OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITIES:
TWO CASE STUDIES OF KARAHİSAR-I ŞARKİ
(ŞEBİNKARAHİSAR) AND GİRESUN

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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the Ottoman priorities and preoccupations in the provincial administration during the 15th and 16th centuries. By studying the local and global conditions on one hand and the priorities and the policies of the Ottoman administration on the other, it aims to contribute towards a better understanding of the workings of the Ottoman administrative mechanism. The main sources for this study are the Ottoman tax registers, widely known as tahrir defters, from the 15th and 16th century.

The view of modern researchers concerning Ottoman institutions and bureaucracy is shaped by the accounts of classical western sources, which inculcated in their mind unchanging institutional forms and highly regularised bureaucratic procedures. These institutions were also regarded by them as rigidly constructed models, intolerant of any deviation from a given norm. Under the strong influence of these views, some scholars studying the Ottoman central administration disregard its connection with the provinces and the larger social, economic and geographical environment. Other scholars doing regional studies on the provinces ignore the regions’ connection with the centre. Based mainly on tahrir defters, the latter group of studies, usually concentrating on a single sancak, create a kind of self-contained universe, disconnected from the surrounding areas and, most importantly, from the central administration. Any interaction and relationship between the central

* I wish to acknowledge the help Rhoads Murphey (Birmingham University), Oktay Özel (Bilkent University) and York Norman (Bilkent University) have given in their critiques and editing of this text.

administration and the provinces is ignored. Only recently has this started to change. The realization that there was some sort of flexibility and dynamism in the central decision making and the provincial administration of the Empire led some scholars to study the nature of this process.

It is now widely accepted that the Ottoman State was a dynamic system, which consisted of living organisational entities, each with an evolutionary history linked to conditions in particular ages and in particular areas of the empire, rather than existing as static forms. These studies are however, limited in scope and employ mainly random as opposed to statistical evidence. I believe that it requires a more systematic and consistent approach supported by statistical evidence to understand properly how the Ottoman political/administrative system functioned and changed.

In this paper, an approach well known in political science, called systems approach, is adopted. This approach allows one to study patterns of relationships or interactions and interdependence between parts that compose a whole. Based on this approach, I developed a conceptual framework to examine the Ottoman administrative mechanism. The advantage of this framework is that one can study an Ottoman institution without losing sight of its relations with other institutions and, more importantly, with its environment. This framework is described in detail elsewhere.

2 Murphey, ibid.
4 Murphey, ibid., pp. 117-118.

Since the main sources for this study are the Ottoman tax registers or tahrir defters of the 15th and 16th centuries, a brief description of the nature of these documents is in order.

Sources

The series of tahrir defters of Giresun and Karahisar examined for this study spans nearly a century, in Giresun from 1486 to 1583, (MM 828 of 1486, TT 52 of 1515, TT 288 of 1554 and TT 43 of 1583) and in Karahisar from 1485 to 1569, (TT 37 of 1485, TT 387 of 1520, TT 255 of 1547 and TT 478 of 1569). This series of registers taken as a whole, comprised the reigns of Mehmed the Conqueror, Bayezid II, Selim I, Suleyman the Magnificent and Selim II successively.

After five decades of research, we still can not say that studies of the tahrir defters have moved towards a systematic analysis of their problems and towards reliable methods of processing data contained in them. Rather, the studies have tended to concentrate on some specific problems or on a regional study. In these studies, various methods were applied ranging from textual criticism to highly advanced statistics, which resulted in broadening and enriching our knowledge of the tahrir defters, but, at the same time, caused some confusion about the assessment of the function and value of the defters and accordingly about the methods and techniques to study them.

This led researchers at the beginning to regard defters as population censuses. The applicability of the defters as censuses was criticised later on by a second generation of researchers who saw defters as essentially tax registers. Considerations of the defters' content divorced from the Ottoman adminis-

7 One contribution has emerged in this area, which may potentially improve the quality and the scope of tahrir studies significantly. This is a database, called tahrir database, which is designed to store and process the data in defters in their entirety. More information about this database can be found in R. Acun, Modelling and Retrieval of Historical Data, Ph.D. thesis, The University of Birmingham, October 1994 and R. Acun, R. Anane and S. Laffin, Database Design for Ottoman Tax Registers, in: Marker and Pagh (eds.), Yesterday, Proceedings from the 6th International Conference of the Association of History and Computing, Odense 1991, Odense, 1994, pp. 109-122.
The former was the Islamic world while the latter was the non-Islamic world, Islamic concept of world order, the human world was divided into two parts: "the house of Islam" had become their ultimate ideal in the administration of the empire. in this preoccupations in the administration of the provinces.

