bende Ieronim os metropolid-i | Bende vekil-i millet-i Rumiy an Gavril Zarkavi | Bende Yako vekil-i Yahudiy an Yako veled-i Avram |

| | | ola yâ Rab | | | n Zühdü | | | tevfikihi illa billah | | | Selanik hâlâ | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| Document from BOA with Call Number | List of Members of the Councils of <i>Selanik</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I.MVL. 158 4541, 27.11.1849, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Bende müşir-i eyalet-i Selanik Rıza | Bende an mir-i miran aza Yusuf Siddık azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Mehmed Said | Bende rütbe-i rabi'ada n müdir-i mal İshak Nureddin | Bende an müderris müfti-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Hüseyin Zühdü | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire müdir-i ziraat Şerif Mustafa Faik | Bende an mevali aza Abduhu Mehmed Ataullah ve mâ tevfikihi illa billah | Bende an ser bevvabin aza Yusuf Refik azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende an müderris aza <i>Deraliyye' de idüğü</i> | Bende metropoli d-i Selanik Bende Ieronimos metropoli d-i Selanik hâlâ | Bende vekil-i millet-i Rumiy an Gavril Zarkavi | Bende Yako vekil-i Yahudiy an Yako veled-i Avram |
| I.MVL. 159 4584, 27.11.1849, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Bende müşir-i eyalet-i Selanik Rıza | Bende an mir-i miran aza Yusuf Siddık azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Mehmed Said | Bende rütbe-i rabi'ada n müdir-i mal İshak Nureddin | Bende an müderris müfti-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Hüseyin Zühdü | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire müdir-i ziraat Şerif Mustafa Faik | Bende an mevali aza Abduhu Mehmed Ataullah ve mâ tevfikihi illa billah | Bende an ser bevvabin aza Yusuf Refik azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende an müderris aza <i>Dersaadet 'te idüğü</i> | Bende metropoli d-i Selanik - | Bende vekil-i millet-i Rumiy an Gavril Zarkavi | Bende vekil-i millet-i Yahudiy an Yako veled-i Avram |
| I.MVL. 162 4747, 27.1.1850, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Bende müşir-i eyalet-i Selanik Rıza | Bende an mir-i miran aza Yusuf Siddık | Bende an mevali naib Es-Seyyid Mehmed Said | Bende rütbe-i rabi'ada n müdir-i mal | Bende an müderris müfti Es-Seyyid | Bende rütbe-i saniyeden aza Es-Seyyid | Bende bâ paye-i müdir-i ıstabl-ı amire aza | Bende bâ paye-i müdir-i ıstabl-ı amire aza | Bende an mevali aza Abduhu Mehmed | Bende an ser bevvabin aza <i>çiftliğinde bulunduğ</i> | Bende vekil-i millet-i Rum Gavril Zarkavi | Bende vekil-i millet-i Yahudi | |



| | | azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | | İshak Nuredd in | Hüseyi n Zühdü | Numan Tayyib | Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Şerif Mustafa Faik | d Ataullah ve mâ tevfikihi illa billah | | | Yako veled-i Avram | |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Document from BOA with Call Number | List of Members of the Councils of <i>Selanik</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I.MVL. 168 5009, 4.4.1850, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Bend müşir-i eyalet-i Selanik Rıza | Bende an mir-i miran aza Yusuf Sıddık azizi mazharı tevfik ola yâ Rab | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Es-Seyyid Mehmed Said | Bende rütbe-i rabi'ada n müdür-i mal İshak Nuredd in | Bende an müderri s müfti-i Selanik Abduhu Feyzull ah | Bende rütbe-i saniyeden aza Es- Seyyid Numan Tayyib | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende an ıstabl-ı amire müdür-i ziraat Şerif Mustafa Faik | Bende an mevali aza Abduhu Mehme d Ataullah ve mâ tevfikihi illa billah | | | | |
| I.MVL. 209 43, 4.5.1853, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Sıddık Yusuf mazharı tevfik ola ya Rabbi | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Mehme d ? | Bende müdür-i ? İsmail Hakkı | Bende an müderri s müfti Abduhu Attaulla h | Bende an mir-i miran aza Es- Seyyid Numan Tayyib | Bende bâ paye-i müdür- iıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende bâ paye-i müdür-i ıstabl-ı amire aza ? | Bende an ser bevvabin aza Es- Seyyid Salih Vehbi | Bende müdür-i ziraat-ı Selanik Abdurra hman ? | Bende vekil-i millet-i Rumiyan ? veled-i Dimitri | Bende vekil-i millet-i Yahudiya n Gadalya(?) veled- i İsak | | |
| I.MVL. 924 22, 14.11.1860, <i>meclis-i tabkikat</i> , | Bende Naşid | Bende Davud Fedai | Bende <i>Osman Bey basta idiğü</i> | Bende Seyyid Fezzi 252 | Bende Enver 272 | Bende El-Hac Mehmed Rıza | Bende Numan Sabit 276 | Bende Es- Seyyid | Bende Es- Seyyid | Bende Atanaş Bladi | Bende Aci Mihal veled-i | Bende Hebre w seal 1 | Bende <i>?bu da meclisde</i> |