It will be useful to start with some introductory remarks on the concepts that shaped the minds of the Sultans and statesmen who were the decision makers, and the objectives which affected the decision making process in governing the provinces. These will help us to determine the state priorities and preoccupations in the administration of the provinces.

The Ottomans had a strong sense of world order, nizam-i alem, which also had become their ultimate ideal in the administration of the empire. In this Islamic concept of world order, the human world was divided into two parts: "the house of Islam" (dar al-Islam) and "the house of war" (dar al-harb). The former was the Islamic world while the latter was the non-Islamic world.

The Ottoman administrative practice, i.e. the policy-making mechanism, is still an imperfectly understood dimension of Ottoman historical studies. While the tahrib defters provide us with an ample amount of evidence of both a statistical and a textual nature for studying the Ottoman administrative practice, it is unfortunate that they are the least exploited materials. This paper aims to make a small contribution to this much-neglected field of Ottoman administrative history by focusing on its operational aspects.

OTTOMAN OBJECTIVES CONCERNING PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

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OTTOMAN PRIORITIES CONCERNING THE CREATION OF AN IDEAL SOCIETY IN GİRESUN

The process of development of the fortress of Giresun into a full-fledged city is very interesting to observe in terms of the Ottoman policies and priorities towards creating an ideal urban society.

Situated on the Black Sea coast, Giresun was a natural harbour for ships sailing to and from Trabzon. The surrounding areas of the fortress of Giresun

10 In this cyclical philosophy, also called the circle of justice (daire-i adliye), the Sultan's power and authority depended on the material as well as moral support he received from his subjects. Related to this philosophy, the notion of justice (adilet) had particular meaning in the system of government. It is defined as the prevention and elimination of oppressive acts by those who exercised power in the name of the ruler. Long historical experience showed that oppressive government might cause an impairment of the productive capacity of the taxpaying masses and a decrease in the state's revenues. The alternative policy was to protect the reaya against the abuse of power by state officials. The main issue was then, how to increase the state revenues without impairing the prosperity of the taxpayers and causing discontent among the reaya. Therefore, the maximisation of revenue was one of the Ottomans' primary objectives because this was necessary for the successful running of the state by the Sultan. In order to achieve this objective, the Ottomans developed strategies of revenue raising. They also had to take problems into consideration when administering an area, which had to be dealt with in a particular order, because some were more important than the others. Some of the Ottomans' priorities in provincial administration will be examined in this paper.

From the above discussion we may thus set out the creation of an ideal society and revenue maximisation as the ultimate administrative objectives of the Ottomans. The Ottomans tried to achieve these objectives by following a particular course of action in which some of their concerns took priority over others. By studying these prior concerns we will be able to see whether the Ottomans organised their priorities in a way that helped them to achieve their objectives in the long term.


12 I have made extensive use of the following article by Feridun Emecen, especially in cross-checking the data I found in the relevant tahrir defterler. XV ve XVI. Asırlarda Giresun ve Yöresine Dair Bazı Bilgiler, in: 19 Mayıs Üniversitesi Egitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 4 (Aralık 1990), pp. 157-166.

13 The majority of the fortress soldiers (hisar erleri) in Anatolia were recruited from the Balkans. On this, see Halil Inalcik, Ottoman Methods of Conquest, in: Studia Islamica, II (1954), p.107.


15 Heath W. Lowry, "From Lesser Wars to the Mightiest Wars": The Ottoman Conquest and Transformation of Byzantine Urban Centres in the Fifteenth Century, in: Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society, ed. by Anthony Bryer and Heath Lowry, Birmingham-Washington, 1986, p. 332.
quired to navigate the ships sailing between Trabzon and Samsun, and to take care of the fortress in which they were living. 16

Subsequently, around 1515 the policy of internal migration was pursued in order to create an ethnic-religious blend among the inhabitants: 33 Muslims (28 hane (households) and 5 mücereed (bachelors)) and 140 Christians (123 hane, 3 bive (widow head of household) and 14 mücereed) were introduced to the fortress. Roughly half of the newly migrated Christians, or 60 households, were drawn from the nearby region of Trabzon, and were employed to serve the native Christian inhabitants of the fortress whose number amounted to 179 persons (103 hane, 36 mücereed and 40 bive). 17 The fact that quite a large group of people was employed as servants is very interesting in terms of revealing the Ottomans' protective attitude towards the natives. Among the Christian population of the fortress that had been 22 widows previously recorded as heads of household. Their number rose to 40 in 1515. The unusually high number of widows was probably due to the fact that their

16 The entries from MM 828, p. 37 and 38 read as follows: "Cemaat-i Kala-i Giresun zimminiyan elli-nderiinden sultan Mehmed hâkim-i hürriyet-i hâkim-i varildir ki, hasreden ve ispençeden ve ulukdan ve şehreden ve terahbordan ve Olsun kalasi hastemendinde ve gayriyeden konularini yetmek icin getirdikleri hububatdan gurnük ve resimlerden manuf ve nasîmelden olalar ol kala-i Olsun'lu gerek gizmocek hizf ideler Trabzon ve Samsundan gelib geçen people, gemileriyle getirileb alirler cyle olsa şindikter halde ol vilayet yazlab yelen yet Sert ak mezburen zimmilerin elli-nderiinden olan ber hat-i hümayunlarin mukarrar dubtus ki yod-i berat sadaka olundu esnelerin dedi ki zikr olunur." "Ve keenderleri verilinde ikiyelerin hamsinden evvelden gurnük ve ikiyelerin (MIC) istimedi dahi yazlamadı ve du araverdan ispençen alın alımemiş gireli alâmaya diyil yazlabu l." The entries from TT 52 concerning the communities settled in the fortress read as follows: "Cemaat-i Mislimanen ki der nefs-i Kala-i Giresun sakindir, 26 hane, 2 mütek aid sipahi, 5 mücereed (pp. 603-604).

"Cemaat-i gebran-i kadim der nefs-i Kala-i Giresun ki ispençen mân oğr ve sair rûsum fer- nude şud türn-i mezkirin an menden-i Kala-i Giresun. 103 hane, 36 mücereed, 40 bive (pp. 604-605).

"Cemaat-i gebran der nefs-i Kala-i Giresun ki ez haric amid müteccünderdir raiyet fer- nude şud berat-i mender-i Kala-i Giresun", 63 hane, 3 bive, 14 mücereed. "Zikr olun kafliler haricden gelib nefs-i Giresununda müteccünderdir oldukları sebebeden Giresun hisar erlerine raiyeti emr olundu haricden icadi ve gayri bunlarla da idlib ispençen ve sair rûsum taleb olunmaya asil vaturlarında mallarları var ise tasarruf inen kimesneden mücereed ösrün taleb ideler deyri emr olunmagan defter-i cedidi-i suhniyye kayd olunh" (pp. 606-607).

"Cemaat-i hâmetcanan-i gebran nefs-i Kala-i Giresun ki ez haric amid. der nefs-i Giresununda sakindir raiyet fermente şud berat-i mender-i Kala-i Giresun", 55 hane, 5 mütek aid sipahi, 5 mücereed (pp. 607). "Mezkir kafliler haricden gelib Giresun kalasının kadını kaflilerine hâmet etdik idlib müteccünderlik olmalarından şindikter halde Giresun kalasi mastahfizlara raiyet emr olundu haricden icadi ve gayri bunlarla da idlib ve sahir rûsum taleb olunmaya asil vaturlarında mallarları var ise tasarruf inen kimesneden mücereed ösrün taleb ideler deyri emr olunmagan defter-i cedidi-i suhniyye kayd olunh" (p. 608).

17 Some of the taxes recorded in TT 52, p. 608 are: Mukataa-i boyahane; Resm-i istefina (facestina) ki kestilia-i nev bina gerde ber vech-i tapu ber muceb-i adeti-i kadim an Siferdos ila serhdd-i Bayramlu ama zikr olunan hududdan taqını gevent pela resm taleb olumuyu, Resm an furukh-i kestilia; Resm-i dalyan; Resm-i Limon; Resm-i gürük; Resm-i faqah; Resm-i has an kirbas ketan ve gayrihi; Resm-i has an râh-i Kamhisar-i Şarki; Resm-i dekakin; Mukataa-i ihtisab; Resm-i has açan gencen; Adet an hilm-i Kala-i Giresun; Ösr-i kendir.