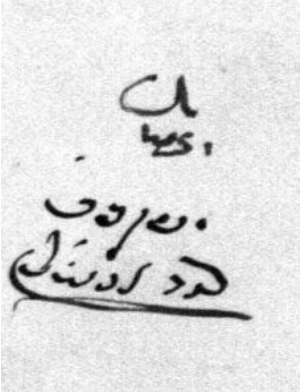
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| rape-defloration, (<i>biker-i izale</i>) | | | | | | 263 | | Ahmed Şevki 266 | Mehmed Şükrü | | Aci Kostantin | | <i>bulunmadığı</i> |
| Document from BOA with Call Number | List of Members of the Councils of <i>Selanik</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I.MVL. 459 20624, 24.10.1861, <i>Selanik meclisi</i> , murder | Vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Hüsnî Katib-i meclis Es-Seyyid Ali Rıza | Ed-da'i hâkimü'ş-şer' Es-Seyyid Mehmed ? ? Katib aza Es-Seyyid Mehmed Eşraf | Muhasebeci-i Selanik Mustafa ? <i>An aza Metropolit efendi ? bulunamadığı</i> | Ed-da'i müftü Es-Seyyid Mustafa <i>An aza Acı Mihal Kostantini veled-i Acı</i> | An aza ? nüfus Es-Seyyid Abduhu Ahmed mahzarı tevfiği Samed <i>An aza Behor ?</i> | An aza ve müdir-i evkaf Abdülkadir | An aza Şerif Mehmed ? | An aza Faik bey Dersaadete | An aza Mehmed İzzet | An aza ve reis-i meclis-i tahkik Abdurrahman ? | An aza Şakir İsmail | An aza Es-Seyyid İbrahim Namik ? | An aza Osman |
| MVL. 943 27, 18.12.1861, <i>meclis-i tabkikat</i> , theft | Bende reis-i meclis-i muvakkat Abdurrahman mazharı...ola | Bende an aza Osman Tevfik | Bende an aza Mehmed Feyzi | Bende an aza Hüseyin Hilmi | Bende an aza Enver | Bende an aza El-Hac Mehmed Rıza | Bende an aza Numan efendi memuriyyete idii ki | Bende katip efendi Es-Seyyid Ahmed ? | Bende katib-i ? Zinalabdin | Bende Hebrew seal 4 | Bende an aza Dimitre? mecliste bulunamadığı | | |
| MVL. 949 32, 27.4.1862, <i>meclis-i muvakkat</i> , theft | Bende reis-i meclis-i muvakkat Es-Seyyid İbrahim Namik | Bende an aza Osman Tevfik | Bende an aza Davud Fedai | Bende an aza Hüseyin Hilmi | Bende an aza Enver | Bende an aza El-Hac Mehmed Rıza | Bende an aza Numan Sabit | Bende an aza Es-Seyyid Mehmed ? | Bende an aza Ovadya? mecliste bulunamadağı | Bende an aza İstefan Vetati 1862 | Bende an aza Behor Saltil | | |

| Document from BOA with Call Number | List of Members of the Councils of <i>Selânik</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| MVL. 975 21, 19.10.1863, <i>meclis-i tahkik</i> , rape-defloration, (<i>bikr-i izale</i>) | Bende reis-i meclis-i tahkik Es-Seyyid Mehmed Rıza | Bende an aza Hüseyin Ali | Bende an aza Seyyid Mehmed Şükri | Bende an aza El-Hac Mehmed Rıza | Bende an aza Es-Seyyid ? | Bende an aza - | Bende katib-i emval Mehmed Piri | Bende katib-i mal <i>Deraliyede idiği</i> | Bende an aza Hristaki | Bende an aza Behor Saltıl | Bende an aza Hebrew seal 2 | | |
| MVL. 986 25, 18.2.1864, <i>meclis-i tahkik</i> , theft | Bende reis-i meclis-i tahkik Es-Seyyid Mehmed Rıza | Bende an aza Hüseyin Ali | Bende an aza Seyyid Mehmed Şükri | Bende an aza El-Hac Mehmed Rıza | Bende an aza - | Bende an aza Hasan Rifat | Bende an aza Osman | Bende katib-i emval Mehmed Piri | Bende an aza Seyyid Mehmed Şükri | Bende an aza - | Bende an aza Behor Saltıl | | |
| MVL 986 37, 1.3.1864, <i>meclis-i tahkik</i> , theft | Bende reis-i meclis-i tahkik Es-Seyyid Mehmed Rıza | Bende an aza Es-Seyyid Mehmed Şükri | Bende an aza Es-Seyyid Mehmed Refih | Bende an aza El-Hac Mehmed Rıza | Bende an aza Hasan Rifat | Bende an aza Osman | Bende katib-i emval Mehmed Piri | Bende katib-i mal Es-Seyyid Mehmed Şükri | Bende an aza Behor Saltıl | Bende an aza Atanaş Havoto v? | | | |


& EXPLANATIONS

Each council minute (*meclis maḥbatası*) was sealed with the seals of the council's members present on the day the minutes were penned. A typical signature comprised the profession and the name of a member, handwritten in Ottoman script, followed by its seal; here are some characteristic examples:

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <p>A Jewish seal (I.MVL. 143 3997)</p> | <p>A Muslim's seal (I.MVL. 146 4102)</p> | <p>A Muslim's seal (I.MVL. 459 20624)</p> | <p>A Christian's seal (MVL. 975 21)</p> | <p>A Jewish seal (MVL. 975 21), noted as Hebrew seal (1) in the tables (could be read as Ovadya / Ovdajia?)</p> |
|  |  |  |  |  |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | <p>A Jewish seal (MVL. 1001 91), noted as Hebrew seal (2) in the tables</p>  <p>A Jewish seal (I.MVL. 426 18704), noted as Hebrew seal (3) in the tables</p>  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | <p>A Jewish seal (MVL. 943 27), noted as Hebrew seal (4) in the tables</p>  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | | | <p>A Jewish seal (I.MVL. 452 20191), notes as Hebrew seal (5) in the tables</p>  |
|--|--|--|--|---|

In the tables presented above, which comprise the transcribed names of several councils' members, the part of the name which comprised the seal itself is written with **bold** letters. When no seal is to be found, that is, when a member was not present at a specific session, the explanation written instead is marked with *italics*. If no explanation is being noted in the original, a mere dash (-) is being used. If a word could not be read, a question mark (?) is put instead (although most times the religion of this member can be discerned from the word and the letters -alphabet- under question).