18 Despite the presence of taxes related to urban activities, the population of the fortress, which numbered 351 households, had not yet reached the limit of 400 taxpayers set by Faroqhi to be called a small size town. Therefore, by the population criteria alone the fortress of Giresun can not be qualified as a town yet. On this see Suatlıya Faroqhi, Towns and Townsmen of Anatolia - Trade, Crafts and Food Production in an Urban Setting 1520-1600, Cambridge, 1984, pp. 9-11.
When the population increased to a certain level, the policy of tax exemption was deemed no longer appropriate, and consequently the generous tax immunities initially granted to the non-Muslim natives of the fortress were now reduced to the extraordinary taxes and to the grain reserved for home consumption. In return for these exemptions the whole non-Muslim community of the fortress was obliged to continue to serve as navigators. The nearby fortress of Tirebolu set the example for lifting the exemptions. On the other hand, there are examples of tax immunities granted to Muslims living in the nearby villages in return for serving in the mosque and repairing the fortress. Another arrangement was the diversion of the revenues derived from the fortress to the timars of the fortress guards. The revenues were previously allocated to the hasa (a revenue grant with annual value of more than 100,000 akçes-silver coin) of the mirliva (governor of a subprovince) of Trabzon.

The organisation of the fortress population around some communities and the new arrangements made in the revenue collection and allocation are certainly indications of the fact that the state was giving priority to the social and economic development of the area. The allocation of revenues to the fortress guards may show the state’s concern for the administration of the fortress.

20 The entry from TT 52, p. 609 about lifting the exemptions reads as follows: “Bandan evvel Giresun Kalasi halki Hasan ve ispençe virmevbilavardan emas olub Giresunun aqagisi hisarrn hizip idip sandal ile ulak hizmetin ideleri idir ve gemileyyle getirdikleri gallattan kendii mekulatlar i için resmin virmevbilav baki kalat gallattan adeti-i kadim üzre gümrüklerin virürlemiş. Şimdiki halde Trabzon vilayeti tahir-i defter olunub arz olduğu maalde emi-i seri ot veclari sadar olub ki Ki Trabzon ve Gorele kalasi kafiri gibi daha hemçumun Giresun kalesi kafirleri gibi sandal ile ulak hizmetin idip ve hasari hizip idip nimetler harac virmevbilavı ispençe övr ve rüşun virürler iniiş yekle olsa hizmette tevâvöl olunuğun Giresun Kalasi kafirlere dahi ispençe övr ve rüşun emr olunub Giresun Kalasi mastuhtl라도 yalnız olunmak emr olunda ve gemileyyle getirdikleri gallattan dahi ulak hizmetine kadır olanlar için mekulaطلق adeti baki baki gallattanın olgenet adet ve kum ana üzre gümrüklerin virme vb. emir olduğu sebededen veh-i meşru üzre defter-i cedili sultaniye kayd olundu ve haricden gelihib mürremmekle olan kafirler dahi ulak hizmetin kadim kafirleri ile beraber hizmet ideleri deyî emr olundu alâhik hizmeti bedeli-i avrardi hizme olunma.”

21 Some of the entries from TT 52, p. 597, 600 and 630 respectively read as follows: “Mezkar Ahmed Fakih hâdevandığar hazretlerine Giresunada olan camiinde serâhî fahl olmâna avrardan ve sey tarikâtâdan mubah oluna deyî emr olundu; “Mezkar karye (karye-i Kayadibi) halki Giresun Kalasının sarnıcı ve anbarları ve topanhaneleri hârbâ hâtemeç ve olub mezkar karye hâlb merâmeetine ilizyan ettiği sebeden merâmeeti tayin olunub merâmeet ha-mitac oldukda merâmeet ideler bunlar avrâ arvaz teklif olunmaya deyî emr olundu; “Mezkar karye (karye-i Kavarcı) halki Giresun camiine merâmeeti tayin olunub arvaz teklif olunmaya deyî emr olundu.”

22 The entry from TT 52, p. 603 about the allocation of tumar to the fortress guards reads as follows: “Hisar erlerince hisar kurbünde tumar tayin idezid deyî emr olunmaga zîlî olunub tumar hisar kurbünde olduğu sebeden enri-i ali macebince hisar erlerince tayin olundu.”

23 One of the entries from TT 288, p. 727 concerning tax-exemption reads as follows: “Kala-i Giresan saracil ve anbarlar ve topanhaneler hârba mütvedeç olub mezkar karye hâlb merâmeetine ilizyan ettiği sebeden merâmeeti tayin olunub merâmeet mutâbab olubahda merâmeet ideler bunlar avrâ teklif olunmaya deyî emr olundu; “Mezkar karye (karye-i Kavarcı) halki Giresun camiine merâmeeti tayin olunub arvaz teklif olunmaya deyî emr olundu.”

24 These administrative arrangements were part of the re-organisation of the old Eyalet of Rum. For this, see Tayyib Gökbilgin, XVI. Yüzyıl Başlarında TrabzonLivasi ve Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi, in: Belleten, XXVI (1962), pp. 293-294. See also by the same author, 15. ve 16. Asırlarda Eyalet-i Rum, in: Vakıflar Dergisi, 6 (1965), pp. 55-54.

25 The entry from TT 43, p. 139b about the new coming Muslims reads as follows: “Cemaat-i Mişâbanan kâ da haric ameç.”

26 Six quarters were founded in the town of Giresun which were inhabited exclusively by Christians. The Muslims had not formed a quarter yet and were recorded under the title of community (cemâat). See TT 43, pp. 140a-141b.
There are a number of entries in the TT 43 concerning tax immunities in return for the employment of a large group of people for the various needs of the fortress and its inhabitants clearly shows the Ottomans' concern for the welfare and security of the inhabitants. These exemptions obviously meant a reduced amount of revenue to be collected for the state. In other words, the state left an increasing amount of the income in the area by not collecting it at all. This clearly was a contribution to the economic well-being of the people of the area. In the meantime, industrial, commercial and agricultural activities grew in volume and output. The exploitation of potential resources, the mobilisation of the people to meet various needs of the fortress, and the organisation of the fortress society around the town may be seen as steps taken by the state to develop Giresun into a small industrial and maritime city and a centre of commerce for its hinterland.

REVENUE MAXIMISATION IN THE KARAHISAR-I ŞARKI PROVINCE

Taken over some ten years before the first survey (1485), the Karahisar region presented the Ottomans with many difficulties and challenges as well as opportunities. It was a high mountainous plateau with average altitudes of 1500 to 2000 meters and a severe climate. There were very few possibilities for intensive agriculture, but the ground was rich in terms of mineral deposits.

27 "Giresun Kalası kafirleri eşir ve rüşmillerin ve haraların eda eyledikten sonra asağı kafirleri ösür ve rüşümlerin ve haracların ve mezraasın (extraordinary taxes) and tekalif-i örfiye (customary duties)." The employment of a large group of people from the nearby villages was confirmed at this date with extended immunities. Sometimes a whole village population was appointed to maintain and repair the fortress and the mosque and in return they were exempted from the avarz (extraordinary taxes) and tekalif-i örfiye (customary duties).

28 The previous appointments of people from the nearby villages overflowed. The previous appointments of people from the nearby villages.


30 A higher rate of desertion is seen in the neighbouring sancaks of Baybard and Kenah where 42.9% and 67.7% of the villages were deserted. The main cause for this scale of desertion was the wars between the Ottomans and the Akkoyunlus, and the Ottomans and the Safavids. On this see Ismet Miroğlu, 16. yüzyılda Bayburt Sancığı, İstanbul, 1975, pp. 29-30. Ismet Miroğlu, Kenah sancığı ve Erzincan Kazası (1520-1566), Ankara, 1990, pp. 34-37. A similar phenomenon at a lower scale has been observed in the nearby sancak of Harput where out of 164 villages 24 were deserted (viran, hali). Mehmet Ali Ünal, XVI Yüzyılda Harput Sancığı (1518-1566), Ankara, 1989, p. 67, table 9.

31 The mining villages were recorded as having a permanent population at the end of TT 37, pp. 883-888, under the title of Karayı-ışebane-i Karahisar. No desertion was seen among these villages and mezraas. The situation was the same for the fortress of Karahisar-i Şarki. See TT 37, pp. 818-820.