Following colours have been used to make the tables easier to read: Red for the non-Muslims notables, Green for the Muslims notables, Blue for the state-appointed members. In case I was not sure about the specific function of a member, the usual, black colour has been retained.

The names are to be read from left to right and row after row. The maximum number of members these councils were officially having was thirteen. In some exceptions, the number of the members was exceeding the thirteen. On the other hand, temporary councils (*meclis-i muvakkat*), investigative councils (*meclis-i tahkikat*) and others had fewer members.

For the reading of the Hebrew seals I had to contact several specialists from various universities (see below). The seals are partially in Hebrew and partially in Solitreo (Sephardic cursive script).

-Hebrew seal (1): Ovadia Biniamin. (Regula Tanner, from the University Basel, proposed to read the first row as “Ovadja,” while the second row was read as “Biniamin” by Dov Cohen (Bar-Ilan University, Israel)).

-Hebrew seal (2): Shelomo ben (son of) M(?) Abastado(?) (read by Dov Cohen).

-Hebrew seal (3): Yaakov (proposed by Prof. Eyal Ginio, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel) ben (son of) David Angel (read by Dov Cohen). Confirmed by Izo Abram (Paris), who read Yakov David Andjel.

-Hebrew seal (4): -

-Hebrew seal (5): -

Explanation of terminology: Following fixed Arabic expressions have been repeatedly occurred in the stamps, and may prove useful for future readers of similar documents:

el-abdü'd-dai, ed-da'i hadimü'ş-şer', müdür-i mu'accelat, hasbe mâ el-bayreddin, mazharı umuru Rabim, sebhele umur-u Rabbi, vefik umur-u Rabbi, mazharı nur-u Samed, mazharı nur-u İlahi, bende-i Hüdâ, mazharı nur-u Hüdâ, nısfü'd-din el-insaf, an mir-i miran aza, ve mâ tevfikihı illa billah, an ser bevabin aza (bevab: gatekeeper, doorkeeper, porter), mazhar-ı tevfik azîz ola yâ Rab, ve mâ tevfikihı illa billah, istabl-ı amire (istabl: Sultan's stable).

Note: I thank Güldane Çolak (Istanbul University) for filling out my gaps in reading these seals, especially with regard to the Arabic expressions. I take responsibility for all possible mistakes which may have occurred in the reading of the seals.

Appendix 2 (to Chapter 6): The Members of the Various Local Councils Referred to in Chapter 6

Explanations of initials used in the tables: -IP: Interrogation Protocol, Membership of the Councils during the Interrogations, CR: Council Reports, Membership of the Councils on the Day the Council Report was Drafted