32 Kemal Paşazade makes the following statement on the capture of Karahisar: "Hisar içinde olan Türkmanlar ol hal-i müšebbet menli ki gördüler, mescereleri kalmayıp avaz-i "el-an'ı dervâze-i asumana girödüler, kal'ayı amanda teslim oldular." On Wednesday 24 August we, the Ottomans, marched to (Sebin) Karahisar. When we set up the cannon and began to destroy the fortifications (…) (the governor) Dara Bey came out, seeking peaceful surrender (…). We did not remove the existing townspeople, but we left there one-thousands of our men with abundant supplies. We removed garrison-troops, taking them with us." (The Ottoman Empire 1300-1481, Istanbul, The Isis Press, 1990, p. 217).
usual and to grant very generous tax immunities to those who were already living there.\footnote{The mining community, m"usellems and various groups and individuals were granted tax exemptions. The taxes due to be paid by the rezya of the villages cultivated by outsiders (haricden) and the villages with low population were also calculated in lump sums, which were lower than usual taxation rates. These are examples of wide spread tax exemptions and the generosity of the state at this initial period of conquest. See Acun, Ottoman Administration, pp. 92-96, 104. Granting tax immunities was, in fact, a typical Ottoman policy aimed at securing faithfulness of the native peoples. However, such privileges were not granted permanently and could be withdrawn by the Sultan at his pleasure. See Halil Inalcik, Ottoman Methods of Conquest, in: Studia Islamica, II (1954), pp. 107-108.}

Another Ottoman policy through which they made their rule acceptable and appealing to the locals was to acknowledge and to confirm the previous statuses and the rights of the local interest groups such as the freeholders, vakifs (pious foundations) and m"usellems (peasant soldiers).\footnote{About 10\% of the population of the area was made up of m"usellems, freeholders and vakif beneficiaries who had pre-Ottoman roots. Their previous status was confirmed by the state, and in the case of m"usellems, who constituted 9\% of the recorded population, they were exempted from regular taxes altogether in return for waging war. Fatma Acun, Ottoman Administration, pp. 92-93.}

As for the strategies the Ottomans developed to secure the peaceful surrender of the local mining community, the state allowed them to continue mining as they had been doing since antiquity. The employment of local Christians in the mining is a typical example of the Ottoman policy of adopting to local practices at the initial, uncertain stages of the conquest. The adoption of this policy secured the uninterrupted production of alum, and hence, income. The Ottomans were realistic enough not to directly oppose the established tradition in the newly conquered areas. The local mining community was granted such generous immunities as the exemption from the c"izye (head-tax), ispence, behre ve r"usum-i saire (share and other miscellaneous dues), avariz, tekalifi "orfiye, "akrekegi (being called away for the performance as carsmen for the fleet) and acemi oglani (child recruitment levies) in return for working in the mine and producing alum.\footnote{Suraiya Faroqui, Alum Production and Alum Trade in the Ottoman Empire (About 1560-1830), in: Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, vol. 71 (1979), pp. 152-153.}

The alum mined in Karahisar was the best quality and was used mainly for textiles in the dyeing process and in the manufacture of leather. It was also used by pharmacists and goldsmiths. After the Ottoman takeover, the export of alum by Genoese merchants was disrupted and channelled to fulfill the demands of the internal market.\footnote{ATTOMAN ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITIES} From its conquest until the 1570s the alum mine was operated directly by the state, and after that it was farmed out for textiles in the dyeing process and in the manufacture of leather.\footnote{The entry from TT 37, p. 888 reads as follows: "Mahsul-i "Sebhane der nahiye-i mezhibi hassa-i m"irliva-i Karahisar fi sene 150,500".}

After the initial uncertainty of the conquest, the previously empty or deserted settlements were now either inhabited or abandoned, and new ones were also established. Now, in the state's view, fiscal matters took precedence over administrative and other matters and the state channelled the highest revenue source of the region directly to itself: the amount of income from the mine tripled, reaching 459,000 akçes and was diverted from the hassa of the m"irliva to the imperial domains of the Sultan.\footnote{The Ottomans allowed the local Christians to have a monopoly on the mining business, and their population increased sharply in subsequent surveys. The number of miners increased from 161 males (nefer) around 1485 to 771 males in 1547 and to 1300 males in 1569. This increase was so great that by 1569, one of the mining villages, Maden "Orece, recorded 423 males to various individuals.\footnote{Possession and control of mines was of critical importance to the state, as they supplied metals for the military and industry, as well as being a source of wealth and prosperity. The operation and administration of mines in the empire were, therefore, under the close control of the state. Depending on the source of the capital invested to operate a mine, the mining activity was organised mainly by the state or private sector. The state administration of mines was generally applied to the unused mines or to those requiring a higher level of investment to render them profitable, whereas operating mines with a yearly regular production were farmed out to private investors. Rhoads Murphey, Murdoch, in: El., second edition, 5 (1984), pp. 974-975.}}