| COUNCIL (penal cases, seditions) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| I.MVL. 310 12874 (<i>Selanik</i> , Karatasos, 1854) IP | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Abduhu Mehmed Bende an ser bevvin aza Es-Seyyid Salih Vehbi | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Mustafa Bende katib-i meclis-i kebir ? | Bende an müdir-i mal ve reis-i meclis-i kebir İsmail Hakki Bende metropol it | Bende an müderis müftü Abduhu Feyzullah | Bende an rütbe-i sani aza Es- Seyyid Numan Tayyib | Bende bâ paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende an rütbe-i sani aza Yümni Şerif | Bende memur-u tefrık-i tebaa aza Ahmed Rasim |
| I.MVL. 477 21592, I.MVL. 474 21489, komisyon (sub- province <i>Trnovi</i> , 1862) IP | Bende kaimmaka m liva-ı Trnovi Tahsin Hüseyin | Bende aza-ı meclis-i liva Ali Fazil | Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyo n ? | Bende aza- ı meclis-i komisyon Es-Seyyid Mehmed | Bende vekil-i metropol it-i Trnovi ? | Bende aza-ı meclis-i liva Yorgi ? Arnavut | Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyon Istamati ? | Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyon ? Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyon ? |
| <i>Trnovi</i> IP | Bende aza-ı meclis-i liva Ali Fazil | Bende aza meclis-i komisyo n Es- Seyyid Mehmed | Bende vekil-i metropol it-i Trnovi ? | Bende aza-ı meclis-i liva Yorgi ? Arnavut | Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyo n Istamati ? | Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyo n ? | Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyon ? | |
| <i>Trnovi</i> IP | Bende kaimmaka m liva-ı Trnovi Tahsin Hüseyin Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyon ? | Bende memur-u tahkik Mehmed Sabri | Bende aza-ı meclis-i liva Ali Fazil | Bende aza- ı meclis-i komisyon Es-Seyyid Mehmed | Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyo n ? | Bende vekil-i metropol it-i Trnovi ? | Bende aza-ı meclis-i liva Yorgi ? Arnavut | Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyon ? Bende aza-ı meclis-i komisyon Istamati ? |
| <i>Trnovi</i> CR <i>meclis-i liva</i> | Bende kaimmaka m liva-ı Trnovi Tahsin Hüseyin | ? hakim-i belde Mustafa İzzet | Ed-da'i müftü Es- Seyyid Mustafa | Bende katib-i mal Ali Mustafa | Bende katib-i tahrirat Mehmed Hakki | Bende aza İbrahim Hürşid | Bende aza ? | Bende müdir-i ? Mehmed Katib |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| | Bende tahir-i nüfus Ahmed Derviş | Bende aza Ali Fazil | Bende aza Yorgi ? Arnavud | Bende aza Yorgi Nedov | | | | |
| <i>Turnovi CR meclis-i liva</i> | Bende kaimmakam liva-ı Turnovi Tahsin Hüseyin Bende müdir-i ? - | Bende memur-u tahkik Mehmed Sabri Bende tahrir-i nüfus Ahmed Derviş | ? hakim-i belde Mustafa İzzet Bende aza Ali Fazil | Ed-da'i müftü Es-Seyyid Mustafa Bende aza Yorgi ? Arnavud | Bende katib-i mal Ali Mustafa Bende aza Yorgi Nedov | Bende katib-i tahrirat Mehmed Hakki | Bende aza İbrahim Hürşid | Bende aza ? |
| I.MVL. 578 25929, I.MVL. 581 26079, <i>meclis-i muvakkat</i> (<i>Ruşuk</i> , 1867) IP | Mehmed Cenab | Es-Seyyid Rüşdi Süleyman | Mehmed Nuri | Es-Seyyid Mehmed | Ahmed Edib | Haci Tanas Haci Petkov | Yorgi Nedov | Todor Marko |
| <i>Ruşuk</i> IP | Mehmed Cenab Todor Marko | Es-Seyyid Rüşdi Süleyman | Mehmed Nuri | Es-Seyyid Mehmed | Ahmed Edib | Karabet (or sometim es Tanil) | Haci Tanas Haci Petkov | Yorgi Nedov |
| <i>Ruşuk</i> IP | Mehmed Cenab | Es-Seyyid Rüşdi Süleyman | Mehmed Nuri | Ahmed Edib | Tanil | Todor Marko | | |
| <i>Ruşuk</i> IP | Mehmed Cenab | Es-Seyyid Rüşdi Süleyman | Mehmed Nuri | Ahmed Edib | Haci Tanas Haci Petkov | Yorgi Nedov | Tanil | Todor Marko |
| <i>Ruşuk</i> IP | Mehmed Cenab | Es-Seyyid Rüşdi Süleyman | Mehmed Nuri | Yorgi Nedov | Haci Tanas Haci Petkov | Tanil | Todor Marko | |
| <i>Ruşuk</i> IP | Mehmed Cenab | Mehmed Nuri | Mustafa Nuri | Tanil | Haci Tanas Haci Petkov | Mihal | | |
| <i>Ruşuk</i> IP | Mehmed Cenab | Mehmed Nuri | Mustafa Nuri | Tanil | Mihal | | | |
| <i>Ruşuk</i> CR <i>meclis-i cinayet</i> | Ed-da'i müfettiş-i hükkam vilayet-i Tuna | Bende memur-u meclis-i cinayet-i vilayet | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet ? <i>Efendi</i> | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Anastas | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Yakov Muvzi |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Faik Mustafa | ? Ba emrname-i vekaletpen ahileriTarn ova'ya azimet eylediği | Mehmed Nuri Es-Seyyid | Es-Seyyid Mehmed Rifat | ? Hüseyin | <i>na mezaç bulunduğ u</i> | | |
| I.MTZ. (4) 4 103 1, (Ruşuk, 1868) IP | Mehmed Cenab | Es-Seyyid Rüşdi Süleyman | Mehmed Nuri | ? Hüseyin | Anastaş Taşko | Panayot Doçev | Yakov Muvzi | |
| <i>Ruşuk CR meclis-i cinayet</i> | Ed-da'i müfettiş-i hükkam vilayet-i Tuna Faik Mustafa | Bende vekil-i memur-u meclis-i cinayet-i vilayet Mehmed Cenab | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Mehmed Nuri Es-Seyyid | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Memuriyette idüki | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet ? Hüseyin | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Anastaş Taşko | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Panayot Doçev | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Yakov Muvzi |
| I.MTZ. (4) 4 103 2, <i>meclis-i deavi-i kaza-i Lom</i> (district <i>Lom</i> , pop Mito, 1868), IP | Bende an katip ? Selam Ali İbrahim | Bende an aza ? | Bende an aza Hafiz ? | Bende katip Osman Fehmi | Bende an aza ? | Bende an aza ? | | |
| (sub-province <i>Vidin</i> , 1868) IP | Reis-i meclis-i cinayet Tahsin Hüseyin | ? Mahsud Efendi ? Mahsud | ? Ahmed | ? Sükri Ahmed | Katip Remzi | ? ? | ? ? | ? <i>?zade Ruşukta</i> |
| (<i>Ruşuk</i> , 1868) IP | ? Hüseyin | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Anastaş Taşko | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Panayot Doçev | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Yakov Muvzi | | | | |
| <i>meclis-i cinayet-i Vidin</i> (<i>Vidin</i> , 1868) CR | Reis-i meclis-i cinayet Tahsin Hüseyin | Bende ? ? Mahsud | Bende ? Ahmed | Bende ? Sükri Ahmed | Bende katip Remzi | ? ? | ? ? | ? <i>? efendi Ruşukta</i> |
| <i>meclis-i cinayet-i Tuna</i> (<i>Ruşuk</i> , 1868) CR | Ed-da'i müfettiş-i hükkam vilayet-i Tuna Faik Mustafa | Bende vekil-i memur-u meclis-i cinayet-i vilayet Mehmed Cenab | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Mehmed Nuri Es-Seyyid | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet İsmail effendi Memuriyette bulunduğ u | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet ? Hüseyin | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Anastaş Taşko | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Panayot Doçev | Bende aza-1 meclis-i cinayet Yakov Muvzi |

| COUNCIL (Not legal cases-summaries stating the situation of seditions) | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| I.DH. 301 19014 (<i>Selanik</i> , 1854) CR | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Abduhu Mehmed | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Mustafa | Bende an rütbe-i sani müfettiş Mehmed Remzi | Bende an müdür-i mal ve reis- i meclis-i kebir İsmail Hakkı | Bende an müderriş müfti-i belde Abduhu Feyzullah | Bende an rütbe-i sani aza Es- Seyyid Numan Tayyib | Bende bâ paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende bâ paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza ? |
| I.MTZ. (01) 11 262 (<i>Selanik</i> , 1854) | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Abduhu Mehmed | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Mustafa | Bende an rütbe-i sani müfettiş Mehmed Remzi | Bende an müdür-i mal ve reis- i meclis-i kebir İsmail Hakkı | Bende an müderriş müfti-i belde Abduhu Feyzullah | Bende an rütbe-i sani aza Es- Seyyid Numan Tayyib | Bende bâ paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfiki Samed | Bende bâ paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza ? Bende Ismail Rasib |
| I.MTZ. (01) 11 270 (<i>Selanik</i> , 1854) | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Abduhu Mehmed | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Mustafa | Bende an müdür-i mal ve reis-i meclis-i kebir İsmail Hakkı | Bende an müderriş müfti-i belde Abduhu Feyzullah | Bende an rütbe-i sani aza Memuriy ette | Bende bâ paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza memuriy ette | Bende bâ paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza Mehmed | Bende an rütbe-i sani aza Yümni Şerif |
| I.MTZ. (01) 10 252 (<i>Selanik</i> , 1854) | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Abduhu Mehmed | Bende an mevali naib-i Selanik Mustafa | Bende an müdür-i mal ve reis-i meclis-i kebir | Bende an müderriş müfti-i belde | Bende an rütbe-i sani aza <i>Dersaadett e</i> | Bende bâ paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid | Bende bâ paye-i ıstabl-ı amire aza ? | Bende an rütbe-i sani aza Yümni Şerif |

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| | Bende an ser bevvabin aza Es-Seyyid Salih Vehbi | Bende müdir-i ziraat Selanik ? | İsmail Hakkı | Abduhu Feyzullah | | Ahmed mazharı tevfiği Samed | | |
| I.MTZ. (01) 10 246, (<i>Yanya</i> , 1854) | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Rumeli <i>hasta olup bir işe bakamadığı</i> Bende an ? Süleyman Feyzullah Bende an aza-ı millet-i rumiyan Nikolaki Atnasiyo | Bende an mir-i miran ? Ahmed Es-Seyyid Bende an ? ? Bende an aza-ı millet-i rumiyan Panayot veledi ? | Bende defterdar ve reis-i meclis-i eyalet-i Abdülhakk ? Es-Seyyid Bende an ? ulema Mehmed Vehib ? Rum Hristaki ? | Bende katib-i tahrirat ve meclis-? Hüseyin ? Bende an ? ? | Bende naib-i -ş-şeri ve memur-u meclis-i Ahmed Ataullah ? Bende an ? ? | Bende müfti-i ? İsmail Abduhu Bende an ? Zülfikar | Bende katib-i mal Hastadır mecliste bulunamadığı Bende metropolit -i Yanya Ioannikios | Bende ? ? Mustafa Bende an aza-ı millet-i rumiyan Alkis Merşos? |
| I.MTZ. 11 261 (<i>Yanya</i> , 1854) | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Rumeli Mehmed Besim? Es-Seyyid Bende an ser bevvabin Süleyman Feyzullah Bende an vücut Es-Seyyid ? | Bende an mir-i miran ? Ahmed Es-Seyyid Bende an ser bevvabin ? Bende an vücut Mehmed Celal | Bende defterdar ve reis-i meclis-i eyalet-i mezbur ? Bende an ? Bende an ? Yusuf Bende metropolit-i Yanya Ioannikios | Bende katib-i meclis-i ve tahrirat Hüseyin? Bende an ? Nuri Mustafa Es-Seyyid Bende metropolit-i Yanya Ioannikios | Bende naib-i -ş-şeri Ahmed Ataullah ? Bende an ? Mehmed Vehib Bende an ? millet-i rumiyan Aleksi Papazoğlu | Bende müfti-i ? İsmail Abduhu Bende an vücut ? Bende an aza-ı millet-i rumiyan Alkis Merşos? | Bende katib-i emval eyalet-i Yanya Raşid Süleyman Bende an vücut ? Mustafa Bende an aza-ı millet-i rumiyan Nikolaki Atnasiyo | Bende an aza Celaleddin Mehmed Bende an vücut Mustafa Ali Riza Bende an aza-ı millet-i rumiyan Panayot veledi ? |
| I.MTZ. 9 242 (<i>Manastır</i> , 1854) | Bende mutasarrif eyalet-i Rumeli <i>Tırbala'dan henüz gelmemiş idi</i> | Bende defterdar vekil-i mutasarrif Tahsin Hüseyin | Ed-da'i naib-i -ş-şeri İbrahim ? Bende an aza-ı | Ed-da'i müftü Mustafa vefk umuru Rabbi | Bende sabık kaimmak am liva-ı Kesriye Halil Es-Seyyid İbrahim | Bende ser katib-i tahrirat ordu-ı Rumeli Arif | Bende emin-i alay ? merkez Hasan ? ? alay-ı topu | Bende an aza-ı meclis-i Manastır ? Hafız Ahmed |