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Thirty-five years later, around 1520, the most important change in the empire's general circumstances was the sudden expansion of territory in the Asian provinces of the empire, which translated into a 76\% increase in land during the short reign of Sultan Selim I.\footnote{Murphey, Conceptual and Pragmatic Uses, p. 114.} Accordingly, with the conquest of the neighbouring territories, the region became a hinterland and thus safer. After the initial uncertainty of the conquest, the previously empty or deserted settlements were now either inhabited or abandoned, and new ones were also established. Now, in the state's view, fiscal matters took precedence over administrative and other matters and the state channelled the highest revenue source of the region directly to itself: the amount of income from the mine tripled, reaching 459,000 akçes and was diverted from the hassa of the m"irliva to the imperial domains of the Sultan.\footnote{TT 37, pp. 883-888; TT 255, pp. 23-32; TT 478, pp. 48-64.}
In 1547, the same village of Maden Görece had a population of 120 males which was more prominent and a priority was given to resource extraction. The constant increase in the number of miners secured an adequate workforce for alum mining. However, not all miners were absorbed by the work in the mine: at the beginning of the period (1485), there were four alum pits and 161 households in the mining villages. At the end of the period, i.e. in 1569, the number of pits rose to six whereas the miner population increased, much faster, to 1300 households.

Such an overcrowding in the mining villages seems to have led the Ottoman officials to revoke the policy of lower taxation, since this policy was now causing loss of revenue for the treasury, including the loss of revenue from the head-tax (çizye). The state's own financial concerns now became more prominent and a priority was given to resource extraction.

Thus, the state decided to re-organise labour in a way that was thought to be more profitable. The Ottomans started to operate the mine with paid labourers (irgad) and to collect the usual taxes for the treasury. The new arrangement caused some degree of unemployment and certainly a great deal of dissatisfaction among the miners. Only two years later, two inspectors of the tax-farms of Arz-i Rum, Sefer Bey and Mehmed Bey, and the treasury inspector (müfettisi-i emval-i hassa) who was also the judge of Arz-i Rum, Mevlana Muslihiddin, sent a report to Istanbul stating that the land around the Şebane villages was too infertile and that there was little space for agriculture in the area. It was, therefore, very difficult to make a living as a full-time farmer and still bear the usual tax load. These officials also informed Istanbul that some of the locals had already left the area, while others were dispersed. In order to overcome the difficulties, so ran the report, the locals therefore seemed that these young and landless inhabitants supplied the silver mine in the village with the necessary workforce. Oktay Özel, Changes in Settlement Patterns, Population and Society in Rural Anatolia: A Case Study of Amasya (1576-1642), Ph.D. thesis, The University of Manchester, 1993, p. 85, footnote 80.

In 1547, the same village of Maden Görece had a population of 120 males which was made up of 62 bonnak, 34 caba and 24 mücerred. Notice the high number of bachelors and people without land (caba). A similar phenomenon is observed in the village of Hacı (modern Gümüşhacıköy) in Amasya where 320 males (nefer) were recorded, of this, 108 were landless, 187 were bachelors and only 25 had land in form of land-tracts (zemir). It therefore seems that these young and landless inhabitants supplied the silver mine in the village with the necessary workforce. Oktay Özel, Changes in Settlement Patterns, Population and Society in Rural Anatolia: A Case Study of Amasya (1576-1642), Ph.D. thesis, The University of Manchester, 1993, p. 85, footnote 80.

As we stated at the beginning, the creation of an ideal society and the maximisation of revenue were the Ottomans' primary objectives concerning provincial administration. The above examination of the two areas with different administrative priorities was made possible by the setting in Amasya of the high number of bachelors and people without land (caba). A similar phenomenon is observed in the village of Hacı (modern Gümüşhacıköy) in Amasya where 320 males (nefer) were recorded, of this, 108 were landless, 187 were bachelors and only 25 had land in form of land-tracts (zemir). It therefore seems that these young and landless inhabitants supplied the silver mine in the village with the necessary workforce. Oktay Özel, Changes in Settlement Patterns, Population and Society in Rural Anatolia: A Case Study of Amasya (1576-1642), Ph.D. thesis, The University of Manchester, 1993, p. 85, footnote 80.

CONCLUSION

As we stated at the beginning, the creation of an ideal society and the maximisation of revenue were the Ottomans' primary objectives concerning provincial administration. The above examination of the two areas with different administrative priorities was made possible by the setting in Amasya of the high number of bachelors and people without land (caba). A similar phenomenon is observed in the village of Hacı (modern Gümüşhacıköy) in Amasya where 320 males (nefer) were recorded, of this, 108 were landless, 187 were bachelors and only 25 had land in form of land-tracts (zemir). It therefore seems that these young and landless inhabitants supplied the silver mine in the village with the necessary workforce. Oktay Özel, Changes in Settlement Patterns, Population and Society in Rural Anatolia: A Case Study of Amasya (1576-1642), Ph.D. thesis, The University of Manchester, 1993, p. 85, footnote 80.

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43 Men is a unit of measurement for weighing heavy goods such as spices, meat and iron. In much of Eastern Anatolia, a 'heavy men' was in use, which corresponded to about 7.5 kg. On the varieties of men used in the Ottoman Empire and in the various countries of the Islamic Near East, see Walther Hinze, Islamische Masse und Gewichte umgerechnet ins metrische System, in: Handbuch der Orientalistik, 1. Abt., H1, ed. Bertold Spuler, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1955, pp. 16-23.

44 See Appendix.
ferent social-economic and geographical conditions, shows that the Ottomans sought to achieve these objectives by adopting various measures depending on the region and its conditions. For instance, the initial toleration of the Christian population and the gradual integration of a Muslim community in the area demonstrates the Ottomans’ primary objective of creation of an ideal society, securing the region into a central province of the empire, “darü 'l-İslam”. Similarly, as we have seen with the alum mining community of Karahisar, the Ottomans pursued the second main policy of revenue maximising, whether this meant recognising the traditional rules and customs of the pre-Ottoman mining community or, in the later centuries, changing the methods of its administration. Moreover, in both cases migration and the granting of tax exemptions were applied as a way of re-settlement which would lead to the revitalisation of the local economy and, in turn, increase the potential for revenue collection. Administrative re-structuring and the creation of ethnic and religious balance were the two other methods used specifically in the Giresun region. As has been seen, the Ottomans tried to achieve their objectives by following a particular course of action during which some of their concerns took priority over others. They were successful in organising their priorities in a way that helped them to achieve their objectives in the long term. All these may be seen as proof of the specific flexibility of the Ottoman administrative system.

This study has also shown that the tahrir defters are very effective sources for demonstrating the policies and preoccupations of the Ottomans in the administration of an area. Further studies on areas with different ethnic-religious, geographic and socio-economic characteristics will provide us with a deeper understanding of the Ottoman administrative system and its workings.

APPENDIX

The long text from TT 478, pp. 63-64 concerning the miners reads as follows: “Zikr olan yirmi üç pare kura ve mezari reayasi kaza-i mezburede olan dört kita sab madenlerinde cizye ve ispençe ve behre ve rüsum-i saire ve acemi oglani ve avariz ve kürekçi ve tekalif-i örfiyeden muafiyetle kadimden sab islerler iken sabhaneler irgadla islenüb kuray-i mezbure keferesin dahi harac ve ispençeleri ve sair rüsüm edasma kudret-leri olmamagla bazası celay-ı vatan idip sairleri perkende olmak üzere kullanmadıkları takdirde sairleri dahi perakende olduklarından sonra madeni isletmeye irgada dahi müzayaka iktiza idüb madenci olmayan kefere sab islemeye kadir olmayub mal-i miriye külli zarar olmak mümkin olmayub malum olmayub arz ve mecbure reayasi yoklandıkda iki yılda beri yüzcesken hane celay-ı vatan idip kanda gidildikleri malum olmayub arz ve ispençeleri ve rüsum-i sairelerinden nesne hasil olmayub menen-i mecbure ber karar-ı sabik muafiyetle madenciler olmadıkları takdirde saireleri dahi perkende olduklarından sonra madenleri işletmeye rıgada da müzayaka ıkitza idip madenci olmayan kefere sab islemeye kadir olmayub mal-i miriye külli zarar olmak mümkündü dahi malum olmayub vech-i mecbur üzre kuray-ı şahbancı reayası rıgadan manul olan dört madeneden maada iki maden dahis idihib yilda her bir madende yirmi dörder firın şah zahiresi ihrak ve müheyya idihib beher onbeş günde bir kuyu şah derderleri maden-i mecbure ıhyasına ve mal-i miriye enfa olub madenci reayasi dahi her senede vech-i mecbur üzre yükçükört kuyu şah demeği kabul eyleldikleri ve ber karar-ı evvel muafiyetleri defter-ı cedide kayd olundu”.