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| | Bende an aza-ı meclis-i Manastr Mehmed Vehbi Es-Seyyid | Bende an aza-ı meclis-i Manastr Mehmed Halid Es-Seyyid | meclis-i Manastr Mahmu d Şakir Es-Seyyid | Bende ser katib-i mal Nuri | Bende sergerde-i amire-i zabtiye Abdullah ? | Bende ? süvari Mustafa | Mehmed | |
| I.MVL. 9 242 (sub-province <i>Tırhala</i> , 1854) | Bende müdir-i mal liva-i Tırhala Ragib Mehmed Abdü'd-dai an ulema Mahmud Bende an aza millet-i rumiyan ? Yanaki | El-abdü'd-dai hakimü's-şer' Nazif Ahmed Abdü'd-dai an müderris Mehmed Raşid | El-abdü'd-dai al-an mevali İsmail Şefik Es-Seyyid Bende an vücut Mehmed Es-Seyyid | El-abdü'd-dai müfti-i belde Ahmed Es-Seyyid Abdulhamid Bende an aza müdir-i ziraat Ali Abduhu | Bende an aza Mehmed Şefik Es-Seyyid Bende katib-i mal Mahmu d Sıdkı | Bende an aza <i>Memuriyet le ? bulunduğ</i> Bende katib-i tahrirat Mehmed Nasib Es-Seyyid | Bende an aza Mehmed Arif Es-Seyyid Bende metropolid <i>Deraliyede idüki</i> | Bende an vücut ? Abdulhalim Bende an aza millet-i rumiyan ? |
| I.MVL. 9 242 (sub-province <i>Tırhala</i> , 1854) | Bende müdir-i mal liva-i Tırhala Ragib Mehmed Abdü'd-dai an müderris Ahmed Galib | El-abdü'd-dai hakimü's-şer' Nazif Ahmed Abdü'd-dai an müderris Mehmed Raşid | El-abdü'd-dai müfti-i belde Ahmed Es-Seyyid Abdulhamid Bende an vücut Mehmed | Bende an aza Mehmed Şefik Es-Seyyid Bende an aza müdir-i ziraat Ali Abduhu | Bende an aza <i>Memuriyet le Tırhala'da idüki</i> Bende ? Mehmed Es-Seyyid Rifat | Bende an vücut Nafiz Es-Seyyid Abdü'd-dai an ulema Mahmu d | Bende an aza Mehmed Arif Bende katib-i mal Mahmu d Sıdkı | Bende an vücut ? Abdulhalim Bende katib-i tahrirat Mehmed Nasib Es-Seyyid |
| I.MVL. 9 242 (district <i>Kesriye</i> , 1854) | El-abdü'd-dai naib-i kaza-ı Kesriye <i>Burada bulunmadığı</i> | Bende müdir-i kaza-ı Kesriye Behlül Vehbi | El-abdü'd-dai müfti-i kaza-ı Kesriye Mustafa | Bende müdir-i ziraat an vücut Selim Sabrı | Bende ? an vücut Celaled din | | | |
| I.MVL. 9 242 (district <i>Naslıç</i> , 1854) | Bende müdir-i kaza-ı Naslıç Mehmed Timur | Ed-da'i naib-i kaza-ı mezbur Mürteza | Ed-da'i müfti-i belde Ahmed Es-Seyyid | Aza-ı min al vücut Recep | Aza-ı min al vücut Recmi Abdin | | | |
| I.MVL. 9 242 (district) | Bende müdir-i kaza-ı Kranya | El-abdü'd-dai naib-i | Bende an aza Mehmed din | Bende vekil-i müdir-i ziraat | Bende an aza <i>Bulunmadığı</i> | Bende katib-i mal Nazif ? | | |

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| <i>Kranya</i> , 1854) | ? İbrahim | şer'-i mezbur Mehmed Raşid | | ? Hüseyin | | | | |
| I.MTZ. 10 257 (district <i>Volos</i> , 1854) | Bende kaimmakam kaza-ı Golos ? | Ed-da'i naib-i kaza-ı mezbur Ömer Hulusi | Bende an aza <i>Dersaadette idüki</i> | Bende ? ziraat ? Salim Ahmed | Bende an aza ? | | | |

| COUNCIL (penal cases, banditry) | | | | | | | | |
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| I.MVL. 264 10019, <i>Selanik meclis-i kebir</i> , CR, 1853 | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Selanik Sıddık Yusuf mazharı tevfik olaya Rabbi Bende müdir-i ziraat Selanik <i>Ciftliğinde idüki</i> | Bende an mevali-i ? Selanik Mehmed Vahid Bende metropol it İeronimos | Bende an müdir-i mal ve reis-i meclis-i kebir Nureddin İshak Bende vekil-i millet-i Rum Gavriil Zarkavi | Bende an müderris müfti Feyzullah Abduhu Bende vekil-i millet-i Yahudiyan Gadaliya veled-i İsaak | Bende an rütbe-i sani aza Numan Tayyib Es-Seyyid | Bende bâ paye-i istabl-ı amire aza Abduhu Seyyid Ahmed mazharı tevfigi Samed | Bende an istabl-ı amire aza ? | Bende an ser bevvin aza <i>Ciftliğinde idüki</i> |
| I.MVL. 382 16735, <i>Manastır meclis-i muvakkat</i> , CR, 1857 | Bende vali-i eyalet-i Rumeli Ahmed Bende an aza Mustafa Es-Seyyid Nuri | El-abdü'd-dai hakimü'ş-şer' Ali Rıza Bende metropol it ? | Bende defterdar-ı eyalet-i mezbur ? Bende kocabaşı Yatkna? | El-abdü'd-dai mufti Vefik Mustafa Bende aza millet-i an musevi Avraam İsaak | Bende an aza Rifat Halil Es-Seyyid | Ad-dai an aza ? Hafız Ahmed | Bende an aza Mehmed Halid Es-Seyyid | Bende ser katib-i mal Süleyman? Es-Seyyid |
| I.MVL. 383 16 761, <i>Manastır meclis-i muvakkat</i> , CR, 1857 | Bende reis-i meclis-i muvakkat Ahmet Rasim | Bende an aza Mehmed Es-Seyyid Seyfeddin | Bende an aza ? | Bende an aza ? | Bende an aza Todor ? | Bende an aza ? | Bende katib-i evvel Salih | Bende katib-i sani Ali Rıza |
| I.MVL. 383 16 761, <i>Manastır</i> , IR, 1857 | All the same as above | | | | | | | |
| MVL. 893 1, <i>Selanik</i> | Bende reis-i meclis-i muvakkat Selanik Mehmet Asim | Bende an aza Hakkı | Bende an aza Davud Fedai | Bende an aza Dimitri Blaci | Bende an aza HacıYorgi İstekli? Hacı | Bende an aza Ovadjia? (Hebrew seal (1)-see | Bende an aza ? (Hebrew seal (3)-see | |

| | | | | | | explanat ions) | explanati ons) | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| I.MVL. 426 18704, <i>Selanik,</i> <i>meclis-i</i> <i>muvaqqat</i> CR, 1859 | Bende reis-i meclis-i muvaqqat Selanik Mehmet Asim | Bende an aza Hakki | Bende an aza Davud Fedai | Bende an aza Dimitri Blaci | Bende an aza HaciYor gi Istekli? Haci | Bende an aza Ovadjia? (Hebre w seal (1)-see explanat ions) | Bende an aza ? (Hebrew seal (3)- see explanati ons) | |
| MVL. 910 71, <i>Selanik,</i> <i>meclis-i</i> <i>muvaqqat</i> CR, 1860 | Aza-ı meclis-i muvaqqat-ı Selanik Hayrı Hakki | Bende an aza Davud Fedai | Bende an aza Dimitri Blaci | Bende an aza HaciYorgi Istekli? Haci | Bende an aza Ovadjia ? (Hebre w seal (1)-see explanat ions) | Bende an aza ? | | |
| I.MVL. 452 20191, <i>Selanik,</i> <i>meclis-i</i> <i>muvaqqat</i> CR, 1861 | Bende vekil-i reis-i muvaqqat Mehmet Izzet Bende an aza <i>Tanaş Bladi</i> <i>keyifsiz idi</i> | Bende an aza Hüseyin Hasan | Bende an aza Davud Fedai | Bende an aza Nadiri Tevfik | Bende an aza Elhaç Riza Mehme d | Bende an aza Gavriil Zarkadi | Bende an aza Ovadjia? (Hebrew seal (1)- see explanati ons) | Bende an aza Hebrew seal (5)- see explanatio ns) |
| I.MVL. 465 21020, <i>Selanik,</i> <i>meclis-i</i> <i>muvaqqat</i> CR, 1861 | Bende vekil-i reis-i muvaqqat Namik İbrahim ? Es-Seyyid Bende an aza Istefan Vetati 1862 | Bende an aza Osman Tevfik Bende an aza Behor Saltiel 287 | Bende an aza Davud Fedai | Bende an aza Hilmi Hüseyin | Bende an aza Enver | Bende an aza Elhaç Riza Mehme d | Bende an aza Numan Tayyib | Bende an aza Yako bin Musa 263 |
| MVL. 930 3, <i>Selanik,</i> <i>meclis-i</i> <i>muvaqqat</i> CR, 1861 | Bende vekil-i reis-i muvaqqat Mehmet Izzet | Bende an aza Hüseyin Hüsnü | Bende an aza Davud Fedai | Bende an aza Nadiri Tevfik | Bende an aza Elhaç Riza Mehme d | Bende an aza Gavriil Zarkadi | Bende an aza <i>Tanaş</i> <i>Bladi</i> <i>keyifsiz idi</i> | Bende an aza Ovadjia? (Hebrew seal (1)- see explanatio ns) Bende ? <i>mecliste</i> <i>bulunmadığı</i> |
| MVL. 946 39, <i>Selanik,</i> <i>meclis-i</i> <i>muvaqqat</i> CR, 1862 | Bende vekil-i reis-i muvaqqat Namik Ibrahim | Bende aza Osman Tevfik | Bende an aza Davud Fedai | Bende an aza Hilmi Hüseyin | Bende an aza Enver | Bende an aza El-Hac Mehme d Rıza | Bende an aza Numan Tayyib | Bende an aza Yako bin Musa |

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| | Bende an aza İstefan Vetati 1862 | Bende an aza Behor Saltiel | | | | | | |
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Appendix 3 (to Chapter 6): The Punishments at a Glance

Explanations: dp: death penalty (*idam*), hl: hard labour (*vaz-ı kürek*), sp: state prisoner (*kalebend*), ex: exile (*tard, nefj*), af: forgiveness, discharge (*afv*), 0: no punishment, y: years (*sene*), p: person(s).

The number in brackets after the punishment refers (if indicated) to the article of the Penal Code, based on which the punishment was being justified in the respective document.

| Case (Sedition) | Interrogation | Local Council | Supreme Council | Final Decree |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--|--|--|
| Darzilovitis, 1851 | 13.2. | - | 15.3. af. | 24.3. af. |
| Hasan (Karatasos), 1854 | 19.5. | - | 7.7. dp. or hl. | 13.7. lifelong hl. |
| Gazino, 1861 | 17.10-10.12. | - | 1.1.1861 5 p.: 0, 4 p.: ex. to Kastamonu for two years (one for one year) | 12.1. same as Supreme Council |
| <i>Turnovi</i> , 1862 | 1.7.-25.8. | 6., 8.7. 11., 17., 27.8. No proposal of punishment | 31.10. 18.9. 5 leaders: dp., being hanged (55-57) 10 p.: 15 y. hl. 8 p.: 15 y. under supervision (64) 5 p.: 15 y. hl. (57) Pop Dobre: 10 y. hl. (63) Dimo and 1 p.: 15 y. under supervision (64, 14) 2 p. from Bucharest: 15 y. sp. in Diyarbakır (58) 4 p.: 5 y. sp. in Diyarbakır (65) | 18.11. 7.10. 5 leaders: lifelong sp. The rest is the same as Supreme Council |
| Voulgaris and his accomplices, 1867 | 25.5-2.11. | - | 14.2.1867 lifelong ex. for all | 25.2. af. for all |

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|---|---------------|--|---|---|
| Bulgarian uprising, 1867 | 8.6.-5.7. | 26.6., 18.7. 4 leaders (Kostaki, Yordan, Trayfo, Nikolai): guilty in the first degree, sentenced until their punishment would be carried out 27 p.: sp. in Diyarbakır <i>17 p.: released 1 p.: dp. 1 p.: hl. 2 p.: should be sent to Istanbul 2 priests: ex. to Aynaroz 2 teachers: ex. to other places</i> | 16.9., 27.10. 2 leaders (Trayfo, Kostaki): dp. 2 leaders (Nikolai, Yordan): lifelong hl. (55, 57) From the 27: 18 p. for 15 y. and 8 p. for 10 y. hl. to various places (57, 63) + 1 p.: 3 y. sp. in Kıbrıs <i>The same as in the Local Council 1 p.: hl. in Vidin (63) 2 p.: 15 y. sp. in Diyarbakır</i> | 14.11., 22.9., 9.11. The same as in the Supreme Court, albeit the first two leaders were not mentioned (Kostaki and Yordan) <i>The same as in the Supreme Court 1 p.: hl. for 7 y. in Vidin</i> |
| Bulgarian uprising, 1868 | 18.-27.8. | 27.8. 4 leaders (Nikola, Hristo, Vasil, Maris): dp. (55-57) 5 p.: lifelong hl. in Anatolia or Arabistan (57) 1 p.: 15 y. hl. (57) | 30.9. 5 p.: lifelong hl. in Akka 1 p.: 15 y. hl. in Akka (57) | 9.10. The same as in the Supreme Court |
| Pop Mito, 1868 | 28.6-15.9. | 29.10. Pop Mito: guilty in first degree (63) Angeli: in second degree (63) 5 p.: under supervision | 2.3.1869 Pop Mito: 15 y. hl. Angeli: 13 y. hl. in Akka The same as in Local Council | 11.3.1869 The same as in Supreme Court |
| Case (Banditry) | Interrogation | Local Council | Supreme Council | Final Decree |
| I.MVL. 264 10019, <i>Selanik,</i> | 17.5.52 | 27.5.52 Abdullah, Salih: hl. | 9.2. Abdullah, Salih: 6 y. hl. | 14.2.53 The same |

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| I.MVL. 383 16761, <i>Manastır</i> | 23.3., 9.4., 16.4., 20.4., 28.- 30.4., 7.5.-9.5., 16.5., 23.5., 9.7., 11.7. | 9.9.57 Ramazan b. Tahir, Abdurrahman b. Tahir: 15 y. <i>pranga</i> Ramazan b. Ramazan, Tako b. Ali, Maliç b. Davud: dp. (<i>icra-ı siyasetleri</i>) | 10.11. The same | 28.10.57 The same (<i>siyaseten idam</i>) |
| I.MVL. 382 16735, <i>Manastır</i> | Not dated | 25.9.57 No punishments | 9.11.57 The same | 19.11.57 The same |
| MVL. 893 1, <i>Selanik</i> | 31.12.57, 7.1., 10.1.58 27.12.57, 11.1., 26.1., 12.4., 2.6.58 | 25.10.58 Yorgi veled-i Istanko, Yanko the son of Istavro: the heaviest hl. Rüstem, Mehmed, Selim, Süleyman: the heaviest hl. | - | - |
| I.MVL. 426 18704, Donço, <i>Selanik</i> | 8.3., 15.3., 17.3., 14.4.58 | 6.10.59, Donço: dp. | 3.1., The same | 6.1.60, The same |
| MVL. 910 71, <i>Selanik</i> | 25.5.58 8.2., 12.2., 17.5.59 | 18.2.60 Yanaki: 15 y. fl. Hüseyin Pehlivan: - | - | - |
| I.MVL. 452 20191, <i>Avrethisar,</i> <i>Selanik</i> | 20.8.1860, 22.8., 27.9., 23.2.61 | 22.4. Bank(?) Kosta: dp. Partners: 5 y. hl. Alkis: 3 y. hl. | 9.9.1861 Bank(?) Kosta: lifelong hl. The same | 22.9.61 The same |
| I.MVL. 465 21020, <i>Selanik</i> | 18.7., 20.7., 23.7., 31.7., 8.8. | 14.9. Yorgi: dp. Dilo: 10 y. hl. | 10.11. The same (art. 62) | 22.11.61 The same |
| MVL. 930 3, <i>Selanik</i> | 27.2., 28.2., 8.4.60 | 28.3., 18.11.61 Osman: 3 y. hl. | 25.1.62 The same | - |
| MVL. 946 39, <i>Selanik</i> | 17.12, 19.12.61, 25.1. | 10.3. Mustafa: 10 y. hl. | 12.5.62 The same | - |

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C.ZB. (Zabtiye)

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A.DVN. (Divan)
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